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“What will people think?”

Indian Women and Domestic Violence in Aotearoa/ New Zealand

A thesis

submitted in fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

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Abstract

Migration is a complex process undertaken for a wide range of reasons. To leave the country of ones birth to settle in another is likely to involve disruption to existing family and community relationships, reassessing ones culture of origin, reassessing ones identity and “fitting in” with a host culture. For many migrants, relative poverty, isolation, racism and prejudice are additional challenges and often, obtaining permanent resident status is far from straight forward. For these sorts of reasons, immigrant women who experience domestic violence face particular challenges over and above those faced by women from the dominant host culture.

Although there is a field of international literature which identifies immigrant-specific factors that trigger or maintain domestic violence, there is little such research in New Zealand and none which specifically focuses on Indian women immigrants.

This research is positioned within a view of domestic violence in India being a socio-cultural issue cutting across all castes, social classes and religions. The research increases awareness of cultural perspectives that foster violence and abuse, and investigates how the process of migration affects Indian women’s attempts to navigate their safety in the context of New Zealand. In particular, it reveals the barriers that Indian immigrant woman experiencing domestic violence face in seeking help, paying particular attention to the socio- cultural aspects of the Indian Diaspora in New Zealand.

There were two phases to the data collection- semi- structured face-to-face interviews with key informants in India and New Zealand and case studies of Indian migrant women who experience domestic violence.

The key findings suggest that patriarchal attitudes and a sense of male entitlement are pivotal in perpetuating and tolerating domestic violence. In-laws are heavily implicated in the abuse (emotional, physical and financial) of women. This includes continued dowry demands after the wedding. Women reported isolation as an integral aspect of power and control exercised by their spouse in a host country. This and the shame they might bring upon their family and community were key reasons for not seeking help. Uncertain immigration status of women hindered reporting domestic violence.

Although some community members were helpful, too often the Indian migrant community colluded with the abuser and/or were tolerant of domestic violence. Indian migrant women were sometimes outmanoeuvred by their partners in the family court by using 'orders preventing removal' of children. Even after women left the abusive relationship, they were emotionally abused by the partner using their children.

Culturally safe practices are paramount to ensure women are not further victimized when they approach services.

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The support of my friends nearby and scattered around the world was crucial. The friends I made in New Zealand are a testimony that it's never

too late to form friendships that could last a lifetime. They have heard me rant, they have seen me fall, but they have always been there to lift me up. To my friends elsewhere, thank you for your unwavering faith in my abilities. It has been humbling and given me the push I needed.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

You can do nothing! I can do whatever I want...Will you report to the police? Try! I'll pay them off. You will be shamed. Your entire family will be shamed.

These statements made by a man on a crowded bus inspired my research. For that, I thank him.

I was 17 years old. I was travelling by public bus to get to college. A man standing behind me was rubbing up against me. I tried to move but he held onto me and started to touch me in more inappropriate ways. At first, I couldn't move as I was in shock. I tried to resist by knocking him with my elbow but he didn't stop. Then I screamed at him; the bus came to a halt. The man looked shocked as if he didn't expect me to retaliate. The driver asked what the problem was and I told him. I was certain that the least he would do was ask this perverted man to get out of the bus. To my shock, I was the one asked to leave for causing chaos in the bus. What confused me more was how the other women in the bus stood there, saying nothing to help me. I walked out in utter rage and frustration. As I walked out of the bus in tears, my assailant uttered the above words in my ear. Those words, I will never forget. Those words changed my perspective about the system, as a whole and making me question the position of women in India.

After I got down from that bus, I decided I would file a case at the police station. But my day only got worse. The police officer, who was a woman herself, explained that incidents like these happened on a daily basis and nothing could be done to track this man down. She added that I should wear more traditional Indian clothes in order to not "attract attention"

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from men. At this point, I experienced utter helplessness. I struggled to comprehend how one woman failed to understand another woman's plight.

After this incident I started to think about male privilege and the indifference of by-standers and the role this plays in allowing violence against women, especially domestic violence. In India, domestic violence is the most reported violent crime against women in the past decade. According to the National Crimes Record Bureau (2014), one case of domestic violence is reported every five minutes in India. The number of reported cases have sharply risen from 94,041 cases in 2010 to 122, 877 in 2014 (National Crimes Bureau, 2014). This does not include the statistics on dowry deaths, which are highly underreported. In a recent study by the International Centre for Research on Women, 52% of Indian women surveyed reported having experienced violence during their lifetime and 60% (three in five men) of Indian men reported having inflicted violence against their wife or partner (Nanda et al., 2014). It was also found that, in particular, men under economic pressure were more likely to abuse their wives. Nanda et al (2014) speculated that this could be related to the cultural norms of masculinity, that men should be the breadwinners of the family. When their economic stance is under threat, they try to re-establish their standing by exerting more control or abusing their partners.

Although domestic violence cuts across all demographic, racial and ethnic lines, little focus has been given to immigrant women's experiences of domestic violence. It is important to acknowledge that domestic violence is not a threat only to women in their home country. One might postulate that if Indian women migrated, their vulnerability to domestic violence might decrease in the host country. This is not the case. There are factors

unique to immigrant women that make them more vulnerable to domestic violence as compared to local women in the host country.

Along with new, positive opportunities, migration can present significant challenges. This is particularly so for women immigrants who experience domestic violence. Isolation from family, language difficulties, uncertain resident status, racism, unfamiliarity with policies and services in the host country and conflicting cultural values are some of the barriers such women may face. Sometimes, they find their own migrant community less than helpful. When people migrate, they bring their culture with them. At the same time, they may leave behind them certain practices and resources which otherwise would help to support them in adversity.

New Zealand has seen a steady influx of migrants over the past decade. In 2013 census, more than 155,000 New Zealanders identified themselves as Indian, of whom more than three quarters were overseas-born (New Zealand Foreign Affairs & Trade, n.d.). As India is now the largest source of migrants, the number of Indian immigrants is growing rapidly and there is an urgent need to develop effective, culturally appropriate interventions for battered women. Both internationally and in New Zealand there is a growing need for a stronger evidence base of the socio-cultural dynamics that are involved in similar patterns of fostering domestic violence among Indian immigrant communities.

This research explores the challenges that Indian migrant women experience in the face of migration that makes them more vulnerable to domestic violence in New Zealand.

Significance of the Study

Indian society is seen to be fundamentally patriarchal in nature: that is, men are considered the dominant gender. In Indian marriage, the daughter is “given away” to the groom’s family and can no longer rely on her parents financially and emotionally. Traditionally, the groom’s family make all decisions for her and if she is subjected to domestic violence, her own relatives and parents tend to justify the abuse, coercing her to remain in the relationship. The patriarchal expectations of being a “good wife” restrict her from reporting the violence owing to fear of being ostracized and isolated from her community. In India, a woman may be abused not only by her husband but also by his family members. It is vital to note here that in the Indian context, domestic violence can be perpetrated by the woman’s mother-in-law as well. That is, it is not necessarily only the husband who abuses her. In-depth analysis of needs of women who experienced domestic violence in the Indian context drove me deeper into wanting to be a part of the change I wished to see when I immigrated to New Zealand.

As mentioned earlier, immigration poses numerous challenges such as limited knowledge of the host-language, lack of access to jobs, separation from community and family, unclear legal status and negative experiences with home country authorities. For immigrant women experiencing domestic violence, these challenges are considerably greater. They may possess limited host- language skills, and are often isolated from their family and community back in their home country, often making them vulnerable and dependent on their abusive spouses. Literature on immigrant women and domestic violence reflects how culture, context and migration status exacerbate a women’s vulnerability to violence. Studies also indicate how perpetrators use these aspects to practice power

and control as a key aspect of the abuse immigrant women face, while also building barriers that prevent women from seeking help.

Theories that seek to explain male violence against women range from socio-biological to socio-cultural. *This* research focuses on the socio-cultural theories that are categorized as family violence or systems perspective, and the feminist viewpoint of gender based violence. Family violence research stresses the involvement of all family members in wife abuse while gender differences in domestic violence is the principal focus of the feminist perspective (Fernandez, 1997). Feminist theory resonates closely with my experiences and understanding of gender inequality, as it draws attention to power and control in heterosexual relationships. It also views domestic violence as the result of living in a community that treats women as second class citizens and condones violence perpetrated by men.

I also believe in a community psychologist's perspective of a framework encompassing individuals and families within the context in which they find themselves. Community psychology emphasizes the importance of understanding individuals and families within the broader socio-cultural context. In understanding the phenomenon of domestic violence, my interest lies in analysing the impact of culture, power and social norms on victims and families which results in gender-based oppression. My research is based on exploring the ways in which Indian women experiencing domestic violence in New Zealand navigate their safety in the context of migration (understanding the nature of power and control relationships). My hope is that this will lead to action which will empower and enable the victims to make independent and informed decisions about their safety.

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There have been numerous research studies done in countries like the U.S, U.K and Canada about South Asian immigrants and domestic violence. There is however definitely a scarcity of research in the field of domestic violence experienced by Indian immigrants, particularly in a New Zealand context. In his research on family violence in Asian communities in New Zealand, Tse (2007) focused on strategies to prevent family violence after having explored the cultural, social and economic triggers within Asian communities. Although the cultural barriers in tackling family violence are identified, there is a lack of in-depth analysis focussing on Indian immigrants. A report by the Ministry of Development on the scale and nature of domestic violence in Aotearoa/ New Zealand in 2007 highlighted the dearth of research in “other ethnic groups” (including Indians) largely owing to low participant response rates. One of a number of reasons for this could be because of the collectivist nature of certain cultures.

Other research by Natarajan (2002) offers an integrated theoretical model to explain domestic violence in Indian immigrant communities in the U.S. He briefly describes the socio-cultural factors that trigger and maintain domestic violence in an immigrant context and a framework for possible intervention strategies. However, there is a lack of analysis of the impact of family dynamics on domestic violence experienced by immigrant Indian women.

Little is known about the intricacies of psychological control exercised by the families in either encouraging or maintaining the violence. Little is also known about the perpetrators’ or their families’ perspectives about the issue of domestic violence. As the focus of all the available research is on the victims and the difficulties they face in the host country. There is also limited research on the involvement of the mothers-in-law in domestic violence in the immigrant context.

In New Zealand, the Domestic Violence Act 1995 encompasses a wide gamut of family relationships. However, little concern is given to the cultural contexts in which violence occurs in ethnic groups (Ministry of Social Development, 2007). In research done previously, socio-cultural precepts are believed to inhibit reporting of abuse. I hope to devise strategies to break this barrier in order to achieve the aims of my research and contribute in a unique way to the area of domestic violence intervention.

The purpose of my research is also to increase awareness of cultural perspectives that foster violence and abuse, as well as cultural beliefs and practices which are protective against domestic violence among immigrants in New Zealand. I intend to identify how the efforts made to maintain and promote positive perceptions of the Indian community have a significant impact on immigrant Indian women who are subjected to domestic violence.

Outline of Thesis

This document opened by providing a background about domestic violence in the Indian context taking the reader to domestic violence experienced by Indian women in the immigrant context in New Zealand. It aimed to give an accurate, concrete understanding of what the document will cover and what the reader can gain from reading it. It also briefed the reader about the ways in which this research can be applied. The previous section elaborated on the importance of this research within community psychology and on theoretical perspectives this research is based on.

The next section of the first chapter will introduce the researcher and the burning questions she has set out to answer and why.

Chapter Two, the literature review, will provide a critical overview of significant literature in the area of domestic violence, focussing on the context immigration and Indian diaspora. It also provides critical discussions around domestic violence in India.

Chapter Three, the methodology, explores the research design and the ways in which data was generated. It gives insight into data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four presents key informants' views in the form of analytical reports that highlight significant trends or findings and also includes selected quotes as examples.

Chapters Five to Eight include case studies of Indian women experiencing domestic violence in New Zealand.

Chapter Nine elaborates on the findings of the research based on the existing literature and data collected.

In chapter Ten, I discuss the implications for future research, policy and practice. I also reflect on my journey through this research and how this has changed my worldview.

The Researcher

I was born into a fairly orthodox South Indian family which was fundamentally patriarchal. I was told many times that my grandfather was the "head of the family." I only fully understood what that meant as I observed over the years that all decisions, irrespective of their importance, were made by him. He held a status of power. My mother would blindly obey what her in-laws and husband asked her to do. My grandmother and mother would eat their meals only after the male members of the family

had finished eating; as a child, these were a few things I saw around the household on a daily basis. At several points, I saw emotional and verbal abuse to which my mom was subjected to by her in-laws. I didn't know the word "domestic violence" existed or that it was wrong.

As a teenager, I started experiencing for myself the oppression the womenfolk in my family had been put through for years. I was only allowed to wear certain kinds of clothes which the elders in the family picked for me; boys were not allowed to call on the home phone and, worst of all, I started noticing how men viewed women. I started recognizing the deeply entrenched patriarchy and widespread misogyny which surrounded me. I noticed the dangers women faced anywhere they went. I observed the way injustices done to women were tolerated. The times I tried to question this discrimination I was told to keep mum and that became a way of life for me, like it did for thousands of other Indian women, I am sure. In fact, I came to feel guilty for questioning what was widely accepted. There is such a widespread taboo around topics like rape and domestic violence which significantly inhibits these social issues from being addressed for what they are. It is important to acknowledge that there have been activists rising to the occasion in some cases. These people demand answers and they don't give up the fight. The fight for gender equality. The fight for justice.

I talked in the beginning of the chapter about the one experience that changed my perspective about the system, as a whole. When the police officer turned her back on me, it made me think about extended family abuse when a mother-in-law abuses her daughter-in-law. This will be discussed in detail later.

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In one day I had experienced how the entire system, on every level accepted, tolerated, and to some level supported, these crimes. This is when I decided I would work towards improving the status of women in India, however impossible that might sound. After this day, I experienced many such incidents and heard of worse. Numerous cases of rape, domestic violence and dowry deaths would hit headlines everyday despite under reporting of such crimes. I would shudder thinking about the actual number of these crimes taking place around the country and about powerless victims who have little or no support.

In the quest for answers, I completed my Masters in Social work and Masters in Counselling Psychology. As the slogan goes, personal is political. It is safe to say that I didn't settle for the patriarchal bargain in the way most Indian women have. I got married to a man who was unlike the men I'd come across earlier. He respected and treated women as equal. He encouraged me to follow my path and stood up with me against injustices done to women. He helped me realize that I could help Indian women no matter where I was.

The need to experience a different culture where women are treated with respect and as equals grew in me. Eventually, we (my husband, son and I) moved to New Zealand. Even though I had settled into a society where I felt safer to go out and express myself and to have freedoms not common in my home country, without risking a negative response, I still felt driven to work towards the betterment of Indian women. I have experienced firsthand some of the challenges migration brings: language barriers, visa status and financial difficulties. Although I had no significant language problems, I found it a challenge to understand the accent spoken in New Zealand. I came as a student which made my family and my own status here temporary. Having emptied all our savings

towards moving to New Zealand, we essentially had to start from scratch, financially. All of the above, in addition to being far away from family and friends, made migration extremely stressful. This is when I started to wonder how women who experience domestic violence cope in a host country.

When the opportunity of PhD was given to me, I took it up in a heartbeat as I knew the potential it had to change thoughts, attitudes and ways of living. I thought about the topic for several days and the images of all those strangers who had touched me inappropriately came to my mind and this led to a trail of thoughts about domestic violence and how deep rooted it is in the Indian culture. I discussed my thoughts with my supervisor and by the end of our meeting I knew exactly what I wanted to do as a community psychologist.

As someone who has experienced both cultures, I felt I had the skills to ask the right questions about the issues at hand. Do all Indian immigrant women feel a change in their views on these issues like I have? Do all Indian immigrant women undergo this mental transformation? As victims in a host country, do they react to domestic violence differently from victims in India? What about the Indian community in New Zealand? Does it help these women or does it abandon or hinder them?

One phrase that constantly resonates in my mind as I sit thousands of miles away from India is “What will others think?”, “What will others say?” It is not uncommon for many Indian women to have heard this from their family members with regards to choices they make in their lives. There is a constant fear lurking in our parents’ minds about what people around may think or feel about the choices their children make. Growing up, I have personally felt the pressure to conform. My parents have

constantly reminded me about the potentially ugly consequences of people knowing what I've said or done. I was always expected to abide by strict rules which were mostly based on other people's reactions.

When I moved to New Zealand, I would narrate snippets of my life story to my friends here. One day, I was talking to a friend about how clothing has been an integral part of my identity and that in the past, I was only allowed to wear clothes that my grandfather approved of, or else I was not allowed to leave the house. So I would obey him but this made me feel like somebody else. It was clear that he was motivated by concern about the judgements that others may make of me based on what I wore. My friend was surprised to hear that someone as educated and intelligent as me gave in to irrational familial and societal pressures. I told her, "I just wanted to protect my parents from this impending shame they believed I could bring upon them. I would never want them to lose face in the community because of my "poor" life choices. So most times, I did what was expected of me as would many other Indian women."

As a researcher, I have come to realize how important this phrase of "What will others think?" is with regards to battered women seeking help in a host country. When women hear this constantly, they absorb the attitude of "What will others think?" to some extent at least. This in turn acts against them when it comes to help-seeking in issues of personal safety. For instance, many rape victims, along with their families have fled their home fearing social ostracism. The stigma attached to single mothers and separated women drives victims to stay in abusive households and holds them back from reporting abuse. By and large, one can say that these attitudes prevalent in most of the Indian society victimizes vulnerable women further. This is also reflected in the statement the man on the bus made – *"You will be shamed. Your entire family will be shamed."*

There is a fear of letting your parents down, letting your community down and being ostracized. The “easier” option would seem to be to please your parents and community and stay in the abusive relationship. Among other things this thesis is a critical examination of the all too common question, “What will people think?”

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The Nature of Violence against Women

Violence against women is a human rights violation disempowering and paralysing women physically, psychologically, sexually and economically. It is a multifaceted issue affecting the well-being of women around the world (Marcus, 1994). However, domestic violence is commonly viewed as a private issue (Beasley & Thomas, 1994). In many societies, cultural values, norms and practices are used to minimize, tolerate or accept domestic violence to a point where it is not considered a serious issue. Domestic violence is viewed as an individual problem rather than as a culturally sanctioned practice, used to oppress women (Perilla, 1999). According to Marcus (1994), moving domestic violence from the private sphere where socio-cultural norms are used to justify oppression of women, to a universal domain of human rights would help supersede these socio-cultural norms. This will help battered women all over the world.

However, one cannot undermine the pivotal role socio-cultural values, norms and practices have played in the oppression of women. Over the years, patriarchal societies across the world have developed practices that hold women subordinate to men. The custom of foot binding was followed in China to restrict women's movements for over 1,000 years. Muslim populations of Middle East, North Africa and Asia follow Purdah, a practice of separating women from society through the use of a curtain that covers her head and neck of a woman. Clitoridectomy is still performed on millions of pre-pubescent girls in Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Guinea and Ethiopia (Bhattacharya,

2004). The patriarchal societies of the West attempt to maintain power and control by rape and assault, both within families and outside. In countries like India, harmful traditional practices such as forced marriages, honour killings and dowry system place men in a privileged position in the household and in society (Martin, 1981). The manifestation of such abuse within the home is either effectively ignored, rationalized or passively tolerated by the victim, family members, society and law-enforcing systems.

Hubbard (1991) defined domestic violence as,

The emotional, physical, psychological or sexual abuse perpetrated against a person by that person's spouse, former spouse, partner, former partner or by the other parent of a minor child. Abuse may include threats, harm, injury, harassment, control, terrorism or damage to living beings or property (as cited in McCue, 2008, p. 2).

According to the New Zealand Domestic Violence Act 1995,

...domestic violence, in relation to any person, means violence against that person by any other person with whom that person is, or has been, in a domestic relationship (s.3.1).

It also elaborates on the types of abuse that count as domestic violence, namely, physical, sexual and psychological abuse (s.3.2). Significantly, it adopts a contextual view of domestic violence in that it makes clear that acts which may appear trivial when viewed in isolation can constitute abuse when they constitute a pattern of behaviour (s.3.4) (New Zealand Legislation, n.d.).

It should be noted that domestic violence can happen in any intimate or familial relationship regardless of the marital status and living conditions. The fact that the perpetrator and victim share an intimate or familial relationship poses difficulties for the victim support and criminal justice agencies in overcoming the violence (Harne & Radford, 2008). As

represented by crime statistics and research, domestic violence, in most cases, is observed to be experienced by women and perpetrated by men (Women's Aid Federation of England, 2009). The different types of domestic violence that women experience will now be briefly discussed.

Women are often exposed to emotional violence and find it rather challenging to cope even though it might be the only kind of abuse present in that relationship. Emotional abuse can range from directing subtle insults towards the victim to threatening physical violence against the victim and their children (McCue, 2008). Abuse of a sexual nature, although widespread, is seldom discussed frankly. Such abuse may often start by passing derogatory comments about women and sex and end with serious consequences such as murdering the victim. Physical abuse may begin with ignoring the victim's need for physical intimacy and lead to painful assaults, sometimes ending up in internal injuries and death of the victim (McCue, 2008). Economic abuse might make the victim financially dependent on the perpetrator by hindering the former's ability to access economic resources, thereby jeopardizing her economic security (Adams, Sullivan, Bybee & Greeson, 2008).

Most importantly, domestic violence is about power and control. Over the years, feminist scholars have focussed on how the subordinate position of women makes them more vulnerable to domestic violence (Anderson, 2005; Dasgupta, 2002). It is also important to acknowledge that domestic violence can take place in different socio-cultural contexts. For instance, in the West, domestic violence typically occurs when a man abuses a woman, whereas in the Indian context, domestic violence may be perpetrated by the mother-in-law or other members of the husband's family. This reflects the diverse nature of domestic violence experiences and the contexts in

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which they occur (Fernandez, 1997). The Indian context of domestic violence will be explained in detail in the next section.

According to World Health Organization (2009), deep-rooted social and cultural factors make a significant contribution towards condoning violence against women. Expressed prohibitions of violence against women are largely ignored owing to cultural practices, norms and misconception of religious ideologies. In addition to the cultural, religious and societal factors that condone oppression and violence, migrant and refugee women find themselves being vulnerable owing to other factors as well.

Immigration to a society which appears to be less condoning of violence against women does not necessarily reduce the challenges facing women (Raj & Silverman, 2002). Immigration poses numerous challenges such as limited knowledge of host language, lack of access to honourable jobs, separation from community and family, unclear legal status and negative experiences with home country authorities. For immigrant women experiencing domestic violence, these challenges are considerably greater. They may possess limited host- language skills, and are often isolated from their family and community, often making them vulnerable and dependent on their abusive spouses. Literature on immigrant women and domestic violence reflect how culture, context and migration status exacerbate a women's susceptibility to violence (Raj & Silverman, 2002). Studies also indicate how perpetrators use these aspects to practice power and control to abuse immigrant women and build barriers that prevent women from seeking help (Abraham, 1998).

Domestic Violence in the Indian Context

Previous research on domestic violence in India has exposed its high prevalence and its underpinning in ingrained in socio-cultural norms (Ghosh, 2007; Rao, Indhu, Chopra, Nagamani, & Padaki, 2000; Vindhya, 2000). According to Ghosh (2007), among all violent acts against women in India, domestic violence is the most prevalent. Unfortunately, it is not given the priority it should be owing to cultural ideologies that tolerate injustices done to women.

Status of women in India.

Like many other societies, India is profoundly patriarchal. Social mores and attitudes regarding the status and treatment of women as second class citizens in Indian culture have a long history, dating back to ancient times. There exists a severe contrast in gender role expectations which was brought about by patriarchy in ancient India. Even something as early as the Hindu epic tale of Ramayana (over 5000 years ago), resonates with the concept of sex appropriate behaviours by portraying women as possessing exaggerated feminine qualities and being subordinate to men (Sarshar, 2010).

Within every religion there is an array of interpretations and expressions of gender roles, violence and control, based on the understandings of their respective scriptures. India is a land of religious diversity with an ancient caste system under each of these religions. At the 2001 census, Hindus constituted the largest group (80.5% of the population), followed by 13.4% Muslims, 2.3% Christians, 1.9% Sikhs, 0.8% Buddhists and 0.4% Jains (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2001).

Community and family life is impacted to a great extent by the caste system (Almeida & Dolan-Delvecchio, 1999) while the religions in India

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convey a fundamental message about the roles and duties of a submissive wife (Tichy, Becker & Sisco, 2009). The religious scriptures convey messages regarding acceptable behaviour of women which can be interpreted in numerous ways which causes some amount of ambiguity. Although the three major religions in India (Hinduism, Christianity and Islam) seem to condone violence against women in some form or the other, there also appears to be a few contradictory ideas. I am aware that religious scriptures need in-depth analysis and are voluminous in content. Due to the restriction of space in this document, a few conflicting notions regarding the gender roles in a marriage will be discussed below.

It is important to recognise that Indian culture is not monolithic. Hinduism being the predominant religion in India, the different forms of Hindu patriarchy will be discussed.

Brahmanical patriarchy, tribal patriarchy and Dalit patriarchy differ in terms of their religious and regional variations (Sarshar, 2010). Brahmanical patriarchy, dominant in many parts of India, connects caste and gender using a set of rules and traditions which imposes on women the expectation to preserve the boundaries between casts (Chakravarti, 2003). In tribal societies, women experience some amount of personal freedom and self-expression but men rule the public sector (Bhasin, 2007). Women are permitted to participate in religious duties within their family and group but are not allowed to be involved in particular ceremonies of tribal gods (Indian Council of Social Science Research, 1975). Dalit patriarchy, on the other hand, engages in subjugating, agonizing, demeaning and marginalizing women (Guru, 1999). The commonalities in these systems of patriarchies are that the man is considered the head of the

family and he exercises complete control over the woman's mobility, decision-making, reproduction, labour and sexuality (Sarshar, 2010).

Manusmriti or Laws of Manu is the most important and earliest metrical work of the textual tradition of Hinduism written between 200 BC and 200 AD. Laws of Manu stress that since women are disloyal by nature, they must be dependent on men and that their husbands must be worshipped as a God. It states that as a daughter, a woman should be under the constant surveillance of her father; as a wife, under the surveillance of her husband; and as a widow, under the surveillance of her son (Chakravarti, 2003). This stems from the "understanding" that women are emotional beings and need a more logical counterpart in order to grow (Tichy, Becker & Sisco, 2009). On the contrary, Manusmriti also states that women must be respected and 'adorned' by the male members of the family which in turn reflected their prosperity. Similarly, the Samkhya school of Indian philosophy gives importance to the concept of "Shakti" representing the Hindu goddess and has as its core the equilibrium between the masculine and feminine which is religiously represented as gods and goddesses harmonizing with one another. The significance of the reciprocity between the power of men and women is depicted by the gods not existing in the absence of their respective goddesses, Shaktis (Morales, 1998).

Christianity, like Hinduism, also reflects contradictory ideas on gender roles in marriage. The Bible contains verses like "Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them" (Colossians 3:19). However, the Bible includes other verses that elucidates the submission of wife to her husband's needs (Ephesians 5:22). Christianity operates on the theory that woman was created from the rib of man in order to aid and complete him (Genesis 2:18). The church's knowledge and awareness on the dynamics of

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domestic violence may be instrumental in intervention through discourses addressing the same (Wendt, 2008).

Islam too makes prescriptions in respect to the husband-wife relationship. Sura 4:34 from the Quran describes how God has made men superior to women as the men spend money to maintain women. It goes on to say that good wives are devout and they cover their unseen parts because God has guarded them. On wife-beating, it states that if the wife is disobedient, ignore her in bed and hit her (Dawood, 1997). On the other hand, according to Mishkat, the chapter on the maintenance of women, when Prophet Muhammad was approached regarding the duties of a husband towards his wife, he said "Feed her when you eat, and provide her clothing when you provide yourself. Neither hit her on the face nor use impolite language when addressing her" (Muslim directory, n.d.). Faizi (2001) explains how Islam as a religion has been wrongly used by Muslim men in rationalizing their actions which adversely affect Muslim women who are unaware of their rights. Although the governing principles of Islam preach gentle and fair treatment of women, many Muslim men often justify wife-abuse by claiming God permits it (Faizi, 2001). Niaz (2003) stated that in early Islam, women held higher status than their Hindu counterparts, with regards to ownership of property, marriage and divorce. However, over time, Islam assimilated a lot from the local Hindu cultures due to its tolerant nature and respect for all religions. The host country's culture often determined Islamic views on women's status (Niaz, 2003).

The Adi Granth Sahib which is the religious scripture of the Sikhs, also consists of contradictory verses about the status of women in Sikhism. According to Sharma (2002), in the Adi Granth Sahib, a woman is given

high regard for her procreative function but only as a bearer of sons. That is, she acquires elevated status if she gives birth to a son. In this sacred scripture, the relationship between God and human beings is seen analogous with that of a master and servant, and sometimes translates as the relationship between husband and wife. It further states that from her childhood, a woman's life is spent in the pursuit of procuring a husband. After this, she will be dependent on him and her life will revolve around him (Sharma, 2000).

Although most of these religions propagate the need for the husband to take good care of his wife and guide her, beliefs that fuel disparity in gender roles are observed to reinforce the likelihood of domestic violence in any culture (Marmion, 2006). These socially-constructed gender role expectations have been internalized by men and women over time. They make women more vulnerable to domestic violence and other kinds of injustices.

Patriarchy is not only evident in religious life: several other features of the Indian culture also create and maintain beliefs that tolerate domestic violence. In cultures where patriarchal ideologies are lauded, violence against women is tolerated and even justified on the grounds that men possess control and authority over women (Sugarman & Frankel, 1996). In India, women are brought up with values that stress that family matters must be kept private and that husbands deserve respect irrespective of the manner in which they treat their wives as their actions are believed to be (necessarily) right for the family (Natarajan, 2002). This patriarchal paradigm constitutes different gender role expectations for men and women starting at birth (Tichy, Becker & Sisco, 2009), which will be explained later. These gender role stereotypes have an impact on the

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perception of domestic violence by the victim and the perpetrator (Esqueda & Harrison, 2005).

It has been argued that patriarchal practices also have a protective value for women. Kandiyoti (1988)'s paradigm of the "patriarchal bargain" explains how women, either passively or actively, engage in self-perpetration of oppression in return for certain benefits patriarchy is presumed to bring. In theory, patriarchy endows women with life-long financial, emotional and physical security in addition to status and power. As an act of reciprocation, they endure the subservient role while making certain that other women from the same or different households, classes, castes and ethnic groups also maintain their subordinate status (Fernandez, 1997). While it is useful to recognise this complexity, this is not a paradigm which treats women as equals to men.

In the Indian context, one's family holds great importance in one's life (Dhar, 2014). Children are socialized into gender –specific roles, more of which will be discussed later. Daughters are usually conditioned to manage household duties and are not encouraged to pursue further education and seek employment (Dosanjh & Ghuman, 1997). Multiple generation households are common in India. The head of the family, is usually the grandfather and the grandmother serves as his assistant in managing the family. Their sons and daughters-in-law, along with their children, all share the same house (Stern, 2003). Usually, women hold minimal status till they become mothers and are slowly assimilated into the wider family. Their duty after this is to teach future generations to abide by these cultural ideologies (Webster, 2000). It is not uncommon for young wives to be battered if the household rules are not meticulously followed. It is important to understand the status of women in both her in-

laws' and natal families to gain deeper insight into domestic violence in the Indian context.

Status in in-laws' family.

To fully understand the status of women within their husband's family, it is important to appreciate that most of the marriages in India are arranged. The ones that are not arranged are referred to as a "love match" (Nanda, 2000). An arranged marriage is one in which the parents of the prospective bride and groom are primarily involved in the match-making process. They also discuss how much dowry, and in what forms, is to be given to the groom's family. Here it is important to note that the dowry system flourishes in all parts of India, irrespective of religion, caste or class, and is almost always a feature of arranged marriages (Rastogi & Therly, 2006). This is despite the fact that it was ostensibly banned by the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961. As a social practice and a cultural norm, the dowry system leads to oppression of women in India

According to Dowry Prohibition Act, "dowry" is defined as,

Any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given directly or indirectly by one party to a marriage to the other party, or by the parents of either party to a marriage (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 1961, p. 5)

In other words, dowry is the money, goods and presents the bride's family is expected to give the groom's family as part of the implicit verbal marriage contract.

The Act of 1961 permits giving "gifts" to the bride during her wedding. This terminology is widely misused; now dowry is exchanged in the form of "gifts." Even if no dowry is demanded, the bride's family is obliged to give gifts in exchange for their daughter's perceived well-being and often serves as basis to the relationship between the families of the bride and

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groom (Nanda, 2000). It is important to note that, in most cases, the giving of dowry continues after the wedding.

Demands of dowry before and after the wedding often escalate to abuse and can even drive women to commit suicide or be murdered by their husband and his family, so he can choose to re-marry and procure more dowry (Rao, 1997; Schular et al., 1996). The phenomenon of “dowry deaths” describes the murder of daughters-in-law whose families are deemed to have not provided sufficient dowry in response to further demands from the husband’s family. Typically, the woman has kerosene poured over her before being set alight. This is usually engineered to look like a kitchen accident or a suicide (Kumar & Kanth, 2004; Stone & James, 1995). India has seen a rise in reported cases of dowry deaths over the years (Stone & James, 1995), despite dowry having being made illegal.

Sometimes, demanding extensive dowry is an attempt by the groom and his family to climb up the economic and social ladder (Stone & James, 1995). There are no set rules for these demands; rules are usually proportional to the status, social class, and education of the groom (Billing, 1992). For example, the groom’s parents are likely to feel entitled to demand significantly greater dowry if the prospective groom is resident abroad, highly educated and has a well-paying job.

Another layer of complexity in the relationship between the bride and the groom is the subordinate position in which the bride’s parents are placed in relation to the groom and his parents. For example, the Hindu tradition of *kanyadan* describes the gift of a virgin to a family of higher social and religious ranking, demanding eternal submission and respect from the bride’s family (Indian Council of Social Science Research, 1975; Stone & James, 1995). In Indian marriage, the daughter is “given away” to the

groom's family and can no longer rely on her parents financially and emotionally. Traditionally, the groom's family make all decisions for her and if she is subjected to domestic violence, her relatives and parents rationalize the situation, coercing her to remain in the relationship. In India, a woman may be abused not only by her husband but also by his family members (Fernandez, 1997).

The patriarchal expectations of being a "good wife" restrict women from reporting the violence owing to fear of being ostracized and isolated from their natal family and community. It is considered highly shameful for a woman to return to her parents' home. In addition, most parents consider her a financial burden as they empty their savings on her wedding and dowry.

As mentioned, the obligation to provide dowry can continue beyond the wedding such that the groom's family may demand a house, car or jewellery at any given point. It is vital to note here that in the Indian context, domestic violence can be perpetrated by the woman's mother-in-law as well. That is, it is not necessary that only the husband abuses his wife (Fernandez, 1997). In a study conducted by ILS Law College in Pune, it was observed that husbands came first place in being convicted in dowry-related deaths, followed by mothers-in-law (Palkar, 2003).

Although Natarajan (2002) notes that, among immigrants, dowry may not play an important role in perpetuation of domestic violence, my research has shown otherwise. Dowry harassment continues even when the couple migrate. Usually a groom who has permanent resident or citizen status, can use that status to leverage dowry demands upwards because of his ability to get his bride into the host country (Tse, 2007). In other cases, arranged marriages are fixed in order to get funds in the form of dowry

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for the groom and his bride to emigrate (Natarajan, 2002). This is an example of the groom's desire to enhance his social position, mentioned earlier. Dowry harassment continues even when the couple are immigrants. Usually, the groom has permanent residence or citizen status and goes to the bride's home country to get married, demanding a large dowry (Tse, 2007). Some arranged marriages are fixed in order to get funds in the form of dowry for the groom to immigrate or the amount of dowry matches the position of the already immigrated Indian groom (Natarajan, 2002).

To conclude, in addition to the low societal status Indian women hold, their status in the in-laws' household can largely be attributed to arranged marriages and dowry. Dowry is an evil social practice that can even lead to women being murdered by their husbands and in-laws. Dowry deaths are underreported as they lead to societal stigma and ostracism of the family in the wider community. The types of dowry demands may differ between communities depending on various factors like education of the groom and the status his family holds within the community. In addition, dowry demands increase if the groom is a resident abroad.

It is important to remember that women also hold unequal status in their natal family. That is, the lowered status they hold within their own families is only exacerbated when they go to their in-laws' household.

Status in natal family.

As explained above, women have little status within the families into which they have married. However, even within their own families, Indian women have a lower status than their brothers. Perhaps the most graphic illustration of this is female infanticide and foeticide. The killing of girl babies, before or after their birth, is directly related to dowry.

Indian society is not only largely patriarchal but also patrilineal. Traditionally, parents prefer the birth of a son over a daughter, largely due to the financial hardships that accompany dowry demands (Rudd, 2001). The birth of a son is usually accompanied by extravagant celebrations and exchange of gifts. This is not the case for the birth of a daughter. One of the most important Hindu scriptures holds chants to transform a female foetus into a male foetus while others discuss the misfortune and bad omen associated with the birth of a daughter (Ramanamma & Bambawale, 1980). A son is usually considered the carer of aging parents and is the one endowed with the privilege to perform the last rites of his parents. It is believed that only then will his parents attain moksha (liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth) (Patel, 1996). On the contrary, a daughter is often regarded as a financial liability due to the dowry her parents will need to provide when she marries and is given away to another family (Kakar, 1988). On the other hand, a son is regarded as an asset who can attract dowry and is seen as someone who would elevate the position of his parents not only within their family but also the wider community. The cycle of dowry continues as the bride's parents, who no longer possess as much wealth as they used to, demand dowry for their son's wedding. The groom's parents who receive the dowry use it when their daughters get married. As Stein (1988) noted, dowry demands are justified as being necessary to fund the grooms' sisters' dowries.

Because daughters are often considered to be a liability, parents seldom consider education a priority for their daughter while they invest in the education of their sons. However, in some families, daughters are pushed to complete higher degrees in order to make them more enticing to grooms who are equally well-educated (Rastogi & Therly, 2006).

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As mentioned earlier, dowry is sometimes viewed as a form of security and protection at her in-law's home by the bride's parents. Stone and James (1995) point out that the practice of dowry continues to flourish not just because of the demands of the groom's parents or the failure to implement existing law banning dowry, but also because the bride's parents' actions participating in giving dowry. Giving dowry helps them believe that their daughter will be safe and free of abuse. However, there lies a significant connection between dowry and domestic violence, as seen earlier. It was also discussed that dowry demands continue when the couple migrate, leading to domestic violence.

To explore domestic violence in a host society further, Indian migration, globally and in particular, to New Zealand should be introduced.

Immigration and the Indian Diaspora

Globally, international migration is higher than it has ever been (Merali, 2008). The number of people living outside their country of origin has risen from 175 million in 2000 to 232 million in 2013 (United Nations, 2013). Many migrants cross borders in order to seek better economic and social opportunities. However, many others are forced to leave their country of origin to escape violence. Most Indians fall into the former category of migrants who leave India mainly for economic reasons.

The Indian diaspora is diverse and stretches across the world. The High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora (2002) estimated that about 20 million Indians were in other countries living all over the world, with above half a million people of Indian origin constituting a significant ratio in 11 countries. The first wave of Indian migrants made their journey during the British rule. Most of these people were struggling financially and were in search for greener pastures. The Gulf and its neighbouring

countries saw a second wave of Indian migrants who were professionals, craftsmen and industrial workers, seeking business opportunities. The third wave consisted of educated upper-class Indians immigrating to developed countries in search of economic prosperity (High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, 2002). One such advanced country that attracts Indian migrants is New Zealand.

Indian migration to New Zealand.

New Zealand has witnessed Indian migration for over a century. DeSouza (2006) noted that the earliest account of an Indian setting foot in New Zealand can be traced back to 1810, when he jumped ship to marry a Māori woman. However, India's relationship with New Zealand is suspected to have started in the late 1800s when Indian soldiers and sailors brought supplies to the penal colonies in Australia on British East India Company ships (DeSouza, 2006). Before the advent of the Immigration Restriction Act 1899, Indians could easily migrate to New Zealand as they were regarded as British subjects (DeSouza, 2006). Although Indian migrants have entered New Zealand since the late 1800s, the numbers have been comparatively modest until the late 1980s. The number of people who identified themselves as Indians has soared from 14,172 in 1986 to 62,187 in 2001 (Friesen, Murphy & Kearns, 2005). More recent data from Statistics New Zealand (2015a) indicated that in the 2013 census, 154,449 people identified themselves as Indian, almost 4% of the population. In the year ending December 2010, 6,300 people migrated into New Zealand from India, more than any other source country (Statistics New Zealand, 2011). India retains the position for largest source of migrants into New Zealand, with 12,900 arriving in the year ending September 2015 (Statistics New Zealand, 2015b, p.5).

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Immigration from India to New Zealand may take place under one or other of several categories. Indians may apply for student visas to pursue university degrees: many subsequently secure employment in New Zealand. In the year ending September 2015, out of 27,000 migrants who arrived in New Zealand on student visas, 10,700 of them were Indians (Statistics New Zealand, 2015b, p.6). Statistics New Zealand (2015, p.6) has shown a sharp rise in Indian migrants applying for student visas. It is important to note that Indian migrants who arrive on student visas have been the largest source of permanent and long-term migration since January 2008. Most students apply for work visas on the completion of their degree.

Skilled immigration has been viewed as the most common and popular visa class in order to get residency in New Zealand. There are three lists, namely the long-term skill shortage list, the short-term skill shortage list and the Canterbury skill- shortage list which enable the prospective migrant to assess and decide if their skilled occupation faces a genuine shortage of New Zealand workers (Immigration New Zealand, n.d.). In addition to this, the applicant must be below the age of 56 and must meet health, character and English language proficiency requirements and also possess a minimum of 100 points which are awarded on the bases of previous work experience, qualification and age. The applicants must fit the special specific criteria given by Immigration New Zealand.

Statistics of 2014/15 shows that, among Indians, the number of Skill Migrant Category approvals have risen by 4% from 2013/14. In 2014/15, India was the largest source country of skilled migrants with 21% of visa approvals in this category followed by Philippines (13%) and United Kingdom (11%) (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, 2015).

The next is the Family category wherein the spouse of the New Zealand citizen or resident may apply if they are legally married. This is the category under which most of the Indian migrant women fall. This category also includes parents or siblings of the New Zealand citizen or resident. More about this category will be discussed in the following sections.

The fourth category is business; business owners, senior managers or company directors migrating under the long term visa or the entrepreneur visa. This category seems less relevant to Indian women, the immigrant group which is the focus of this thesis.

Domestic Violence in the Context of Migration

Whatever the category may be, the woman's ability to remain in the country often depends on her husband. That is, typically her husband is the principal applicant of a joint application. However, in some scenarios when the wife arrives on a student visa, she may be the principal applicant if the husband is entering New Zealand contingent on her visa.

When the husband is the principal applicant, he is able to remove her from the application. Alternatively, if he is a citizen or resident, he will likely be the sponsor of her application. Under this scenario, he also has the power to effectively have her removed from the country by withdrawing his sponsorship (Immigration New Zealand, 2015). The criteria for being a principal applicant and being eligible to sponsor partner (spouse) is elucidated in the Operational Manual of New Zealand Immigration. If the woman is the principal applicant and she gains her permanent residence, he no longer has this power. This immigration status is not only one of the barriers that hinder her access to legal services in the face of domestic violence, but it also can be used by the perpetrator

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as a tool of control thereby increasing a woman's vulnerability to domestic violence (Raj & Silverman, 2002).

In addition, women who do not have permanent residency cannot access government subsidized healthcare, including maternity healthcare (Shakti Community Council Inc, 2011). Although many factors relating to immigration make a woman vulnerable to domestic violence, non-resident status aggravates this susceptibility (MacLeod & Shin, 1990). Male control is exacerbated when the wife holds an uncertain legal status owing to her visa (Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). Re-settling in a foreign country poses a myriad of challenges. The immigration stress begins when the woman sets foot in New Zealand. She has to cope with stressors such as distance from family and home country and with social and economic problems in the new country (Levitt, Lane & Levitt, 2005). In addition, migrant women have to often navigate conflicting cultures which may impose language difficulties among other challenges (Raj & Silverman, 2002).

Prior to migration, stress typically begins with regards to visa and paper work. A popular scenario for immigration would be a young married couple with wealthy parents migrating to a foreign country where they have a social network of family and friends, in search of better career opportunities. On the contrary, there are cases wherein the marriage is fixed primarily to acquire dowry for the sole purpose of migration (Natarajan, 2002). In the latter, immigration poses numerous challenges such as limited knowledge of the host language, lack of access to "honourable" jobs, separation from community and family, unclear legal status and negative experiences with home country authorities such as the police and the courts (Hass, Dutton, & Orloff, 2000). For immigrant

women experiencing domestic violence, these challenges are considerably greater.

Indian immigrant women may possess limited host- language skills, and are often isolated from their family and community, making them vulnerable and dependent on their abusive spouses. Other dimensions of oppression like class, race and ethnicity overlap with these immigrant-centred issues to further exacerbate immigrant women's susceptibility to domestic violence (Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). As mentioned earlier, for non-resident women, their ability to remain in the host country may depend on the abuser who may either be the sponsor of her application for residence or the principal applicant for a joint application (Robertson, et al., 2007). Other important factors that may have an impact on their experience are the resources they migrate with and the ones they find as they settle in the host country. For example, Raj and Silverman (2002) emphasize that poor economic status among immigrants could serve to increase the risk of abuse which will be discussed later.

In some cases, the abuser may mediate the relationship between the victim and the community. Typically the abuser controls her access to resources (Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). In his research on family violence in Asian communities in New Zealand, Tse (2007) focused on strategies to prevent family violence after having explored the cultural, social and economic triggers in Asian communities. This study showed that economic instability and finding work play a vital role in adjustment to a new country. Some women wish to send money back home and where their husbands disapprove, this may lead to domestic violence (Erez, Adelman & Gregory, 2009). It was also observed that patriarchal Asian cultures were at higher risk of wife abuse especially when the husband considers violence to be only way to restore traditional home cultural

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values and traditions (Tse, 2007). Research by Ahmad and colleagues has shown that women in these cultures who accept patriarchal values often fail to view domestic violence as abuse (Ahmad, Riaz, Barata & Stewart, 2004).

Natarajan (2002) elaborates on “immigrant syndrome” as the stressors that a man and woman face as a result of immigration. Often husbands either face unemployment or if employed, long hours of work along with limited host- language skills, racism or discrimination. Wives, on the other hand, have to cope with the domestic demands in a foreign country in terms of cooking habits, finding the groceries that the family is used to, attending to children’s school issues and learning to drive (Erez, 2000). In some instances, violence can be triggered when immigrant women adapt to the host country culture thus altering some of the traditional aspects of their home culture (Raj & Silverman, 2002).

Another factor that connects immigration and domestic violence is the post immigration socio-economic status. Immigration may give rise to economic instability which in turn increases stress in the relationship triggering abuse (Raj & Silverman, 2002). If the husband is employed, he typically controls financial decisions and does not permit the wife to access economic resources. The reverse situation of the woman being the breadwinner can lead to the man feeling insecure and using violence to maintain his control over his partner. As seen earlier, immigration status of the woman is seen to play a vital role in triggering abuse. The wife’s dependent status often results in controlling and abusive behaviour from the husband owing to lack of legal rights. The victims are reluctant to seek help due to fear of deportation (Erez et al, 2009; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002; Merali, 2008; Raj & Silverman, 2002) and the fear of losing custody of their

children (Erez, 2000). They are usually unaware of their legal rights (Erez et al., 2009). Owing to all the stated factors, the woman may feel isolated culturally, geographically, economically, emotionally and socially. Social isolation, in particular, exhibits itself on three different levels. Firstly is isolation by husband, secondly is the lack of or minimal number of informal connections like friends and family and thirdly is the lack of access to formal networks like community organizations and legal agencies (Abraham, 2000). In their home country, these women have usually been brought up with certain family and community values which explicitly expect them to tolerate oppression on various levels.

In India, the upbringing of a girl-child is centred on her maintaining family and community values and traditions. As a wife and a mother, it is likely that she will have internalised the widespread belief that effective rearing of children requires the presence of both parents, irrespective of the father's behaviour (Dasgupta & Warriar, 1996). As immigrant Indian women, the pressure to carry over the cultural norms and keep them intact in the host country increases thereby placing her at a high risk of assimilating abuse as normal.

These pressures are intensified by the Indian migrant community. These communities are largely unhelpful in cases of domestic violence owing to fears that their future generations will not value their cultural identities, norms and practices. They also feel at risk of the host culture eroding their own cultural beliefs. In order to protect their cultural values, parents try to instil the versions of "culture" they bring with them at the time of migration, including harmful norms and practices around gender inequality, failing to recognize that culture is not static (Dasgupta, 1998). Another reason for community collusion is the pressure faced by Indian migrant communities to uphold their flawless image in the host society.

They do this often by denying and concealing social problems within the community (Bhattacharjee, 1992; Dasgupta & Dasgupta, 1996). These are the attributes of the Indian migrant communities that largely shape their response to domestic violence.

Barriers in help-seeking.

One of the biggest fears of Indian immigrant women who are victims of domestic violence is that their family in the home country will lose face in their community if the abuse is exposed or if she chooses to divorce her abusive husband (Dasgupta & Warriar, 1996). Within the Indian immigrant community, sharing one's experiences of domestic violence is considered being disloyal to the community (Liao, 2006). On the contrary, the victim's family and friends may coerce her to stay in the abusive relationship stating children as a reason (Sorenson, 1996). Immigrant women victims of domestic violence are typically concerned about not gaining support of their immigrant community and about her only local relatives, her husband's family, turning against her (Erez et al., 2009). She is sometimes coerced by her community to stay in the abusive relationship. If the woman choose to leave, the blame for breaking up the family is put on her (Shetty & Kaguyuntan, 2002). In addition, her natal family may not take her back, owing to the shame and dishonour she has brought to the family by leaving her husband (Dasgupta & Warriar, 1996; Supriya, 2006).

The fear of losing the custody of her children acts as another barrier in reporting the abuse among immigrant women (Erez, 2000). Even after the abuse is reported, the perpetrator may use children to emotionally abuse the wife. In New Zealand, the perpetrator may use 'Order Preventing Removal' to outmanoeuvre his wife. This is an order that can be made in the Family court, if there is a threat of the child being removed from New Zealand by the partner. One can apply for this order if they are a parent of

the child, a legal guardian of the child and a spouse of a parent of the child (Ministry of Justice, n.d.).

Another barrier to help-seeking is the real or perceived experience with authorities in the home country: that is, women's expectation is that authorities will not do anything to help (Erez, 2000). In addition, the institutional barriers exacerbate the reluctance to seek help as the organizations for abused women are ill-equipped culturally and linguistically to handle the challenge of intervention in these communities (Burman & Chantler, 2005). Some organizations hold racial and ethnic stereotyping which hinder intervention. Immigrant women who felt that the service provided was not being sensitive to their culture, stopped seeking help from them (Sorenson, 1996). There is a dearth of culturally-customized services with regards to the terms they use, language they speak and types of services provided. Hence, the specific needs of battered immigrant women are not met (Raj & Silverman, 2002).

In the "Living at the Cutting Edge" report by Roberston et al (2007), an Indian immigrant woman in New Zealand who experienced domestic violence reported that her husband and his family isolated her from people in their community. Later, she approached a Women's Refuge but was unhappy with her lawyer. Another woman shared her experiences about facing language barriers when she attempted to seek police help. She was unable to explain in detail the extent of violence thereby causing the police to not charge her husband.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted relevant literature that contributes towards better understanding of my research. It is widely acknowledged that domestic violence cuts across all demographic, racial and ethnic lines. It is

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important to reiterate that domestic violence is not only about punches and slaps. It is about power and control. To support this notion, over the years, feminist research has concentrated largely on the subordinate position of women that makes them vulnerable to domestic violence. Research has also brought to forefront the importance of socio-cultural factors in the perpetration of violence against women. It is important therefore to explore the role these cultural factors play in maintaining low status of women and in making women more vulnerable to domestic violence. My research analyses these aspects in the Indian and immigrant context.

In the context of Indian society, which is largely patriarchal, injustices against women are rife, domestic violence being particularly widespread. Daughters are raised with rigid gender roles in their natal family with particular emphasis on their marriageability. The ancient religious scriptures and cultural practices such as dowry, maintain the second class status of women. Dowry, in turn, makes women vulnerable to extended family abuse, a unique feature in domestic violence in the Indian context. It is worth noting that Indian women hold low status in their in-laws' family.

This lowered status of Indian women is carried over even after they leave their home country. Immigration to a society profoundly different from one's home country can pose unique challenges and barriers: more so, for women experiencing domestic violence. There is a dearth of literature in the field of immigrant women's experiences of domestic violence, especially Indian women in New Zealand.

India is one of the largest permanent migrant source to New Zealand. There is a need now, more than ever, to understand the problems faced by

migrant communities in New Zealand. However, little is known about the factors that make Indian migrant women vulnerable to domestic violence in New Zealand. There is also a paucity of research in understanding family and community dynamics in an immigrant context with regards to domestic violence. My research focuses on these issues with regards to domestic violence in the Indian migrant community. The main aim of my research is to investigate ways in which Indian migrant women who experience domestic violence navigate their safety in the context of migration to New Zealand.

In the next chapter, I will explore the research framework and the ways in which data was generated, in order to achieve the aforementioned research aim. Chapter 3 also gives an insight into ways in which data was analysed.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework used in this research that has guided data collection and subsequent analysis. This research is based on feminist approaches, social constructionism, ecological theory and community psychology. Starting with the evolution of domestic violence research, these theories will be explored in relation to this research. The following section will discuss methods and steps used in data collection and the rationale behind it. That is followed by a discussion on how the data was analysed. I will conclude this chapter by discussing ethical consideration and steps taken to ensure women's safety.

Domestic Violence Research

As this research is about domestic violence, I will now briefly examine how research in this area has evolved in psychology. Domestic violence research is not exclusive to any particular discipline but it has generally reflected the goals of feminist activism to bring about social change (Eagly, Rose, Riger & McHugh, 2012). Domestic violence research has evolved from examining only physical aggression to recognizing that it encompasses power and control.

Early research on domestic violence indicated the prevalence of physical aggression in marriages (e.g., Martin, 1981), on the cycle of violence (Walker, 1979) and characterises of perpetrators (e.g., Gondolf, 1988). The field widened to include studies on physical and psychological abuse on dating adolescents and same sex relationships (e.g., Tjaden, Thoennes, & Allison, 1999; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). Researchers have debated the

gendered nature of domestic violence with some claiming that women are just as violent as men (e.g., Archer, 2000; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980). However, some feminist researchers have questioned this data and proposed different models to provide a more nuanced view at female perpetration of domestic violence showing, for example, that when women use violence it is often in self-defence and rarely results in injury: neither is it likely to induce fear in the manner of men's violence (Frieze, 2008; McHugh, Livingston, & Ford, 2005). In recent years, however, a lot of research has been conducted on patriarchy and its association with domestic violence. For example, Johnson (1995), coined the term "patriarchal terrorism" which included not only physical violence but also power and control tactics. More recent analyses of gender and domestic violence has shown that although research has focussed on forms and context of violence, there is a need to develop theoretical frameworks to better understand the nature of domestic violence (e.g., McHugh, 2005). Although the second-wave feminist movement saw the integration of women and gender in psychological research, this research lacked the feminist theoretical orientation (Eagly, et al., 2012).

Feminism

Before we explore how the feminist perspective has shaped this research, it is important to understand its relation to psychology and its evolution in research. Feminism failed to draw much attention from the discipline of psychology until the beginning of second wave feminism in the 1960s (Eagly, et al., 2012). Feminist psychologists widely critiqued the structure of psychological research and methods and the epistemology of psychological science. While examining the content of psychological research, it was evident that women and gender issues were

widely disregarded (Eagly & Riger, 2014). However, the study of women and gender has slowly gained popularity in the field of psychology.

According to Fonow and Cook (1991), feminist research is “reflective”, “the deconstruction of women’s lived experiences”, “woman-centered”, and “the transformation of patriarchy and corresponding empowerment of women” (p. 2-6). These keywords greatly resonate with my understanding of feminist research and have helped shaped my research.

In Chapter 1, I have elaborated on what got me interested in this research. Growing up in a patriarchal family and society invoked considerable introspection; not just about my life experiences but also of the women around me. This process of reflection has helped me understand social and cultural aspects of women’s lives that usually go unheard and unseen. This understanding gained through reflection, I have incorporated in my research.

Feminism recognizes that inequality in gender relations leads to injustices being done to women. It focuses on power and control in relationships. Campbell & Wasco (2000) articulate four main types of feminism: liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism and womanism. All focus on the lived experiences and status of women, however, they differ in the way the oppression is envisaged (Campbell & Wasco, 2000).

Radical feminism, in particular, stresses how women are disadvantaged owing to their gender (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). It draws attention to patriarchy as being a social system that favours male privilege, calling for a revolution to restructure social institutions and eliminate patriarchy (Rowland & Klein, 1996). This research pays significant attention to patriarchal processes in the Indian context. Among other themes, it throws light on dowry, one of the manifestations of Indian patriarchy which

oppresses women, cutting through class, caste and religion. In this context, radical feminism is a useful framework.

Campbell & Wasco (2000) state that in its epistemology, feminist research relies on women's lived experiences as the source of knowledge. This closely resonates with my research, where I have held in-depth interviews with women to understand their life experiences. More of this will be discussed in detail later, along with case studies.

Social Constructionism

When discussing deconstruction of women's experiences, it is important to acknowledge Social Constructionism. This theory postulates that reality is socially constructed through our interactions with the world (Cottone, 2007; Gergen, 1985). That is, meaning is not derived on an individual level. Social constructionism posits that the world around us is built through social practices (Hodgetts et al., 2010). It also suggests that our understanding of the world is a flawed representation (Hodgetts et al., 2010). The social factors such as class, race, culture and gender mentioned earlier, not only serve as a window to reality, they also shape one's knowledge of reality. In other words, realities do not exist in a concrete manner that is universal. They are constructed; not just by individuals but also in a social context.

The in-depth interviews conducted in this research helped break down and bring to the forefront these realities that are socially constructed. Campbell and Wasco (2000) argue that research process is innately subjective as the researcher is constantly constructing the research reality. To me, social constructionism provides solid ground to deconstruct women's lived experience by acknowledging that there is no one absolute truth. This will be clearer in the case studies. The case studies in my

research also resonate with feminist research being woman-centered. As discussed earlier in this chapter, women as gendered beings have often been neglected in research. With women-centered research, rich data on the various complexities of their lives comes to the forefront. Case studies provide a platform to collect this invaluable data. This will be discussed in detail in the upcoming sections on methods.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Exploring women's experiences is central to the feminist perspective. One of the perspectives feminist epistemology has identified is the feminist standpoint theory (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). The central premise of this theory is that a person's reality is connected to power relations (Harding, 2004). In other words, a person's understanding of reality is shaped by class, race, gender and sexual orientation. This social position enables less powerful groups to understand the culture of the dominant group (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). It also presents to them a less altered perception of social reality as their survival is contingent upon understanding individuals from dominant groups (Eagly & Riger, 2014; Nielsen, 1990).

Campbell & Wasco (2000) explain that the position of the dominant groups in relation to the oppressed groups creates opportunity for critical social analysis. However, this standpoint arises from consciousness raising experience. When aspects of class, race, gender and sexual orientation are not taken into account by researchers, inaccurate and warped knowledge is produced as it fails to consider how sexism interacts with privilege and oppression (Greene & Sanchez-Hucles 1997). In order to avoid this, women's experiences should be analysed within their social and cultural context as explained in Mohanty's (1984) essay on feminist scholarship.

Mohanty (1984), throws light on Western feminist discourse and the portrayal of “average third world woman” as a homogenous group of impoverished, uneducated, ignorant and victimized women. This can be problematic while conducting research with ethnic women as the preconceived notions about these women may hinder the research process. Even within a particular group of ethnic women there are national and cultural complexities that much be acknowledged. Mies (1998) argues that when middle-class feminists in underdeveloped countries (e.g. India) start questioning patriarchal ideologies that oppress them as a group, they not only contribute towards their own liberation but also that of rural and working-class women. These middle-class urban women serve as exemplars of progress; these messages are relayed to the villages through media and social activists. In doing so, middle-class women must also be aware of the liberal and dynamic aspects of the so-called ‘backward’ class which might not be patriarchal and those that are protective and empowering to these women (Mies, 1998).

Although I identify myself as a middle-class urban Indian woman and as a researcher, I was cognizant of the fact that during my interviews with Indian migrant women, I would come across women from various social and cultural backgrounds. I also tried to explore if they felt there were any protective factors for them as Indian women, as these can be important factors in coping and help-seeking.

Another aspect of feminist standpoint theorists is that feminist researchers acknowledge they bring their own social position and experiences to the research (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). My experiences as an Indian woman and reflections about how they have shaped me, explained in Chapter 1, have definitely shaped my research and my interpretations of data. They

have helped me understand better the cultural and social nuances of Indian migrant women's experiences.

Ecological Theory

As discussed earlier, my research focuses on women's experiences of domestic violence. It is important to analyse these experiences in the environmental context in which they occur. Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed the ecological model to explain the interactions between the developing individual and his/ her environment. By development, he is referring to the different ways in which the individual perceives and interacts with his/her environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The individual is placed at the core of the ecological model which is a nested structure. This structure consists of layers of different environmental systems interacting with one another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

During my interviews, I was cognizant that Indian women's experiences of domestic violence extended beyond the realm of the nuclear family unit. As I was born and raised in India and belong to a traditional South Indian family, I was aware of the complex dynamics within the extended families and communities. In addition, as migrants, Indian women face unique challenges in the host society. My knowledge about these factors, helped me explore in-depth, through particular questions related to ecological model, the dynamics between and within the systems of family, community and host society.

I have adopted this ecological model to theorize the findings of my research. In my research, the Indian woman is placed at the core of this model within nested layers of perpetrator, family, community, Indian culture and host society. Bronfenbrenner (1979)'s ecological theory will be

discussed in detail with regards to the findings of my research in the discussion chapter.

Community Psychology

An ecological approach is also central to community psychology, the last intellectual tradition that has shaped my research. Other core values of community psychology are diversity, empowerment, social change and social justice. For community psychologists, diversity requires research that addresses the needs of diverse groups – as defined by dimensions such as ethnicity, culture, class and sexual orientation. My research focuses on identifying problems that Indian migrant women face with regards to domestic violence in New Zealand. Here, Indian migrants form a community within the larger social order, New Zealand. It is also important to acknowledge that diversity in a community means one size does not fit all. That is, what works in one community might not produce the same results in another (Kloos, Hill, Thomas, Wandersman & Elias, 2011). This can be related to intervention for domestic violence: what works for the mainstream population might not necessarily work for migrant communities, in the present case, Indian migrants in New Zealand.

My research is also shaped by empowerment: the idea that individuals (and communities) ought to be able to exercise control over their lives. One of the premises that my research is built on is that women ought to be able to make informed and independent decisions for themselves.

Rappaport (1977) emphasizes the need for change in society to ensure equitable allocation of psychological and material resources, irrespective of one's gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or other dimensions of diversity. Social change also means redistribution of power (Kloos et al.,

2011). My research is influenced by this aspect on community psychology on two levels. Firstly, I am interested in, exploring the power dynamics between men and women within the Indian community. Secondly, I am interested in the ways in which resources are distributed within host country in relation to the Indian migrant community. That is, services for victims of domestic violence need to work equally well for Indian women as they do for other groups of women.

The unequal access to services and resources is a sign that social injustice is present and that social change is required (Moritsugu, Vera, Wong & Duffy, 2015). That is, social justice is achieved through social change. My research identifies the social injustices Indian women face within the immigrant community as well as within the context of host society. My hope is that my research will lead to social change, empowering and enabling Indian migrant women make independent and informed decisions about their safety.

Methods

As seen in the previous section, this research has drawn on feminist perspective on domestic violence research traditions that involve a qualitative approach and community psychology research traditions. I have based this research on constructs like honesty, depth, and richness that qualitative research permits.

This research comprised of two stages. The preliminary stage included interviews with key informants in India and New Zealand who have first-hand knowledge about the community. The community experts in India contributed to this research by giving their valuable inputs on the cultural aspect surrounding the issue of domestic violence while the community experts in New Zealand contributed with their knowledge on the nature

of the problems around domestic violence in Indian immigrant communities.

Stage two comprised case studies of Indian immigrant women who experience domestic violence. These aforementioned two stages of data collection are explained in detail below.

Key informant interviews.

Interviews with key informants were the focus of the first stage of my research. These key informants include community leaders and service providers in the field of domestic violence among Indian immigrants.

The main objective of discussions with key informants was to refine my approach to the case studies. The technique adopted in conducting key informant interviews was the face-to-face interview. I included counsellors and social workers associated with women's refuges and facilitators of stopping violence programmes in immigrant communities. Key informant face-to-face interviews enabled discussion of sensitive topics. Some probing questions were answered in an open in-depth manner to get the information which helped me gain deeper insight into current issues around domestic violence in the Indian immigrant community.

Recruitment.

New Zealand: Key informants were recruited based on their level of expertise in the area of domestic violence among Indian immigrants in New Zealand. I recruited participants through service providers and community organizations for immigrant women, initially by distributing information sheets. The most important factor in recruiting these participants was that they possess detailed knowledge about domestic violence among Indian immigrant families in New Zealand. As the first

step, I identified relevant groups from which potential participants could be drawn. Secondly, I selected a few key informants from each group. I made a list of potential participants and had substitutes in case some informants were unavailable. I also asked these key informants' advice on any other potential informants they felt would contribute to my research. All but one of the New Zealand key informants were women.

India: Indian key informants were recruited after I did background research on appropriate participants for my research. These participants were researchers, head of NGOs helping women experiencing domestic violence and women's activists and advocates. I recruited these key informants to explore the contemporary issues around domestic violence in India. These included family and community dynamics and the role these played in the choices women made in the face of domestic violence. I also wanted to gain in-depth knowledge about the support systems Indian migrant women had in place, if they decided to leave an abusive relationship.

The first few key informants that I interviewed suggested other potential experts in the field. I then contacted them, explained my research and asked them about their willingness to participate.

All the Indian key informants were women.

Interview process.

Initial contact with the potential participants focused on establishing rapport and creating an environment of trust where the informant could clearly communicate their views and opinions. I made the first contact through phone or e-mail with a brief introduction about myself and my

research. I then negotiated a time and place for the interview according to their convenience and made appointments.

I opened the interview with a brief introduction about my background. I stated the objective of the interview- I want to investigate the ways in which Indian immigrant women in New Zealand who are experiencing domestic violence navigate the challenges they face in the context of family and community. I assured the key informants of the confidentiality of information. In this thesis and any journal articles, arising from my research I have referred to key informants only by their role/ position (e.g. women's advocate, social worker). I have ensured that identifiable information like place names or events are omitted. However, I advised interviewees that while I will take all possible care in protecting their privacy, they may be identified by some readers, especially if they have a high profile and their views are well known.

In this phase, my research focussed on investigating how the process of migration affects the ability of Indian women's attempts to navigate their safety in the context of domestic violence in Aotearoa/ New Zealand. For this, I used qualitative approaches like semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were devised so that there is some consistency across different respondents, while still enabling open, flexible two-way communication. Many questions were spontaneous probes enabling deeper discussion of the issues. The interviews generally canvassed the key informants' experiences with Indian immigrant women who are victims of domestic violence focussing on the cultural and immigration context. I paid attention to how I can refine my approach to case studies based on the information provided by the key informants. Interviews were audio recorded with the key informants' consent and later transcribed.

Key informants were invited to respond to broad questions such as:

1. What are the pressing issues of domestic violence in the Indian immigrant community in New Zealand?
2. What are the attitudes of Indian immigrant victims?
3. To what extent do the socio-cultural values that they have brought up with have an impact on these attitudes? In what ways?
4. What intervention approaches are currently available to the Indian immigrant domestic violence victims in New Zealand?
5. Who gains access to these resources, and how do they go about doing it?
6. What are the main barriers to accessing resources in New Zealand?
7. What are the attitudes of the families and Indian community towards domestic violence and the victim, in particular?
8. How important is familial support to these victims?
9. What recommendations do you have for change?
10. What issues do you think I should be including in the case studies?

Towards the end of the interview, I summarized the key points discussed and asked the key informants if they have anything else to add on to the interview. I also thanked them for their time.

Case studies.

My approach to the case studies was based on the constructivist paradigm, which was explained earlier. One of the advantages of this method is that it allows participants to narrate their stories as it encourages close

association between the researcher and the participant (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). When women tell their stories, they are able to describe their views of reality which in turn enabled me, as a researcher, to understand their actions better.

The case studies are an integral part of my research. The ways in which Indian immigrant women experiencing domestic violence in New Zealand navigate safety in the context of migration is best narrated by women themselves. Case studies help us understand a complex issue within its context (Baxter & Jack, 2008) and can contribute to what is already available in previous research. They prove to be insightful with regards to new research and are useful in providing answers to “how” and “why” questions (Yin, 2003).

Recruitment and selection of participants.

The criteria for selecting participants were that they had to be Indian immigrants who had been brought up with Indian values and were married to Indian men and currently lived in New Zealand

Initially, I had planned on seeking key informants’ advice on how I should go about recruiting participants for case studies. I was aware of the challenges I was likely to face in recruiting women for this sort of research as they might feel hesitant to talk about sensitive topics and these discussions may involve unearthing or reliving some intense emotions. As I started the process of recruitment, I faced additional challenges in recruiting women. The women’s organizations that work for ethnic women were concerned about the privacy of their women. They were protective about their clients which in turn hindered my recruitment process. I learnt about the other concerns of the women as well- being identified by community/ family members.

I requested my key informants to check with the potential participants if they could pass on their contact details to me through these workers. I also distributed information sheets to be given to the potential participants so they were fully aware of what kind of project they would be involved in. I was successful in recruiting a few women through key informants.

However, in order to recruit more women, I resorted to seeking help from the communications department of the university to publish a newspaper article about seeking Indian migrant women for interviews. This was of immense help as organizations that were willing to contribute towards my research got in touch with me. An organization that works for South Asian women who are victims of domestic violence, invited me to a women's forum which helped build rapport with potential participants. They then introduced me to a group of women, giving an overview of my research. They also informed the group that willing women may contact me in order to get further information about their participation in my research. Another ethnic organization that works with Indian immigrant women who are victims of domestic violence, took the liberty of filtering participants for my research and invited me for interviews with them after seeking their consent. E-mails with participant information sheet were sent so they were able to give these women details about my research. When I was put in contact with suitable women I negotiated with them a suitable time and place for the interview. I was successful in interviewing six Indian immigrant women, but I have not included two of the women in my case studies because on reflection, they did not fit the criteria for participation: their husbands were not Indian.

As it turned out, all my case study participants are from Punjab. I acknowledge that they don't represent the diversity of India and its cultures. However, the cultural norms largely apply to these participants

as much as women belonging to other states. Moreover, from what can be gleaned from community contacts and official statistics on language use in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2016), Punjabis form the largest Indian community in New Zealand.

Interview with participant.

The interviews took place at a time and location negotiated with the participant. The interviews were held in the premises of an ethnic service provider that the women were familiar with. This was a place where they felt safe and secure to talk about their experiences of domestic violence.

When I met each participant, we exchanged pleasantries and asked each other how we were doing, in a manner that is common while meeting new people in India. I then formally introduced myself and explained my research before consent to participate was confirmed. The interview was open-ended as a standardized interview would have hindered my objective of obtaining an uncensored version of the women's stories. Also, depending on how the open-ended approach allowed each interview to be customized according to the specific circumstances of the participant. Particular attention was paid to how cultural norms have an impact on her reaction to domestic violence in the host country.

I audio recorded the interviews after getting participants' consent. A full transcript was later prepared. Three of the four interviews were in Hindi. I translated these interviews into English as I transcribed them. It is important to acknowledge that there is no direct translation for some words and the closest word in English was used in the transcript.

Towards the end of the interview, I checked with them if any members their families or friends or people who have helped her would be willing

to contribute to my research in order to get additional information, if needed. All the four women felt uncomfortable in getting these people involved in the research, possibly due to the stigma attached to domestic violence issues. I also discussed with them a safe way in which they could review a draft of their case study before approving it. Where appropriate, I asked women for copies of relevant documents (e.g. affidavits). I used these documents to gain useful contextual knowledge and a better understanding of women's stories.

As these types of interviews tend to trigger strong feelings which may result in some amount of discomfort, I called them a few days after the interview to check if they are okay. Follow up interviews for some of the women took place over the phone.

Participant checks.

Once the draft of each case study was completed, I let the participant review it to either comment on or make changes before approval. This helped ensure that the material in the case study is authentic. Case studies were only to be included in my research after getting consent of the woman concerned. The review process was discussed during the interview. All of the women interviewed preferred the draft of case study to be sent to them via e-mail.

Forms of analysis.

This study generated qualitative data from key informants and women participants through semi-structured interviews. This material was subjected to thematic analysis, a widely used qualitative technique for analysis of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis provides a practical yet flexible research tool which leads to an in-depth analysis of

3: Methodology

the data by recognizing recurring themes or patterns within them (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis has a number of advantages. First, this method is considerably flexible in analysing qualitative data, and allows researchers to use wide analytical options in analysing data. Second, the method can be effortlessly learnt and put to use. Third, it provides a detailed description of a data set. Fourth, it can generate unforeseen observations, and allows social as well as psychological interpretation of data. And finally, it can provide a useful qualitative analysis to account for during policy decisions (see Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The patterns in thematic analysis are classified and coded in two ways: an inductive coding approach wherein the collected data is not made to fit into any existing coding framework and is not directed towards the researcher's theoretical framework but instead the themes arise from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The second is the theoretical coding approach which is driven by the researcher's theoretical framework and research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). My research adopted more of the theoretical analytic methods in order to code for particular research questions driven by theoretical approach and carried out a detailed inquiry of some segments of data. I also used some of the inductive analytic methods to derive some research questions through coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this research, theoretical analytic methods have been applied to in-depth analysis of culturally constructed attitudes of gender among Indian immigrants.

Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) argue that the use of both inductive and deductive coding approaches complement the research questions by allowing the pre-existing beliefs of the researcher to contribute to the

process of deductive thematic analysis while also allowing themes to emerge directly from the data using the inductive coding approach. Braun & Clarke, (2006) assert that in inductive coding “the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves” (p. 83);—the latent level “goes beyond the semantic content of the data, and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations / and ideologies that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data.” (p.84).

Additionally, in the thematic data analysis approach the researcher can categorise the themes into two levels: the manifest/semantic level, and the latent/interpretive level (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The manifest level refers to directly observable themes from the raw data as reported by the research participants. In contrast, the latent level themes are indirectly observable from the data in which researcher interprets the data by examining the underlying ideas and assumptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, if a participant reflects that she did something because “that is what is expected of women”, a latent analysis would involve discovering or making explicit the assumptions about what is accepted as proper behaviour for women.

Braun and Clarke, (2006) identified six phases in the process of conducting thematic data analysis. The first is making oneself more knowledgeable about the data by transcribing raw data, reading, and re-reading the data, and summarizing basic ideas. The second is creating initial codes by coding interesting features in an orderly fashion across the entire data set, and extracting data consistent with each code identified. The third is investigating the themes by sorting codes into themes and collecting all the data within each theme identified. The fourth phase is examining the themes, where the researcher checks if the themes identified are

compatible with the coded extracts by developing a thematic map or networks of analysis. The fifth is defining and refining of the themes. The final phase is producing the final report by selecting themes in the extracts that are relevant or related to the research questions and literature.

This study has adopted these phases of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke, (2006) in analysing the data generated from semi-structured interviews. Also, as mentioned earlier, the present study has used both inductive and deductive coding approaches, and latent level themes analysis categories.

Ethical consideration.

My research received approval from the School of Psychology Ethics Committee at the University of Waikato and was conducted in congruence with the Code of Ethics of the New Zealand Psychological Society (New Zealand Psychologist Board, 2002).

Women's safety and confidentiality was paramount to my project. In order to protect privacy and confidentiality of the participants, I have used pseudonyms to refer to them and other family members. I have also omitted or disguised potentially identifying information such as place names and easily identifiable events. However, while I have taken all possible care in protecting the participants' privacy, it is possible that they may be recognised by readers who know them really well (e.g. family members or close friends). This was clearly explained to them and written in the information sheet for their referral.

I was aware of the risk of the participants becoming distressed as a result of discussing sensitive issues and re-living traumatic experiences. In order to minimize any harm or discomfort caused by the interview, I contacted them a couple of days after the interview to check how they were doing. I

also offered to meet with them and/or refer them to further help as appropriate. When I checked back with them after the interview, all the women were doing fine. They didn't want to make any changes to the case studies. In some cases, they were happy to give me further helpful information.

All participation in this research was voluntary. Both key informants and women were given an information sheet which provided them with details about my research and how to address any concerns they may have regarding the same. They were given the right to ask questions at any point during the study. They could also ask for the audio recorder to be turned off at any point during the discussion. The participants were informed that they could decline to answer any specific questions. They also had the right to withdraw from the research at any point during the interview. I reassured the participants that the information collected will be kept in secure storage. The contact details of my supervisors and the chairperson at the Research and Ethics Committee were given to all interviewees so that they had someone to go to if they had any concerns or questions about the research.

Another important ethical consideration was my own safety, as a researcher. As the interviews were of sensitive nature, I had to be aware of my psychological well-being. Frequent debriefing sessions with my supervisor helped in sharing and discussing feelings associated with the traumatic experiences shared by women. At times, it also helped me reflect on how I could manage some of these feelings of helplessness and distress effectively.

Chapter 4

Key Informants' Views

Key informant interviews were held in New Zealand and India. These had several purposes. Firstly, interviewing New Zealand key informants helped me to gain a deeper understanding of the pressing issues around domestic violence among Indian immigrants. Secondly, interviewing key informants in India enabled me to explore the Indian context of domestic violence and to understand the problems Indian migrant women face if they chose to leave the relationship and return to India. Finally, these interviews helped set the scene for the case studies. That is, based on the key informant interviews, I was able to recognize the issues that called for further probing while talking to Indian migrant women. Particular attention was paid to how cultural norms and factors relating to migration had an impact on their reaction to domestic violence in the host country.

The recruitment and interview process of key informants has been discussed in Chapter 3.

This chapter presents the readers with an analysis of key informants' views that highlights key trends or findings. It also includes selected quotes as examples to bring the theme being discussed to the forefront.

Key Themes

The main findings from both sets of key informant interviews are discussed below.

Indian context.

As we have seen in Chapter 2, it is important to understand the Indian context of domestic violence in order to understand the challenges Indian migrant women face in a host country. Some of the major themes that

emerged during key informant interviews while investigating the Indian context were status of women, arranged marriage, in-laws and dowry and the shame attached to talking about domestic violence and leaving an abusive marriage.

Status of women.

Many key informants in both India and New Zealand discussed how Indian women are viewed as second class citizens. This is an inevitable reflection of a profoundly patriarchal society. Some of the markers of this second class status are evident in the strict gender roles which are apparent in many parts of India. For example, as an Indian researcher pointed out, most men are regarded as primary breadwinners of the family while women are caretakers of children and in charge of household chores. These roles don't seem threatening when looked at in a simplistic manner. However, the woman has strict protocols within the household as part of her role. One key informant observed that even though pregnant women require timely meals, they were still not given priority compared to the men in the household. This social scientist in India pointed out,

...even today in many rural and middle class households, a pregnant woman, will still have to wait till all others have eaten before she eats. She is not given the priority, in many cases. So irrespective of whether she is hungry or there is enough for her, it's not a priority. Woman's position in the family is still bottom of the rung.

She added that, on the other hand, men were given priority with regards to general welfare and decision making in family matters. In cases where men were breadwinners, women were invariably financially dependent on them, this expert said. However, a few experts, both in India and New Zealand, added that even if women were employed, men usually gained access to all their finances and were in charge of making financial

decisions. This financial control extended when the couple migrated to a host country as well. The impact that financial control of women has in the immigrant context will be explained later.

Regardless of their ability to gain employment, women are still regarded unequal to men in the household. It is important to note that the "Patriarchal bargain," a term explained in Chapter 2, has a significant impact on women's views and conformity to the expected roles. The influences that create this paradigm force women to internalize and conform to patriarchal norms by adhering to strict gender roles which disempower them. In exchange they supposedly get physical, social and financial security. This social trade-off also leads to the unequal status of women in India.

The differential status of men and women is also evident in contrasting aspirations parents have for their sons and daughters. An Indian expert who worked as a researcher in the field of gender issues noted that, for sons, education is given priority as they were seen as the future sole breadwinners of the family. As seen in Chapter 2, sons were generally expected to take care of their aging parents. Hence, it was seen as a sensible long-term investment to educate a son who would subsequently acquire a job, be financially stable and eventually support his aging parents. On the other hand, the priority for a daughter was to master household chores and be trained to be a good daughter-in-law and a good wife. She was given away in marriage and in most cases went on to live with her in-laws. Some Indian experts commented that daughters-in-law were expected to sever close ties with their natal family. This has implications for migrant women experiencing domestic violence in New Zealand as will become evident later.

One key informant argued that many women were being educated in modern India. She added that this led to a 'societal backlash.' According to this expert in India, many parts of the Indian society resisted this shift toward women experiencing some amount of freedom of choice. This key informant explained this adverse reaction in terms of sexual violence in India,

Some of these mind sets have their roots in the structure of the society and if society has to function...women have to be controlled, contained and submissive. The imbalance in the power has to be maintained- divide and rule. Women are resisting this. Today women are becoming empowered, they have more freedom, and they have a right to choose. All these things are contributing to the spread of sexual violence... Society would like to see women confined to the home...I read sexual attacks on women as male society's way of reacting to women's new found freedom. Then culture just becomes an excuse to beat women.

This key informant stressed that although there had been numerous protests and legislative reforms following the infamous Delhi gang rape in 2012, most of the nation placed greater restrictions on women by demanding they dressed appropriately and remained confined to their homes at night, instead of attacking gender inequality as a problem that led to injustices done to women.

Closely related to these restrictions placed on Indian women is another theme of "victim-blaming." One Indian key informant, who headed an organization that worked alongside victims of domestic violence, pointed out that if a woman was raped, she was termed "spoiled." This meant she lost her worth as a woman and was regarded as not eligible for marriage, as she was considered unchaste. This led to shame and losing face in the community not just for women themselves, but also for their parents. The

shame factor comes to the forefront in the immigrant context as well, which will be discussed in detail later.

Another key informant elaborated on the phenomena of victim-blaming by saying that even some political leaders in India called rape victims "painted and dented women" referring to the culture of tattoos and piercings on a woman. These "modern women" were invariably regarded as ones with loose morals and were blamed for the injustices done to them. That is, they were constantly reminded that they brought it upon themselves by choosing to live life a certain way.

"Victim blaming" occurred in cases of domestic violence as well where women were accused of instigating the violence by not following their husband's orders and rules. Even in the immigrant context, women who chose to leave the abusive relationship were blamed for splitting up their family. I will explore this point further in upcoming sections.

With regards to victim-blaming, a key informant spoke about the messages given to Indian women by a large part of the society, in terms of how only the wife could bring about a positive change in the perpetrator's behaviour, with regards to domestic violence.

It is all about the upbringing and attitudes where my media, my social life, cultural information and knowledge is all telling me, "If you are like this, he can change. You can bring about a change in here." When they are pushed to an edge...many of them end in suicides.

This expert argued that suicide by women was sometimes a response to their oppression. Many key informants added to this point by talking about cases they were involved with, where women were driven to commit suicide or attempted suicide for various reasons, the most

important one being dowry- related harassment. This will be discussed in the next section.

While discussing the status of women in India, it is important to acknowledge the broad diversity, in terms of urban and rural women. In general, urban women tend to be less disadvantaged compared to their rural counterparts. While some experts in India argued that domestic violence was sometimes an outcome of women's low status, in terms of their education and employment, another key informant had an interesting complexity to add to this argument.

This expert pointed out that in a study she had conducted, women who were better educated and employed suffered greater amount of abuse at the hands of their husbands. She also stressed that although there was a common notion that education served as a protective factor for Indian women, in fact it did not, in most cases. According to her, men felt threatened and retaliated by asserting more power over women. This was discussed in terms of backlash earlier in this section.

Another diversity to be acknowledged is the geographical location of women and its effects on her status. One of the experts from South India explained the differences seen in the prevalence of domestic violence in North and South India and related to literacy. She was of the view that women in South India were more educated than their counterparts in the North. Speaking about North India, she added, "*...they have a very hierarchical social structure where male dominance is very strong.*" This expert also revealed findings of a study she had conducted, about the prevalence of domestic violence across three different strata namely urban slum, urban non-slum and rural. There was high prevalence of domestic violence in urban slum and rural areas. She added that one of the reasons

for low prevalence in urban non-slum areas could be directly related to the social stigma attached to talking about domestic violence, reporting and divorce. It is important to note that urban and urban non-slums comprise mostly of the middle and upper-middle class population of India. These are the strata that are most likely to migrate. There is an important implication to my study here, that among Indian people who migrate to New Zealand, domestic violence is likely to attract a particularly strong stigma.

The stigma attached to divorce is carried over to the host country as well. A New Zealand key informant asserted that although many urban women are shedding divorce stigma, they still have to face the consequences of leaving a marriage, even if it was an abusive one.

The shame factor is definitely there. I know ...women who have walked out of marriages because of domestic violence. They walked out on their own...people who were their friends very soon dropped them off their visiting and they got isolated because the community or the friends that they had depended on, did not want them coming to their houses because they are a bad example for the children in the other home. It is not a very easy step that women take...

It is amply evident from the above arguments that there is a circular nature to the crime against women in India. While one of the factors that contributed to the status of women in India was the tolerance of injustices done to them, one can equally say injustice is tolerated because of women's low status.

A key informant pointed out that this acceptance and tolerance of mistreatment of women started at home, when children learnt from parents. That is, they grew up seeing their mother tolerate different forms of abuse and father feeling entitled to treat mother this way. While talking

about patterns in domestic violence cases that a key informant has witnessed, she said,

What you grow up watching...Your mom being beaten up and abused by your father, you grow up normalizing that and your mother saying "That's ok, he is a good father, isn't he? He's looked after your needs and provided for you. Look we live in such a flash house with two cars here. He only does that when he drinks. It's not your father, it's the alcohol." That's what you grow up with. I think girls more than boys take a lot of that on board...The boys have seen their dads do it, so they do it. "My mum and sister were still there and we lived as a family even though dad did this. My wife won't do anything because my mum didn't." The girl thinks "Mum never called the police. If I call the police, the neighbours see and they say "Oh my god! The police came to their house, what's happening?"

The informant quoted above not only stressed the learnt behaviour of tolerating violence in many Indian families and the nature of the patriarchal bargain, explained earlier, but also about the shame and embarrassment the woman brought to the family by reporting domestic violence. The implications for immigrants in New Zealand will be discussed in detail later. In the example given above, it is implied that the husband was the breadwinner, which is generally the case.

There were many reasons why women were hindered from reaching their full potential intellectually and financially. One of the reasons was explained earlier in terms of traditional expectations of a son versus a daughter. A key informant commented that many women assumed that being financially independent would free them from the shackles of abuse. But most times, this assumption was not a reality. It was pointed out that girls were raised with messages that portrayed financially independent women as "bad."

Also, women assuming that if I am economically independent then I don't have to suffer this kind of violence but then being told that these (economically independent women) are not good woman; so from young age being told that you are not a good woman.

From the quote above, the expert explained some of the consequences for Indian women who strove to be economically independent. These women were not encouraged to reach their full potential because they failed to adhere to the strict gender expectations assigned to them. This could also be connected to the backlash from segments of the society discussed earlier. These demands also contributed to Indian women internalizing their low status, said this key informant.

Another expert was of the view that there has been a lot of conflict in modern India owing to many women becoming financially independent.

Women's expectations are also changing. Women are no more this nice little Sita to adjust and put up; prove your virginity and chastity...all those things are over today. But men have not moved on. Women are educated and working and say "to hell with you" and move on. We are in a flux...

Here the key informant was referring to the Hindu mythological story of Ramayana in which Sita was the epitome of an ideal Indian wife with her unwavering devotion to her husband, Rama. Sita endured adversity in silence. This expert said that women's expectations with regards to marriage had seen a shift too. However, most men still expected their wives to possess traditional values which included being subservient and forbearing.

These cultural and societal aspects in India help us understand better the background from which many Indian immigrant women may come to New Zealand. It is safe to say that most Indian migrant women who arrive

in New Zealand would have experienced aspects of the gender oppression discussed in this section. In addition to this, they experience additional challenges that migration poses. All these put together, make Indian migrant women vulnerable to domestic violence. It is important for New Zealand service providers to understand Indian migrant women's experiences as unique, and filled with complexities, some of which were discussed in this section.

Arranged marriage, dowry and in-laws.

Arranged marriage is another contributing factor to the low status of women in India. It can equally be said that the low status of women legitimates forced arranged marriages of women and the payment of dowry. A system that regards women as a burden, which her in-laws can expect to be offset by the payment of dowry, makes Indian women more vulnerable to domestic violence. It must be acknowledged that men are also forced into arranged marriages. However, for men, marriage gives more opportunities to exercise power and control, while for women it opens them to the potential of abuse within the in-laws family.

Regardless of whether the marriage is arranged or a "love marriage", becoming a wife does not enhance women's status. In some cases, it could even lead to homicides, as asserted by many key informants. A few Indian experts commented that although there was legislation in place for dowry harassment, it was poorly implemented and numerous cases either went unreported or were not picked up by the authorities, as dowry related abuse or death. I will discuss this further in upcoming sections.

It is important to understand the changing nature of dowry in order to contextualize dowry harassment in both India and New Zealand. A key informant in India, who headed an organization focussing on dowry

harassment and dowry deaths, elaborated on how domestic violence emerged from being seen as a private affair into the public domain. One incident, in particular, drew immense public attention in the early 1980s. It was a dying declaration given by a woman who was set ablaze by her in-laws because her parents were unable to meet the dowry demands. The husband and in-laws were trying to pass this off as a kitchen accident. The interviewee added that this particular incident changed the understanding of kitchen accidents or stove burst incidents which claimed the lives of many married women across India over the past few decades. I will discuss dowry deaths in the coming sections.

According to this expert, dowry was initially only a part of the Hindu marriage tradition but soon cut across all religions and classes. She added that the topic of dowry disappeared from public domain in the 1990s through to the 21st century, owing to the amendment of laws in India to safeguard women's lives. She asserted that this did not mean that the practice of dowry disappeared. In fact, it was rampant. The public was becoming aware of the law and was wary of its consequences. That is, individuals who give dowry and those who accepted it were both punishable by law. This expert also threw light on the dowry in pre-colonial times,

Dowry was actually seen as a safety net for women. It was given to a woman so that in times of economic distress, it could be hers... dowry in imperial times, in moments of economic distress the men would sell her gold in order to pay the taxes or when farming was slowly becoming mechanized and small farmers had to pay taxes to the imperial tax (collector) otherwise they would take away their land. You see from that time how the whole notion of dowry itself has changed. This used to be protective for a woman but it has all changed now.

As mentioned earlier, the practice of dowry spread its influence across all religions and class. However, there existed some differences in the way in which the transaction occurred across communities. Some Indian key informants noted that dowry was called “gift giving” from the bride’s family to the groom’s. This was one way in which the families that demanded and gave money or materials were shielded from the law against dowry that penalized both sides. An expert from South India, was particularly intrigued by the tradition of displaying the dowry during the wedding ceremony which was a tradition in some Indian communities. This was to prove to the rest of the family and wider community that the father of the bride still held status in the society and had fulfilled his fatherly duties successfully.

According to my key informants, demands in dowry were usually very high, particularly so, for grooms who lived outside India. A social worker in New Zealand stated that dowry demands increased if the groom resided outside India regardless of his actual financial situation in the host country. This expert had witnessed cases where the groom had manipulated the bride and her family by portraying that he was well-off in New Zealand although he was not. His family had demanded dowry based on his supposed financial status. However, the reality was not exposed until the wife had moved to New Zealand.

One key informant observed that in addition to demanding exorbitant dowry, prospective grooms who lived outside India were sometimes given greater preference, as a reflection of their financial status. That is, prospective grooms who lived abroad were considered rich by default. A social worker in New Zealand, pointed out that the lure of getting daughters married to someone who lived outside of India was strong as it

was recognized as an indicator of climbing up the status ladder. Several key informants in New Zealand stressed that parents of daughters must thoroughly investigate the prospective groom and his family prior to the marriage, especially if he lived outside India. By this, they meant parents could play a key role in ensuring their daughter's safety, because in addition to manipulations related to false portrayal of the groom's financial status, Indian women were faced with other challenges that accompanied migration which made them more vulnerable to domestic violence. Some New Zealand experts dealt with cases where the groom was already married to a local in New Zealand and had a family but did not reveal this to his new in-laws and wife in order to procure dowry. This was followed by more dowry demands and related domestic violence including threats to leave this wife to marry someone else, in order to fulfil their dowry needs.

As I mentioned earlier, dowry demands can lead to domestic violence and even deaths, in some cases. The ugly side of dowry came to the forefront when a few experts who were involved in research in various parts of India investigated the prevalence of kitchen incidents related to dowry. One expert noted that in one South Indian city, almost 100 women died in kitchen accidents every month. Most of these deaths were related to dowry harassment. She added that while working in a burns ward of a hospital, she observed that at least five women were admitted everyday with 60-80% burn injuries and most of them died. She was also of the view that cases of dowry deaths were higher in North India as the society is more aggressive compared to the South. In other research conducted in another South Indian hospital, it was found that nearly 200 women were admitted a month for burns suffered in kitchen fires, of which 90% were dowry related cases, either self-immolated or inflicted by the husband and

his family. It is important to note that self-immolation is usually an attempt to commit suicide when the woman is pushed to such an extent due to dowry harassment by in-laws and husband.

A head of an NGO shared her experience of one particular case,

He has tried to burn her and she's still living with him. After the hospital where she has recovered, she has gone back, so she's able to forgive him... but we can't blame her because she's brought up in a family which has taught her that you have to endure even violence to this extent; that is what the beliefs and practices are.

The pressure on women to tolerate domestic violence was explained in the previous section. Although dowry harassment could lead to the deaths of women, an expert asserted that many women considered dowry as claiming their share of their father's property. Daughters were commonly denied a stake in their father's property, only sons. So, dowry was seen as the only way she could procure her share, even though, in most cases, she had no access to it. A researcher in India argued that women also considered dowry as a form of protection, in that, if they brought in sufficient dowry they would be spared of the harassment by in-laws and husband and be given an equal social status as other women in the family. However, in reality, the practice of dowry still confirms the low status of women and the idea that they are a burden.

According to many experts, dowry-related abuse was prevalent in New Zealand as well as in India. A social worker here observed that sometimes the bride's parents presumed that any dowry demands made during the wedding which were unmet would be forgotten when the couple moved to New Zealand. But this was not the case. Some New Zealand key informants pointed out that some brides' families believed that the groom's family would have a different outlook on dowry than their Indian

counterparts, as they had lived in New Zealand, if not for generations, for a few years at least. This was also usually not the case. In fact, another expert pointed out that most Indian migrants in New Zealand strove to preserve their traditions and cultural beliefs, however outdated they were. That is, they sought to uphold traditions that were no longer being followed in India.

Some of my interviewees had dealt with cases where men brought their wives from India and the dowry was given at the time of the wedding. However, demands continued after the couple arrived in New Zealand. If these demands went unmet, women were harassed, physically and mentally. A social worker added that those Indian men who are abusive usually threatened to leave the wife and marry someone else for more dowry. A relationship manager who worked with a government agency in New Zealand gave the example of a dowry harassment case wherein the woman was hospitalized with multiple injuries. Her mother came from India to care for her. However, the hospitalized woman couldn't disclose the domestic violence to her mother or the doctors as her husband was constantly by her bedside. A manager of an ethnic organization also gave an example of dowry-related abuse in New Zealand where a man brutally burnt his wife's hand by placing it on the stove.

An Indian expert shared a different scenario with regards to arranged marriage and dowry abuse. She had dealt with several cases where women from India went to a host country after the wedding. Their husband soon realized she was not suitable for the lifestyle in that country. The couple returned to India on the pretext of visiting family. The husband then abandoned his wife there without a trace of his whereabouts. His parents maintained that they hadn't heard from him either. This was after dowry was given to them.

It was evident from my interviews in New Zealand and India, that dowry demands were very common, whether the groom and his parents lived in India or in New Zealand, as were negative consequences of not fulfilling such demands. Furthermore, many Indian and New Zealand experts noted that in the immigrant context, dowry harassment occurred irrespective of where the in-laws lived. If they lived in India, abuse took place via telephone or was carried out by the husband under the supervision of in-laws. The experts added that in some cases, the bride's parents in India were threatened by the groom's parents if their dowry demands were not fulfilled.

It is important to note that dowry is also about in-laws' entitlement. The founder of a women's organization in India noted that in most cases, daughters-in-law were expected to hand over their jewellery to their mother-in-law. Most times, the dowry was also in her custody. This expert added that mothers-in-law usually encouraged their sons to financially control their wives. Some key informants, both in India and New Zealand, shared similar views by saying that they had seen Indian women face a considerable amount of psychological abuse by in-laws.

Several key informants spoke about in-laws' entitlement in the New Zealand context. A New Zealand key informant, who had worked with Indian migrant women, gave an example of a case where the mother-in-law did not allow her daughter-in-law to sit next to her husband in her presence. Another expert had seen cases where the husband would not lock their bedroom door until his mother was asleep. It was his way of showing respect to his mother. But also, according to this interviewee, it was the mother-in-law's way to have control over the privacy of the

couple. Indian women, it was said, were expected to follow these rules without questioning them.

Many New Zealand interviewees observed that in numerous cases, when Indian women arrived, their jewellery and passports were placed in the hands of in-laws or husbands, ostensibly for safe-keeping. Most women are unaware of the whereabouts of their passports and of their legal immigration status in the country. The implications of this will be discussed later.

Some of the experts argued that surveillance was high in the immigrant context. Many women were constantly monitored by their in-laws at social gatherings and were interrogated later about the details of their conversations. This was perhaps to ensure that she was not sharing details of her in-laws or husbands behaviour towards her with members of the community.

Many New Zealand experts shared their experiences with cases where the in-laws played a significant role in isolating the woman further than the effects of immigration may have already done. In addition to controlling her movements and demanding dowry, she was usually expected to do all the household chores. A New Zealand key informant gave an example of a woman with a new-born whose in-laws had come to help her out. Her in-laws and husband stormed out of the house because she had said something inappropriate to her in-laws, according to her husband. As a result, she was left alone at home with her new-born with no food or transportation.

From the above observations made by experts in New Zealand, it is glaringly evident that understanding in-laws involvement, nuances of dowry and related abuse, is pivotal for New Zealand service providers

dealing with Indian migrant women. Dowry is still a fairly unknown concept among mainstream services in New Zealand. In an interview, a family solicitor in New Zealand revealed that she was unaware of what dowry exactly was. She didn't comprehend it when Indian women and their in-laws were after the gold jewellery. On the other hand, a New Zealand expert stressed the importance of understanding the dynamics of dowry and its impact on Indian migrant women, as it is pivotal to understanding their experiences.

Now that I have discussed the Indian context of domestic violence in terms of status of women and arranged marriage, in-laws and dowry, I will move on to the New Zealand context of domestic violence among Indian immigrants. For this, I will first discuss the patterns of migration.

Patterns of migration.

There are several ways in which Indian couples migrate to New Zealand. Many New Zealand experts were of the view that in most cases the husband was the principal applicant for resident status: his wife, who accompanied him from India, was dependent on him for immigration status. This was particularly common among women from rural India. Some experts observed that in many cases the husband was a New Zealand resident or citizen, which meant he invariably, had the power to withdraw his sponsorship and deport his wife, if he had decided to. As mentioned earlier, the husband or his parents sometimes confiscated the women's passport and/ or kept her immigration status secret from her. The implications of the husband being the principal applicant for an Indian woman will be discussed further in the next section.

A social worker in New Zealand categorized migration of young Indian couples into two. One category was where couples migrated after their

wedding that had taken place in India. The other, was when single Indian men establish themselves in New Zealand before returning to India to get married and bring their new brides to the new country. Another pattern observed by a relationship manager in New Zealand was that some Indian men married local women in order to gain resident status in the county. They then ended this relationship, returned to India and married a woman their parents had chosen for them. The new bride who arrived in New Zealand was unaware of his previous relationship. The expert added that for many women, domestic violence was triggered when she did find out.

New Zealand key informants working in the field of domestic violence observed that in most cases the husband's parents also lived in New Zealand. In some cases, the parents had migrated by themselves and had raised their children in New Zealand. In other cases, sons had migrated first and had sponsored their parents. As seen in the earlier section, this could make Indian women more vulnerable to extended family abuse. These experts added that in the majority of cases, Indian women who arrived after their wedding did not have their parents in New Zealand. This point will be further developed in the next section on challenges women experience while migrating to New Zealand.

Some key informants observed that those women who were the principal applicants were more confident than their dependent counterparts in reporting domestic violence in New Zealand. According to many experts, this could be related to financial security, especially if children were involved. That is, women who were principal applicants could usually provide financially for their children as opposed to their dependent counterparts who were financially reliant on their partners. This point will also be explored further later.

Irrespective of who the principal applicant is, migration poses numerous challenges for both men and women. A number of New Zealand experts felt that unemployment and financial insecurity played a significant part in putting a strain on these relationships. However, I will focus on views of experts regarding the challenges that Indian women, in particular, faced while migrating to New Zealand which made them more vulnerable to domestic violence.

Challenges Indian migrant women face that increases their vulnerability to domestic violence.

While experts in India shared their experiences with the challenges Indian women faced in several host countries, New Zealand key informants commented specifically about challenges Indian women faced when they migrated to New Zealand. In both sets of interviews, three main factors emerged: language barriers, isolation and dependent visa status. These are elaborated below.

Most experts stressed that a language barrier was one of the biggest challenges Indian women experienced during migration. However, a social worker in a government agency who had worked with Indian migrant women argued that Indian women should not be categorized as a homogenous group. As mentioned, Indian women migrate from both rural and urban areas to New Zealand. According to this interviewee, the women who arrived from rural India tended to be more vulnerable as they had limited or no understanding of the new language. This could be because English is taught more extensively in urban areas than rural India. Furthermore, an expert in India commented that even today not many daughters are educated in rural India. This was discussed in the first section of this chapter.

Most interviewees, both in India and New Zealand, stated that isolation was a crippling factor making Indian women more vulnerable to domestic violence. As several key informants said, Indian women left their families and friends behind while migrating and were unaware of ways to reach out to the community to form new networks. As mentioned in the previous section, most times, women's movements and activities were controlled and monitored. This would make it even more of a challenge for them to connect with new people in the host country. In addition, the language barrier could exacerbate their sense of isolation. A New Zealand expert who worked with Indian migrant women said,

Most of them...face isolation...Coming here, you left your home country, you left your good job, and you left the whole family. You left everything there... You don't have friends here; you don't know how to reach out to the community. It is a foreign country; it's totally different culture, totally different laws. Most of men and women face language barriers; they don't speak English; or maybe 50-50. So those are the challenges they face...

A policy analyst commented that for an Indian woman who was a newly arrived migrant the only network she usually had were her husband and his family. Some key informants added to this by saying that sometimes this was used as a tool by her husband and in-laws to isolate her further, as discussed in the previous section. Some of my New Zealand interviewees observed that Indian migrant women who had young children were more isolated than the rest as they were busy caring for them, while managing all the household chores, single-handedly. Some experts in New Zealand and India stressed that many Indian migrant women were not allowed to learn to drive or to find a job. Driving was seen as a mark of independence by the perpetrator which had to be curbed.

Unemployment, said many New Zealand and Indian experts, made Indian women vulnerable to domestic violence. They pointed out that unemployment also added to women's isolation and thereby to their vulnerability to abuse. On the other hand, when men were unemployed, their frustrations also made women more vulnerable to being the focus of violence. These experts added that this form of violence wherein the frustrations of a husband are taken out on his wife, is a rather acceptable and common in the many parts of the Indian society.

The next important factor that emerged in most New Zealand interviews was that of the dependent status of the woman. As several key informants said, dependent visa status was used by men as a tool of establishing power and control over their partners. The woman was usually threatened that she would be deported if she reported the violence or did not fulfil the dowry needs. A social worker said that for an Indian woman to return to India was an unpleasant outcome, costly in social, financial and emotional terms.

As discussed earlier, many women were unaware of their immigration status in the country because their passports were given to their husbands and in-laws for safe-keeping. A family solicitor in New Zealand gave an example of an Indian woman who was completely unaware of her status in the country and was being threatened by her husband that she would be deported if she reported the violence. However, when she found her passport, which had been in her husband's hands, and gave it to her solicitor, the solicitor was able to tell her that she was eligible for residency at that point.

As mentioned in the previous section, Indian migrant women feared returning to India. This could be linked to the shame and embarrassment

that an Indian woman and her family would typically face on her return. Many experts in India were of the view that women were ostracised if they returned to their natal family whether they left the relationship in India or outside India. They also observed that many migrant women chose to stay in the host country even after they had left the abusive relationship so as to not bring shame to their families. An Indian expert who worked with immigrant women said,

Parents will be ashamed to face the society...this woman who went through separation and divorce, her father said, "Don't come home for holidays because neighbours talk. I'll send the money, you can go somewhere else."

Some experts added that some separated women chose to stay in the host country if they were able to financially support themselves and their children. They also commented that Indian women who left abusive relationships and decided to stay in New Zealand were, at times, ostracized by the Indian migrant community. This will be discussed later.

An expert in India pointed out that in addition to the shame there were other pressures that women who left their husbands faced. If they had sisters who were yet to be married off, it could prove difficult for the parents to find a suitable match as their family was stigmatized. Another interviewee added that these women found it difficult to live by themselves as landlords hesitated to lease their house to single women. This could be because they were considered women of loose morals. They often became targets of crimes, as well.

A head of an Indian NGO that worked with domestic violence and acid attack victims, argued that the stigma for women leaving an abusive relationship and returning from a host country was a lot more than their counterparts who left an abusive relationship in India. The reason for this

was rooted in how a groom from outside of India was viewed. It was considered a matter of pride, prestige and status for the bride's parents for having married their daughter off to someone who lived abroad. When this marriage broke down for whatever reason, including domestic violence, the parents experienced immense amounts of embarrassment in admitting the truth to wider family and community, as it often brought them shame and stigma. That is, leaving a "higher status" husband attracted greater shame to the woman and her family. The expert added that in order to avoid these unpleasant consequences, many parents put up a façade that their daughter was only visiting them on holiday. So there was added pressure for the daughter to return to the host country after a limited period. I will develop this point further in 'parental support' section.

In addition to the shame factor, women feared other consequences they might have to face in the event they returned to India. A manager of an ethnic organization in New Zealand shared her experiences with Indian women who had left the abusive relationship but still wanted their help when they went to India for a holiday owing to threats posed by husband's family. In a particular case this expert had encountered, the woman who had returned to India for a holiday was concerned about her safety. She feared that her in-laws might get back at her for reporting the abuse to the police. Some Indian experts also shared similar experiences with women they had helped who returned from their host country.

A few New Zealand experts shared their view that many Indian migrant women tried to assimilate into the New Zealand culture by altering some of their values and beliefs, but their husbands, on the other hand, stayed unchanged. The experts added that the friction this caused made women

more vulnerable to domestic violence as the men felt threatened. This is because some of these changes would mean rethinking traditional gender roles and/or being relatively more independent in thought and action.

In the next section, I will discuss the importance of parental support. I will also analyse the trends observed by experts with regards to attitudes of Indian migrant women's parents whose daughters experience domestic violence in a host country.

Parental support.

Parental support was one of the key themes discussed with interviewees in India and New Zealand. Although there were mixed views among experts, most of them voiced the view that parents usually preferred their migrant daughters to stay in the relationship, regardless of how abusive it might be. One of the main reasons for this was the shame associated with divorce, as discussed earlier.

Both India and New Zealand-based interviewees noted that for an Indian migrant woman, parental support played a key role in not only deciding whether or not to leave the abusive relationship but also in gauging the support she might get after leaving it. That is, she would have her parents to fall back on if they supported her decision. Several India-based experts pointed out that many women based their decision on their parents' views on whether they wanted her to stay or leave. The reason for this could also be that daughters did not want to disappoint their parents who had found a suitable groom for them and had paid a hefty dowry. In other words, most daughters feel indebted to their parents.

A New Zealand social worker observed that many parents she had come across were supportive of their daughters' decision to end the marriage. On the other hand, she had also seen a few parents who insisted their

daughters stayed in the marriage and make it work. Parents justified this by saying that domestic violence was part and parcel of marriage. That is, she had to tolerate it. This expert also noticed that parents of younger generation Indian couples proved to be more supportive than their older counterparts. She stressed that there was a shift in the way they looked at abuse in a marriage. This could be because crimes against women have become more visible in India in recent years and there is growing awareness of the seriousness of these situations.

However, as mentioned earlier, the majority of the parents that my interviewees had come across did not encourage their daughters to leave the abusive relationship irrespective of the intensity of domestic violence. A social worker who had worked with Indian migrant women noted that, faced with a daughter who had emigrated but then separated some parents would do all they could to have her remain overseas: to have her return would invite stigma on her and the family. Some parents, she said, would rather provide financial support to their daughter than to have her come home. A research director at a human rights organization in India described a common pattern,

... (there's) nobody to support her from her native family because she is always considered as paraya dhaan (other's property). So once they have married her off, given that economic burden of giving dowry for her, you are not our family member anymore. So if you are coming back, you are an outsider. You can stay there for a couple of days but not for a long time or be a dependent. Many women who are not working, it becomes all the more difficult because then they are a financial burden to the family. They are never entertained positively...they may be just working as domestic help within the own native family because they are emotionally attached and don't want to throw her out. She will not enjoy the rights that she did previously because she has walked out of the marriage. She is not worth getting remarried. She is... an additional mouth to be fed, that's how she

is viewed... Shame...The father and the mother are seen as ...“What kind of family did they marry her into?”, “What kind of a daughter is she that she has brought shame to her family by coming back?” “She didn’t have the right cultural upbringing to stay back.” There is a lot of stigma attached to women who walk out.

As seen in the quote above, it is not only the woman who is stigmatized but her family as well. In addition to this stigma, the daughter who returned was also considered a financial burden as a considerable amount of the family’s wealth was given as dowry. This dowry was usually a mark of giving the daughter away along with payment for her well-being. When she returned, there was resentment at her not carrying through this bargain.

A New Zealand social worker discussed an incident where it seemed like the woman’s parents came from India to help her. However, they had actually come to coerce her to stay in the abusive marriage.

...there are instances where we have called the entire family for a meeting where the girl’s parents came from India...and I did think at that point that the girl’s family can see the extent to which there is abuse in this family. They said yes, they will look after her as there was a child involved too...everything seemed sorted; the parents were going to be here with her so there would be no violence. The parents had also said that they would work towards taking her back home. Strangely, I bumped into her and her husband and she denied ever having had any domestic violence and she said the whole thing was a lie and she is happy with her husband. She said she was very happy. This means that her parents had convinced her to stay in the violence...

It is important to acknowledge that not all parents had this attitude towards daughters who returned. A few New Zealand experts suspected that many parents intended to help their migrant daughters but were unable to due to financial reasons. A few were able to come and support their daughter through the court processes, while others weren’t. There

were also a group of parents who were unable to provide for their daughters if they returned to India, but morally supported her in her decision.

Some New Zealand experts had come across cases where parents blamed their daughters for ending the marriage. One of my interviewee shared her experience,

Families back home don't support the woman coming back at all. They insist that she has to live with her husband. They insist that all the fault is their daughter's and not the man's. And the families here will also insist that the fault is all with the girl and not the male. I have not come across families where at any point the boy's family have said that they are wrong...

Similarly, some New Zealand experts commented that they had never come across families of men who admitted that their son was at fault and supported the woman. To the contrary, they stated that the man's family was likely to blame the woman for leaving their son and breaking up the family.

Many experts stressed that community collusion with the perpetrator and his family was a factor present in many of the cases they had witnessed. The community's attitudes and values and the effect this has on instances of domestic violence will be discussed in the next section.

Community attitudes.

Community attitudes were a significant theme of the interviews, especially in New Zealand, as in most cases the only contact a woman had outside the family, was within the migrant community. Most of the New Zealand key informants noted that domestic violence was swept under the carpet in the Indian migrant community in New Zealand. A social worker shared her experience of approaching Indian community leaders to

initiate conversations around domestic violence in the Indian community. However, she was turned away, as the leaders insisted that there was no domestic violence. Another expert added that the community as a whole had a closed attitude towards domestic violence and did not want the locals to know of their community issues, as they didn't want to be stigmatized further in a host country.

Some New Zealand experts observed that many community leaders and members promoted tolerance of domestic violence within the community.

A social worker said,

...if you sought help within the community from elders, the woman is taught a lot of tolerance. "Look, it's your family. You can't go back home. What will your parents think? What will the others think? What about the children?" The first thing they do is stop the children legally from going with the mother or boarding the flight. If you seek help from the elders or more experienced people in the community, I believe this is what is happening...There are always gatekeepers in the community who do not like people like me to intervene.

In the above quote, the expert mentioned about the community helping the perpetrator to legally stop children from leaving the country with their mother. This will be discussed later. The expert also talked about gatekeeping, which was also raised by some other key informants. They had similar experiences while trying to help women in the Indian community- they had to avoid or get past the gatekeepers, which, most times, was futile. The clear implication is that the community response can be such that it acts as a barrier to women attempting to leave abusive relationships.

A few experts had dealt with cases where members of religious institutions had coerced women to stay in the abusive marriage. They would tell these women that the act of breaking a marriage was

considered sacrilegious in the eyes of God. Further, these individuals also portrayed a grim picture of the consequences of leaving like the negative impact it would supposedly have on children, the shame the woman would bring upon herself and her family and the way they would be ostracised. A graphic example of these attitudes was evident when I interviewed a male key informant who had intervened in domestic violence cases in the community. He stated,

They should try to stay together because that is the best way... When I was involved with a family, I explained to them what will happen if they separate. They had one child. I told them that the husband will get the child for one week and the wife will get the child for one week. The child will be the one who suffers the worst; if you love your child, then think about it. If you don't love the child, then separation is the right path for you.

By constructing a decision to leave as a failure to love one's child, this leader has exerted heavy moral pressure on the women to stay. It appears that he was not concerned about women's safety or the deleterious effects on children exposed to domestic violence. Yet the message he has given in this instance seems typical of those given to Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence in New Zealand.

A community relations officer was of the view that there was a lack of support mechanisms within the communities for Indian women who experienced domestic violence. She added that if the woman reported the violence to authorities, she was further stigmatized and isolated. She was ignored at community gatherings.

A New Zealand-based expert said that the community promoted values of keeping the family together irrespective of women suffering at the hands of their husbands. That is, parents experienced shame because of the attitudes of their community. These are powerful messages. As one

interviewee said, little will change for women until the community as a whole challenges the traditions and values that are complicit in the abuse of women and children. In the next section, I will discuss other barriers women experience in seeking help.

Other barriers.

One of the main barriers to seeking help cited by my interviewees was financial dependence on the abuser. Earlier, I argued that financial dependence is one of the factors that make Indian women vulnerable to domestic violence in the first place. But as my key informants pointed out, it is also one of the things which can stop women from seeking help when domestic violence does occur. For example, a social worker, who worked in a woman's refuge, discussed a case she was involved with where the Indian woman who experienced domestic violence was 'treated like a slave' for three years. Her passport was hidden from her and she was fully aware of her husband's extramarital affairs but had no option but to tolerate them. The primary reason she refrained from reporting the violence was her financial dependency. Some other experts added that migrant women who did not hold residency were dependent on their husbands and were not entitled to New Zealand government benefits like Work and Income. This left them with no alternative options for financial support.

A women's advocate in New Zealand argued that Indian women who were dependent on their husbands for resident status in the country held back from seeking help. However, she had observed recent trends where some women rang the organization to educate themselves about their rights and the options available to them. This expert also stressed on the lack of awareness among Indian migrant women about the help available to them. They were uninformed about the benefits they were entitled to.

Children also played a big part in women making the decision to stay or leave, said some New Zealand experts. Many interviewees were of the view that many Indian migrant women stayed in abusive relationships because they believed that this was best for the children. This is probably linked to the financial risks associated with leaving. These key informants also argued that most women fear they may lose custody of their child to the perpetrator as they would not be in a position to provide for the child or children.

One way this can happen is when the perpetrator applies to the Family Court for an 'Order Preventing Removal' of children. Such orders stop the woman from taking her child overseas. Some New Zealand-based experts said that this acts as a barrier as well. Many women are threatened by the perpetrator that he would gain custody of the child eventually and that she would not be allowed to take the child to India. These interviewees had observed that Indian migrant women were often outmanoeuvred by their partners in the Family Court by such tactics.

A New Zealand-based social worker noted that the stigma attached to being a single mother also seemed to hinder reporting domestic violence, not only among women in India but also Indian migrant women in New Zealand. In addition, societal pressures faced by single women and mothers, discussed earlier, and their implications on children also served as reasons for Indian migrant women to stay in abusive relationships.

In a lot of the families that I have worked with, the wife stays back because of the children. The bad name the children will get; their future might be affected. If there is a daughter in the midst, the mother is always thinking about at the time of her marriage, she will need the father so if I walk out, she will not be able to get married. I remember one case, there was an 11 year-old-girl this mother had and she had come out, she was willing to go into the

refuge. We worked out a plan and everything was set. She had two other children too. But the last minute, she said "In another 10 years my daughter will be ready for marriage: who will marry her if I leave my husband?" She went back.

The quote above exhibits that patriarchal bargain is intergenerational. A woman had little or no status in the society if she chose to leave her husband, pointed out an expert in India. This not only affected her status but also the status of her children especially, her daughters. In the Hindu marriage ceremony, the father plays a vital role in giving away his daughter. It is considered inauspicious if the father is not a part of the ceremony. In the absence of a husband, a single mother might find it difficult to find a suitable groom for her daughter. She is viewed as someone who left her husband which goes against the societal expectations placed on a woman as a wife. She might also be less able to afford a dowry.

On the contrary, some experts expressed their views that children were often a reason for women to leave the relationship as they worried about the welfare of their children. These interviewees were of the view that in cases where alcohol was involved, women left the relationship for the sake of their children. This could be either because they feared their husband would physically harm their children or that children would learn these behaviours from their father.

Many Indian migrant women experienced language difficulties when they arrived in New Zealand, which was discussed previously. These language difficulties also hindered reporting of abuse to a large extent as these women did not know what to say. This opinion was expressed by many India and New Zealand-based experts. A policy analyst from New Zealand argued that even Indian women who had a good grasp of English

faltered when faced with authorities such as the police. This, in turn, could make officials reluctant to trust the women. That is, if police officers and other officials did not take the time and make the effort needed to understand any variety of English other than Kiwi, they got little or apparently confusing information which they tended to discount.

Another factor that acted as a barrier in help seeking were the experiences with authorities in the home country. These may shape women's expectations of what help they might get from authorities in New Zealand. For example, an Indian interviewee noted that many times, police did not help women who tried to report domestic violence. They either blamed the women or asked them to go back to their husbands, pressurizing them to hold the family together under any circumstances. This interviewee shared an experience with me,

...We told her if she had any problems in the future she could go up to him (police)...if her husband harasses her. The police officer said, "Don't worry, any time you need help I'll be there." And we left. A month later, her husband got into her house and started beating her up. There was a breach of protection order. She was worried and scared. She called the same police officer who said he'd help her a month ago. When she went there, he said "Oh, it's ok, call your husband and compromise."

The attitudes of authorities in India is important to understand as Indian women who migrate to New Zealand bring with them the belief, that approaching the authorities would be futile.

One New Zealand interviewee shared her experience of getting calls from doctors who received disclosures about domestic violence. She talked about a particular case where an Indian migrant woman experiencing domestic violence wanted help from her doctor but not from the police. The referral, while good, wasn't a panacea as the issues of shame and

dependency undermined intervention. On the brighter side, the woman at least got to know that not everyone tolerates domestic violence and there is some help available.

Many Indian migrant women in New Zealand faced barriers even after approaching services. These not only hindered intervention but when other women in the community got to know of these difficulties, it hindered help-seeking as well.

All New Zealand experts, including interviewees from mainstream organizations, stressed that culturally sensitive intervention was a must when dealing with Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence in New Zealand. That is, one size did not fit all. This was recognized following the homicide of a migrant woman in a domestic violence case. The homicide opened the eyes of policy makers about the need for interventions to be tailored to particular circumstances. This particular case, the social worker said, contributed to changes in immigration policy with regards to special visa that helped migrant women who leave abusive relationships find work and eventually resident status.

However, my New Zealand key informants identified several problems with the policy that posed barriers in help-seeking. They said that many Indian migrant women were either unaware of this provision or did not qualify because of the required evidence that domestic violence had occurred. Some interviewees stressed that a lot of domestic violence in the Indian community was psychological which in most cases could not be proved.

Some New Zealand interviewees stressed the importance of service providers paying attention to cultural needs of Indian migrant women who availed themselves of their services. One expert stressed that

attention given to details in intervention would help women feel at home: for instance, providing halal meat for Muslim women in safe houses or having separate utensils for vegetarians. Some experts said that safe housing was mostly available only in mainstream organizations: ethnic organizations generally do not have the funding for refuges. These institutional barriers caused many Indian migrant women to return to the perpetrator as they did not feel welcome at the safe houses available.

Many interviewees emphasized that in order to alleviate language difficulties, employing an ethnic worker who spoke the language was helpful. They added that language played a vital role in engaging women in intervention. However, one expert pointed out that sometimes this could act against the woman. For instance, there were cases where the social worker was known to the perpetrator and his family. This worker then sometimes spread the details about the incident to the community members which jeopardized the woman's safety.

In addition, some New Zealand interviewees spoke about the cautious approach needed in assigning interpreters in the event that the woman had little or no knowledge of English. An expert shared an incident where the interpreter was a well-known community member or even worse, the husband himself. This was evidently problematic and victimized the woman further.

One of the women's advocates, who worked with a mainstream organization in a region that had significant Indian migrant population, pointed out that their organization was not as visible to the Indian community as they should be. A reason for this could be that they did not have an Indian worker. This could pose a significant barrier for Indian migrant women to seek help. However, having an ethnic service is no

panacea. The same interviewee considered that a particular ethnic organization in her region was ineffective. She expressed concerns that Indian migrant women in their region might not be gaining easy access to services with regards to domestic violence. A few other New Zealand interviewees also shared similar concerns about the same ethnic service provider. One of the experts had spoken to Indian women who were unsatisfied with the services. As mentioned earlier, if women experienced inadequate support with services, it could increase the risk of them returning to the perpetrators.

Inadequate legal representation was identified as a barrier. A few experts noted that legal aid lawyers, who were government-funded, were not usually as experienced as the lawyers that the perpetrators could afford. In these cases, it was evident that the power was in the hands of the perpetrator from the beginning of the case. These barriers in service provision left women feeling powerless and defeated.

Mental health.

Although not many experts spoke about mental health and domestic violence, it is important to acknowledge that mental health issues can play a role in domestic violence. A social scientist in India shared some findings of a study she was involved in. This project looked at how mental health correlates to domestic violence. They found high associations between domestic violence, depression and suicidal ideation. She added that dowry demands also led to depression and increased risk of suicide attempts. A few Indian key informants spoke about women attempting to commit suicide by consuming poison, hanging or setting themselves ablaze as a result of dowry harassment. That is, in these cases, mental illness was an outcome of domestic violence.

However, the themes that emerged in New Zealand interviewees with regards to depression were different from those in India. A social worker in New Zealand argued that Indian migrant women experienced depression largely due to the impact of isolation. In addition, if there was domestic violence and they had just given birth, many women experienced post-natal depression. This could be owing to the vast difference in the expectations of a new mother in India and New Zealand. Most times, in India, there was family to help her with the new-born. This is usually not the case in New Zealand. The woman is expected to do all the household chores and take care of the baby all by herself. In many cases these women lived in a joint family, with their in-laws, and had to cater to the needs of every family member.

Some key informants stressed that mental illness was still largely taboo in the Indian community. They were also of the view that terms like depression were frowned upon not only by the women's families, but by women themselves. One expert suggested that while dealing with Indian migrant women with mental health issues, it was preferred to not use mental illness terminology as they and their families might resist treatment, owing to stigma.

Protective factors.

New Zealand and India- based key informants were asked if there were any protective factors for Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence. Some experts noted the importance given to familial ties in Indian communities that served as a protective factor for some women. A few added that even if the women's parents were not supportive of her decision to leave the abusive relationship, in some cases at least, the women's extended family members stepped in to help her. A policy analyst in New Zealand shared her experience, saying that in some cases

she had seen, close knit families who lived in New Zealand supported women in times of need. On the other hand, even if the perpetrator's family resided in New Zealand, she had never seen them supporting their daughter-in-law. This could be because these family members were, in most cases, directly or indirectly involved in the abuse, as discussed earlier.

An expert added that there was a developing pattern of parents in India coming forward to provide their daughters with school and university education, as compared to a decade or two ago. Some experts in India stated that education and economic independence served as protective factors for Indian women.

An interviewee in India shared her observation that there had been some attitude shift among parents of daughters. She said that some parents she had come across wanted their daughters to leave the abusive relationship, even if the latter was unwilling to. That is, these parents did not want their daughters to tolerate abuse anymore. This is probably because of the awareness of the intensity of abuse and visibility of consequences other women had faced.

We have the parents coming and telling us," Will you talk to my daughter and tell her because we know that she's putting up with abuse. "Earlier it never used to be like that, they didn't want her to change or didn't want her to leave the husband and they used to believe that you have to put up with this. I have another daughter to get married. She cannot be separated from her husband and she has to tolerate it. But of late I see a lot of parents coming and saying, "Will you convince her? I at least want my daughter alive."

This suggests that some parents are coming forward to help their daughters. They are not only breaking the norm of tolerating injustices

done to women, but are also carrying these values forward to the following generations.

An Indian interviewee was of the view that in addition to extended family members, women in rural India also had the village council (*panchayat*) that protected them, at least in some cases. In contrast, urban Indian women had fewer support networks on a community level. The reason for this could be the attitude on the relative importance of privacy with regards to domestic matters, in urban India as compared to rural. An expert asserted that in urban India, domestic violence happened behind closed doors as it was not considered anyone else's place to step in and address the situation.

It is important to acknowledge that some experts in India and New Zealand pointed out that religion and religious leaders were seen to act as protective factors for women experiencing domestic violence. One of these experts felt that, on the whole, messages delivered by religious leaders had more impact in the community than those from workers in women's organizations. On the contrary, a few other experts in India were of the view that religious leaders sometimes were part of the coercion of women to stay in abusive relationships. That is, these leaders' ideas about preserving the sanctity of marriage were not particularly helpful to women experiencing domestic violence. However, some New Zealand experts believed that approaching religious leaders helped in initiating conversations around migrant domestic violence issues. These contrasting views exhibit that in an immigrant context, religious leaders seem to be helpful in conveying the right messages to the community as opposed to their counterparts in India.

Some experts in India believed that Indian women were raised to be resilient, which acted as a protective factor for them to cope with domestic violence. An NGO head said,

The way you bring up the girl child, even when a 2-year-old girl falls down you tell her, "Why are you crying for such small things, there's so much more to come." You kind of prepare the girl that the tsunami that is going to hit you at some point .That's why the coping is better with Indian women; they are more resilient. We did a study of coping strategies and we compared it between Japan and India and we found that certain hypothesis were very unexpected, self-esteem was very high, confidence level was high and capacity and coping skills were very good. That's because they are brought up with this in mind when it hits you, it's not that bad, they are able to cope with it, and they are able to cope with it for a very long time.

This is an interesting response to oppression that women experience, in that parents prepare their daughters for more of the same- to tolerate it. The coping that this interviewee was referring to was the tolerance and acceptance that violence was inevitable in a marriage.

Another interviewee observed more resilience among women in rural India, as their living conditions were tougher compared to urban Indian women. This might be the case as many rural women lead tougher lives than their urban counterparts owing to rigid gender roles, stressed this expert. Speaking of resilience in rural women, she said,

When I go to these rural areas...I remember in this one particular focus group, this woman was laughing and talking and was saying, "Every day I live in terror of what he is going to do to me. I have got my child and he comes home drunk. How he is going to react for any innocuous thing, I don't know how he'll behave." She generally runs away and gets protection...In a rural area the cohesiveness is very nice there so they look out for each other. But what amazed me was despite all these trials and tribulations, how is this woman able to talk so cheerfully? I sometimes feel that there is a tremendous amount of resilience... Our people live such

difficult lives every day, women much more so. When you grow up like that, there is some inner resilience within you.

This expert's views coincided with those of the previous interviewee, that daughter's upbringing played a vital role in making them resilient to domestic violence.

An interviewee, who headed an organization that worked on issues of sexual and gender violence in India, expressed the view that malleability of cultural aspects served as a protective factor. Her view could be further understood as flexible and dynamic culture can help women by playing a part in altering rigid gender roles. This in turn could open avenues for women to be empowered.

Conclusion

This chapter comprised views of experts in India and New Zealand on various aspects of Indian migrant domestic violence. Indian key informants particularly stressed issues around unequal status of women that make them vulnerable to injustices. They also discussed cultural norms and practices that maintain and reinforce the low status of Indian women. Indian experts shared their views on the practice of dowry and its connection to domestic violence. This suggest that domestic violence in the Indian context has several unique features; for instance, the involvement of in-laws and extended family in abuse and dowry harassment. Another unique aspect that comes to the forefront is that of "What will people think?" According to Indian experts, shame and fear of ostracism pressurizes many Indian women to stay in abusive relationships. Most times, their parents also coerce them to keep the family together, asking them to tolerate abuse, fearing community reaction.

Key informants in New Zealand discussed challenges that Indian women face during migration that make them vulnerable to domestic violence in New Zealand. They pointed out that Indian women's low status in their home country in addition to migration-related factors exacerbate their vulnerability to domestic violence in a host society. They also talked about parental support and Indian community attitudes with regards to domestic violence. Experts were of the view that while most parents and community members tolerated and accepted domestic violence, there were a few who wanted to protect women. The take-home message here is that Indian women experiencing domestic violence in a host country operate within tough constraints, which thwart their efforts to seek help from family and wider community owing to cultural norms imposed on them.

These themes served helpful in shaping my approach to the case studies which appear in the next four chapters. The themes provided me with a clear picture of the issues around Indian migrant domestic violence in New Zealand. It particularly gave me insight into aspects of parental support and community attitudes and their impact on women's efforts to navigate safety in a host country. The themes that emerged in the key informant interviews reveal the unique needs of Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence thereby raising implications for service providers and community leaders. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 10.

Chapter 5

Roopa

Introduction

Roopa's parents in India arranged her marriage with Ravi who was a New Zealand citizen. Roopa arrived in New Zealand. Shortly after, Ravi started to physically abuse Roopa frequently. He constantly worked towards isolating her from her family and friends in India. As the violence escalated, Roopa found herself holding back from reporting the extent of it to the authorities fearing the consequences. After several unsuccessful attempts, Roopa left the relationship when she felt that her life was in danger. She got a protection order but Ravi used the Family Court – to get an order preventing the removal of their daughter from the country. This meant that when Roopa decided to return to India because she was not coping here, she had to leave her daughter behind in Ravi's care. She is now back in New Zealand and although she has an open arrangement with Ravi that she can visit her daughter whenever she wishes, Roopa feels that Ravi has alienated her daughter from her.

This is a story in which the woman's parents play an important role. It also highlights the involvement of in-laws in the abuse. It shows how women are made financially dependent and the husband's manipulation of the system which eventually leads to the mother's alienation from her daughter. This story also brings forth barriers women face in leaving an abusive marriage, besides language difficulties and their status in the host country. It is worth noting that Roopa could speak English fluently.

Background

Roopa belonged to a Punjabi family and was born and raised in Delhi. She has one brother. Roopa said her family shared mutual love and respect for one another. Roopa's extended family was close-knit as well. She was close to her cousins. Roopa told me this is what she had expected out of a marriage as well: closeness, love and respect. This was not to be.

Roopa's marriage followed an approach to her uncle by the groom's father. He was on the lookout for a "well-educated" bride for his son, a resident of New Zealand. Her parents were favourably disposed to the idea of Roopa and her prospective husband living away from India. They believed that the best thing for them to do was to leave the couple alone and away from interfering relatives. In retrospect, perhaps they were naïve to the isolation that newly married women experience when they come to a host country.

As Roopa did not have anyone else in mind, she agreed to marry Ravi. Initially, though, they lived near her parents in Delhi. Roopa recollects there were times when he would get angry but she did not make much out of it as they were newlyweds. She believed things would get better once they spent more time with each other.

Roopa came to New Zealand soon after her wedding. She was in a well-paying job in India but had to quit to move to New Zealand. She came on a visitor visa and got her work permit within 10 days of arrival. When she started working, she applied for residency. Roopa says that, right from the start, the relationship was "*not very comfortable*." As they were both working, they did not spend much time together. Roopa reflects that she should have "*done something*" when the verbal and emotional abuse started. It is safe to assume that by this she means seeking help in the early

stages of abuse. She did not do so because she felt it was better to “compromise and adjust.” She rationalized, believing she did not know him well enough to know how to react to his anger. Roopa adds that is what Indian women do to maintain relationships. Some of her beliefs about gender roles in Indian families became clearer when she spoke to me about how women are tolerant and adjusting when they are being abused by their husband, as will be discussed later.

Abuse in New Zealand

Roopa says although Ravi was controlling right from the beginning, initially, there was no physical abuse as they lived close to her parents, as mentioned earlier. Perhaps the fear that she would report to her parents and relatives kept him from physically abusing her. Roopa told me,

When we moved here (New Zealand) and he hit me first time, I was shocked...when he yelled at me, I was shocked that he could raise his voice that much and that he can call me names. He called me a 'bitch' the first time and I was surprised because you don't say those things to girls in India.

Although Roopa felt that as an Indian wife, one should be compromising in nature, she expressed shock and disbelief when the verbal abuse escalated to physical abuse. This reaction can be attributed to Roopa's expectations of a marriage, mentioned earlier.

Ravi got angry a lot: most times Roopa was unaware of the reason behind it. Talking about the first slap,

The first time he abused me was on my first birthday here after I got married. It was physical...he slapped me quite hard. The reason was that I tidied up a drawer where we had all the electricity bills, statements.

Ravi was angry she touched his papers. He started yelling at her, during which Roopa countered by telling him that it was her house as well and that she was only trying to help by cleaning up.

... that was the first time ever he slapped me and I was shocked because my dad or brother have never done that to me.

That is, other significant men in Roopa's life have treated her with love and respect. Roopa did not report this incident as she was too shocked to react to the slap. She was puzzled why he was so angry. The next day, he apologized. She felt she was in the wrong by moving his important papers without his permission and rationalized his anger. In our conversation, Roopa attempted to explain what would trigger abuse,

Our fights were, if I gave him tea and he wanted half cup and if it's more than half cup he'd say, "Why is it not half a cup, why is it full?" If it is full, "Why is it full, why is it not half? " Anything can go wrong...any time.

Soon, Roopa fell pregnant. She was beaten during her pregnancy as well. Ravi was upset about Roopa choosing a male gynaecologist. He yelled at her for not picking a female gynaecologist. This made Roopa sad but she remained silent. Roopa had some complications in her pregnancy owing to stress. Her in-laws told her they would come to New Zealand and help look after the baby so that she could continue working after the birth. However, they cancelled this trip and Roopa had to quit her job to care for her child.

During her last trimester, Roopa took a courageous step to confide in her friend about the abuse, despite her wifely duties towards keeping the family together.

I did tell one of my friends who used to work with me; she's Kiwi. She told me that I should seek help and come out and tell someone

but I told her my due date was any day. Where will I go? Where will I keep my child? Because I did not have any information with me.

Roopa constantly feared the consequences of reporting abuse, as will be discussed later.

It is worth noting that as Roopa was initially employed and then went on to pursue a degree, she was not as isolated as some migrant women are, particularly those who are unemployed. She did not have any language difficulties either. Despite this, she did not know where to seek help in this situation. In the above quote, it is also interesting that Roopa chose to confide in a Kiwi friend rather than someone from her own community. Roopa knew of some people in the Indian community but felt safer confiding in someone outside the community owing to the potential pressures she might face by confiding in the former.

Ravi constantly isolated Roopa, not only from the community here but also from her parents who lived thousands of miles away. Roopa said when her daughter was born through C-section, her mother would ring her every day to enquire about her health. This angered Ravi. He would sit next to Roopa and monitor her conversations with her mother. He was intolerant of her relatives trying to get in touch with Roopa.

Gradually I was cut off from everyone. I had my friends' contact numbers but I couldn't call them because then I had to use calling card and for that I needed money. To have money, I had to ask him and answer all his questions- why am I talking to my friend; what was she saying. Even when I used to go to friend's house he would ask me what did you say; "What did you talk (about)?" I do not mind answering but not every time. Sometimes I used to forget. I would say I do not remember, we just talked and then he would abuse me. "Oh, you don't want to tell me. Why are you trying to lie to me?" Then he used to get physical.

5: Roopa

These are indicative of Ravi's tactics to isolate Roopa and exercise power and control over her. He also used Roopa's financial dependence to his advantage. I will discuss more about this later in the case study.

There was another incident after her daughter was born. Roopa recalls that this particular incident took place on her birthday. Roopa, like any other new mother, was trying to figure out how to meet the needs of her young infant. Ravi was not happy that Roopa stayed home taking care of their child. He wanted her to get a job. She was beaten repeatedly until the police arrived. Roopa suspects that the neighbour may have called them. The police asked the couple about the reason for the "argument." Roopa told them it was over her being unemployed. The police asked them to sort it out. Roopa was asked in private if she was physically abused but she denied it.

I didn't say anything at that time because I got scared about police being involved as it's not good. It's something we do culturally...that it's not good that he might lose his job or whatever will happen because he was working for a government agency.

Here Roopa is talking about of the repercussions she may have to face on a familial and community level, such as shame and losing face, associated with reporting abuse and the social stigma attached to separation and divorce.

While the police did not take any action against Ravi, they did notify refuge. Roopa got her first call from the women's refuge following this incident. She was asked if she needed assistance to move out of the house. Roopa told them she was fine. They also sent her a brochure which included all the details about where to seek help. Roopa says she was not "mentally prepared" to seek help at that stage.

I thought maybe since police have come and it's been recorded, he might step back...but he didn't.

As it will be noted in the other incidents of abuse that were reported as well, Roopa decided to stay hoping Ravi would change for the better out of fear, if not anything else.

Roopa narrated another incident when they lived in a regional city. This was when she was pursuing her post graduate degree. She asked Ravi if they could leave their daughter at day care as she had practicum work as a part of her course requirement and he said no. She felt Ravi would help her as he did in the first practicum when he took up night shifts so she could work in the mornings. But when he said no the second time, she had to ask her parents to come to New Zealand and help.

Roopa did not understand why Ravi was unhappy with her studying as well as with her staying at home to take care of their daughter. He would hurl abuses at her if she stayed home. He constantly reminded her that it was his money she was spending.

He used to call me names and call me a black bitch eating free food from his home...all those nasty things. I thought maybe I should just leave because it was horrible living with that emotional abuse.

Roopa told me she tolerated Ravi's behaviour as her daughter had health issues and needed her attention. She tried to focus on caring for her daughter rather than the physical, emotional and financial abuse she was being subject to on a regular basis.

Intervention by Neighbours

They moved to a small town where Roopa says, "it was horrible," referring to the ongoing abuse. The day they were moving, they had a

“fight.” It is interesting how Roopa uses “fight” in a context where there is evidently a use of power and control by Ravi, as we will see.

Ravi wanted to chat via webcam to his parents in India while Roopa was using the laptop to finish her assignment before the deadline. He demanded that he first talk to his parents and told her that her assignment could wait. She had to submit it by midnight and he told her he would only take 15 minutes.

I told him, “You always prioritize your things first; you can wait until my assignment is done.” But then he got angry and yelled at me and then we had a fight again. He just threw me out of the house.

Leaving her daughter behind, Roopa went and sat in a bus stop nearby, wondering what to do. An Indian couple who lived nearby drove past. Although they didn’t know Roopa, they stopped and asked her if everything was alright. Roopa burst out in tears. The man spoke to Ravi and told him that everyone argues but physical abuse is not the right way to resolve marital issues. He questioned Ravi if he was abusing Roopa because she was alone in New Zealand, away from her parents and family. Ravi instantly shifted the blame on Roopa. I will discuss later in detail how this acted as one of the barriers in reporting abuse.

After the couple left Roopa’s house, Ravi sarcastically called the Indian male her “husband”, asking her if she would call her “husband” if they had an argument the next time. Ravi also asked Roopa if she was going to live with him. This kind of verbal and emotional abuse scared Roopa, especially because they had just moved to this town: she didn’t know anyone there.

Roopa's Parents in New Zealand

After the couple moved, Roopa's parents came to visit her in New Zealand to help her with her daughter's care. This was helpful to Roopa, but did not stop the abuse. For example, Roopa told Ravi she wanted to enrol for driving classes but he offered to teach her.

I used to go out with him for driving but then it was the same. If I took a wrong turn...or anything if I did wrong, he would say "that's your fault, you did that" and he would slap me. Once when my parents were here, he chucked me out of the car and I came back home walking.

Ravi refrained from abusing Roopa in front of her parents: he found ways of keeping the abuse hidden from them. Her parents knew something was amiss. They sensed Roopa was unhappy. They even asked her if she was being treated well by Ravi as they saw him get angry often. She rationalized his anger saying it was work-related stress.

They all went to another city for a holiday. Ravi started yelling at his in-laws in the car.

...he abused my dad and asked him to just get out of his car. So we all were out of his car and had to take a bus. My dad luckily had money with him. I didn't have because I thought he (Ravi) is with me, why should I carry money.

This particular incident was a turning point in Roopa's parents' views on Ravi's behaviour towards her: it gave them a better appreciation of the how abusive Ravi could be. Right after this incident, Roopa's father told her it was her choice to stay with Ravi or not. He reassured her that either way, they would support her decision. This was an important turning point in the story as this was the first time Roopa's parents were somewhat aware of the gravity of the situation Roopa was in and extended their support.

The incident also shows how power and control is not just directed towards the wife but also her family members, in some cases. This may be attributed to the lop-sidedness of agency between the families of the bride and groom from the time of the marriage. That is, the wife's family because they feel indebted to the husband's family for taking their daughter off their hands, may feel that they have only a limited ability to stand up against their son-in-law and his family. Further, when Roopa states she carried no money because she was with Ravi, it indicates how financially dependent he had made her. Even when Roopa was employed, they had a joint account; she would be interrogated about every single expense. She had to ask his permission before spending money.

Ravi continued to be hostile towards Roopa's parents for a long time after this incident. This led them to believe that they were partly to blame for the marital problems between Roopa and Ravi. So they decided to cut their visit short, from six months to two. They felt things would change for the better if they left. Unfortunately, nothing changed. In fact, the situation got worse.

Calling the Police Herself

Although Roopa was saddened that her parents cut their visit short, she was rather relieved to hear from them that they would support her in her decision. A few months later, there was a brutal incident that drove Roopa to call the police. This was the first time she made the call; perhaps owing to the intensity of abuse. She feared for her daughter's and her life.

Once...he tried to put a pillow on my face and tried to strangle me. That's when I had to call police, for the first time ever because I was scared. And it always used to happen in front of my daughter... She has seen our every fight, every single argument...everything.

Roopa's daughter was two and a half years old when she witnessed this incident, but she had witnessed the violence from the beginning. I will discuss the impact this had on her daughter later in the case study. In this instance, Roopa went to her neighbours for help. She used their phone to call the police. This was necessary in part because Ravi used to hide the telephone in their house as a means of controlling her interactions, not only with her friends and family, but also the outside world in general.

The police arrived and took a statement from Roopa. As was the case with the previous police call-out, she did not mention anything about physical abuse. Roopa complained only about her husband being "verbally abusive and loud." By this stage, Roopa had obtained New Zealand citizenship. However, although she had the legal right to stay in New Zealand, there were still practical matters to consider. She was afraid that if she reported the full facts of the assault, her husband would lose his job with the government. She was also anxious about where she would go with her daughter, where would they live and how her daughter will be raised by a single mother. Thus, it is worth noting that while securing resident or citizenship status can make a big difference to immigrant women, they may still face significant barriers to reporting domestic violence in the host country.

Because Roopa's daughter was in the house – and in fact had witnessed the violence – the Police notified Child Youth and Family Services (CYFS). An Indian CYFS worker phoned Roopa and explained to her the consequences of a child witnessing violence and reassured her that there was help available anytime she chose to leave the relationship. She also connected Roopa to a social worker at the refuge. Roopa added that this social worker was of great support to her during trying times. Roopa

found the information provided by this worker useful but was not ready to leave. She stayed on and the abuse continued.

Extended Family Abuse

A few months after the abovementioned incident, Roopa's in-laws migrated to New Zealand which added more tension to her marriage. It certainly increased the surveillance to which she was subjected. Ravi's parents insisted on knowing her whereabouts throughout the day. They would ring their son and complain to him that Roopa was not home on time. This in turn would lead to him calling her and yelling at her for not being home.

Roopa told me about another incident that occurred after her in-laws started living with the couple. This incident led to her reporting the violence to the refuge.

By this stage, Roopa had completed her studies and had just started working. At short notice, she was asked if she could cover an early morning shift. Being new to the workplace, she did not want to say no as she felt the first few months are important to make a good impression. She asked her mother-in-law to drop her daughter off at childcare. Her mother-in-law said she could not do it. So Roopa took her daughter with her, dropped her off early at day care and went to work. She describes the scene when she got back home that day,

I came back home, they all were sitting... they all started yelling at me. That's the first time ever I confronted my ex mother-in-law. I said, "I told you that I've got a call and if you can drop her off and you guys said no." That's what they used to do; they used to be different to me and different in front of my husband.

Roopa showed resistance by questioning her mother-in-law despite being aware of the potential dire consequences. Needless to say, this act of resistance evoked anger. Her in-laws verbally abused her and called her names.

That's the time when my ex dad-in-law, he said to me...in our language he said "motherfucker" which is not a very good thing for a father to say to a girl...being in Indian culture you never get abused to that point. They all pushed me against the wall.

Roopa was appalled by the extent of nasty verbal abuse she was subjected to by her husband and in-laws.

As Roopa's father had offered to support her earlier, she rang him. She told them she was not "coping with the situation at home." It is evident that Roopa blamed herself and viewed it as her incapability of dealing with the situation rather than the real problem – the brutal abuse she was experiencing. This is possibly due to the pressures placed on the role of an Indian wife to maintain solidarity within the family.

As mentioned earlier, Roopa's parents' support has been instrumental in changing the course of the story. Following her father's suggestion, Roopa called the police. She also called the Indian social worker from CYFS who rang her earlier and reported to her that she wished to move out of the house. A woman from refuge along with a police constable went to pick up Roopa from her house. Just when Roopa was about to leave, her husband begged her to stay, promising to change for the better.

He really pleaded and I thought maybe I should give him another chance...maybe this time was an awakening call for him. I was at that point maybe not ready in my head. I decided not to go. I had my things and my daughter's things packed up, I was just about to leave... but I didn't go.

5: Roopa

This time around, Roopa truly believed her husband and in-laws would treat her better as they now were aware that she had the potential to contact the authorities and leave the relationship. However, this was not to be.

A couple of weeks after this incident, Roopa overheard her husband telling his mother that even if Roopa went to refuge they would ask her to leave eventually and that she would have no other option but to return home. To this, his mother ordered him to exercise more control over Roopa.

My ex mother-in-law was telling my ex that he should have more control on me and he should be restricting me financially and he should be asking me where I am going and why.

It became increasingly clear to Roopa that her in-laws living with them exacerbated the violence and put her at a greater disadvantage. She told me her marriage would not have ended if it wasn't for her in-laws.

It is important to note that exercise of power and control by Roopa's in-laws did not begin only when they migrated to New Zealand; it started a few years earlier, after Roopa's daughter was born.

Dowry

A few months after the birth of her daughter, Roopa visited her parents in India. Her parents were expected to give presents for Ravi and his family. Ravi was in New Zealand at this point and his parents in India.

After the birth of a child, the new mother's family is usually expected to distribute presents to members of the groom's family. In some communities, the presents are more extravagant and expensive if the child is a boy. This is a common practice in many Indian communities. Roopa's

parents took many presents for all the family members. Ravi's parents were unhappy that he was given a t-shirt instead of a formal shirt.

All three of them gathered around me, pestered me and had a huge fight with me till 3am because they were not satisfied with what they got... That was a horrible... experience.

Another incident relating to dowry demands took place when Roopa's parents visited Ravi's parents with presents during a Punjabi festival. This is an Indian tradition wherein the bride's parents visit the groom's family along with presents on special occasions. Ravi's mother phoned Ravi and complained to him that Roopa's parents had not visited during one such festival. Roopa found out this was untrue when she called her parents,

I called my mum in front him and asked if they didn't go there. And my mum said they had been to his place. Even my mum's mum who is 90-years- old went as well...just to give blessings and gifts. My mum even told me the list of things they gave them.

This form of "gift-giving" is an implicit form of dowry and represents the maintenance of power and control by the groom's family. This incident showed Roopa's mother-in-law's manipulative nature which later exacerbated the problems Roopa faced in her marriage (as was discussed earlier in the story).

Roopa reported that Ravi would tell her many times that he could have married a girl from a family who was willing to give him a lot more dowry because he was resident overseas. It is common in arranged marriages for the worth of dowry to be directly proportional to factors such as educational qualifications of the groom, his country of residence or even the social status of his family. Whether there was an alternative, better paying source of dowry is unknown: his claim served to demean Roopa and her family irrespective of its truth.

Leaving the Relationship

After Roopa's in-laws had completed the minimum six months in New Zealand needed to qualify for residence, they returned to India. Contrary to what she had hoped, this did not make things easier for Roopa.

Despite almost leaving on several occasions, Roopa stayed in the relationship because she believed Ravi would change when he realized that Roopa was capable of leaving him. The day after her in-laws left for India, Roopa had an early day at work again. She informed Ravi regarding this weeks in advance so he could make arrangements. Roopa asked him if he could negotiate his work schedule in order to pick their daughter up from day care. This made him angry.

...then he hit me hard. He kicked me, slapped me. He bit me and then he brought a knife and tried to stab me in front of my daughter. I was on the bed.

This was the last straw. Roopa told Ravi for the first time that she was not willing to live with him. However, she kept her deliberate planning and escape strategy a secret. On an earlier occasion when Roopa tried to leave Ravi, he begged her to stay and she did. Roopa wanted to ensure this didn't happen again. Roopa was determined to leave; at the same time, she wanted to ensure that it was well-planned. So she stayed on with Ravi until she was sure of her next move.

She called women's refuge from work the next day. The refuge asked Roopa to look up white pages and find a lawyer. Roopa felt she was not "mentally strong" enough to call a lawyer by herself. She was distraught and was grappling with the implications of the decision to leave. In order to get some emotional support, Roopa called one of her Indian friends who was 5th generation Indian in New Zealand. They visited her when

Ravi was at work and saw her bruises. They advised her to report the assault to the police immediately and then to get a lawyer. She consulted a local lawyer. He asked her to get her medical examination done.

Although Roopa visited the doctor seven days after the incident, her bruises were still visible. After the doctor's visit, she went to the police station where pictures of her injuries were taken. She got a protection order without notice. Roopa says she finally made this move as she feared she would be killed.

I knew that once I have reported all this I'm not going back because I was sure he would kill me. I was scared of him.

A little over a week after the incident, Roopa had left home. She was taken to the refuge while her husband was at work.

When Ravi realized what had happened, he tried ringing her multiple times, as did his family members. Roopa did not answer. She was angry that none of the family members who called her had intervened earlier even though they were fully aware of the abuse. One or two relatives had tried to intervene in the past but Ravi put the blame on Roopa for the "fight." When these relatives left, there would be escalated abuse. This confirmed to Roopa that seeking help from relatives was counterproductive.

I was sick and tired of everyone telling me, "Oh, he's apologizing. He really wants to come (back). He's feeling very guilty." But I didn't see that. I told him once that if you even admit that you hit me, even if you acknowledge it I will come back. But he never did. Why would I go back to a liar who can do anything to me?

Even the friends Roopa acquired through Ravi decided to cut all ties with her and "judged her" because she had left Ravi. The silver lining was also

the support she received from her parents, brother and some extended family members.

However, Roopa still felt isolated. She was working in a school at that time but was too distressed to focus on work. She decided to quit her job. This meant, she had no income. Workers from the refuge took Roopa to Work and Income office as they were being unresponsive with her case.

They (workers from refuge) told WINZ, "We are leaving her here. You do whatever you want to do with her." Because I didn't have any money. They help but it's a long process...I needed money to survive. I had nothing with me. I wondered what sort of system is here.

There was no positive outcome with WINZ. For everyday survival needs, Roopa started working on a casual basis at her daughter's day care centre.

Parents' Support

Roopa desperately wanted her parents by her side during this time. Roopa felt even though support from services available is better in New Zealand than in India, family support which she considered important was missing here.

Roopa did not have the finances to sponsor her parents, as required by Immigration New Zealand. She spoke to Immigration requesting them to allow her parents to come to New Zealand to support her. She explained to them that she was unable to sponsor them. Unfortunately, no exception could be made by Immigration. Speaking of the immigration policies, Roopa says "They have their policies but there should be exceptions." Roopa's parents had to arrange their own funds to come here, which took a few months.

Roopa could not go to India to be with her parents either. Ravi had responded to the separation by applying to the Family Court for an 'Order Preventing Removal' of their daughter.

So I was stuck here. I just had a social worker...that's all. I was alone. Just two friends...they have helped me lots at that time but that's not comfort. Yes, they would come, bring food for me ...they helped me lots but I wanted someone who could be there with me ...go to court. I was working part-time and going to the courts. It was such a huge mess.

A couple of months later, Roopa's parents finally arrived in New Zealand. Roopa's father called for the President of the local Gurudwara to help sort out issues relating to the separation. Her father wanted to try and reach a resolution outside the court while they were here so that Roopa didn't have to go to the court alone.

...this president came home and said, "Why don't you discharge the protection orders and then we can negotiate." That was the "help" I got from the community people. I was very blunt and told him that that's not going to happen. And if he (Ravi) wants to go through the courts then I'm there. By that time maybe I had accepted that whatever happens I have to face it.

In Roopa's case, the community leaders proved to be unhelpful. Their negotiation of the situation was based on saving face of the Indian community- by getting Roopa to discharge the protection order. As mentioned by my key informants, many women in her position are coerced to stay in the marriage by community leaders owing to social stigma relating to separation and divorce. But Roopa was strong enough by this point as her parents were not only by her side but also supportive of her decisions, as mentioned earlier.

Roopa was determined to seek justice but she needed emotional support in trying times in the court. Roopa says she felt better when her parents

came to support her. Her father would accompany her to the court while her mother would take care of her daughter at home. Roopa wondered what she could have done without them considering it took the entire day for the court processes when she was called.

Roopa got support not only from her parents, but also, her brother and some extended family members. She was certain that the abuse would not have taken place or escalated to the level that it did, if the couple had lived in India.

He could not have dared to do anything because I have my whole family there. Here, it might have been better because when my parents were here, I felt heaps better.

Roopa's parents' support became more evident when they encouraged Roopa not only to leave Ravi but they also told her that they would cut all ties with her if she continued to live with him. While some readers may consider this to have been a threat, Roopa found it helpful as she felt this showed the extent to which her parents were against her staying in the relationship and how much they cared. It is interesting to see the lengths to which her parents go in order to ensure their daughter's safety.

Roopa's parents' support was important to her especially at this point. Roopa needed their help in taking care of her daughter when she was preoccupied with the current situation they were in. By this stage, Ravi had been convicted of assault and was ordered to complete 100 hours of community service.

Roopa's Daughter

The Family Court ruled that Roopa and Ravi would have custody of their daughter- one week with each parent, despite the fact that Ravi had been convicted of assault. Roopa said her daughter was not coping with this

arrangement. As mentioned earlier, Roopa's daughter was present during every incident of abuse. Roopa narrated how this traumatized her.

When she used to come and stay with me (for a week) she used to tell me things that I would not expect from a 4 year old. She used to say "I am not good, mum. Why are my parents living here (apart)? It's not their house. They should go back." It was really bad. I had to take her to counselling because she saw him trying to stab me. One day, she was watching TV. There was a song going on; a girl picked up a knife and my daughter started crying and she ran away from the room. I realized she needed help.

Roopa told me that her daughter suffers from feeding issues as a result of witnessing the abuse. Roopa told me that when there was abuse, her daughter would run to another room and shut her ears. In fact, she still does the same, years later, when she hears loud noises. Roopa said the impact of witnessing the violence was also evident on her daughter's personality. She became more introverted and "kept to herself."

A few months later, Roopa decided to go to India, along with her parents. This was a big step because she had to leave her daughter behind, but Roopa was not coping with the stress of court cases and aftermath of the abuse. Her eyes welled up with tears, as she narrated,

I had to leave her because with this back and forth thing- one week with me and one week with him, it was rotten. She was a really unhealthy child. I couldn't take her to India because of the orders that were there. The stay orders. I asked my ex if those could be removed and I could take her with me but he said I cannot take her. I think the only reason was that he controls me through her.

Roopa felt she was being punished for reporting abuse. She felt victimized further and this will be discussed in detail later. One of the biggest fears facing many Indian migrant woman who experience domestic violence in

New Zealand is that their children will be taken away from them. This could possibly be one of the barriers for reporting abuse.

While it was hard being separated from her daughter, this time away was important for Roopa to clear her head and start afresh. She stayed in India for one and a half years. During her time there, Roopa maintained contact with her daughter by ringing her at school. This year and a half away from her daughter in addition to her financial situation, proved to be a challenging ordeal.

Roopa Returns

On her return, Roopa had to renegotiate custody arrangement. Roopa was broke: she had sold all her belongings before she left to India in order to pay her lawyers. She had been paying child support. Roopa felt she needed to be more financially stable to ensure the welfare and safety of her daughter.

My position when I came back from India was not that strong...financially. I wasn't sure where I was going to live. I was living with a friend for some time. After that I had to flat with some people. I had to leave that place and move to another house...I struggled a lot to get a job.

Given that Roopa had a protection order and Ravi, by this stage had been convicted of assault, Roopa would have had a strong case for getting a parenting order giving her the day to day care of her daughter. On the other hand, she might have been vulnerable to claims that she was a bad mother for “abandoning” her daughter in New Zealand when she returned to India. In the end, Roopa agreed to an arrangement whereby her daughter lived with Ravi but Roopa could see her whenever she liked. Her sense of helplessness was evident when she spoke about her separation from her daughter. Roopa’s alienation from her daughter

coupled with financial stressors left her mentally distraught. She was diagnosed with clinical depression. She detested being on medication.

...I had been on anti-depressants and it has ruined me completely. I just stopped it this year. I do not want to be on medicines. Because of this stress, I got hypothyroidism. I'm taking medication for that; I got high cholesterol because of my thyroid. My hormones are imbalanced. It is the stress that is killing me.

The stress can also be attributed to her lack of support system in New Zealand. More about this will be discussed later.

As mentioned earlier, Roopa had to pay child support. Her financial position was further strained by this.

When I was not working, I was paying the IRD. Now that I'm working I'm paying a huge amount to IRD... I'm sick and tired of ringing IRD time and again. I cannot afford it. I have to do flatting because my money goes there. I cannot afford to buy a new car...my car is broken. It's horrible... What am I getting out of this? I'm just here in this country because my daughter is here. Otherwise I don't want to live here. I hate this country. Really hate it.

As the non-custodial parent, Roopa was expected to pay towards child support during her time in India, when she had no source of income. This continued on her return to New Zealand. Nevertheless, by the time I talked to her, she was in a much better financial situation – and, perhaps ironically, Ravi was on a benefit, having lost his job following his conviction. I asked Roopa if she wanted the custody arrangement to change. Roopa broke down into tears,

I really don't know now because she doesn't want to come and stay with me. I don't know what has been told to her...she is scared of me. I do not want to force her to come and stay with me. I want her to come to me when she's ready, when she wants to. I couldn't take her with me to India because her passport was in the

5: Roopa

court. Otherwise I would have taken her and never come back here... She hates me. She is being told by them (Roopa's husband and in-laws) that I'm not a good mother. I've been gone for long. She says many times "I do not like you." Whenever she sees me in the Gurudwara, she ignores me. That's the hardest thing.

As mentioned earlier, Roopa regretted leaving her daughter behind when she went to India. She was unaware that so much would change when she returned; that her daughter would turn against her. Roopa was certain that her in-laws and husband slander her as a bad mother who does not care for her own daughter. This has resulted in her daughter not wanting to live with her. Roopa's daughter finds it difficult to fathom why her mother left her with her father. Roopa hopes that someday her daughter would understand her side of the story and come back to live with her.

Reflections

Roopa was defeated. She felt she had lost everything. She was alienated from her daughter and lived in relative poverty. The main implications of Roopa's story include the importance of parents' support, the involvement of in-laws in abuse, financial dependence and abuse which leads to Roopa being left penniless and Ravi outmanoeuvring the system. We also learn about the importance of the role of community members in intervening in cases of domestic violence.

Reflecting on community intervention, we can see a contrast in help Roopa received. There were the neighbours who questioned Ravi when they saw Roopa sitting alone in a bus stop. This indicated their intention to be helpful in this situation. However, one can question if this was helpful after all since the abuse escalated after they left. On the other hand, there was a community leader who was completely unhelpful, when

approached for help. As discussed earlier, he had tried to “negotiate” with Roopa asking her to discharge the protection order.

In the end, Roopa felt that some people came forward to help but the prevalent attitudes in the community hindered support that could be provided.

The worst part is some community people they understand but being Indian and having that culture... (the view is that) he's your husband, he's male so it's a patriarchy thing. I hate that because that doesn't give him the right to do what he did to me.

In the above statement, Roopa essentially pointed out how male entitlement is viewed and abuse is justified in the Indian community. Her disapproval of this is evident. Overall, it did not seem like the Indian community was helpful in ensuring Roopa's and her daughter's safety.

Although Roopa found some community agencies helpful, she thought they lacked cultural knowledge. Ironically, the local refuge in her town proved more accessible than one of the ethnic agencies she approached for assistance with wanting a better lawyer. When Roopa tried to approach this ethnic service provider, she was disappointed. It is worth noting that she was unaware of the ethnic agency for a long time.

Roopa went through many agencies: police, courts and women's refuge, to name a few. She found it emotionally exhausting to repeat the story of her abuse to each agency. Telling and re-telling one's story is a burden and this must be taken into account for effective intervention.

... You really don't feel like contacting anyone because you have to tell them again and again the same thing. And I hated it. I couldn't go through that emotional abuse again and again. The worst part is I didn't have enough time, I was running around trying to sort out everything. It's not easy.

Roopa summed up her feelings about her current situation,

It's not my fault he's on benefit; I didn't ask him to beat me. If he lost his job, that's not my fault. If he's looking after my daughter, I'm willing to pay but I'd rather pay it in her account. Why should I pay him? I have to go through court cases, I was victimized, I was beaten, I left this country, I had to leave my job. He's living in that house. His parents are here sitting with him- he's got everything. Who have I got here? The only reason I'm here is for my daughter. What am I getting here? I'm earning good money but I cannot spend it because I have to think, I have to pay IRD and whatever is left I have to do other things. I want to live as well. It's really, really bad. I think sometimes they make a big fuss here...domestic violence. What are you doing about it? You support at that time but after that what do you do? Do you ever go back and check if that person is surviving? How she is going to survive? No one comes.

As evident in this statement, Roopa is feeling dejected and abandoned.

While her family were helpful at certain times, the helping services and the Indian community have failed her. She also feels defeated. Roopa feels that Ravi, despite being the perpetrator, got the long end of the stick. She is left wondering how to survive.

Chapter 6

Usha

Introduction

Usha's parents were faced with an unexpected marriage proposal for their daughter. They agreed and the wedding with Ram was arranged soon after. This was an unexpected change in Usha's student life. However, she quickly adapted to being a wife and a daughter-in-law. Soon after their wedding, Ram returned to New Zealand, where he lived. Meanwhile, she faced brutal psychological abuse from her in-laws. She tolerated this abuse as she waited patiently to join Ram in New Zealand. When she joined Ram in New Zealand, they lived happily in the absence of her in-laws. But this did not last long. When Usha fell pregnant with her second child, her mother-in-law came to New Zealand to help the couple out. This triggered an avalanche of abuse both from her mother-in-law and her husband. Ram started to get particularly abusive under the influence of alcohol. She hesitated to access services as she felt emotionally and financially dependent on Ram. In two separate incidents, her 5-year-old called the police when Usha was getting beaten by Ram.

This is a story in which the man exercises his power and control not only over his wife but also over her family members. It highlights the role children may play in situations of abuse and the impact of abuse on them. This story brings forth mother-in-law's role in jeopardizing the couple's relationship. It shows how Indian women are expected to adhere to strict cultural norms and are faced with unpleasant consequences if they fail to do so.

The Relationship

Usha was born and raised in a Hindu family in Punjab. She was the oldest of four siblings and acquired a professional degree in India. Usha's parents used to "fight a lot." Her narration reflected some undertones of patriarchal nature of her family as she talked about the nature of her parents' relationship. Her father was the decision maker of the family and her mother was expected to follow his instructions. As she continued to talk about their relationship, she said her sister would try to intervene during these "fights" but Usha herself would remain silent. She added that her parents still fight.

Usha's use of the concept "fight" – *jagda* in Hindi – is instructive. Like the other women, she has not used the term "*ghareloo hinsaa*," which is sometimes used to describe domestic violence. The use of terms that translate in English to "fight" or "quarrel", serves to normalise violence, to remove accountability from the perpetrator and to suggest equal responsibility.

Usha had not seen her husband before their wedding day, as is the case in some arranged marriage, even in modern India. Usha shared details about the unusual circumstances under which she got married to him. As seen earlier, in a traditional arranged marriage, the boy and his family visit the prospective bride's house to see her and her family. If they decide they like the girl and her family, they proceed to discussions of other details about the wedding such as the date and dowry. In many cases, the bride gets little or no rights on making a decision about the groom. She is generally not involved in conversations about dowry.

Most Indian women live with their parents till they get married and then go to their in-laws' house. But Usha lived away from home while

pursuing her postgraduate degree, prior to getting married. The fairly independent life she led away from home changed her views and expectations about arranged marriage and women's status in a family, compared to most young women who have not gone away from home.

Usha returned home for a day and was unaware about guests arriving. When she asked her mother who was coming home, she was informed that a boy's family was coming to "see" her cousin for marriage. The prospective groom, Ram, was Usha's brother-in-law's brother. Usha's cousin was 34-years-old while Usha was 24. Once the boy's parents had seen Usha's cousin, they went back home and rung Usha's mother saying they wanted their son to marry Usha instead, possibly because Usha was younger than her cousin. The age of a woman is a major factor in arranged marriage. A younger woman is a much more desirable candidate than an older one, possibly owing to her fertility.

When Ram's parents asked for Usha's hand in marriage, her family was shocked. However, they accepted this offer despite the fact that Usha had never seen this boy. They decided to go ahead with the proposal as Usha's parents believed Usha was of marriageable age and that it would be unwise to turn down an offer that came knocking on their door.

From the above instances it is clear that the groom and his family had agency right from the beginning of the relationship and Usha and her family were treated as objects. One would rarely see this happen the other way around wherein the bride's family asks the prospective groom's parents for the hand of another male member in the family. Initially, the boy was unhappy to marry Usha after seeing her picture.

I was quite "healthy" and my husband saw my picture and said no because he was quite thin. He said he didn't want to marry me

because I was fat. So my mom said, "Leave it, we'll look for other boys." But my brother-in-law insisted that his brother only marries me.

It is common for a boy to reject a girl on the basis of her looks alone. It is not unusual to see matrimony advertisements in newspapers and online stating the expectations on how a prospective bride must look. For example, Wanted Punjabi bride, not over the age of 25, fair, slim, tall, well-educated.

Usha and Ram got married. To date she does not know how he was convinced to marry her despite him initially rejecting her. It is worth noting that Ram starts off from the beginning resenting the marriage which shows that patriarchy can prove disadvantageous to Indian men as well; men too lack agency, sometimes. They too succumb to family and community pressures at times.

Abuse in India

Usha's wedding saw many conflicts between the families. As she narrates them, it is hard not to see how the power and control was unbalanced right from the beginning of the relationship. The groom's family members sat at the wedding hall in a self-important manner, expecting to be personally called by the bride's family members when meals were being served. The groom's family's sense of entitlement is a common phenomenon in Indian marriages, not only with regards to being treated superior but also catering to their unreasonable demands such as distributing presents to the groom's extended family.

The day Usha went to her in-laws' house after her wedding, her mother-in-law yelled at her for not formally inviting her daughter to the dining table although everyone was aware when meals were being served. She

said it was shameful to be treated that way by Usha's family. Usha saw these expectations as unreasonable and absurd. Usha and her siblings were unaware of many traditional family etiquettes as they stayed away from home while pursuing their studies at the university.

A day after their wedding, her mother-in-law asked her to come out of her room to say goodbye to relatives who had attended her wedding. Usha needed ten minutes which angered her mother-in-law. Usha stood up for herself at this point and asked her mother-in-law to not talk to her that way which angered the latter even more probably because it is rather unusual for a daughter-in-law to correct her mother-in-law. It is generally viewed as disrespectful even if the mother-in-law is wrong.

Ram left Usha in India with his parents and went back to New Zealand. Usha was treated badly from the beginning by her in-laws. Ram visited a few months after their wedding and his trip to India was the only respite. The one month for which he was in India with Usha and his parents was the only time she was treated well by her in-laws. Usha faced a lot of harassment from her mother-in-law once he returned to New Zealand. Her in-laws would lock the kitchen so she would not get anything to eat. They would make it difficult for her to leave home on time to get to work by taking their own time in the bathroom. Usha complained to her mother about this. Since she lived close to her parents' house, she started to leave her in-laws house early in the morning to get ready for work at her parents' house. This was Usha's way of negotiating the situation which proved successful but this was not the only form of abuse she was subjected to. Her in-laws would lock her outside in the scorching heat in the afternoon; they would not open the door even after she repeatedly knocked. Her mother-in-law told Usha that it was her nap time and ordered her to come home after 5pm. One day her neighbour heard this

and asked Usha to come to her house till they opened the door. When her mother-in-law came to know of this, she picked a fight with the neighbour for helping Usha. The neighbour backed off owing to fear of ostracism. This is one of the many reasons community members hesitate to help women in need.

Usha decided to go to work as she felt she would be spending less time at home that way. This was her way of coping with the abuse by her in-laws. She was successful in securing a job. Eventually, her father-in-law who knew her boss got her fired from her job. This shows how older people in the community misuse their influence and power to jeopardize their daughter-in-law's status in the community.

Usha's mother-in-law fired the housemaid and asked Usha to do all of the washing, cleaning, sweeping and mopping on a daily basis. When Usha suggested to her mother-in-law, that the workload be shared between her sister-in-law and her, she said Usha had to do all of it. This indicates the double standards that Indian mothers-in-law might hold for her daughters and daughters-in-law, which has been discussed earlier. It is important to note that most mothers-in-law ensure that when in public the image portrayed is such that the daughter-in-law is being treated very well by her in-laws. The reality of what goes on behind closed doors, however, is different. Usha's brother-in-law would also verbally and physically abuse her. He would take his mother's side when she treated Usha badly. *"My brother-in-law got the sword once to kill me!"* said Usha with fear in her eyes. Usha did not want to go into the details of this incident.

When Usha tried to talk to Ram about the issues she faced with her in-laws, he would ask her to respect his parents and obey them. Ram even asked Usha why she was talking back to his mother. To that, Usha said,

"She will be talked to the way she talks to me." This shows resistance and Usha's bravery in speaking her mind despite knowing the potential consequences. She even suggested that she could live with her parents if her in-laws were unhappy with her. But her husband asked her to stay with his parents, irrespective of disharmony at home.

Usha's sister-in-law, who was physically disabled, lived in the same house with her son, who was young at the time. Usha's mother-in-law demanded that Usha and Ram adopt this son, in order for him to have a better quality of life in New Zealand. Usha was not happy with this demand and did not comply. Her mother-in-law threatened her that their marriage registration would only go through if she signed the adoption papers. Usha could not come to New Zealand unless she had her marriage certificate for immigration purposes. Sometimes prospects of immigration bring with it familial pressures and pressure to assume additional responsibilities. In Usha's case, her mother-in-law wanted her grandson to have a better life and planned to achieve this through Usha and Ram.

Usha's in-laws took her to a judge to get her to sign the adoption papers. She refused. She also admitted to the judge that she was being made to sign the adoption papers against her will. She proceeded to tell the judge that she would take legal action against him if he also coerced her. The judge then asked Ram's parents to convince her and bring her back. Ram took Usha aside and asked her if she would do it, she said no. They abandoned her at the court and left. Usha then went to her parents' house. She told me that her parents got the marriage registration done promising Ram's parents that they would convince Usha about the adoption at a later stage. This shows the dynamics between the families and how Usha's family negotiated in order to keep her in Ram's household, despite being

aware of the abuse she was subjected to. This could be because of the fear of shame and losing face in the family and community.

Usha was put under immense stress to adopt her sister-in-law's son. When she did not change her decision, she was threatened by her in-laws that Ram would divorce her. She was repeatedly told she would not be allowed to leave the country until she signed the papers. Usha's husband sent her immigration documents twice which were discarded by her in-laws. Usha went through a lot of emotional trauma when people in the community started speculating why she was still away from her husband. It seemed like this was the final straw and Usha migrated to New Zealand.

Abuse in New Zealand

Usha migrated to New Zealand 2 years after the wedding. After failing to pursue Usha to adopt their grandson, Usha's in-laws started to pressure Ram to take his younger brother to New Zealand. The elder son usually holds a lot of responsibility towards helping his siblings and also taking care of his aging parents. This shows men's responsibilities in a patriarchal framework discussed earlier.

Usha's daughter was born a year later. Her mother had come to New Zealand to help here and she stayed with the family for 9 months. By this point, Usha was a New Zealand resident. Usha and Ram were happy and there was no violence up until she fell pregnant for the second time. This time, her mother-in-law came to New Zealand to help her out. This sort of arrangement is common for Indian migrant couples when they have children, for their parents to take turns to come to the host country to help the new parents out.

Usha had many complications during this pregnancy. Her mother-in-law came to New Zealand on the pretext of helping her but was never home. She would go to the Gurudwara in the morning and return in the evening. Usha also heard from some people in the Gurudwara that she had told them that the baby would die in her womb. Usha was deeply hurt by this comment. She tried talking to Ram about this but in vain. On the contrary, he started to get angry with Usha for “talking back” to his mother and confronting her about bad mouthing the well-being of their unborn child. Usha recalled, *“That’s when it all started.”*

Ram would lock her outside the house when she was pregnant. She would knock repeatedly and beg him to open the door. Ram wanted to sleep next to his mother. All this frustrated Usha as he would be at work all day and wanted to spend the rest of the time with his mother. She felt isolated as she had no friends and was not confident about her English speaking skills. Usha was aware that her neighbour could hear all their “fights.” She expressed concern to her husband about the neighbour reporting this to the police. To avoid the involvement of the police, Ram moved his mother to a relative’s house for a day. Usha was however pressured by Ram and other family members to apologize to her and bring her back home.

When Usha and her husband went back to India for a visit, she asked her mother-in-law for her jewellery which had been handed to her for “safe keeping.” This is often the case in arranged marriages wherein the groom’s family not only demand their share of dowry but also confiscate the bride’s jewellery in the pretext of safe keeping. Needless to say, these are seldom returned to the bride.

During this visit, her husband would hit her everyday under the influence of alcohol. He started drinking at noon and drank till midnight. He had

imposed rules on where she should and should not go and when she did not follow them, she would get beaten. During one such incident, Usha's brother intervened and took her back to their parents' house. She was forced to return to her in-laws' place as Ram threatened to divorce her. Usha had tried to commit suicide when in India because of the emotional and physical abuse she was subjected to. Usha added that he would apologize all the time which is why she would give him multiple chances to salvage their relationship.

Usha's parents visited them in New Zealand when her son was a year old, when Usha faced health issues. Ram would consume alcohol along with her father and pick a fight with him. She narrated an incident when her father had gotten back from outside and Usha had made him some tea. Ram arrived shortly after and was angered by the fact that he was not asked if he wanted tea as well. Ram slapped Usha in front of her parents. This angered her father who asked his friends to talk to Ram. Her parents decided to move to a friend's house, pandering to Ram's feelings of injured pride, as they felt issues between Usha and Ram were caused by them staying in their house. Her parents failed to tackle the issue directly and their reaction to the abuse failed to ensure Usha's safety. Usha said that the abuse only got worse after her parents had moved out. Ram started pressuring her to work despite the fact that she had to take care of her children and be responsible for all the household chores. She found work at small restaurants but Ram was not happy. He wanted her to study; so she enrolled in a diploma course.

Ram would get particularly abusive when under the influence of alcohol. He would lock her out in winter while her children would be inside the house. Usha's children were witness to the abuse and her 5-year-old son

called the police one night when Ram started beating Usha. She took her children and left the house to a nearby park as she was unsure about what to do next. She just wanted to get herself and her children to safety.

However, Usha was unaware that her son had rung the police before they left home. Usha later learnt that her son had been taught at school to ring the police in case they needed help or felt unsafe.

The police arrived. They asked her if she had been hit. She told them she had only been pushed. The police took Ram away but he returned home the following day. Usha reflected that she had probably learnt to “put up” with the abuse seeing her mother do the same with her father. This confirmed that her mother was subjected to ill treatment by her father, when Usha talked earlier about “fights” her parents would have. Usha also lived in the hope that Ram would eventually change for the better when their children grew up. Usha felt dependent on him financially and emotionally,

I would feel like my life could not go on without him. Maybe, I thought I should adjust a little more and hoping it would get better tomorrow.

When asked if she got a protection order, she replied, “No. I had no knowledge about it.” There is evidently a lack of awareness, among immigrant women, about protection orders and parenting orders.

Ram demanded that Usha should cut ties with her family. Usha believed that if the abuse would have taken place in India, she would have had no support. She acknowledged that a woman who leaves an abusive relationship is considered a burden by her parents. Usha felt there is relatively more support in New Zealand. By support, she was referring to the services available for victims of domestic violence and not about family or community support.

After the initial call to the police, Usha started to ring the police every time there was escalation in the abuse. However, she would not disclose the extent of abuse to them. This was her way to let Ram know that if need be, she could retaliate. But this did not stop him from abusing her repeatedly. This was clear from the following incident. Usha's sister was getting married in India. She could not attend the wedding owing to financial reasons. Her sister rang her to fill her in about the details of the ceremony. Ram got annoyed that Usha was on the phone for a long time. He waited for her to finish and slapped her "very hard." She called the police. This time the female police officer told Usha that she needed to stand up for herself as she had reported abuse at least ten times. Usha did not want any serious legal action against Ram because she felt isolated in a host country and needed his support for herself and her children. This clearly indicated some power and control tactics that can be unique in the case of migrant domestic violence.

Accessing Services

CYFS got involved fairly early, but Usha assured them that Ram was fine with the children. She did not hear back from them although CYFS came back into the picture later.

Talking about her children Usha said,

Even the kids say, "We want daddy when he doesn't drink. When he drinks, he is the meanest one."

Usha's brother lived with them for a while. He bought his nephew a toy train. The child was elated and showed it to his father with a big smile on his face. This infuriated Ram. He did not appreciate that her brother had bought their son a present. He broke the train into pieces and threw it in the rubbish. He threw all of her brother's belongings outside the house

and asked him to get out. Usha helped her brother move his things to another house. When she got back home, her husband started to hit her in front of his friend who tried to stop him. Interestingly, Usha mentioned that her husband's friend asked him not to treat his wife in a bad way in front of the children. This gives an impression that it was acceptable to treat your wife in an abusive manner when the children are not around.

Ram proceeded to kick her. He strangled her. Her son who witnessed this, called the police, for the second time. When asked by the police if she was hit, Usha denied any abuse. The police then questioned her son who told them in detail about the abuse he had witnessed. Ram was taken away by the police and she was issued a police safety order. The next day, CYFS worker came to meet Usha and her children at her house. This worker expressed her concerns about children growing up in such an abusive environment. She also advised Usha to contact a particular ethnic agency. Usha added that this CYFS worker was helpful in getting her and her children into the refuge. Usha applied for parenting orders and got day-to-day custody of her children.

Usha spoke about the impact on her children, of witnessing the violence. She said her son's behaviour had changed drastically. He was getting increasingly aggressive often and refused to go to school. Usha and her children were moved to a refuge for a month and a half. Usha said the police case did not go to Court because her husband had agreed to leave the house. Usha herself did not want a court case. This could possibly be because of the fear of being ostracized by her family and community and an attempt at saving face.

Usha found the processes involved with the refuge quite stressful.

You leave home to stay someplace else. There are so many formalities involved. They said we can't go home until such and such date. My kids were not getting adjusted to this place...in fact I don't think my daughter ate anything the one and a half months we were there. Kids used to miss home and miss our food.

Usha added that they didn't feel welcome at the refuge. She felt the environment was culturally "different." This indicates that women's refuges need to pay close attention to the needs of Indian migrant women so as to make them feel comfortable and at ease during this tumultuous phase.

Situation Now

Usha still holds the protection order. Ram was asked to attend an anger management program which has now ended. CYFS had suggested that the children ought to spend time with him. They were working towards a plan to reunite the family so as to want the children to get used to their father being a part of their lives once again. Usha added that he was "*more than welcome*" to come back home with the only condition that he would never consume alcohol again.

Usha receives sole parent benefit from WINZ. However, she had requested her lawyer to ask Ram to contribute some money towards house expenses. The lawyer said that would not be possible as he does not live there. Usha reflects that sometimes she believes he has changed for the better but also fears his behaviour if he consumes alcohol.

Reflections

Usha lived away from her parents while pursuing her postgraduate degree. Despite experiencing some form of independence during her time away from home, she still followed her parents' wishes and married Ram.

That is, even if some Indian women stay away from their parents for a brief period of time while pursuing education, they are still expected to adhere to cultural and societal norms with regards to marriage.

Usha's story also showcases in-laws' entitlement right from the beginning of the relationship. It shows us the ways in which Usha navigated her safety when she lived with her in-laws in India and when she lived with Ram in New Zealand. Although she stayed in the marriage, she resisted oppression every step of the way within the tough constraints of family and community.

This story is an exemplar in displaying the power and control exercised by a man over his wife and her family. It brings to forefront the ill-treatment Usha, her brother and parents were subject to by Ram and his family. Their entitlement over Usha and her family is evident on several occasions throughout the story. This in turn brings to light the complex dynamics between the family of the bride and the groom in the Indian context.

From this story, we learn about the ways in which women's parents negotiate dynamics in order to ensure she stays in the relationship. When Usha's parents witnessed the abuse, it angered and saddened them. However, their way of dealing with this situation was to leave their daughter alone and blaming themselves for causing conflict in the family. Although to many it might seem like they didn't work towards ensuring their daughter's safety, one must keep in mind that they were also operating within the cultural parameters of the wider community. That is, they were protecting their daughter and themselves of the potential shame and ostracism they could face if she left the relationship.

One of the main implications of Usha's story are the barriers she faced in leaving in relationship. Usha called the police several times but she did

not want to report violence. She was isolated in New Zealand and felt financially and emotionally dependent on Ram. She was not aware of her options in the host country if she decided to leave and was anxious about her children's future. Usha's fears came true when she was placed in a refuge along with her children. She didn't feel welcome and her daughter ate very little as the food provided to them was different from what they would normally eat. This represents implications for service providers to pay close attention to the cultural needs of Indian women and children.

Chapter 7

Neha

Introduction

After seven years of abuse from her husband Anand, and her in-laws, Neha now lives with her daughters in a suburb in New Zealand. Neha's journey began when she married Anand in India, who was already a resident of New Zealand. When Neha arrived in New Zealand, she was expected to do all the household chores and treated like a slave.

Neha faced language barriers and was unaware of the systems in New Zealand. She was also isolated. Neha believed it was her wifely responsibility to keep the family together and not separate her daughters from the father- this was one of the barriers in reporting abuse. Although Neha was eligible for residency, Anand controlled her by refusing to sponsor her application. He demanded dowry in exchange for her resident status. The involvement of a community leader who supported Anand and his family worsened Neha's situation.

Eventually, Neha was kicked out of the house by Anand and his family. Court cases ensued: In the criminal court Anand was acquitted. In the Family Court, Neha got custody of her daughters. She is now coping with the unspeakable violence she was subject to and is trying to focus on a better life for her and her daughters.

This is a story that shows us the connection between dowry and domestic violence. It also enlightens us about the role of community members in intervention. This story tells us about the challenges women may face even after entering a service where they think they are safe- the need for supervision and other precautionary measures to be taken.

Life in India

Neha lived in Punjab. She was the only child of her parents. Neha and her mother lived with her uncle after her father died of a heart attack, when she was 16. As she was the only daughter and her mother was on her deathbed, her family rushed her into getting married. In some Indian families, unmarried women are seen as a burden and an added responsibility to the family.

That's what happens in our culture. They worry what will happen to the girl if the mother dies...what will she do alone?

Owing to the patriarchal nature of many Indian families, a woman is expected to be dependent on her father, as a child and on her husband, as an adult. As an unmarried woman whose father had passed away, Neha was viewed as having no security; there was added pressure by members of the family and community to get married.

Neha and Anand's family were acquainted through another marriage between the families. She had not seen him prior to the wedding, which is the case in some arranged marriages even today. However, she states that he had been to her house on a few occasions with other male members of their family but she had not paid attention to Anand. Having seen Neha, Anand, expressed a desire to marry her. Neha was ambitious: she had completed her law degree and wished to pursue higher studies but her family informed her that her wedding was already planned and was to take place very soon. She was shocked to hear this but could not oppose the wedding.

According to Neha, dowry given to Anand's family included 44 lakh rupees (approx. NZ\$ 95,000) in cash and 14 lakh rupees (approx. NZ\$ 30,000) worth of jewellery and furniture. Anand's family were

manipulative in that they did not explicitly state their demands until after the engagement knowing well that Neha's family could not back out of the wedding as it would cause shame and embarrassment in the wider family and community. Neha's mother had to sell one of her houses in order to meet the dowry demands. Neha's only condition before getting married was that she did not want to leave India as her mother and uncle were both ill and she wanted to care for them. Anand agreed before the wedding but a few weeks after that, applied for his residence through his family in New Zealand, without Neha's knowledge. Neha says he forged a few documents, like birth certificates and also lied to the immigration that he was unmarried. These were things which she came to know of later.

The abuse began before Anand left for New Zealand. He harassed Neha's mother for her house to be transferred to his name. Her mother, however, told Neha she would only transfer this house to her and if Neha wished, she may transfer it to Anand. He would hurl abuses at his mother-in-law asking her to die soon so Neha could transfer the property to his name. Anand felt entitled as the groom to demand any amount of dowry he wished for.

Anand would leave home at noon and drink all day. He would return at 3am and slam the door open so he could wake up his sick mother-in-law. He would also beat up Neha saying he needed the property. Neha's mother told her things will get better eventually. It should be noted that Neha was raised with expectations of marriage that a husband can be rough at times and it is a wife's duty to accept it as a part of married life.

In our culture, we have to put up with anything the husband does.

From the above statement, it can be deduced that Neha developed a tolerance to and to a certain extent, accepted the submissive positioning of women in her family and the wider community.

A few months after their wedding, when he got his residency, Anand left for New Zealand alone. He did not bring Neha to New Zealand for the next two years. He was called to India when Neha's mother fell very ill: soon after, she passed away. Anand agreed to return because as a son-in-law it was his duty to perform the last rites as Neha's mother had no sons of her own. Neha was devastated by her mother's passing away but she says her mother's illness prepared her mentally for this eventuality.

Anand would demand money and if Neha did not meet his financial needs, he would beat her black and blue. He would also slap her demanding property. As Neha's mother was no more, she was told to live in her mother-in-law's house. He returned to New Zealand without letting Neha know he was leaving. It seemed like he was trying to avoid bringing her to New Zealand, perhaps to keep her away from his life there.

When Anand beat her up in India, Neha would complain to her uncle and other relatives who tried to tell Anand that he was not doing the right thing. Neha felt a sense of security when her family stood up for her. She also felt that she could seek protection any time she wanted to. We will see later how the lack of family support made her more vulnerable to abuse in a host country.

Neha's neighbours started to enquire why she was still in India. In many communities, it is considered a matter of shame and losing face if newly married couple live apart. In fact, people start to gossip that there is "trouble in paradise." This is often one of the barriers for a woman to

leave an abusive relationship. Neha decided to step up and tell her husband that she would stay in the marriage only if he took her to New Zealand: otherwise they would go their separate ways. Neha was desperate for an answer from Anand as it had been 2 years since they had gotten married. When Neha demanded answers about her move to New Zealand, he started to ignore her. He would not return her phone calls. Neha did not give up. She got in touch with one of Anand's cousins in New Zealand and asked him what was going on. Women and men in an arranged marriage sometimes seek help from family members in the case of any marital problems as an arranged marriage is believed to not only be a union of two people but of two families. This can be protective in some ways, such as now in Neha's case and threatening in others (extended family abuse). Overall, however, in Neha's case the extended family proved to be unhelpful as will be discussed later.

Neha's mother-in-law had painted a picture of Neha to their family in New Zealand, as an arrogant and badly behaved woman. Anand's cousin heard this but was pleasantly surprised when he met her in India during his visit there, as he realized her mother-in-law was bad-mouthing her. He asked Anand to bring her to New Zealand. He also told Anand's family that if Neha turned out to be the woman her mother-in-law had portrayed, he would take responsibility for it and either set her right or send her back to India.

Neha narrates that succumbing to familial pressures, Anand sent her the immigration documents. Although Neha was eligible to apply for a residency in New Zealand, she was unaware of this and Anand got her to apply as a visitor. It is possible that he did this to have more control over her, but as will be shown, there were other reasons too.

Finally Re-united?

Neha finally arrived in New Zealand. *“I was surprised,”* she says, referring to the warm welcome from her mother-in-law’s relatives. Neha’s reaction to their friendly behaviour seems to stem from the ill-treatment she was subject to by her mother-in-law and husband. Perhaps, she expected hostility from their relatives as well.

Neha lived in a joint family, along with her mother-in-law and brother-in-law. She hadn’t been there long when an argument developed about the house that he had been demanding. The argument escalated and Anand started hitting her. Neha ran out of the house to Anand’s uncle’s house which was located two streets away. This was her way of trying to seek help in a host country where she had no knowledge about service providers.

I asked them to talk to Anand and ask him why he was hitting me. Mother and son denied everything. They said they never hit me...So I was sent back.

Neha was reassured by this relative that they will treat her well and told her to go back. It seems like Anand’s uncle is either tolerant of domestic violence or he believed Anand and his mother when they told him there was no violence. Neha felt let down by this as Anand’s uncle sent her back to a house where she felt unsafe.

Neha was well-qualified and wanted to pursue her career, as mentioned earlier. According to Neha, her husband and mother-in-law kept her as isolated as possible as they feared she would leave the relationship if she gained knowledge of the outside world. Neha’s mother-in-law took all of Neha’s certificates and jewellery for “safe keeping.” She would give her the jewellery if they had to go to the temple or a wedding. She would

confiscate them once they got back home. Her mother-in-law kept Neha's certificates under her possession to ensure Neha could not look for a job without her knowledge. It was around this time that Neha first became pregnant.

Neha's husband would lock her up inside the house when he went out. When they had visitors at home, Neha was expected to make them tea, serve it and then go into her room. She was also expected to do all the household chores and take care of her sister-in-law's children.

Neha adds that her neighbours would talk amongst each other that they heard "*a lot of noise.*" Unfortunately, no one came to her rescue. Neha says at this point, she felt abandoned, not only by her family, but also by the community.

Neha's sister-in-law was in India for a visit. She rang Anand's mother, whose face, according to Neha, turned red in anger when she heard her say something with regards to Neha. Neha is unaware of the content of discussion. However, when Anand got back home from work, his mother spoke to him in private, presumably about the conversation she had with her daughter. After Neha was done cooking and cleaning, she walked into the bedroom. Out of the blue, Anand picked a "fight" and accused Neha of snoring heavily which she denied. Neha was certain his anger stemmed from something his mother had heard over the phone from his sister. But he made it out to be about her snoring. Next thing Neha knew was that she was being beaten repeatedly. She was punched in her stomach. Neha was pregnant when this incident took place. She fell unconscious. Her right ear was injured and she told me she still has difficulties hearing through that ear.

The next morning, Neha started to bleed continuously. She panicked. She quickly changed her clothes and walked into the living room where she saw her mother-in-law and Anand sitting. Fearing the worst for her unborn child, Neha pleaded Anand to make contact with the midwife. Although Anand was aware of her condition, he did not pay much heed. This angered her. She asked him what he would do if the baby died. She told me, *“I tolerate a lot, but not this; not when it comes to my child.”*

Neha demanded the phone. She rang the midwife and got herself admitted in the hospital. Neha fought back when she feared the safety of her child. It indicated that Neha wanted to protect the child’s welfare in ways she could not protect herself.

Neha was asked by the doctor about her bleeding and the bruises on her face. She disclosed the series of events that happened the previous day. The public health nurse notified CYFS. Neha was unhappy with the involvement of CYFS as she was scared her yet-to-be-born child would be taken away from her. She also did not want to be the cause of breaking up her family. A team from an ethnic women’s refuge also visited her at the hospital and asked her if she wanted to get a protection order against Anand.

I said, “No. What’s the use? I have to live there anyway.”

Even though Neha resigned herself to her fate to some extent, she decided to confide in her uncle who lived in India, about the abuse she had been subject to by Anand and his mother. Neha’s uncle asked her to give Anand another chance. He reassured her that Anand would have a change of heart once the baby came along. This reflects the efforts made by some Indian families to keep their daughters in a marriage regardless of the

abuse, largely to save face within the wider family and community, as traditionally separation and divorce is frowned upon.

Neha took her uncle's advice and decided to give Anand another chance. Following the tradition of some Indian communities, Anand asked Neha to go to her parents' house in India during her last trimester. Neha asked him where she would go as she had no parents. She later realized that Anand wanted her to leave so she could bring him back money from her uncle. Neha left to return to India where her first child was born. During her visit there, Anand demanded 25 lakh rupees (approx. NZ\$ 43, 600) and asked her never to return to New Zealand if she did not bring the sum with her.

My uncle said if you stay back here then people will talk...they will ask if I broke your home because I couldn't give you 25 lakh rupees.

According to Neha, the fear of shame, embarrassment and blame, for breaking Neha's marriage, within the family and community drove Neha's uncle to give her the money. He gave her 30 lakh rupees (approx. NZ\$ 65, 500); 5 lakh rupees rupees (approx. NZ\$ 10, 900) for Neha's expenses and the rest for Anand. Traditionally, a new mother is expected to bring back gifts for her in-laws' side of the family when she returns from her parents' house post delivery. These may also be seen as a form of dowry. This also reiterates the husband's family's sense of entitlement to the wife's family assets in every milestone of their relationship.

On her return, Neha handed the money over to Anand. He was unhappy with the amount and told her 25 lakh rupees was "*nothing in dollars.*" He expected her to bring back at least 1 million NZD. Neha did not respond but was shocked at his reaction despite giving him the money he had demanded. He also made sure the immigration officials did not know that

money had come in from India as only a certain amount of money is allowed to be legally brought into New Zealand.

My mother-in-law asked me if I had no shame; that I didn't bring anything back for her daughter.

Wealth is generally considered a mark of social status; more so in the case of dowry. Neha brought clothes for everyone in the house including her sister-in-law. However, her mother-in-law had expected her to bring a gold jewellery set. On hearing this, Neha said if she had been informed earlier, she would have brought the jewellery set instead of the cash. Her mother-in-law replied saying the cash was unrelated to the jewellery. Neha told her uncle about this: he asked her to ignore these demands. Neha's uncle was trying to protect her in his own way, by giving in to most of Anand's family's never-ending demands as he did not want her to leave the relationship owing to shame and loss of face in the family and community. Potentially, he was worried about Neha's future as well, as she had no parents. At the same time, he asked her to ignore the dowry demands. This reflects the tolerance women are taught by family and the wider community, with regards to abuse.

Neha told me *"things were ok for a while."* This could be interpreted as Anand and his family being satisfied for the time being, but the abuse continued soon after her second pregnancy. Similar demands for money began when she went to India for the second time. She could not bring "much" on her return. For this, she got beaten.

A few months after her return, Neha had her second child in New Zealand. She was not visited by anyone for two days. Anand's financial control over Neha became more evident when Neha asked him to buy her a sandwich when Anand finally visited her. Anand told her he would only

do so if she gave him money for it. The only money Neha had was NZ\$ 1000 in cash at home. She told him where it was kept so he could take money for her sandwich.

When I went back home, there was no money. All gone.

Neha did not confront Anand about this as she was certain she would get beaten if she did. Neha's mother-in-law was unhappy Neha had given birth to a daughter, for the second time and not a son. In many Indian families, there seems to be a bias against the girl child largely due to economic reasons. The existing dowry system is possibly one of the major causes for the preference of a male child.

Even in modern India, having a daughter is considered a burden in some cases. This is largely the reason for female feticide and infanticide. A daughter is considered a liability, as traditionally she is not given as much education as a son. This is because the order of events is such that she gets married and stays home, doing the household chores. Her education, in this case, is not seen to reap any benefits. In addition, parents usually have to save money or take an enormous loan for dowry purposes. Overall, in many cases, parents are made to feel disadvantaged for having a daughter over a son. He is given good education as he is expected to put it to use in the growth of his career. He is usually at the receiving end of dowry and is traditionally expected to take care of his aging parents. As discussed earlier, one of the main reasons Neha was rushed into a marriage was because she was seen as a liability.

On Neha's return home from the hospital, her mother-in-law left to go to her daughter's house saying she needed help with household chores as she was on her period. Neha's mother-in-law demanded Neha did all the household chores but had the opposite attitude when it came to her

daughter. This dichotomy in a woman's attitude towards her daughter-in-law and daughter is fairly common in many Indian families.

"You take care of your children, make food and eat all you want," she (mother-in-law) said.

Neha kneaded the dough and made *rotis*. Suddenly, she felt blood flowing down her leg. Quietly, she went into her bedroom and changed her clothes. She knew too well that there was no one she could go to for help. She felt more alone than before as she was physically vulnerable as well. However, she continued cooking. They had visitors at night and she had to prepare dinner for them. This seems like a deliberate act of control by Anand to ensure she is subject to manual labour while recovering.

Neha went back into the kitchen but started to bleed again. This time, she failed to notice it. One of the guests pointed this out to her; she went inside and changed her clothes again. Anand was aware of what had happened. He followed Neha into the bedroom and slapped her hard for "*creating a drama.*" He was angry with her for not being self-aware. He felt embarrassed that their guest had to tell her she was bleeding. When Neha came out of the bedroom, she realized he had invited more people over for dinner to "*get back at her.*" It is noteworthy that the aforementioned guest was aware of the abuse. She advised Neha to step up to Anand and not give in to his unreasonable demands but the guest herself did nothing to protect Neha.

To make matters worse, Anand started having an extramarital affair. At the time, Anand was working for an insurance company in a managerial post. Neha recalls that some money started coming in. Despite this, she had to ask her uncle for her expenses. One day, Anand nonchalantly told Neha that he was having an affair. He would go to visit his girlfriend on

weekends. He used to visit “massage parlours” as well. Anand would tell Neha where he was going and what he was doing with other women. Anand was fully aware that his actions would have no consequences whatsoever.

We were shopping with our daughters and he said he needs to go meet his girlfriend and come back. He said he wants to live with her and asked me to leave the house.

Neha told him that she will not be the one to leave him as *he* chose to marry her. She added he was free to do anything he wanted to and that he would not be stopped. Neha was extremely concerned about the welfare of her children if she left the relationship as she was financially dependent on him to a large extent. In addition, she was unaware of the services available to support her. She had no family support in New Zealand and was concerned about the children’s custody as she was not a resident here and Anand was. In addition, Anand threatened her that he could deport her anytime he wished to. These may have been a few barriers posed by migration that Neha faced to leave the abusive relationship.

According to Neha, Anand would bug the house so he was aware of who Neha was talking to and what she was saying.

I wanted someone to know before he killed me...he used to strangle me with scarves. He...tried to kill me many times.

Anand would twist the telephone cord around her neck and say, “*This is how they kill girls.*” He would constantly intimidate her. As she feared for her life, Neha made sure the house, which was in her name after her mother passed away, would be legally transferred to her uncle and grandmother if anything bad were to happen to her. Anand used death threats on a regular basis,

...he would tell me that he would cut me up and put me in a garbage bag and throw me in the ocean...and that no one would know.

Neha replied asking him not to do that with her dead body. *“Just give it back to my uncle,”* she said. As seen by the events unfolding above, it is hard not to notice how Anand had manipulated and taken advantage of Neha’s isolation and dependency on him in a host country.

Accessing Services

Neha repeatedly pleaded with Anand to help her gain residency. He gave her excuses about the process being laborious; especially the medical tests that are a requirement to apply. One day, Anand accompanied Neha to her GP as she was suffering from severe headaches. Anand always went in with Neha when she attended her doctor. This was one of the ways in which he exercised control over what information was being shared by Neha.

It is important to note that her GP did not insist on Anand waiting outside during consultation. This presents a significant problem to ethnic women. While the doctor’s understandings of Indian culture may have been that Indian families are close knit and stick together in times of need such as illnesses, he may have been naively oblivious of the culturally nuanced power and control tactics between some couples that are compounded by migration.

While they were at the GP’s, Neha insisted on getting her medical tests done for her residence application. Anand admitted to her that his intention was never to keep her in New Zealand. This angered and saddened Neha who questioned him about why he realized this after having children with her. He calmly told her he was using the children as

a trap to get her to sell the house in India and buy one for him in Auckland.

On returning home, Anand started hitting Neha. A neighbour heard this. She pulled Neha aside and gave her a phone number to call. Her uncle also advised her to go ahead and call the police. As noted, her uncle had earlier advised her to tolerate the abuse. He asked her to call the police this time because he felt she had tolerated enough. It is possible that her uncle realized there was a threat to Neha's life.

Following this incident, Neha called the police for the first time. She used her mobile phone to ring them as Anand used to take the telephone cord with him when he went to work to ensure she did not ring the police. A police safety order was issued against Anand for five days. During this time, he stayed in his sister's house. Neha informed the police that if anything bad were to happen to her, her children should be sent back to India. She added that she was unaware of the laws in New Zealand. Ironically, as mentioned earlier, she was a law student in India. It can be inferred that her isolation and language barriers contributed to her lack of knowledge of services and laws in New Zealand. However, it is debatable whether she would have accessed services even if she was aware of them owing to her beliefs about wifely duties towards her family.

Neha's in-laws told her they did not want her to stay in their house anymore and if she still chose to, she needed to pay rent. They demanded this despite being fully aware that she was financially dependent of them.

Community Leader

When the police safety order expired five days later, a without notice application for a protection order was filed by Neha along with an on

notice application for parenting orders. Neha was granted the protection order. Anand was directed by the Family Court judge to attend a living without violence program which he did not follow through. An application to have Anand's brother and mother included in the order as associated respondents was placed on seven days' notice. Her brother-in-law was subsequently included: her mother-in-law was not.

Unfortunately, Neha's relative success in the Family Court had implications on her visa status. Anand withdrew his visa sponsorship of her work permit. Amit, a prominent community leader, reassured the police of the safety of Neha and her daughters. It is rather questionable how the authorities took his word for it without careful assessment or monitoring. The deficiencies of the processes followed by the police is evident from the judgement given later, which criticizes the police for accepting assurance. The judge commented,

I note that the community leader was contacted by the police and asked to provide re-assurances as to the applicant's safety and her finances. That re-assurance was apparently given. It is difficult to comprehend how such a re-assurance could be given unless a constant monitoring was occurring (which was not). Neither was it wise for an influential third party such as the Sikh leader to facilitate the agreement he did whilst having the knowledge of a background of domestic allegations and the presence of two young children in the family. Finally, it is reasonable to assume that he would have understood the cultural imperatives which influenced the applicant in not finding the implications of separation difficult to deal with.

Amit was well aware of the cultural pressures Neha was subjected to. He asked Neha to compromise. He also reassured her that in exchange for this compromise, he would take responsibility in getting her residency by either convincing Anand or potentially forging documents. Neha agreed to compromise only under the condition that this be done. This

compromise meant she had to give Anand another chance- a clean slate. An agreement was drawn up and both parties signed this in an informal restorative justice meeting. This document's wording reflects a priority on a couple's duty to the community to preserve the marriage and a presumption that both parties are equally to blame for any problems in the relationship, which was clearly not the case with Neha and Anand. In fact, most of the document blamed Neha for "misunderstandings." The statement below from this document suggests that Anand was suspicious that Neha was with him in the marriage only to gain residency.

Neha was feeling some pressure regarding her current status in New Zealand and Anand was in doubt that Neha is only waiting for her current status to be gained through him and may not be lived for longer as stable relationship.

Furthermore, the document made it seem like Anand was the victim when talking about the incident that led Neha to ring the police,

...both had argument where Anand advised Neha to call the police if she felt she (was being) treated unfairly. Anand handed the phone to Neha to get assistance if she needed. Neha made the call to the police and the police issued safety order to Anand to leave the property for 5 days. Between these times Anand was aware that children's bank account having valid funds available about \$1900...however Neha was not aware that money can be withdrawn without efpos card which she does not have in her wallet. The account was joint holder with Neha and both children's which she was not known how to withdrawn...Anand was unable to feed them for 5 days as safety order was issued against him.

The above statement from the community meeting document minimizes the abuse by calling it an argument. It wrongly portrays Anand as a caring husband who handed the phone over to Neha to ring the police if she felt unsafe. It also suggests that Neha was wrong in calling the police as Anand was "unable to feed them (his family)" during this period that he was

required to stay away. The document goes on to state that both parties (Anand and Neha) agree to start afresh.

As was later confirmed by the Family Court judge,

I am troubled about the manner in which this influential person (Amit) intervened in the process. Whilst I have no particular reason to doubt that his intervention was well intentioned, the resultant "agreement" was unhelpful. Firstly, it would appear from the evidence that the person who "witnessed" the "affirmation" of the parties...was not present when at least the applicant signed the document. Secondly, it is notable that a different version of events is recorded in the affirmation in connection with the reasons for the police safety order being issued in favour of the applicant, than versions given by the parties. The very nature of the relationship is summarised in a fashion that I do not consider reflects the truth. Importantly also the affirmation suggests that on the basis of the agreements reached the parties would take no further action. All of these aspects of the document do no more than add to the confusion and in some cases appear to be an attempt to hide the true picture.

The community meeting document paints a bigger picture of the important implications for women who use community-led non-statutory avenues for resolution. It can put them at greater risk of violence. In Neha's case, it resulted in her applying for the withdrawal of the protection order.

I had the protection order but he wrote a compromise letter for the order to be withdrawn. It's better to be peaceful. The kids were his...home will be broken and the kids won't have their father... so I thought it was better to withdraw the order.

Neha strongly believed the family should be together even if it meant tolerating the brutal abuse. This is possibly the result of certain values regarding tolerance of violence being inculcated by Indian families.

However, the judge refused to grant leave to withdraw the order, noting,

I do not regard the applicant's discontinuation of her initial application for a domestic protection order as being of any significance other than to indicate that she was without effective support, was anxious about cultural issues and considered it proper to resolve issues through the Sikh community leader (Amit), who guaranteed her safety.

Neha believed Amit, as he had promised he would come to her rescue if Anand mistreated her again, but this was not the case. Neha was assigned a family safety team as her case was regarded as a serious one wherein there was threat to her life. Anand and his family often harassed officials as well. When members of the family safety came to visit Neha, Anand threatened to kill himself. They asked him to go ahead and that they will only leave once they complete their assigned tasks. Another time, a member of CYFS came to visit Neha. They questioned her brother-in-law as to why they were not being allowed to talk to Neha. Anand, his brother and mother started yelling at them, threatening to falsely report to the newspaper that they were wanting to talk to a woman against her wish. But CYFS did not budge. Neha narrated another incident involving family safety team. They visited Neha when she was home alone. Neha gestured to them that the couch was bugged. The officials gestured asking Neha to leave the house before Anand and his family kill her.

When two women from the family safety team came to see me, I gestured to them that the couch was bugged. They gestured asking if there is someone at home, I said no. They said my husband is cheating me, so is Amit saying he will get me residency. "Get out of here before they kill you," they said.

Neha did not leave.

Continued Abuse

A few days later, Anand and his family picked a fight with Neha over a cup. Her mother-in-law hurled abuse at Neha for placing the kitchen

cleaning brush in her sister-in-law's cup. Neha was unaware that the cup belonged to her sister-in-law. Neha's mother-in-law told her angrily that everything in the house belonged to her and Neha had no right to touch anything. Neha told her husband what had happened. Anand had a few words with his brother and mother. He stormed into the bedroom and slapped Neha. She had no idea what was going on and asked him why she was slapped. This time, Anand's mother and brother joined in as well. They started hitting her too. This was not the first time her brother-in-law hit her.

My brother-in-law used to verbally abuse me and pull my hair and hit me. He called me a 'bitch.'

On this occasion, when her brother-in-law started verbally abusing her, Neha questioned him as to why they were interfering in a "fight" between husband and wife. Anand was standing there listening to this. Neha did not expect what Anand did next.

My husband got a butcher knife and said, "It's better to kill her." Earlier he only used to point out to it and say, "Look, this is what I will use to kill you," but today he took it out. I thought he is going to kill me now. I opened the door and ran. I left my daughters behind, I knew they would not hurt them.

Neha ran for her life. It was almost midnight. She knew a Punjabi family that lived close by. She told them what had happened. The male member of the family spoke to Neha's husband and in-laws. He asked them why they were abusing a woman who had no parents and called them shameless.

When questioned by the neighbour, Anand told them that it was their family matter that they could sort out privately. He continued to tell them that they could have Neha stay in their house if they were so concerned

about her safety. But they told him that Neha was his wife and his responsibility, not theirs. This statement is powerful in indicating that Neha's safety was not of priority to the neighbours. The neighbour's focus was more towards getting Anand to treat her better and take responsibility as a husband than to safeguard Neha from further abuse. Neha reflects that if things would have gotten to this point in India, her parents' friends would have intervened and ensured her safety. Again, the social isolation and lack of community support that could potentially support her comes to the forefront.

Meanwhile, Neha's in-laws rang Amit explaining the situation. Neha found out later that Anand's brother rang the police and lied to them that she was beating up her children, as per Amit's suggestion. Neha stayed at the neighbour's house for a while. On her return to Anand's house, she was shocked to see a police officer waiting for her. The officer enquired about the complaint made against her. She denied the allegations made against her. The police officer also asked her if there was anything she wanted to tell them. Neha did not respond. She was asked by the police if she wanted to stay in the police station or if she had elsewhere to go to. Anand intruded at this point and told them he did not want his wife to stay in a police station. The police sent her to a relative's house where she stayed for several days.

When Neha went back to Anand's house, they were visited by Amit. He asked Neha to call the refuge and leave the house immediately. Anand and his family told Neha they did not want her in the house. Perhaps the public humiliation of Neha running out of her house to seek neighbour's help indicated to them that she could report the violence at any time; they were desperate to protect themselves. Threatened by this, they asked her to leave the house.

When Amit asked her to ring the refuge, Neha did not know what the refuge was. She rang the family safety team who dropped her off at the refuge. Although Neha had been in New Zealand for nearly three years, she was unaware of the services available to her. This not only reflected the extent of isolation Neha experienced because of Anand's family and some influential members of the community but also paints a grim picture about the plight of other victims who may be experiencing domestic violence for years without being able to seek help due to similar barriers in reporting.

Neha described the abuse she was subjected to even when leaving the house. Anand and his family confiscated her belongings.

My luggage disappeared from my room... I had a few clothes. I didn't have bags to put my clothes in. They hid all the garbage bags also, so that I don't take my stuff. I borrowed a bag from my neighbours.

Neha told the refuge worker about the details of the abuse. This was the first time Neha spoke to anyone about the extent of abuse. Neha reflects that she would not have reported it if she was not asked to leave the house because she did not want to be the reason to break her family, as mentioned earlier.

I told them how badly I was beaten and that I was in pain...my entire body. They gave me painkillers.

She was taken to the police station to make a complaint and pictures of her injuries were taken.

I was so badly beaten; my jaw was punched in, my back was broken and my ribs were swollen...

This was corroborated in the Family Court judgement,

After the applicant left the family home, assisted by a Women's Refuge representative, she was taken to a general practitioner, whose notes read, inter alia, "tearful on recounting history. Swelling affecting right mandible, with tenderness over this area...Tender over upper chest and trunk. Also tender over thighs"... "gives history of being physically abused by him for the past five years...also assaulted by brother-in-law."

However, it took nearly a month for the refuge to help her apply for a protection order as they were busy with a large case load. Eventually, she got a protection order, for the second time.

It is worth noting that Neha's second application for a protection order included her brother-in-law (as an associated respondent). In the end, the Family Court judge did not find enough evidence to make a protection order against Anand's brother but she did make some interesting comments about him.

Some of Anand's brother's evidence reflected a desire to support his brother and family, whatever the truth may have been...The associated respondent or the respondent's extended family should nevertheless understand very clearly, that in the event of any further allegations by the applicant of abuse, harassment and/or threats being made towards her by family members of the respondent, this Court will be looking very carefully at those, given the history of lack of support.

As mentioned earlier, the application for a temporary order was ex parte: neither Anand nor his friends would have known about the application. However, at a later stage in the court process, Anand's friends had written letters of testimony to the court saying she was never subject to any act of violence by Anand or his family members. They even offered Neha a bribe to shut the case. She was outraged by this.

While the Family Court judge found there was sufficient evidence to make a protection order against Anand, he was exonerated in the criminal court.

The court shut the case because there was no evidence. There were photos of my bruises and they said it was all self-inflicted. How could I hit my back? What can I even say?

It is worth noting that the Family Court judge saw this and similar evidence and dismissed the story about the injuries being self-inflicted.

The respondent's (Anand) evidence was that...the applicant (Neha) had caused the injury to herself. He says that...she deliberately hit her head against a door and a cot...The medical evidence does not support a version of events which includes significant banging of a head against a door.

Neha broke down in tears as she re-lived that sense of helplessness. She felt the criminal court judgement was unfair.

I had bruises all over my body and a broken jaw and they asked for more witness. I didn't get a chance to talk in the court...They said there is no one outside of that house who has seen the abuse. I got out of that house. Where else was I? The police picked me up from there. I don't know where the gap lies but it's not my fault. I want justice.

However, Neha went on to have negative experiences at the ethnic services as well.

Experience with Ethnic Service Provider

Anand's friend's wife, Ganga, worked with one of the high profile ethnic services where Neha was initially taken.

It is a pathetic place to go to. So much torture...the social worker was very rude. She used to hit my kids and verbally abuse us. She was from my village and she knew everything about me. Before even I left home, my husband told me I will end up in that organization and Ganga will be there.

Neha talked about another client at the same organization who was ill-treated as well. Neha said this client suffered a stroke owing to stress caused by this ethnic organization's workers.

They took her to a hospital and there was a case against them. The organization wanted all the women who were with them to forcefully write letters saying they are not being tortured. I refused. I told the family safety team what exactly happened. So the organization said if I didn't sign that letter, I should leave. So I did.

Neha was sent to another refuge by the family safety team. She was asked to leave in a few weeks as they said “time is up.” Neha knew someone in the community who offered to give her their garage to stay in. Neha recalled the cold nights with her daughters in the garage. Her daughters have asthma and this would worsen during winter. She was not eligible for many benefits from the government owing to her non-resident status. It is worth noting that she had applied for and got residency on her own, later, under special policy for Victims of Domestic Violence. The garage she was staying in was owned by a man known to Anand, who asked him to get her out of there. She stayed in another garage for a few months. She now lives with her daughters in a one bedroom unit.

Neha broke into tears again and struggled to find words for what she was about to say next.

My grandmother's will had my uncle's name on it for property. My uncle's will had my name. Registered will...according to which I will get all the property. My husband hired contract killers and murdered both of them. Tied both of them up and threw them into the river alive...

Neha's helplessness was evident when she said no criminal case could be registered because there was no evidence. Although there is no evidence that Anand was associated with this crime, there is reason enough to believe he was involved in such a crime. While the judge decided against making a protection order against Anand's brother, she did seem to believe that the brother did act under Anand's orders. If Anand can get his

brother to commit perjury and abuse Neha, perhaps it is not so much of a stretch to believe that he can obtain a contract killer. As stated by the Family Court judge,

Some of Anand's brother's evidence reflected a desire to support his brother and family, whatever the truth may have been. His evidence was confusing and inconsistent in relation to the events of the <date>, his relationship with the applicant and the applicant's relationship with her children. The nature of some of this evidence appeared contrived and "under instruction".

Neha was convinced Anand committed this crime. "They (her grandmother and uncle) had no enemies," she said.

So maybe it's my turn now. After me, all the property will go to my daughters. If I die, my daughters will be handed over to my husband.

Neha also received an anonymous letter from India threatening to kill her and her daughters. She constantly lives in a fear for her life. She handed this letter over to the Family Safety Team who regard her case as critical and have been closely monitoring the events in her life.

Children

Anand and Neha's daughters had been witness to the abuse Neha was subjected to. The judge mentioned that the attitude Anand and his family had towards Neha would have an adverse effect on the children if the situation remained the same. According to the Family Court judge,

...It is clear from both parties' evidence that the children were present during the <date> incident and were significantly involved in terms of observation and resultant distress. The children have, therefore, been themselves subjected to violence on this and I find on the balance of probabilities, other occasions.

Anand notified CYFS indicating he was concerned about his daughters' safety immediately after he was served with a police safety order. However, he never applied for a parenting order. This shows a lack of interest, on Anand's part, in being involved in his daughters' care. The Family Court judge noted that according to her, Anand notifying CYFS was merely a response to him being served with a police safety order. She further observed that Anand had not made any attempts to see the children for over two months after Neha left home for the refuge. An interim parenting order was made, giving Neha the day-to-day care of her two young daughters. Anand was granted supervised contacts with their children for one day of the week. Neha was unhappy with this arrangement as she noticed her daughters' behaviour was changing for the worse. The risky nature of supervised contact is revealed as their elder daughter who was three, started to use abusive language. They were also being taught to say unpleasant things about their own mother.

They (in-laws and Anand) have taught my kids to tell me, "Mama, don't hit us too much." I asked them, "When have I hit you?" They said, "Papa asked us to tell you that."

The risk of this was also noted by the judge,

...I have additional concerns...that the respondent (Anand) and his family will indeed seek to influence the children in their attitude towards their mother.

When the contact arrangements were reviewed a few months later, Neha was granted full custody of her children. Neha said Anand has not cared about the well-being of the children even prior to this judgement. He hadn't made any efforts to try to see them either.

Anand did have one victory in the Family Court. He applied for and was granted an order preventing removal of the children from New Zealand.

Neha will need to go to court to get this removed should she want to take the children to visit family in India or to go anywhere else. It is unclear whether she was successful.

Neha used to receive help from some members of the community but most of them stopped associating with her when Amit threatened them with dire consequences if they continued to support her. Neha says Anand has now “fled” to India in order to find himself another bride.

Reflections

Neha’s story addresses many integral aspects of this research. It echoes the entrenched patriarchal values, some of which are universal while others are particular to Indian culture. There are classic episodes of intimidation, physical and psychological abuse and extended family abuse. Neha experienced most of these both in India and in New Zealand. However, it is clear that the added layer of migration made it more difficult for her to seek help. It also made her more vulnerable to the domestic violence she was subject to. If the abuse had continued in India the way it did in New Zealand, Neha believes that she would have had support of the people known to her family. Whereas, in New Zealand, most of the community only seemed to victimize her further, probably because they were all known to Anand’s family. The community leader clearly took Anand’s side even though he was cognizant of the incidence of abuse.

It is commendable that despite the challenging circumstances, Neha displayed acts of resistance by running out of the house and complaining to her neighbour. In another episode, Neha confided in the doctor. However, there were forces that were acting against her resistance, pushing her further away from help.

It is worthwhile to note that although Neha's brother-in-law was included in the temporary protection order, her mother-in-law, who had been psychologically abusing Neha from the time she arrived in New Zealand, was not. Perhaps, this is one of the family dynamics within Indian communities that need further exploration and understanding. A well-informed judge might have better understood the role of her mother-in-law.

There are two issues that stand out while considering the gap in service provision. Firstly, the community leader reassures the police of Neha and her daughters' safety. It is appalling that the police took his word for it with no further interrogation or monitoring. This possibly represents the naïve view of the abuse that the police holds. The complex community and family dynamics at play were largely overlooked which further victimized Neha and her daughters, as they were witness to the abuse from the beginning. Secondly, Neha narrated the ill-treatment her daughters and her were subject to by the ethnic women's refuge. Even though Neha essentially won the Family Court case, she did not find solace even after she moved out of Anand's house. She was subjected to verbal and emotional harassment at the refuge as one of the social workers was known to Anand.

Although Neha and her daughters are in a much better place now, they had to go through numerous ordeals because of family/ community and service provision.

Chapter 8

Shanti

Introduction

Shanti and Kamal got married in India in the arranged marriage way. Kamal was a resident of New Zealand and Shanti followed him there shortly after the wedding. Soon after, Kamal started to abuse Shanti emotionally and physically. Shanti was not allowed to talk to her parents who lived in India. She was financially dependent on Kamal who did not allow her to seek employment.

This story brings to the forefront the involvement of the mother-in-law in domestic violence in the immigrant context which is not explicit most times, but is more subtle and manipulative in nature. This story also highlights the dynamics of involvement of influential community members and the reactions from the community after Shanti decided to leave Kamal.

Shanti also battled with the Court processes that were unfamiliar to her in addition to dealing with lawyers who did not prove to be particularly helpful.

The Relationship

Shanti was born and raised in the state Punjab in North India and came from a well-to-do family. She has two brothers. Shanti talked about the loving relationship between her parents which involved a lot of understanding and support. However, her father was the decision-maker of the family.

He (father) would share everything with her (mother). I have never seen my dad raise his hand on my mom. I have lived in a joint family and have never seen any quarrels.

However, Shanti told me about the times there would be “small fights” between her sister-in-law and brother. She mentioned that her parents would support her sister-in-law in these situations. She talked about this in contrast to what she was to experience later in New Zealand.

Shanti completed a nursing degree in India and had always fancied settling down in a foreign country. Shanti’s family friend found a matrimonial advertisement in the newspaper and advised her that it would be easier for her to settle abroad through marriage. In modern India, most arranged marriage respondents rely on mediums such as newspapers and the internet to find a potential match. Shanti was raised with the belief that her parents would play an integral part in choosing her life partner.

The family friend, whom she called her uncle, belonged to Shanti’s inner circle. Shanti trusted that her family would only have her best interests at heart; so she agreed to get married. This uncle was asked to meet the prospective groom and his family for a preliminary check. Once he gave Shanti’s father the green light, the groom and his family were invited to the uncle’s house to see Shanti. Traditionally, the bride and groom’s family meet at the former’s place as their first meeting. The bride and groom’s presence is not considered mandatory. In Shanti’s case, the groom, Kamal, was based in New Zealand. So, only his parents came to “see” her. This viewing of the potential bride is pivotal in deciding whether or not to go ahead with the alliance. The families scrutinize each other for different aspects. The bride’s family, scrutinise the groom’s family mainly in regard to financial and emotional support they can

provide for their daughter. The groom's family examine the bride and her family as to what kind of reputation they hold in the community.

Importance is given to the bride's character; whether she is well-mannered and respectable, with no taint on her name. Once both sides are content with their findings, they proceed with other details of the wedding such as dates and the amount of dowry to be given. In some communities, horoscopes of the bride and groom are analysed to check for compatibility before the first meeting.

As mentioned earlier, usually in arranging a marriage, a thorough background check of each other's families is carried out before proceeding with wedding dates. However, Shanti stated that the wedding was rushed as her mother-in-law, who lived with her son, had to get back to New Zealand in a short while, which she did not. Shanti suspected there was some other reason for the demand of a rushed wedding: possibly that they did not want Shanti and her family to figure out what they were really like. When asked if dowry was involved during the ceremony, Shanti said,

If it is given with a happy heart, it is not considered dowry. They are doing it for their daughter. My parents gifted gold rings to all the female members of his family...and clothes as well. During the wedding, my parents gifted their family 25 gold rings...for his uncles etc. Even for my husband...diamond ring and gold. In the form of gifts. Furniture as well.

Shanti and Kamal got married and subsequently moved to New Zealand. Before the wedding Kamal had told Shanti that he was a teetotaler but he got heavily intoxicated three days after the wedding. Shanti was left feeling shocked and betrayed by Kamal's behaviour. When asked about it, he rationalized saying, it was a one off incident. But this turned out to be untrue, as is seen in the events that unfolded later. Shanti reflected that her husband possibly did not "raise his hand" on her in India because he was

aware of the family and community support she had. She was confident that her family would have condemned any form of abuse as she was pampered and taken care of by her brothers and parents. She also had the community supporting her family in case she needed help.

Life in New Zealand

When Shanti came to New Zealand, they lived in Kamal's sister's (5 bedroom) house with seven other family members. A joint-family is still fairly common in India wherein traditionally, the woman moves in with her husband and his family after marriage, which usually includes his parents and siblings.

Shanti recalled feeling welcome into the household. Her husband treated her well for a couple of days. She talked about the tradition in their community where the new bride is not allowed to do any household work for at least a month after the wedding as a mark of welcoming her into the family and making her feel at home. This did not hold good in Shanti's case. Slowly, she started feeling increasingly isolated and alone in New Zealand.

On a daily basis, Shanti had to cook and serve food for the whole household. She barely got to spend any time with Kamal. He would emotionally abuse her by waking her up at 4 am to make him food and serve it to him when he got back from work, after which he would ask her to massage his back for an hour. Shanti said she did not mind doing any of this for him as she felt it was her duty as a wife to do so.

This shows a sense of male entitlement on Kamal's part which is the case with most but not all Indian men. Shanti narrated another incident that reflected male entitlement. Kamal would turn the lights on when he got

into the room at 4 am even though he was aware she was fast asleep. Shanti stated, *"If I did the same, he would slap me twice."* She was resigned to the fact that, as a wife, she could not retaliate. This is indicative of the acceptance and tolerance of different forms of violence in an Indian marriage. In India, socially constructed views of gender roles are internalized by women making them more vulnerable to injustices. Shanti said,

Even in the kitchen, he would hit me if I didn't keep something in its spot. Men don't even belong in the kitchen.

That Shanti believes that men do not belong in the kitchen suggests that she has assimilated some of the traditional gender roles that her community imposes on men and women. This became more apparent when she said she loved her husband despite the unbearable abuse because that is what her parents had taught her - to love. She reflected that that could have been one of the reasons she had stayed in the abusive relationship. The fact that she loved him despite the abuse is not only possibly indicative of what is expected of a good Indian wife but also the tolerance and acceptance of abuse in a marriage, stated earlier.

Shanti spoke about the first incidence of physical abuse. Being new to the country, Shanti was unaware of the driving rules and regulations in New Zealand. Kamal handed her the driving theory test book for her to learn. She understood most of it but could not grasp some of the concepts. He wanted to question her to know how much of it she had actually understood. Kamal slapped her because she had not learnt the driving book to his satisfaction. She says that by the end of the year of her arrival, she was in "very bad condition."

She remembered that her mother-in-law had double standards in relation to how she was treated compared to her sister-in-law, who also lived in the same house as them. Her mother-in-law would demand that Shanti do all the household work, while her daughter did not take any part in it. Her sister-in-law would return from work at 11 pm. Shanti was expected to cook and serve her as well. She would go to bed at midnight only to be woken up by her husband at 4 am.

Speaking of the escalating violence, Shanti narrated an incident when she was vacuuming and had accidentally left out a spot. Her husband stood up and slapped her saying, *“Are you vacuuming? Is this how you vacuum?”* This is clearly indicative of his assertion of power and control over Shanti. The entire family had a clear picture of the violence and they all remained passive. Their bedroom door would be closed while she got beaten inside the room but no one intervened. Nor would they say anything later. Shanti’s sister-in-law once stood right outside their bedroom room, eavesdropping.

Everyone at home knew I was being beaten and I would cry. The door would be closed and no one would come in. And no one would say anything after... One day I told my mother-in-law that he hits me so much, why doesn't she tell him anything? She replied, “How can I say anything? I can't do anything.”

Thinking back on the physical abuse inflicted upon her, Shanti said, *“...he would make a fist and hit me on my head, slap me. He used to treat me like an animal.”* She also talked about another brutal incident wherein she was so badly beaten that the sclera (white of the eye) turned red. Kamal told her to tell the doctor it was an accident; she did so to protect him from the police. This could also be possibly because she had no support here and was anxious about what she would do and where she would go if her husband was taken away by the police. She was possibly aware of the

potential ostracism by her husband's family and the community. These are common barriers Indian migrant women in reporting abuse.

Shanti's husband would physically abuse her by pulling her long locks to a point where she felt her entire scalp might rip. Shanti was physically abused when she was pregnant as well. She recalls being so badly beaten that she had blood in her urine.

During her pregnancy, Kamal controlled her financially by not allowing her to work, stating she should not work owing to her condition. Nor would he give her money for minor expenses. She would be given exact change to buy nappies for her son. She told her parents about this and her father asked Kamal to keep an account of Shanti's expenses so he could return the money to him. Shanti wished to study in a nursing institute in New Zealand but her husband refused to give her the money for registration with the university. *"If he had given me that registration money, I would have been a nurse today,"* Shanti recalled.

Shanti's stress only intensified when her son was born with club feet. He had to undergo two major surgeries and needed a high level of care. He also suffered from eczema as a baby. She had to spend a lot of time caring for him while completing all the household chores. This again reflects the expectations the elders and male members in the family hold of a woman fulfilling the duties of a mother, a wife and a daughter-in-law in an Indian household.

Shanti's mother-in-law was an integral part of the deteriorating relationship between Shanti and Kamal. She would distort facts and complain to her son in such a way that it seemed like Shanti was not paying heed to her mother-in-law or taking good care of her. This led to further physical abuse. For instance, they had guests over one day and

Shanti's mother-in-law was peeling garlic while making conversation with them in the living room. Shanti informed the guests that dinner was ready and did not personally invite her mother-in-law as she assumed that she would join the guests once she was done with her chore. Her mother-in-law complained to her son saying she was not given food. This infuriated Kamal who locked the kitchen door and slapped Shanti in front of her mother-in-law. This is how she would try to jeopardize their relationship by constantly complaining to Shanti's husband about her behaviour.

Shanti narrated another incident when she asked her mother-in-law if she would like Shanti to make her some food. Her mother-in-law said she was not hungry; Shanti went for a shower. On her return, she noticed her mother-in-law making food for herself. Kamal started to hit her, asking her why she had not cooked for his mother. He added that that was the reason he brought her from India. Shanti's mother-in-law did not intervene and tell the truth. Instead, she let her son abuse Shanti, physically and emotionally.

In addition, Shanti's mother-in-law was overly possessive about her son and she would go to great lengths to ensure they did not get any private time together as husband and wife. She went to the extent of separating their beds when Shanti was seven months pregnant. Kamal did not oppose this idea. The reason given for this was that the mother and new born would need privacy. When I asked Shanti if she tried talking to Kamal about this, she said she did not because she was certain she would get beaten.

Family and Community Reaction

Shanti's sister-in-law's husband, a prominent community leader, helped Shanti by providing her with international calling cards knowing well the

treatment she was given in her home. His mother would sneak in food for her during her pregnancy. This could be seen as a form of support Shanti received during her pregnancy. In many Indian communities, the daughter returns to her parents' house in the last trimester and stays there for a few months post pregnancy. This is to ensure that she gets adequate rest and has her parents' support at all times. As an immigrant, Shanti did not have this support. It is possible that the older woman was trying to provide this support but was not willing to expose Shanti's condition possibly fearing the community response. The community leader was well aware of the domestic violence but *"he would laugh and walk away."* He was also explicit about not wanting to get directly involved in this matter, potentially fearing the loss of community support, personally and professionally, which he was not willing to risk.

Initially, Shanti did not inform her parents about the brutal abuse she was subject to because of her parents' ill-health. She was also concerned about the Punjabi community and her family's reactions if she chose to leave the abusive relationship. This acted as a barrier to reporting the abuse. When she started to confide in her parents, they repeatedly told her that Kamal would change. Shanti reflected she understood why her parents reacted that way: *"They didn't want their daughter's life to be ruined."* This reaction is fairly common among parents of Indian victims owing to their emotional and financial investment in their daughters' wedding. Her parents would tell her,

...anyone can live with good people but he is human who can also live with bad, dirty people.

This may be interpreted as them wanting to save face in the Indian community and their wider family. A daughter leaving her husband's house is usually considered shameful in the Indian community. Shanti

was also anxious about where she would go or what she would do if she left the relationship as she was completely isolated.

Owing to the isolation, Shanti did not have the opportunity to make new friends in New Zealand. She made her first friend at a shop where would use the phone to make calls to her parents as the phone at her house was locked. This depicts another power and control tactic to isolate her not only from support system in New Zealand but also from her family in India. Shanti started confiding in her friend, Durga, an Indian woman and found that comforting. In fact, when Shanti was subjected to brutal abuse and had blood in her urine, Durga accompanied her to the doctor.

Seeking Help

Shanti decided to call the police when Kamal tried to strangle her. She struggled to breathe. She said the police took pictures of her and took him away but his friends bailed him out. Shanti added that his friends were supportive of him despite being aware of the abuse he had inflicted on her. This reflects the tolerance and normalization of violence towards women in the Indian migrant community. It also shows the lack of support for victims of domestic violence in the Indian migrant community.

When Shanti decided to leave the relationship, she took her son with her. She stayed with another member of the Punjabi community for a few months.

She asked her husband for her gold jewellery. He refused to give it back to her saying he brought her to New Zealand and got her residency; this was how she would repay him. The police could not help her with this as she had no proof that he had her jewellery.

Shanti went to the Family Court to seek a protection order and a parenting order and was assigned a legal aid lawyer. She found him to be inadequate: she said that he asked her to do all the paperwork and did not assist her in any meaningful way.

No help! I had to do everything. I had to bring everything written. I am not happy with the New Zealand courts at all.

The Family Court assigned a lawyer to represent her son. Shanti felt that this lawyer was also incompetent. For instance, if Shanti had a hearing scheduled for the next day, the counsel for child would ring her the previous night to get her statement. Shanti recalled how her complaints regarding her husband would be ignored by this lawyer. Shanti's son had expressed fear about his father's drinking problem. But the lawyer said, "...it is better to send the child (to the father)." That is, Shanti felt this lawyer had decided what was best for her son, without considering Shanti's views.

Under an agreement made with Kamal, Shanti got custody of her son for weekdays while her husband got to keep him on weekends. Shanti was unhappy with this outcome as she felt Kamal, being the perpetrator, should have not been granted any access to their son. She had serious concerns about her son's safety and well-being while in Kamal's care. Despite these concerns, she had signed the custody agreement under pressure from counsel for child. She signed this document because counsel for child said it was the best possible scenario for her and her son. Her own lawyer seemed quite passive and didn't provide advice to the contrary. At the time, she did not know what the law actually says: that the decision needs to prioritise the best interests of the child. Shanti was totally reliant on the lawyers.

Shanti expressed her frustrations about the outcome of the child custody case. Now, Shanti well understands that the test for deciding applications for a parenting orders is the best interest of the children. But her experience with the lawyers has led her to see the process as farcical.

I was fighting for my son's custody and the "law" (according to counsel for child) here is such that the child goes to the father and the mother. If your rules are like this, why make laws (Care of Children Act)? When a mother knows that she HAS to send her child to the father for 2 days, then why go through this process? The woman gets the protection and the parenting orders; there is a rule that the child has to stay with the mother till he is 18 years old. What's written in the books, you follow! There is nothing about winning or losing a case.

Shanti's fears were well-grounded. Shanti recalled an incident when she was unwilling to send her son to stay with Kamal as her son had just undergone foot surgery. She did not trust Kamal with caring for their son. Kamal took their son to his house anyway and called her at 1 am, heavily intoxicated. He asked Shanti to collect her son as "he was not calming down." This worried and angered Shanti who rung the police. The police said they did not have anyone free to attend to the matter. Shanti then went looking for a patrol car and found one. She explained the situation to the officer who went to her husband's house and brought him back to Shanti. Shanti reported this incident to counsel for child who failed to raise it in court. She also decided to change her lawyer.

On another occasion, Shanti said that her husband slapped her son when drunk. She took her son to the police station to report this. The police responded that they could not take his statement as he was too young.

I want to ask New Zealand law, all these lawyers you have here... If a woman like me comes for help and knows nothing about protection orders, withdrawing them, what her losses are,

what the benefit is. She doesn't know what the lawyer is writing... does she have to silently agree or does she have the right to refute this and fight for her rights?... Just making countless affidavits...when I get nothing out of the court, why fight?

This indicates the dejection and hopelessness that Shanti felt owing to her experiences with the legal system in New Zealand. Shanti withdrew the protection order after her ex-husband provided a statement stating he would not harass her. However, she was not fully aware of what she was signing when she signed the withdrawal of the protection order. Prior to that, he would verbally abuse her over the phone. She was successful in recording this verbal abuse over phone which was regarded as outdated by her ex-lawyer. Shanti stated it was not possible to record every single time such an incident took place.

During the last court hearing, Kamal stated in court that he was being treated for depression. A few days later, he called her saying he was about to commit suicide. Shanti rung the police and got him help. The police told her that he was intoxicated and that they had found a suicide note. She noted that the judge who had asked for a copy of this note did not receive it. Shanti has not stepped in court since the last hearing, nor has anyone called to check how her son and she are doing.

This situation was replicated within the Punjabi community. Shanti recalls going to the Gurudwara (Sikh temple) after leaving Kamal, only to be shunned by people she had known previously. This left her feeling hurt and dejected; she decided to go to another Gurudwara far away in order to avoid people known to her. Unfortunately, she experienced the same reaction there as well. Since then, she has cut all ties with the Punjabi community. The above incidents clearly reflect the ostracism Shanti was subjected to by the Punjabi community at large, only because she chose to

leave her abusive husband. This isolation is usually magnified in a host country as the woman does not have her parents or her support networks to help her.

Moving Forward

Shanti expressed her frustration having experienced abuse and going through court processes. She felt Kamal walked scot-free despite the horrible abuse she was subjected to.

I was so badly abused and then he stood in court and said, "I am sorry, I feel guilty." The judge said ok. That's all. The lawyers or judge didn't think for once what I was going through. No one understood my feelings or even tried to. I am scared now... about men. That all men are like this. Only lucky women have good men in their lives. I have had the worst experience of marriage. I am scared to move forward.

Shanti felt the law had failed her and her son. Her parents and siblings have been supportive of her leaving the relationship. When Shanti moved out of her husband's house and stayed with another member of the Punjabi community, she was treated like a slave in that house. She had to pay rent and do all the household work. Shanti was unaware of the benefits provided by Work and Income. Immigrant women are seldom provided with adequate information regarding benefits they are entitled to, even after accessing services.

Nothing has come out of the court or of my marriage. I am strong today because I've overcome so much. My husband used to tell me that I can never take my son anywhere; that he won't allow me to drive. Now look, I go everywhere with him...I tell women, don't go to the courts. Handle it yourself. I ask parents why they spend so much money on the daughter's marriage in the form of gold and gifts. I say they should deposit cash in the girl's bank account.

The above statement is indicative of Shanti's resilience and changes in her views about dowry. Earlier in the narration she had stated that gifting gold and other materials to the groom's family is not considered dowry if given with a good heart which is contrary to how she felt about dowry after her bitter marital experiences. She now feels that if dowry is given in the form a deposit in the daughter's bank account which is under her control, it may serve as a protective factor.

She now lives independently with her son and is grateful for the help she has received from her friend, Durga and an ethnic organization that helped her with providing counselling and regaining focus in life.

Shanti had heard on the radio recently about how if a woman leaves a man in the Punjabi community, people talk badly about her and she loses face in the community implying that she should tolerate the violence and stay with the perpetrator. This angered Shanti. She wanted to ring the radio station and lash out at them for saying such a thing on air.

Shanti's son still talks about the physical violence Kamal had inflicted upon her. He is evidently emotionally disturbed by these events. Shanti stated that she would never allow her son to treat a woman the way she was treated. This indicates not only resilience on her part but also diminished tolerance for any form of abuse. Shanti's ex-husband has now remarried. Her son does not visit him as often as earlier which Shanti is relieved about. Shanti's son told her that if his father yelled at his new wife, she yelled back at him. Shanti approves of his wife's behaviour as she feels that it will put him in place. Shanti maintains a cordial relationship with Kamal's wife with the sole purpose of being there to support her in the event of abuse. Shanti suspects her ex-husband slapped his wife. She confided in Shanti; Shanti explained to her that she had no

support when she needed it and that she should seek help in the event of escalated abuse.

Reflections

Shanti came to New Zealand with expectations that she would lead a seemingly normal married life like that of her parents. She wished to take care of her husband and be happy. However, from the ways in which she was treated by her husband and his family, and also from what her husband had told her later, she realized she was only brought to New Zealand to do household chores and to care for her mother-in-law.

Like many Indian women, Shanti experienced hostility from the community after she left the abusive relationship. Shanti looked utterly disappointed when she reflected on how her experience of being married differed from her expectations.

Shanti's husband and mother-in-law lived in the same house when Shanti left. However, her husband asked his mother to leave the house as he had realized that that she played a big part in jeopardizing their marriage. This realization dawned upon him when he wanted to make amends with Shanti and she confided in him about his mother's behaviour towards her.

Shanti has had a tumultuous journey from setting foot in New Zealand as a new bride to leaving an abusive family. Since I interviewed her, Shanti has completed a degree and is now establishing a career. All this took immense courage considering the backlash from her community and family. It also shows tremendous resilience and growth as a survivor of violence.

I almost decided to go back to India when I left him but then I thought, "No! I want to stay here, stand on my own feet and

show them that I can do something with my life." I have always cried while talking about these things. This is the first time that I haven't.

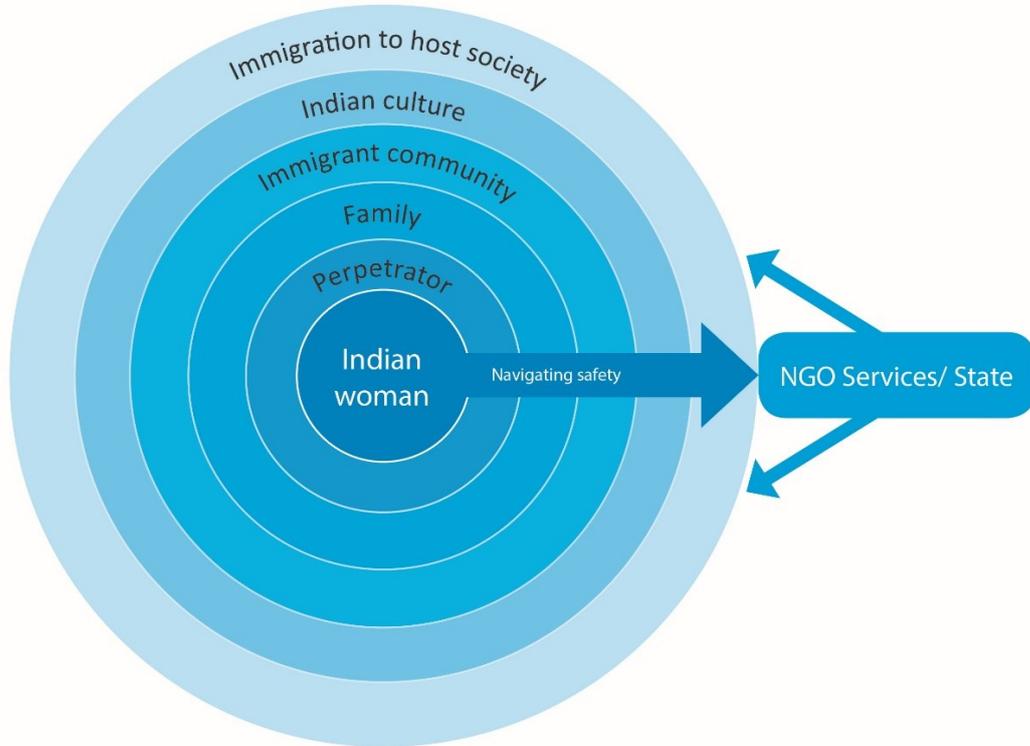
Chapter 9

Discussion

This thesis set out to explore the ways in which Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence in New Zealand navigate their safety in the context of migration, to understand the challenges that Indian women experience in the face of migration that make them vulnerable to domestic violence, and to investigate the barriers they face in seeking help. This thesis has established through the analysis of key informant interviews and case studies, that Indian migrant women in New Zealand are vulnerable to domestic violence not only owing to additional challenges migration poses but also the cultural complexities that they bring with them, many of which hinder help-seeking. My research also shows us how Indian migrant women's apparent channels of support often further victimize them. It brings to light ways in which these women navigate their safety. In investigating and analysing aspects of such contexts, I address the barriers in service provision.

I argue that we can best understand these processes as occurring within nested systems of oppression acting against Indian migrant women who experience domestic violence in New Zealand (see Figure 1). This ecological system includes the perpetrator, family and community. While perpetrator behaviour is nested within the context of family - which in turn is nested in wider migrant community practices and norms, what shapes the migrant community is Indian society. It is also important to understand these systems as operating within a host society which can serve to exacerbate some of the challenges and barriers and undermine some of the protective factors which might otherwise serve to protect women's interests.

Figure 1. An Ecological Framework: Dynamics of Indian Immigrant Domestic Violence



The Ecological Model

My model is inspired by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory which was ground-breaking in understanding human development in terms of complex interactions between the individual and the environment around him or her. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the ecological environment is made up of layers of entrenched systems, enclosed within one another. Through his ecological model, Bronfenbrenner explained that the complex interactions between nested systems play a vital role in the events that unfold within a given setting or a particular context. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model comprised of five

environmental systems, which I will now elaborate on in relation to my research.

The individual operates at the core of this structure and is influenced by and influences the interactions between the other nested layers and the wider contexts in which these layers are encapsulated (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In my ecological model, the Indian woman experiencing domestic violence in a host society operates in the centre of the structure.

The first nested layer operating above the individual, or the microsystem, includes aspects of the direct environment in an individual's life like family, friends and other individuals with whom she or he has direct contact. In my model, this is where the perpetrator is placed. The analogy to the original model in the context of immigrant domestic violence is that the perpetrator and his controlling and abusive behaviour constitute a microsystem within which the woman conducts her life. He is the one with whom she interacts face-to-face on a daily basis. Most Indian men are raised in an environment that promotes patriarchy and male entitlement. In relation to my model, an Indian man is the one that directly perpetuates physical, emotional and financial abuse. He has direct power and control over her in the context of domestic violence. That is, he has direct influence on isolating her and has power over her visa status in a host society.

The next layer in the concentric structure, the mesosystem, is a group of microsystems; it consists of relationships between the microsystems in the individual's life (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In Figure 1, this is the family layer. It comprises not just an Indian woman's parents but includes her in-laws and extended family as well. The findings of my research show that an Indian woman is expected to carry out duties of a "good wife" as

taught to her by her parents and expected of her by her in-laws and extended family. The experts in my research explained that one of these wifely duties include maintaining the family honour by holding the family unit together, even if this means tolerating and accepting abuse as a part of marriage. The dynamics of power and control within this layer come to the forefront in the practice of dowry. The power is visibly lopsided with the in-laws having the upper hand in demanding dowry and the bride's parents largely conceding to these demands. When dowry demands are not fulfilled, it leads to abuse of not just the bride but also her parents by the groom and his parents.

The layer above the mesosystem is the exosystem. It consists of interactions between two or more systems. This is the context in which the individual has no active role but the events that take place indirectly influences or is influenced by the immediate setting of the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994). In my model, this is the immigrant community level. From my data collection, it is evident that the Indian immigrant community largely condones domestic violence. This takes us back to cultural norms, on the family level, around the role of women in not bringing shame to the family and the community. On a community level, there is pressure to preserve home-cultural values within the context of migration to a host society. For women, this could sometimes mean tolerating domestic violence. Since reporting abuse in a host society is largely viewed as bringing shame to the immigrant community, women are expected to suffer in silence. These strict community norms not only affect lower-order systems (family, perpetrator and woman) but also are affected by these systems.

The macrosystem is the overarching culture of the micro-, meso- and exosystems. In Figure 1, this is where Indian culture is positioned. This is the context in which the immigrant community, family, perpetrator and woman operate. The community norms, discussed earlier, are governed by aspects of the Indian culture. It can also be conversely said that the status of Indian women in the Indian society is also reinforced by attitudes and practices on the perpetrator, family, community and cultural level that disadvantage their position. This brings to forefront the complex nature of the ecological model. That is, the influence of the layers on other layers is bi-directional.

In Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, the outermost layer is called the chronosystem. This includes the individual's transition in the ecological environment as a result of a change in role, setting, or both (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In my model, I conceptualize migration to a host society as a part of the chronosystem. This is a major life transition in an Indian woman's environment. Commonly, she will have migrated soon after she got married, so the geographical transition coincides with a transition in her role and status. Migration to a host society accompanies a unique set of challenges that make her vulnerable to domestic violence and hinder help-seeking. The Indian community in a host society may pressure a woman to adhere to cultural norms and stay in the abusive relationships as the community doesn't want to air its dirty laundry in public, as explained by some experts. That is, the migrant community is vigilant of the judgemental gaze of the host society and wants to protect itself from further stigmatization. In my data collection, it was evident that the migrant community does this by trying to resolve domestic violence matters within the community. However, from my case studies it was

evident that intervention by community members often worsens the abuse.

An Indian migrant woman experiencing domestic violence, nested in the core of this ecological framework, often navigates her safety despite the complex interactions between layers in the model that work against her (see Figure 1). The factors that make her vulnerable to domestic violence and those that hinder help-seeking in a host society, make it all the more challenging not only for the woman to reach out to NGOs and state agencies but makes it difficult for these agencies to penetrate the lower-level layers to help her.

This chapter interweaves the main themes that have emerged in this research. I will discuss what my research has contributed to already existing research with regards to a conceptual framework that captures the complexity of domestic violence in the Indian migrant community in New Zealand. I will explain this framework in terms of five main themes: status of women in India, Indian women migrating to New Zealand, challenges they face that makes them more vulnerable to domestic violence in the host country, Indian migrant women navigating their safety and barriers they encounter in help-seeking. I argue that these themes are evident from a careful reading of the key informant interviews and case studies.

Firstly, however, it is important to revisit the view of domestic violence with which I started this research: that domestic violence is a universal phenomenon that cuts across all class, race, religion and national boundaries (World Health Organization, 2001), although the nature of that oppression may differ according to those factors. It is also keeping in mind that deep-rooted patriarchal values play a key role in perpetuating crimes against women, including domestic violence (Brown, 2014). Domestic

violence is not only physical but also psychological. That is, domestic violence is about power and control. It is about male entitlement. It is about men asserting their power and fighting any threat that challenges their privileged position. This will become more evident when I discuss the status of women in India.

Status of Women in India

The Indian culture forms the second to top most layer in the ecological model. This is the level that shapes the cultural norms and values that the Indian community brings to New Zealand. This layer needs to be understood as it influences all the other layers in the model. That is, the Indian migrant community, parents, perpetrators and women are all placed within the workings of the Indian culture. In this section, I will discuss the status of women in the Indian culture in relation to the patriarchal and cultural norms that disempower them and legitimises violence against them.

Some of my Indian key informants explained how Indian culture remains profoundly misogynist despite certain changes evident modern urban upper and middle class communities. It is a society which routinely oppresses women and regards them as less deserving of full human rights than men. This is evident from the injustices against women from before their birth until their death: female foeticide and infanticide, arranged marriages, the practice of dowry and violence against women, to name a few.

Violence against women is legitimated by powerful cultural norms and at the same time, serves to reinforce those norms. For instance, as explained in Chapter 2, according to Hindu scriptures, a daughter is under the surveillance of her father and, as a married woman, under the surveillance

of her husband. In her later years, as a widow, she is under the surveillance of her son. Thus, men have power and control over women at all stages of life.

From the data collected, an overarching theme that emerged was that of patriarchal attitudes and practices. It was evident that patriarchal attitudes, coupled with sense of male entitlement, invariably played a significant role in not just perpetuating domestic violence but also tolerating injustices done to Indian women. In Chapter 2, I discussed the contrasting aspirations parents have for their sons and daughters owing to cultural norms. Education is seldom prioritized for a daughter. She is usually trained in household chores so she grows up to be a good daughter-in-law and a good wife. The experts in my research discussed how the parents of a daughter are expected to save up for her dowry. This is why a daughter is viewed as a burden. Over the years, India has seen an appalling rise in cases of female foeticide and infanticide owing to the cultural and societal pressures that accompany raising a daughter and the financial pressures of dowry.

A son, on the other hand, is seen as an asset to the family. He is given education as he is expected to be the breadwinner of the family. He is also on the receiving end of dowry. That is, he is capable of improving the financial and social status of the family. In contrast, a daughter is seen as the one who drains the financial resources of her parents, in the form of dowry. Dowry, with regards to my case studies will be discussed in the next section on migration. In Neha's case, her mother-in-law was unhappy that Neha had given birth to two daughters and no sons and did not help her with the care of her new-born. Neha was still expected to do all the household chores throughout the day while caring for her daughter.

As seen in the ecological model, parents form a layer in the nested structure and are impacted by cultural norms and the community. That is, dowry is a practice that is reinforced by the wider community. An Indian key informant pointed out the tradition of displaying the dowry during the wedding ceremony for the viewing pleasure of the guests. This was to prove to the wider community that the father of the bride still held status in the community and that he was adhering to community traditions; that is, fulfilling his fatherly duties by giving dowry.

Some Indian key informants noted that these contrasting priorities for raising sons and daughters were particularly common in rural India. This is reflected in Neha's case. She grew up in rural India where her immediate family wanted to get her married although she was keen to pursue higher education. In Shanti's case, although she had completed her nursing degree in India, she was certain she would be married off soon after. She didn't have any particular career ambitions as she was prepared to obey her parents' orders and marry the man they chose for her. All four women I interviewed moved to New Zealand because Indian women are usually expected to move to their in-laws' or husband's house after the wedding. Most Indian women usually have little or no say in the matter.

As explained by some Indian experts, it is worth noting that although education for daughters is not prioritized, many women in modern India are flourishing in the workforce. They strive to be financially independent, although interestingly, in some cases, they use some of their earnings to contribute towards their dowry. The irony here is that on one hand they are financially independent, but on the other, they are preparing themselves to be more "marketable" to a prospective groom. One could understand this as women improving their chances in the patriarchal bargain they expect to enter (see Chapter 2). On the other hand, some

experts in India discussed how many Indian women who were ambitious were not encouraged by their parents to pursue their goals of higher education as it would prove challenging for them to find a suitable groom who was equally well- educated. That is, it would transgress cultural norms for a man to have a lower educational status than his wife.

A few experts in both India and New Zealand noted that, in many cases, women are still under the financial control of the male in the household. That is, even if women are employed, men gain access to their finances and are in charge of making financial decisions. Even though Roopa was employed, her husband insisted on having a joint bank account. She had to seek his permission before spending money.

Despite their lesser status, not all Indian women are helpless in the face of adversity. There are many women who break free from these shackles of oppression and question cultural norms that are detrimental to their well-being. However, some experts in India argued that these women tend to face societal backlash: a resistance from pockets of society towards women's attempts to seek equal status as men. In some ways, women's liberation is viewed as a threat to men's position and the roles they are expected to fulfil. Women's lower status and conformity to expected gender roles provide the foundations of the patriarchal bargain. In this bargain, women supposedly gain physical, social and financial security from giving up certain rights like education and employment. However, what they actually gain is questionable when we look at the rates of crimes against women in India.

In fact, Indian key informants explained that women were blamed for the injustices done to them. In cases of rape, they were told to not venture out in the streets after dark and to wear "appropriate" clothing. In cases of

domestic violence, victim-blaming occurs by stating that the woman instigated violence by not following the rules laid out by men in the household. Some Indian and New Zealand experts added that if women left the abusive relationship, they are usually not welcome in their natal home as they are seen a financial burden. They are also blamed for bringing shame and causing embarrassment to the family. Indian women are responsible for protecting and maintaining family honour (Abraham, 2000). An Indian expert noted that remarriage is seldom an option for a woman who leaves a marriage as she is seen as tainted and immoral. A man, on the other hand, may go on to remarry and also demand dowry, once again. Divorce is still largely a stigma in the Indian society. Neha, Roopa and Shanti are single mothers while their ex-partners have remarried.

Key informants also talked about the manner in which daughters are raised. They are told from a young age of the potential hardships they will face as an Indian woman. This instils in them a level of acceptance of the injustices done to them. Some experts reflected on how daughters learn gender roles from their mothers. That is, when they see their mothers not standing up to violence, the daughters also learn to tolerate injustices done to them. This was evident in Usha's case. Even though Usha rang the police, she did not disclose the intensity of abuse to them. Usha reflected that she had probably learnt to tolerate the abuse seeing her mother do the same with her father.

Even in modern India, arranged marriages are considered the norm. All four women I interviewed for case studies entered arranged marriages negotiated in India. There was dowry involved in all cases. Three out of four of them were raised in a traditional family set-up. Usha grew up seeing her father being the head of the family while her mother followed

rules laid by him. Usha had little or no say in choosing her life partner. Her parents made this decision for her. In fact, the groom did not want to marry her when he saw her photo as he did not find her attractive. However, with some convincing, he agreed to marry Usha. Typically, in arranged marriages, the groom and his parents have power and entitlement in a wide range of decisions from rejecting the alliance to demanding dowry.

In Neha's case, as her parents had passed away, there was additional pressure on her extended family to get her married. She was married off to a man she had never met, against her wishes. Her aim was to study further and be financially independent. However, all this was to change when she moved to New Zealand.

Another theme that emerged in my data collection that is closely related to arranged marriages, was that of in-laws abuse in Indian marriages. More so, in-laws are heavily implicated in the abuse (emotional, physical and financial) of Indian migrant women, as described by my key informants and seen from my case studies. Usha was harassed by her in-laws prior to her arrival in New Zealand. Her father-in-law jeopardized her employment. Usha's mother-in-law would lock the kitchen so she wouldn't have access to food. Her in-laws also delayed her entry into New Zealand by not giving her the immigration documents that her husband had sent from New Zealand. In Neha's case, her mother-in-law and husband lived in New Zealand and left her behind in India for two years after the wedding. Neha later found out that her mother-in-law had spoken ill about her to their family in New Zealand who did not approve of her joining them. At this point, it is important to note that abuse by in-

laws can happen at a distance as well. I will explain this further in the next section.

An aspect closely related to in-laws abuse in India is that of dowry harassment. In India, many dowry cases end up in brutal physical and psychological violence or even death (Kumar & Kanth, 2004). Indian key informants shared experiences of research conducted in burn wards of hospitals wherein most women suffered burn injuries due to dowry harassment in the hands of their in-laws and husband. Kumar and Kanth (2004) noted that an extreme form of this dowry-related abuse, "kitchen deaths," refers to setting a woman ablaze in the kitchen and passing it off as an accident. Most in-laws and husbands are not charged as they pay off the authorities (Kumar & Kanth, 2004).

Shame and ostracism are related themes that have emerged in my data collection. Both are worth exploring with regards to women's status in Indian society. Some Indian and New Zealand key informants noted that shame and keeping up appearances are pivotal to Indian women staying in abusive relationships. In the model, the layers that operate above women, ensure that shame is not brought upon them and their families. Most times, this is carried out by ensuring that women stay in abusive relationships, as is evident from the data collected.

Sometimes, a woman's parents are aware of the escalating abuse. They either coerce her to stay in the relationship in order to protect their family from impending shame and ostracism (as seen in Neha's and Shanti's stories), and/or they are not able to fulfil the ongoing dowry demands (as seen in Neha's case). Some of key informants discussed how despite the violence women face in a marriage, they are expected to keep the family unit together. This is seen as one of the primary duties of a good wife: she

serves her husband and in-laws and she does not split up the family under any circumstances. These pressures placed on her are not only on a family level but also on a community level: she must uphold the honour of the family. This is evident in Neha's, Shanti's and Usha's stories in the ways in which their parents responded to the abuse. Their parents asked them to negotiate the abusive relationship up until the point where it became a threat to their lives.

Some New Zealand experts discussed how it was not only women's parents but also community members who coerced women to stay in abusive relationships in order to protect themselves from impending shame. In Roopa's case, the community member her father approached for assistance, asked her to withdraw the protection order as a first step. He wanted to settle the matter outside of court in order to protect the image of Indian community in the host country. Neha's story is also a classic reflection of community members coercing women to stay in the abusive relationship. She tried to seek help from neighbours who were also Indian. They eventually asked her to return to her husband.

In my research, these aspects of Indian culture that disempower and disadvantage women plays out in the context of migration to a host society. This will be discussed in the next section.

Migration

My research focuses on domestic violence in the Indian community in the context of migration. As mentioned earlier, all the layers in the model operate in the context of a host country (see Figure 1). In this section, I will discuss how the second class status of Indian women is replicated in New Zealand. That is, the patriarchal values and norms that disempower Indian women, discussed in the previous section, are not left behind in

their home country but are brought with them to the host society. From the data collected, it is evident that the layers that operate above Indian women, in the ecological model, often work towards maintaining their lowered status in the event of migration to a the host country.

There is limited literature with regards to Indian immigrant women in New Zealand. Some of it focuses on their occupational experiences (Nayar, Hocking & Giddings, 2012; Pio, 2005) and addresses settlement issues through the lens of work environment.

There is also a dearth of research with regards to domestic violence in the Indian community in New Zealand. Tse (2007) in his research focussed on family violence in Asian communities in New Zealand. This also included a few excerpts talking about Indian women's experiences. Although his research raised some important issues around immigration and cultural aspects with regards to domestic violence in Asian families, Tse (2007) was clear that there is a lack of knowledge about whether and how cultural norms in these communities are linked to domestic violence in these migrant communities in New Zealand. Not only has my research focussed on one migrant community in order to make the study more focussed, it has also been successful in bringing to forefront the cultural factors that make Indian migrant women vulnerable to domestic violence in New Zealand and has made explicit the barriers they experience in seeking help.

Pillai (2001)'s research on domestic violence among Asian immigrants in New Zealand brings to light some of the complex dynamics within Asian families that work towards maintaining the disadvantaged position of women in New Zealand. However, this research does not give much needed attention to the impact of the wider community. In my research, I

have attempted to analyse the ways in which the migrant community at large pressurizes Indian women to stay in abusive relationships and how women navigate their safety in these circumstances in the context of migration.

As mentioned earlier, Indian women who migrate may remove themselves geographically from India but they typically remain subject to the culture of their origins. It is important to note that they also enter a context in which the practices which oppress women in India are largely recreated in New Zealand.

As noted earlier, all the women in my research entered arranged marriages negotiated in India. Closely associated with arranged marriages, is the role of in-laws in couples' lives. Many New Zealand key informants discussed the role of in-laws in abuse of Indian migrant women. They stressed that even if in-laws did not live with the couple in the host country, women were still harassed either via phone or the abuse is carried out by the husband. Usha's mother-in-law was abusive towards her when they lived in India. She also carried out this abuse when she arrived in New Zealand. Further, she jeopardized the couple's relationship by ensuring they did not have privacy and by manipulating situations to seem as though Usha was not taking adequate care of her. The same can be said about Roopa's and Shanti's case. Their mothers-in-law exacerbated the violence they experienced in the hands of their husbands.

In her research, Fernandez (1997), investigated the role of in-laws in domestic violence in India. However, little research has been done on this specific form of abuse in the context of migration. The New Zealand experts in my research not only stressed the role of in-laws in perpetuating domestic violence in the host country, but also discussed the use of

continued dowry demands as a threat to the woman's implied or actual safety. Neha's story, in particular, serves as an exemplar in magnifying the role of in-laws and dowry demands in domestic violence in New Zealand. In Roopa's story, it is hard to overlook that her in-laws exacerbated the violence by manipulating her husband, first when they lived in India and later when they arrived in New Zealand. It makes one think about how in-laws' abuse doesn't necessarily have to be physical: it can also be emotional and financial. Also, it shows that this form of abuse can happen from a distance. As mentioned earlier, the in-laws don't necessarily have to be in New Zealand with the couple.

Tradition dictates that the groom and his parents are entitled to make financial and career decisions for the woman. These privileges are carried over to a host country as well. After her move to New Zealand, Shanti wished to study. However, her husband did not want her to. He refused to help her out with the registration fee. In Roopa's case, although her in-laws came to New Zealand and stayed with her, they refused to help her out with her child when she was called in for work early. Usha's husband pressurized her to get a job in New Zealand although she had to take care of her children and do all the household chores. Although she found work in small restaurants, her husband was not happy. He wanted her to study, so she enrolled in a diploma course. It is evident from these instances that many Indian women are pressurized to adhere to rules imposed by their husbands and in-laws, not only in their home country but also in New Zealand.

In India, women live in extended families along with their husbands and in-laws. Some New Zealand experts pointed out that this seemed to be the case with Indian migrant women as well. Neha and Shanti lived in an extended family setup in New Zealand. They were expected to cook and

clean for all the family members. In Roopa's and Usha's case, their in-laws visited them periodically.

Some New Zealand experts pointed out that migration typically increased the surveillance Indian women were subject to partly owing to the added pressure on the woman to keep the family together. The surveillance was to ensure these women adhered to social and cultural norms. From my interviews with key informants in New Zealand, it seems that there is a higher level of surveillance within immigrant communities than is the case in India. In particular, one key informant pointed out that the Indian migrant community faced pressures to not be further stigmatized in a host country. This pressure was in turn transferred to Indian migrant women, to maintain family and community honour. This was briefly discussed earlier. In the data collected, shame and fear of ostracism were also carried over to the host country and were key factors in the Indian migrant community that not only made women more vulnerable to domestic violence but also hindered help-seeking. This will be discussed in the upcoming sections.

When Roopa was on the phone, her husband wanted to know who she was talking to and what was said. He would do the same when she spoke to her parents in India. Shanti was not allowed to make phone calls to her parents. Her husband locked their landline phone. Neha's husband would carry the landline phone with him when he left home to ensure she did not contact anyone regarding the abuse. On a higher level of the community, the leader involved in Neha's case threatened dire consequences to any community members who would attempt to help Neha.

Some New Zealand experts had encountered cases where women were watched by their in-laws at social gatherings. This constant monitoring was to ensure that no details about the treatment towards her by her in-laws or husband was being shared with any community members. In addition, in many cases, Indian women were expected to hand over all their jewellery and passport to their in-laws or husband. Many key informants spoke to Indian women who did not know where their passports were kept. This is another power and control tactic practised by the in-laws and husband, not only in India but also in a host country. Shanti had handed her jewellery over to her husband when they arrived in New Zealand. He refused to give it back to her when she wanted it back. Similarly, Usha could not retrieve the jewellery given to her mother-in-law for “safe keeping.” Neha’s mother-in-law not only had the custody of Neha’s jewellery but also of her certificates. This was to ensure Neha did not look for work in New Zealand.

Hence, it is evident that Indian women are a part of a cultural edifice they cannot escape- it follows them to the host country. Because their culture comes with them, Indian migrant women remain vulnerable to domestic violence, despite the fact that the host society may be a little less tolerant of it and makes a wider range of remedies available to victims. I will now discuss the challenges related to migration that add to this vulnerability to domestic violence.

Challenges That Make Indian Immigrant Women Vulnerable to Domestic Violence in New Zealand

In the earlier sections, I have discussed the status of women in India and how this disadvantaged position is carried over to New Zealand. The entrenched patriarchal values and practices that disempower Indian

women also make them more vulnerable to domestic violence in New Zealand. That is, status of women in India coupled with additional challenges related to migration amplifies their disadvantaged position in the family and Indian community which in turn are placed in a host society. In this section, I will analyse the migration-related factors that make Indian women vulnerable to domestic violence in New Zealand.

Menjivar and Salcideo (2002) brought to light the challenges imposed by immigration that exacerbate the already vulnerable position of immigrant women in domestic violence situations. These researchers studied common experiences of immigrant women experiencing domestic violence in various host countries. Some attention in research is also given to experiences of women from South Asian immigrant communities (Ahmad, Rai, Petrovic, Erickson, & Stewart, 2013; Dasgupta, 2007; Kallivayalil, 2007, 2010). However, there is limited research investigating domestic violence in Indian migrant population in various host countries.

Although it is important to acknowledge the significance of research on domestic violence on diverse populations of immigrant women, particular focus on a certain immigrant population and the challenges they face in a particular host country has the potential to reveal complexities to these existing challenges. In my research, an in-depth analysis of cultural norms that most Indian women bring with them when they arrive in New Zealand has revealed not only challenges they face but also barriers in seeking help.

In this section, I will discuss the challenges related to migration that make Indian migrant women more vulnerable to domestic violence, based on the data collected. Again, referring to the model, it is important to remember that Indian women's experiences of domestic violence are

explored in the context of migration. Hence it is important to investigate migration-related challenges.

Isolation: As seen from the data collected, isolation is one of the biggest challenges faced by Indian migrant women that not only increased their vulnerability to domestic violence but escalated the abuse. Many New Zealand interviewees explained that Indian migrant women left their support networks behind to start anew with their husband and his family. They added that many of these women felt alone and disconnected from the host country. In many cases, this isolation is intensified by in-laws' involvement in abuse. As experts pointed out, women are monitored by their in-laws at public events. In a way, the women are isolated even when surrounded by extended family.

Neha's mother-in-law confiscated her certificates so she didn't gain employment. Her husband would lock her up at home when he went out. Shanti shared in her story the isolation she faced when she arrived in New Zealand. In her case, her partner tried to isolate her from her family in India as well, so that she did not confide in them about the abuse she was experiencing. Usha's isolation came to the forefront when her husband ignored her when his mother came to visit. Usha's mother-in-law ensured that her son spent more time with her than with Usha who at the time was pregnant. Usha felt isolated at this point and the abuse intensified as well.

This isolation also contributes to women's lack of knowledge of the services available to them and their legal rights in New Zealand. Although Shanti held resident status, she was unaware of the benefits she was entitled to, through Work and Income. Roopa was educated and faced no language difficulties. In fact, she was initially employed. However, she was not aware of ethnic service providers. In addition, her husband

constantly worked towards isolating her from her family and friends in India. Neha held a law degree from India. Despite this, she was unaware of her legal rights and services available in New Zealand as her husband and mother-in-law actively isolated her from the outside world.

These findings coincide with Abraham (2000)'s research that confirms that isolation makes South Asian immigrant women more vulnerable to domestic violence. This experience of isolation is further convoluted by language difficulties, dependent migrant status and financial dependency.

Language barriers: These were one of the main contributors to women's experience of isolation, thus making them more vulnerable to domestic violence. In addition, language differences acts as a barrier in help-seeking in the event of domestic violence in a host country (Hass, Dutton & Orloff, 2000; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Tse, 2007). Although many New Zealand experts pointed out that language barriers increased vulnerability of Indian migrant women to abuse, one particular key informant distinguished migrant women from rural India from those from metropolitan centres. She commented that the former were more vulnerable to domestic violence as their English language abilities were limited in comparison to their urban counterparts. This was evident from two of my case studies: neither Neha nor Usha, both of whom were from rural India, were confident about their English language skills. This inhibited them from forming new networks in New Zealand thus making them more vulnerable to domestic violence. On the other hand, Roopa, who hailed from urban India also found it difficult to form new networks despite her fluency in English: her husband had other ways of isolating her.

It is clear from these instances that although language difficulties could put migrant women at greater risk of abuse, other factors also play a role in increasing this vulnerability.

Dependent immigrant status: In my research, experts stressed that most Indian migrant women were dependent on their partners for their visa status. They added that since their spouses were usually the principal applicant, women often experienced threats of deportation which hindered the reporting of domestic violence. This in turn made them more vulnerable to abuse. This coincides with other research that says dependent immigrant status is seen to increase vulnerability of migrant women to domestic violence (MacLeod & Shin, 1990; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Tse, 2007).

Neha's story presented to us the harsh reality of Indian migrant women dependent on their partners for visa status. Neha's husband was adamant that her visa status would change (from dependent work permit to resident status) only if she bought him a house in New Zealand. That is, she could gain resident status only if she fulfilled this demand of his: otherwise, she would be deported. Neha was also aware that she could be deported if she reported the ongoing violence.

Usha's case was different in that her immigrant status was not used as a threat to deport her but was used as a threat for her to not gain entry into New Zealand. Her husband still had the power over her immigrant status in the host country. Her arrival in New Zealand was contingent upon her agreeing to adopt her sister-in-law's son and take him with her to New Zealand. She refused. So, when her husband sent immigration documents to be filled out for her residence visa, they were discarded by her mother-in-law. She was threatened that not only will she not be able to go to New

Zealand but also that her husband would divorce her if she didn't agree to the adoption.

It is worth noting that although dependent visa status posed barriers to reporting violence, women who have legal rights to stay in New Zealand may also face significant barriers. In Roopa's case, there was escalating violence although she had eventually gained New Zealand citizenship. That is, her immigration status did not particularly make her vulnerable to domestic violence. However, other factors like shame and ostracism and her financial dependency did. She feared that her husband would lose his dignified job. Moreover, she was anxious about the future of her daughter and bringing her up as a single mother.

Shanti was a New Zealand resident. When she asked her husband for her jewellery, he told her that the jewellery was a payment of gratitude for getting her residency and refused to return it to her. This is indicative of Shanti's husband's manipulative strategies to keep her jewellery and relating it to her status in the country.

Shame and ostracism: Among Indian migrant women, fear of deportation is closely tied to the fear of impending shame and ostracism they would face if they returned home. Some experts explained this by saying that women who returned to India were stigmatized by the family and the wider community for the shame they had brought to the family. An Indian expert added that they were also seen as a burden, an additional mouth to feed. Natarajan (2002) pointed out that the shame a daughter brought to her parents on returning to her natal house as a result of conflicts with her husband, also hampered the marriage of her siblings.

This shame is not restricted to the community in India; there is the same sense of shame within the New Zealand immigrant community. Some experts pointed out that in fact, this shame is intensified in the immigrant context. One reason is that a daughter being married off to a groom living abroad is considered prestigious for the bride's family. So when she leaves the relationship, there is added shame and losing face in the community. Another reason, as pointed out by a few experts, and an important one as mentioned earlier in relation to the ecological model, is that the Indian immigrant community strives to look good in the eyes of the host country so as to not be further stigmatized. When domestic violence is reported and a woman chooses to leave the relationship owing to this, the immigrant community experiences additional shame. Tse (2007) briefly discussed how reporting domestic violence is frowned upon in the immigrant context in New Zealand because it is regarded a private issue and affects the reputation of the entire community and brings shame to the home country.

Both Roopa and Neha experienced this when community leaders coerced them to stay in their relationships, despite being aware of the abuse. When Neha decided to tell her immediate family in India about the abuse, her uncle encouraged her to stay in the relationship. In fact, when Neha was in India, her husband gave her an ultimatum that she could only return to New Zealand if she brought back money. Her uncle, although aware of the abuse, insisted that she returned to New Zealand with the money. He feared what other people would think and the shame the family would have to face if Neha stayed in India.

When Shanti confided in her parents who lived in India about the abuse, they coerced her to stay with her husband, reassuring her that he would

change for the better. They did not want her to return to India as it would cause them embarrassment in the eyes of the wider community.

When Usha's parents visited her in New Zealand and witnessed the abuse she experienced, they reacted by asking a family friend to talk to Usha's husband. Further, they moved out of Usha's house hoping the abuse would stop. However, the abuse only worsened. It is clear that her parents were trying to negotiate ways in which they could ensure their daughter's safety without the wider community's or state agencies' involvement. This, in turn, could be related to the impending shame discussed earlier.

The isolation that women faced is often compounded by the potential family shame and ostracism they face after they report violence. The women in my research spoke about the isolation they faced even after reporting the violence owing to ostracism by migrant community members. In Usha's case, although she had reported the abuse to the police several times, she did not want any legal action taken against her husband. She was aware that the state agencies were on her side but she wanted the support of her family and friends in India. She felt isolated and did not think she could cope without the support of her family by her side. Similar isolation was faced by Neha. Although women's refuge and CYFS were aware of the abuse Neha was experiencing, she did not want to report it to the state agencies, as she didn't have her family with her in New Zealand. As a key informant in New Zealand noted, in her experience, court processes can prove daunting for Indian migrant women who have no support in host country from their family. Roopa could not cope with the aftermath of the abuse and reporting it. She had a daughter to take care of while she had to be present in the court room. She confided

in her parents about the isolation she was facing, who then arrived in New Zealand to offer her moral support.

Hence, it is important to remember that there are different mechanisms by which the layers in the ecological model influence lower-level structures. This section brought to the forefront the challenges facing Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence in New Zealand through the ecological model (see Figure 1). These challenges present themselves when an Indian migrant woman migrates to a host society, which forms the topmost layer in the ecological model. However, the complex interplay between this layer and the lower layers, with regards to these challenges, makes navigating safety a difficult process. That is, migration-related factors that exacerbate Indian women's vulnerability to domestic violence in a host society are not merely contained in the topmost layer of the ecological model. They also influence the lower-level structures and in turn, are influenced by them (see Figure 1). For instance, although isolation is brought about by migration to a host society, the perpetrator, his family and community typically have their own strategies of isolating the woman further. This in turn adds to her isolation in a host society.

It is important to reiterate that Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence in New Zealand are not only placed in a nested structure that adds to their disadvantaged position but they also navigate their safety in this multilevel context. That is, there are many systems operating against her in a host country- the perpetrator, family, community and the state and NGO services.

Navigating Safety

Showden (2011) argues that with matters of domestic violence, women are either viewed as victims who lack agency, or as individuals who have

made questionable choices. This could be a direct result of disregarding the complex nature of domestic violence and by overlooking women's acts of resistance to domestic violence (Showden, 2011). She critically analyses agency in domestic violence settings in the following points. Firstly, not all women who stay in abusive relationships lack agency. Irrespective of whether women stay with or leave the abuser, there are ways in which they exercise agency (Showden, 2011). Secondly, in order to gauge a woman's agency, one must be cognizant of the sociocultural context. Staying in the abusive relationship might mean adhering to gender norm expectation, for one woman but for another, it might be her way of planning ahead for a better future (Showden, 2011). The third point Showden (2011) makes is that victimization and agency can exist simultaneously rather than one having to exist in the absence of the other. The final point, and the one that is most relevant to my research, is that women of colour have their unique ways of exercising agency within the cultural parameters they operate in (Showden 2011; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). That is, it is important to explore who stays and why based on the sociocultural context (Showden, 2011). That is, the ways in which ethnic women resist oppression might not be ways in which agency is viewed in the wider western context.

In this section I will discuss how Indian migrant women navigate their safety with regards to the ecological model (see Figure 1). Through my research I have found that in the case of Indian migrant domestic violence, although women face numerous challenges and barriers when they migrate to New Zealand, they do not lack agency in their lives. That is, there are ways in which they resist the abuse they are subjected to and navigate their safety within the Indian cultural context in a host society (see Figure 1). The ecological model in which they are placed and the

dynamics between the layers makes navigating their safety a challenging process. As discussed earlier, most Indian migrant women face pressures on the family and community levels to adhere to gender norms and are coerced to stay in abusive relationships. However, it is evident from the data collected that Indian migrant women stand up against oppression, which operates on the cultural, community, family and perpetrator levels, with the limited resources available to them. As we go up the ecological model, the complex dynamics within which a woman has to navigate her safety becomes apparent.

There are a few important and unique aspects of Indian migrant women resisting oppression in a host society that have come to the fore in my data collection. One is that the ways in which they exercise agency might not, in the wider western context, seem like obvious ways of protecting themselves from domestic violence. Here, it is important to note that Indian migrant women navigate their safety within strict cultural parameters of the Indian society. The second aspect is that Indian migrant women navigate their safety in a multi-level context within the host society. The exercise of agency should be viewed in the context of the levels that make up the ecological model. That is, there are larger structures operating that restrict their options of agency. Sitting at the core of this structure, women often have to weigh their options and consequences of using these options. In other words, Indian migrant women navigate their safety within some tight constraints imposed by the larger systems in which they are embedded (see Figure 1).

It is important to establish here that I view the concept of help seeking as exercising agency with regards to Indian migrant domestic violence. That is, exercising agency includes the subtle ways in which women resist oppression and the active ways in which they work towards altering their

current situation. The focus of this section is not to analyse the consequence or aftermath of being agentic or whether these strategies of navigating safety were successful; it is the act of resistance in itself: what women do to navigate their safety and how they go about doing it. I will discuss this with regards to the ecological model. That is, how women navigate their safety through the dynamics within each layer: the perpetrator, extended family, Indian migrant community, Indian culture and the host society.

It was evident from my case studies that on the perpetrator level, although women resisted the abuse by reaching out to agencies, they typically held back from reporting violence as they feared their husband would lose his job, as he was the breadwinner in most cases. All the women in my research were financially dependent on their husbands. They feared their only source of income would be lost if they reported the violence. However, they were being agentic by making agencies aware of the abuse.

Shanti's husband financially controlled her by not letting her get a job and not giving her any money for her expenses. She would have to ask him for money only to be turned down. Shanti decided to do something about her financial dependence with the limited resources available to her. She talked to her father about her financial situation. In turn, her father spoke to her husband and asked him to keep an account of her expenses so he could repay him. This way she did not have to be completely financially dependent on her husband. This exhibits her agentic stance with regards to navigating safety around the financial abuse she was subjected to.

Usha took her children and escaped to a park nearby to protect herself and her children from her abusive, intoxicated husband. Her son had called the police just before they left home. Usha was unaware of this. That is,

although Usha did not want to call the police, she wanted to protect herself and her children by getting physically away from her husband. Her plan was to wait outside till her husband had fallen asleep and then return home.

In Roopa's case, at times when neighbours reported the violence and police arrived, she did not disclose the violence to them. Although Roopa was doing this in part to keep the family unit together owing to familial and community pressures, the main reason behind this was actually that she did not want her husband to lose his job. Roopa and her daughter were financially dependent on him. She wanted to protect his job by not reporting the abuse as she was worried about her daughter's future. That is, she wanted to be financially secure so she could take care of herself and her daughter before she made a decision to report the violence and leave her abusive husband. This shows that although it may seem like women staying in abusive relationships are doing themselves and their children harm, most times these women are thinking ahead strategically, as is seen in Roopa's case.

In Neha's case, she was hit by husband when she was pregnant. She demanded to go to the doctor. When Anand refused to take her, she told him she would go on her own. Her husband then went along with her to ensure she did not disclose the actual cause of her injuries. In this instance, it becomes clear that although Neha tolerated abuse to a large extent, she resisted when it jeopardized the well-being of her unborn child.

Neha hesitated to approach the police as she was aware that she might get deported if she reported the violence to the police as her visa was dependent on her husband's. However, at times, she questioned him

when she got beaten. This was her way of resisting the violence, within the constraints placed on her on various levels.

A unique factor in Indian migrant domestic violence, on the family level, that complicates women's capacity for agency is the involvement of in-laws in abuse. Within the family layer, this is an important area through which they have to navigate their safety.

This came through in the stories shared by women in my research. On some occasions, they stood up to their in-laws and questioned their authority despite being aware of the unpleasant consequences. Roopa confronted her mother-in-law when she tried to manipulate Roopa and wrong her in the eyes of her husband. Her mother-in-law lied that she was not informed about Roopa's whereabouts when Roopa had told her where she was and when she would return home. Roopa resisted the ill-treatment by her mother-in-law even though it led to verbal and physical abuse. That is, she wanted her husband to know that her mother-in-law was being dishonest and was jeopardizing their relationship.

Shanti's mother-in-law played a vital role in jeopardizing her relationship with her husband, as in Roopa's case. Although she was abused by her husband owing to the manipulations by her mother-in-law, Shanti was careful not to talk to her husband about it. She knew she would get beaten if she spoke to him about his mother being manipulative. To avoid further abuse, she would go on long walks and stay away from her husband and mother-in-law. This was her way of protecting herself from potential abuse from both of them.

Even after Shanti left her husband, he would verbally abuse her over the phone. Shanti recorded one such incident to present it in Family Court.

Despite the emotional trauma Shanti was being exposed to, she was able to think strategically about what she needed to do.

While Shanti did not confront her mother-in-law, Neha tried to explain her side of the story when she was abused by her mother-in-law. This resulted in the abuse escalating. However, that did not stop her. She was aware that she had done nothing wrong and was determined to not remain silent about it, although it led to more physical violence, as it did in Roopa's case. For instance, she was yelled at by her mother-in-law for using a certain cup as a kitchen brush holder. Although Neha apologized, her mother-in-law hurled abuses at her. She told Neha that everything in the house belonged to her and that Neha had no right to touch anything. Neha was aware that discussing this matter with her husband would only result in further abuse. However, she wanted to let him know that she had done nothing wrong, intentionally. When she did this, her husband, mother-in-law and brother-in-law started hitting her. When Neha questioned them, her husband brought a butcher knife to attack her. At this point, Neha ran out the door to her neighbour's house.

Further, in Neha's case, her options of resistance were limited owing to the isolation and language barriers that she faced. Despite this, she tried to make use of the limited resources available to her even if most times they did not prove helpful in stopping the violence and ensuring her safety. For instance, she had confided in her uncle who lived in India hoping he would understand her situation and assist her. Instead, he reassured Neha that her husband would stop abusing her once her child came along. Although it doesn't seem like this strategy worked, she felt safer that at least her family member was aware of the abuse she was subjected to.

Some women exercised agency while gauging what they had to lose as they operated within the wider constraints of the community and culture. In the case of Indian migrant domestic violence, women fear being ostracised by family and community. As discussed earlier, they also weigh the options available to them. It is important to remember that every woman navigates safety in a particular context. For instance, Shanti was aware of the potential ostracism by family and community if she decided to leave her husband. Moreover, she was isolated and anxious about where she would go if her husband was taken away by the police. Her sister-in-law's husband, who was aware of the brutal abuse she was subjected to by her husband, came forward to help her in the capacity that he could, keeping in mind the consequences on a community level. He felt constrained as he was striving to be a politician and did not want his involvement in Shanti's case to affect his professional standing in the community. He provided her with phone cards so she could ring her parents in India. His mother snuck in food items when Shanti was pregnant. However, neither of them encouraged her to leave the relationship. The first friend Shanti made was at the post shop where she made phone calls to her parents. This friend was Indian. It is possible that Shanti confided in this friend about the abuse and found some solace especially because most times, an Indian person would understand the dynamics of domestic violence in the Indian cultural context better than a Kiwi person. When Shanti was subjected to brutal abuse and could not get out of her bed, it was this friend who took her to the doctor. This shows that sometimes even women who are isolated find ways to navigate their safety, on a community level.

When Neha's uncle asked her to tolerate the violence, she approached a community leader for assistance. This also turned out to be ineffective as it

came to light that he was colluding with her husband. Finally, Neha escaped to the house of her neighbour who questioned her husband and his family. On several other occasions, Neha had run to other neighbours for help. This strategy did not prove particularly helpful either, as she had to return to her husband's house. The neighbours were clear that they did not want to be involved in Neha's private life. Neha's escape to their house was to let her husband know that she was capable of seeking help and would not keep mum. This was her way of resisting the violence and being agentic. In Neha's case it becomes evident that her way of exercising agency was making members operating on different levels aware of the abuse.

The Indian culture is the overarching layer above the woman, perpetrator, family and community levels. These lower-level layers are largely influenced by the Indian culture, as discussed earlier. Experts in my research pointed out that, more often than not, Indian migrant women have to weigh their options based on Indian cultural norms, discussed earlier. They added that women who leave a marriage and fail to keep the family unit together, are ostracised by the family and community. In the Indian society, there is stigma attached to being a single mother. All these cultural constraints often restrict their options. All the women in my research also confirmed that they had to keep in mind these cultural parameters they were operating in, before making choices.

All the layers discussed above operate in the context of the host society. Although sometimes Indian migrant women face challenges when they attempt to seek help from the agencies, they still navigate their safety through these factors.

Although police had intervened, Roopa did not want to leave the relationship. Instead, she equipped herself with information that was useful when she decided to seek help from the refuge. When she had almost left him in the past, her husband had pleaded with her to stay. In order to avoid this, Roopa stayed with her husband while she devised an escape plan. When she was ready, she left the house without his knowledge, thus avoiding his pleas. She started this process by calling the women's refuge from work. She was advised to find a lawyer. As Roopa didn't feel mentally strong enough to call a lawyer, she approached an Indian friend for assistance who helped her find a lawyer. The lawyer advised her to get a medical examination done. After visiting the doctor, Roopa went to the police station where pictures of her injuries were taken. Roopa got a protection order without notice and finally made this move as she feared for her life and her daughter's safety. In a few days, Roopa was taken to the refuge while her husband was at work. Her husband was unaware of all these steps Roopa had taken towards leaving. Some of my New Zealand key informants said that although many Indian migrant women hesitated to seek help owing to the factors discussed in earlier sections, they would ring the agencies to enquire about their rights. They wanted to know about the options they had access to so they could make the right move at the right time. This was evident in Roopa's story.

In Neha's case, the police's involvement only exacerbated her vulnerability to abuse. A community leader reassured the police of her safety. The police in turn left Neha and her children to the care of this community leader without further monitoring. The incident with the butcher knife, discussed earlier, occurred after the reassurance of her safety was given to the police. This is when Neha ran to her neighbour's house for help and the police were called again.

As is evident in the cases of Neha, Shanti, Roopa and Usha, the women initially hesitated to get police involved. However, on witnessing continued abuse, Usha's 5-year-old rang the police. After this, Usha started to ring them on a regular basis as she gained the confidence that they would support her. However, she did not disclose the full extent of abuse. She called the police so that her husband was aware that she could retaliate if she wanted to. This was a strategic choice Usha made; she was being agentic by taking control of the situation and letting her husband know that there could be potentially unpleasant consequences for him, in the host country, if he abused her further. But this strategy failed to work as her husband continued to abuse her physically and emotionally.

In the examples above, it is clear that most of these acts of resisting oppression and exercising agency may not seem like obvious ways of navigating safety in situations of domestic violence. However, it is important to reiterate that women who experience domestic violence exercise agency within the complex cultural parameters of the Indian migrant community. In the ecological model, they navigate their safety through every system which imposes constraints on them (Figure 1). This means that interventions with Indian migrant women will also have to be a multi-level: focusing on just one level is unlikely to be enough.

From my data collection it is amply clear that whether women approach services or not, they make strategic choices in exercising their agency within the sociocultural parameters and with the limited resources they have access to. Even when they seem to be compliant, they do not lack agency and they do resist oppression.

Despite these acts of resistance, Indian migrant women who experience domestic violence are faced with barriers in seeking help. These occur on

various levels within the host country, which will be explained in the next section.

Social and Community Barriers in Help-Seeking

The interaction between the layers in the ecological model not only present unique challenges but also serve as barriers in help-seeking for Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence in New Zealand. That is, some of the factors which make women vulnerable to domestic violence in the first place can also undermine their attempts to get help. For example, some New Zealand experts pointed out that factors like language barriers, isolation and dependent migrant status make women more vulnerable to domestic violence but it is important to acknowledge that these factors also hinder help-seeking. For instance, a key informant in New Zealand shared her experience with some Indian migrant women who rang the police for help. Owing to language difficulties, the police often mistrusted these women as they failed to express themselves or give adequate information. That is, some police officers, when they encounter women who are not fluent in English and who struggle with finding the right words to describe the nature of abuse, may come to doubt the women's honesty. This makes me think that the police officers' scepticism could be attributed to the limited vocabulary some women possess. Women might use a word "wrongly," perhaps one that seems to suggest more extreme violence than is justified. For instance, a woman who didn't know "slap" might use "bash" to describe an open-palm slap. This might be misleading in some cases and lead to doubting women's truthfulness. Many experts pointed out that language difficulties hindered help-seeking as women who were willing to ring the services didn't necessarily know what to tell them.

Some experts added that language difficulties also contributed to the isolation faced by women in a host country. Most women were unaware of services or their rights in a host country. This acted as another barrier in Indian migrant women reaching out to services. Many New Zealand experts explained that dependent migrant status acted as a barrier in many cases owing to fear of deportation. This was discussed earlier.

In this and the following section, I will discuss additional barriers Indian women face when they do reach out for help. First I consider what I have termed social and community barriers: those things within the Indian community that impede women's help seeking. It is useful to distinguish such things from what I call institutional barriers: these are features of the host society, both governmental and non-governmental, which also act to undermine and discourage women's attempts to make themselves and their children safe.

Shame and keeping up appearances: These related concepts are major themes to emerge from my analysis of social and community barriers facing Indian migrant women seeking help in relation to domestic violence. Indian migrant women seldom operate as individuals: as shown in Figure 1, they are embedded in larger systems of extended family and the Indian migrant community. These systems have a significant capacity to blame and shame women who leave their marriage – and as previously described, that shame can also become attached to the women's families. Under such circumstances, there is a huge pressure to keep up appearances. In the data collected, it was evident that Indian women in abusive relationships often remain because they have to consider what other people might think. That is, the shame they might bring upon themselves, their family and community as a result of leaving the relationship.

As discussed earlier, in the Indian context, women and their parents feel shameful and sometimes faced ostracism from the community if the marriage fell apart, even if domestic violence was the cause. Many experts in India and New Zealand stressed that the same applied in the migrant context. Shame is one of the reasons Indian women stayed in abusive relationships. - In my research, it is clear it was not just the women who felt this way, but according to these women, their parents as well. This accords with what my key informants said. Many New Zealand experts explained that in their experience, most parents of Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence in New Zealand coerced them to stay in the relationship owing to the shame it might follow. This in turn largely reflects migrant community attitudes and the community coercing women to keep the family together. The complexity of interactions in the nested system is evident from this multi-level pressure to upkeep family and community honour.

However, it is important to note that this sort of pressure is sometimes resisted. Some Indian key informants discussed how many parents of women are coming forward to help and support them despite community backlash. This has led me to think that this could be a recent change in India owing to the visibility of domestic violence in the public domain in the last few years.

Existing research on South Asian communities revealed that families of abused women usually asked them to stay in the relationship to maintain family honour (Ayyub, 2000; Gill, 2004; Merchant, 2000). This theme was evident in my conversations with Indian migrant women as well. Shanti's parents convinced her to stay in the abusive relationship promising her that her husband would change for the better. As discussed earlier, Neha

also experienced similar reactions from her family members when she informed them about the abuse, owing to the shame she might bring to the family. Usha's parents tried to resolve the matter by asking a family friend to talk to Usha's husband. They did not want her to involve state agencies as the community would become aware of the abuse and reporting.

It is important to note that despite their initial reaction of encouraging their daughters to hold the family unit together, the parents of all four women were eventually supportive of them leaving the relationship. It appears that once they realized the serious impact the abuse had on their daughter, they were prepared to support her, despite what other people thought.

Community response: As a New Zealand expert pointed out, under the surveillance of the host society, the Indian migrant community silences its women. This in turn is attributable to the marginal status of the Indian community in the host country. In this context, many community members collude with the perpetrator to maintain unity and maintain the honour of the immigrant community. They also do this so that strict cultural norms and values are adhered to.

In my research, I found that other community attitudes, besides shame and ostracism, played a crucial role in hindering help-seeking among Indian migrant women in New Zealand. The findings of my research support the view that although family and community networks are often seen as a part of the solution, they can sometimes be part of the problem. It shows that some community members were helpful but too often the Indian migrant community colluded with the abuser and/or were tolerant of domestic violence. That is, the Indian migrant community largely demands that women strictly adhere to the cultural norms prescribed to

them in their home country, even if it meant tolerating abuse. In this section I will discuss community response in two ways: community members who colluded with the perpetrator and the ones who helped women in the capacity that they could. That is, community members also operated within larger structures of the Indian culture and were expected to follow cultural norms (see Figure 1).

Some studies have found that greater social support decreased the likelihood of abuse among women (Mahapatra, 2012; Yoshioka, Gilbert, El-Bassel & Baig-Amin, 2003). However, in my research it was evident that these family and community networks that are usually viewed as systems of support did not necessarily decrease the likelihood of abuse. In fact, in some cases it made it worse. In Roopa's case, there was escalated violence when she reached out to a community member for help. This hindered her from seeking help from community members the next time violence occurred.

Studies also show that social support can help women identify effective coping strategies (e.g. Thoits, 1986). However, research on domestic violence in South Asian communities in the U.S reveals that there is a trend to ostracize women who report domestic violence or seek help from community members (Mahapatra, 2012). My research findings coincided with this. Shanti was ostracized by community members when she decided to leave her abusive husband. She was ignored by some community members at her place of worship. It is important to remember that these community members are also embedded in larger systems of culture in the host society. This becomes clear in Neha's case. Neha had some community members helping her. A community leader warned these members of dire consequences if they continued to help.

Community members being supportive of women leaving abusive relationships was not viewed favourably by many in the migrant community. Some New Zealand key informants added that when the community tolerated domestic violence, it further victimized Indian migrant women since these were the only social networks they had access to, owing to aforementioned challenges such as language barriers and isolation.

In Neha's case, the community leader who reassured the police of her safety failed to protect her when violence occurred under his supposed surveillance. This drew comment from the Family Court judge who also noted that the police had left Neha under the care of the community leader with no appropriate monitoring. It is evident in Neha's case that community members, along with the perpetrator and his family, not only manipulated her into staying in the abusive marriage, they also conspired against her. In an informal restorative justice meeting held in the presence of other community members the community leader asked Neha to compromise and to stay in the marriage. He told her that he would ensure that she got resident status and that he would guarantee her safety. In exchange for this, Neha had to agree to withdraw her application for a protection order. Neha agreed. However, in a perceptive move, the Family Court judge noted that Neha's application to withdraw the protection order was reflective of the lack of support and her anxiety regarding cultural issues in the Indian community: the judge refused leave to withdraw the application.

In Shanti's story, although a community member came forward to provide her with shelter when she decided to leave the abusive relationship, she was treated like a slave in their house. That is, her vulnerable position was taken advantage of. Moreover, her husband who was arrested on charges

of assault was bailed by his friends. Shanti commented that her husband's friends supported him despite being aware of the abuse. This not only represents their collusion with the perpetrator, but also reflects the tolerance of violence among some community members.

Roopa shared her story where her father approached the help of a community leader to sort out issues between Roopa and her husband, outside the court. But this leader tried to strike a deal with Roopa to withdraw protection orders in exchange for his help. It is evident that in doing so, he wanted to protect the Indian community's reputation. Some New Zealand experts pointed out that a desire by many in the Indian community to maintain silence about domestic violence reflected an aversion "airing dirty washing in public". That is, they wanted the community to look good in a host country where they already faced stigma and racism.

Shanti, Roopa and Neha shared with me the support they received from some community members. However, the common factor was that none of these community members encouraged them to access services. Instead, they tried to resolve the issue within the community. Here, it is helpful to reflect that women are having to navigate their safety through these complex dynamics within each structure in the ecological model (Figure 1).

In Shanti's story, her sister-in-law's husband and his mother provided some form of support by giving her calling cards to contact her family in India and offered her food during her pregnancy. However, they did not particularly encourage her to report the abuse. That is, they provided her with the support that would not jeopardize their standing in the community. In Roopa's case, an Indian family intervened and questioned

her husband about his behaviour towards Roopa but they did not help her access services. However, when Roopa shared her experiences of abuse with a Kiwi friend, she suggested that Roopa reports the abuse. Neha's Indian neighbours were aware of the abuse and tried to talk to her husband when she confided in them. However, they asked her to return to her husband's house. While they were briefly helpful in questioning Neha's husband about the abuse, they made it clear to Neha that she should return to her husband's house. This is another example that makes it clear that community members who are seemingly not tolerant of violence may nevertheless act in ways that are acceptable by the wider migrant community.

In my case studies it was evident that some community members coerced women to stay in abusive relationships and colluded with the perpetrator. As discussed earlier, Neha and Roopa's stories are exemplars in this aspect. In both cases, community leaders urged these women to settle the matter outside of court. Many New Zealand experts also shared their experiences of working with Indian migrant women who had been discouraged by community members from reporting the violence.

Some of the examples discussed in this section show that although some community members step forward to help Indian migrant women, they often do not suggest intervention by agencies. This could be because of the surveillance of the wider host society and the pressure they experience as migrants to save face. Additionally, it is also possible that the collusion of Indian migrant communities can be attributed to the fear they face of the erosion of their cultural norms and values. They pass on to the next generation the version of the culture they brought with them. These include attitudes around gender stereotypes and oppression of women.

Community members who support women experiencing domestic violence face pressures to protect community honour. More often than not, these dynamics within the community hinder help seeking and further victimize Indian migrant women.

Concerns about children: Although some experts had seen that concerns about the effect of the abuse on children acted as a reason for Indian migrant women to leave abusive relationships, others attested that the fear of being cultural stigmatised as a single mother hindered reporting violence. Some experts pointed out that this was often the case if women had daughters. This was for two reasons. Firstly, being a single mother of a daughter would hinder her future prospects of marriage owing to cultural stigma. Secondly, the woman would have to save up for dowry all by herself which adds to the financial pressure.

Key informants in India and New Zealand pointed out that financial dependency played a significant role as a barrier in help-seeking as migrant women with dependent visa status were not entitled to financial aid from the government. A consequence was that women remained in an abusive relationship because they felt that they would not be able to provide an adequate standard of living for their children by themselves.

This was evident of the case studies. Initially, Roopa did not report violence because she was worried about her daughter's well-being: She was concerned that she would not be able to provide for her daughter. Neha also stayed in the abusive relationship as she was concerned about the welfare of her children: she was financially dependent on her husband and thought her children would face poverty if she left. Her fears were realised when she had to live in a garage with her daughters after she left her abusive husband. From Usha's story, it is evident that she was also

financially dependent on her husband. Like Roopa and Neha, she also feared she could not provide for her children if she left him. However, when she eventually decided to leave her abusive husband, it was in part because she was worried about the effect of the violence on her children. Usha's husband was particularly abusive under the influence of alcohol and Usha worried about the safety of her children.

However, it should also be noted that even if women leave the abuser, children can become pawns in the abusers hands, further jeopardising the mothers' ability to keep themselves and their children safe. In some cases, I was told, children were used as a tool to manipulate and emotionally abuse women even after they had left the relationship. This often resulted in women facing a choice: either remain in New Zealand, without financial assistance fighting for their child's custody or leaving the child behind with the partner, as is evident from Roopa's story.

From the above, it is clear that although sometimes women remain in abusive relationships to ensure financial security of their children, some of them leave the relationship if they are concerned about their children's safety.

Institutional Barriers

In the previous section, I discussed the barriers faced by Indian women experiencing domestic violence that are located on the community and family levels of my model. In addition to these barriers, Indian migrant women face institutional barriers that hinder help-seeking. In this section, I will explain barriers in relation to organizations and institutions in the wider host community.

It is clear from the data collected that Indian migrant women face barriers in accessing services. It is important to note that the services also find it difficult to reach these women as they also have to navigate through the structures, in the ecological model, that work against Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence in a host society (see Figure 1).

Many Indian experts pointed out that legislation and service provision available to victims of domestic violence in most western countries are better than that those available in India. They also added that this could be the impression many Indian parents have as well: that is, parents may expect that the host country will be largely protective for women. It was evident from my key informant interviews in India that most of the experts themselves are unaware of the particular challenges that Indian migrant women face with the State and NGO services in a host country. While they are right in thinking that these services available are better overall in comparison to those in India, New Zealand still has a long way to go to refine them to suit the needs of Indian migrant women.

NGO services.

Most experts from both New Zealand and India stressed the importance of culturally safe practices in NGO services. Such practices are paramount in ensuring that Indian migrant women are not further victimized when they approach services. The experts stressed that although language is an important aspect in service provision for immigrant women, other cultural dynamics should not be overlooked. In this section, I will discuss the experiences that women shared with me with regards to NGO services, some of which were not particularly helpful.

Shanti found that services at the ethnic organization she had approached helped her in regaining focus and moving on from her abusive past.

Although Neha was placed in a safe house by an ethnic service provider where language was not an issue, her safety was still compromised as the social worker was known to her husband. This social worker was married to Neha's husband's friend and hailed from Neha's village. Neha shared that her daughters were beaten by this worker. Neha's husband had forewarned her that if Neha reported the violence, it was most likely that she would end up in this ethnic organization where the social worker was known to him. Neha also told me about another client who was treated badly by workers at the organization. Following this event, the organization asked the clients to document that they were treated well. Neha refused to do so and was asked to leave.

Roopa felt that the mainstream service provider involved in her case supported her better than the ethnic organization she had tried to seek assistance from. She approached the ethnic service for a change in lawyer, but was turned away. The mainstream service, on the other hand, provided her with all the information she needed when they were made aware of her situation by CYFS.

When Usha and her children were placed in a refuge, she commented that her daughter had not eaten properly for the entire time they were there as the food served to them was different from what they were used to. Some New Zealand interviewees discussed how it was important for migrant women and their children to feel welcome and at home when they entered the refuge. One expert added that these details in service provision helped migrant women cope better with the decision to leave. It not only included workers speaking the same language but also the other cultural aspects of service provision like providing women and children with food they are used to, providing a place for worship and using separate utensils for

vegetarians. The interviewee added that these factors made a big difference in the way Indian migrant women perceived services.

A key informant at a mainstream refuge in an area with a high Indian population noted that her organisation was not as visible as they would like to be within the Indian community. In particular, the lack of an Indian worker was an obstacle. It is interesting to note that she also added that the ethnic service providers in her region often failed to deliver adequate services to Indian migrant women, possibly because of the limited resources available to them.

It clear from this section that we cannot assume that ethnic agencies are automatically more attractive than their mainstream counterparts. One must acknowledge that it takes herculean effort psychologically for many Indian migrant women to seek help. At this point, they must not be made to feel more vulnerable. If service providers are cognizant of the needs of Indian migrant women, it will help these women make independent informed decisions, thereby empowering them. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Justice system.

In this section I will discuss the engagement of the police and the courts with Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence in New Zealand. I will bring forth the barriers women face in accessing the New Zealand justice system. In doing so, the gaps in service provision will be discussed.

Police and the criminal jurisdiction: All the women I had interviewed called the police at least once. All four men were arrested. However, only

one was convicted of assault and was sentenced to 100 hours of community service.

It is evident from my case studies that although women rarely engaged with the police, it was a crucial point in seeking help. The police, after all, play a key role in ensuring people's safety and in bringing offenders before the courts where they may be convicted and sentenced. However, all the women in my research faced numerous challenges in approaching the police. They had to carefully weigh the consequences of reporting the violence both on family and community levels. As the experts in my research had pointed out, many Indian migrant women hesitate to call the police as they feared bringing shame to their family and being ostracized by the wider community in a host country. In addition, most women were financially dependent on the perpetrator.

Roopa, Neha and Shanti were concerned about the repercussions of reporting the violence to the police as they were financially dependent on their husbands. However, in Usha's case, after the initial contact with the police, when her five-year-old son called them for help, she started to ring the police every time there was escalated violence. This was her way to let her husband know that she could retaliate, although she did not want to take legal action against him owing to the financial dependence. It appears that she felt protected on some level by the police arriving when she rang them. It is useful to note that the police officer who arrived in one instance encouraged Usha to report the violence.

In Neha's case, the police took the word of a community leader that she would be safe and left her behind in the perpetrator's house. The leader reassured the police of Neha's safety. However, Neha experienced escalated abuse. The judge in Neha's case noted how the authorities had

left the situation unmonitored, which compromised Neha's safety. This is reflective of the cultural naivety of the authorities involved. That is, they accepted the leader's assurance of Neha's safety without assessing her situation in the wider cultural context of the Indian migrant community.

Moreover, key informants discussed how there was considerable amount of stigma attached involving police in private matters. The male key informant, in particular, was of the view that if he was the perpetrator, he would not like it if the police came to his house in uniform, in a police vehicle. He would prefer it if elders in the community came forward to resolve the matter. This male key informant is an influential community member. But in Neha's case, it was evident that the informal restorative justice meeting held by the community members did not prove helpful in resolving the matter. In fact, it victimized her further, placing blame on her as well for the "misunderstandings" in the relationship.

The key informants discussed how the police in India were not only ineffective in protecting women who seek their help but also colluded with the perpetrator in many cases. It was noted that this tended to lead to many Indian women having very negative attitudes towards involving the police in domestic violence. Some experts in New Zealand and India added that these attitudes towards authorities are often carried over to the host country, hindering help-seeking. This coincides with existing research that Asian immigrant women held back from reporting violence to the police owing to the fear of authorities (Abraham, 1998; Bui & Morash, 1999; Mehrotra, 1999).

Family Court: The Family Court is one of the main institutions of the host society with responsibility for protecting victims of domestic violence. The main remedies available through the Family Court are protection orders

and parenting orders. Protection orders keep the perpetrator away from the woman and her children, unless he has her express permission. There are conditions stated that the perpetrator is to follow. These include, no abuse, must not cause damage to property and must not encourage anyone else to abuse the woman or their children. A protection order can be made without notice to the perpetrator. In that case, he has three months to lodge an objection. If he fails to do so or if his objection is not upheld, the order will be made permanent (New Zealand Police, n.d.). Where there is dispute over post-separation parenting arrangements, a parent may obtain a parenting order which sets the arrangements for the day-to-day care of the children and any contact between the children and a parent with whom they do not reside. Such contact may be supervised if the judge feels there is a risk of violence. That is, the contact between the (usually) father and children may occur under the supervision of organizations that are skilled in the area (Ministry of Justice, n.d.).

Some New Zealand experts noted that many Indian migrant women were unaware of these remedies, effectively making them inaccessible. Usha did not know what a protection order was, nor was she aware of parenting orders. She learnt about protection orders only when her lawyer explained to her what it meant. Subsequently, she was unaware that the document she was asked to sign was an application for the discharge of her protection order as her lawyer did not give her adequate information.

It was evident from my case studies that getting a protection order is not an easy option for Indian migrant women because, often, they are dependent on the perpetrator, both financially and for their visa status. A team from an ethnic women's refuge asked Neha if she wanted to get a protection order when she was badly beaten but she refused. She felt she had nowhere to go and felt more vulnerable as she was pregnant at this

time. She also feared that the authorities would take her child away from her. After repeated abuse, Neha finally called the police and got a protection order. However, a community leader intervened and held a restorative justice meeting in which Neha was coerced to withdraw her application for the protection order. The community leader and others involved in forming the informal restorative justice document were aware that Neha was dependent on her husband for her visa status. The community leader promised Neha that he would help her gain resident status if she withdrew the protection order if she gave her husband a clean slate. She agreed. But her application of withdrawal of protection order was denied by the judge. This is reflective of good practice by the Family Court. It is evident that this judge was aware of the cultural pressures imposed on Neha by the family and community.

While protection orders and parenting orders are the main remedies available from the Family Court, a third remedy can sometimes work against immigrant women experiencing domestic violence. Orders to prevent the removal of children from the country are intended to prevent a parent circumventing the Court process by removing the child from its jurisdiction. Such orders can prevent an abusive parent from, in effect, kidnapping the child and going overseas. However, as evident in the case studies, such orders can sometimes work against women. In such cases, the Family Court becomes a venue in which they are outmanoeuvred by their partners.

For example, after Roopa left Ravi, she was unable to cope with the stresses of the Family Court. She did not have any support from community members. She decided to return to India to stay with her parents for a while but she could not take her daughter along because

Ravi had obtained an order preventing their daughter from being taken out of the country. Instead, Roopa had to leave their daughter in the custody of Ravi and his parents. As a New Zealand expert noted, with such orders on place, even if the child wished to go with her mother, he/she would have to stay behind in the hands of the perpetrator. Of course, such orders can be overturned but to be able to do this requires skilled legal representation. As some of my key informants noted, the fathers typically have the resources to get good legal help while the mothers seldom do.

Some experts shared their experiences with Indian migrant women who were assigned government-funded legal aid lawyers. Because the remuneration rates are low relative to the rates charged private clients, legal aid work is typically undertaken by less experienced lawyers. In contrast, men can typically afford the fees of more experienced and more skilled lawyers.

Shanti and Roopa shared some of their experiences with legal aid lawyers. Shanti was assigned a legal aid lawyer who did not assist her with any paper work, knowing well that Shanti had language difficulties. Moreover, the lawyer did not pay heed to Shanti's concerns about their child's safety. Roopa had to sell all her belongings to pay the lawyer as she could not afford a skilled layer.

The Family Court sometimes fails Indian migrant women who are in need of interpreters. Some experts in New Zealand had witnessed cases where the interpreters chosen were known to other community members. Such interpreters would sometimes report to the community the discussions that took place in the court. This puts women at risk of being further stigmatized. It also jeopardizes their safety. This finding suggests that the

Family Court should examine various factors that could potentially put the women at risk before choosing interpreters. This will be discussed later when looking at implications for practice.

Some New Zealand key informants discussed how Indian migrant women find court processes rather daunting. Most women, I was told, feel ashamed to step into a court and feel lonely if they have no support. Roopa could not deal with the court processes by herself as she felt lost and emotionally exhausted, especially because she had to recall the episodes of brutal abuse she was subject to. Her parents came from India to support her through this and to help take care of her child. However, there are many parents who cannot afford to come to New Zealand to help their daughters through the court processes.

As discussed with examples in this section, the Family Court, a major part of the state's system for dealing with domestic violence is, in some instances at least, failing Indian immigrant women. Whether it be awareness of its provisions or making Indian women feel comfortable about the processes, the urgency for the Family Court to pay close attention to the needs for Indian migrant women is apparent from the data collected.

Immigration New Zealand.

Many New Zealand experts noted that dependent migrant status of Indian women not only made them more vulnerable to domestic violence but also hindered reporting. Neha's case was a classic example. She did not wish to take legal action against her husband because she was dependent on him for visa status and was unaware of the special visa category.

The Immigration Act and associated regulations include several provisions to help migrant women who experience domestic violence. The special visa for victims of domestic violence allows women to apply for work or residence visas, independent of the husband's visa. Many New Zealand experts pointed out that most women were unaware of the special visa categories for victims of domestic violence provided by Immigration New Zealand. Neha was not aware of this provision. In order to get her resident visa with the help offered by the community leader, she made an application to withdraw the protection order, which if accepted by the judge would have been an impediment to her safety. However, she finally acquired resident visa under the special category with the help of women's refuge.

Some experts explained that the parents of many Indian migrant women who lived in India and wished to support them could not enter New Zealand because either the woman had to sponsor them or they had to have financial evidence to support themselves during their stay. This is not a possibility, even for many middle-class families. As mentioned earlier, Roopa went through an emotional ordeal after her separation owing to the court processes and wished for her parents to be able to come to New Zealand. She was unable to sponsor them and present financial evidence of being able to support them during their stay in New Zealand. She requested Immigration New Zealand to consider her case, make an exception and allow them to enter New Zealand. However, this was declined. Luckily, in her case, her parents were able to gather financial resources to come to New Zealand. That is, they could sponsor themselves. This is not the case for most Indian parents willing to help their daughters. These special circumstances should be considered by

Immigration New Zealand so parents who wish to help their daughters can gain entry into New Zealand.

Conclusion

The ecological model serves as a conceptual framework to bring all the main themes in my research together. These themes were explained in terms of existing literature and the data collected in my research through case studies and key informant interviews. There are numerous factors, in addition to their lowered status in the home country, that make Indian migrant women vulnerable to domestic violence in a host society. More often than not, these factors also act as barriers in seeking help. It is now clear, through the ecological model, that Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence in New Zealand not only have to navigate their safety through perpetrator and family levels but also through tough constraints placed on them by larger systems of the migrant community, Indian culture and the host society (see Figure 1). These complex dynamics not only hinder Indian migrant women's efforts to seek help but they also impede intervention by state agencies and NGOs. There is an urgent need to understand the intricate systems in which Indian migrant women operate and the interplay between these structures, in order to help women suffering in silence, not only in the hands of the perpetrator but also his family and the community, navigate their safety. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 10

Conclusions

As seen in the previous chapter, Indian women who arrive in New Zealand are vulnerable to domestic violence owing to migration-related factors such as isolation, language barriers, dependent visa status and lack of awareness of their rights and the services in the host country. Their vulnerability is exacerbated by certain cultural norms that are well established in the home country and which are replicated within the Indian community in New Zealand. These norms include being an obedient and subservient wife and daughter-in-law and keeping the family unit together, thereby protecting family honour, even if there is abuse. In the event of domestic violence, sometimes, these women are left with nowhere to go as their families and communities often promote acceptance of domestic violence as a means to keep the family unit together and maintain family and community honour. In particular, women's attempts to navigate their safety are often stymied by an imperative to avoid the stigma that is attached to separation and to making private family matters public. "What will people think?" becomes a powerful way of silencing women's voices and thwart their attempts to seek justice. That is, heavy emphasis is placed on the impending shame and embarrassment women who report abuse could bring to the family and community, thereby acting as barriers in help-seeking.

In this chapter, I will discuss how the ecological model proves helpful in dealing with Indian migrant domestic violence in New Zealand. I will do this by analysing risk and protective factors within each layer of the ecological model. I will also discuss the scope for further research, followed by implications for policy and practice. I hope that this research

will help inform further research, policy and practice for other ethnic women in New Zealand. I also hope it will help native-born women who are married to Indian men understand better the relevant cultural and familial dynamics within Indian migrant communities and assist them make informed decisions.

Drawing on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979), in this thesis, I have attempted to build the above factors into an ecological model of domestic violence in the context of migration. At the heart of the model is the individual woman and her abuser. Domestic violence is about power and control. As I have shown, the abuser characteristically employs a range of tactics in his efforts to maintain power and control over his partner. But as shown in the case studies and reflected in the ecological model he does not act alone. In many cases, he is supported by his family. His family also strives to maintain power and control over the woman and her family, sometimes in the form of dowry harassment. These families are often under the surveillance of the wider community which ensures that the families put their women in place by adhering to cultural norms prescribed to them by Indian society. The Indian society, in turn, largely maintains and reinforces the unequal status of women. It is important to remember that all these layers influence and are influenced by each other.

In the ecological model, the host country is the wider setting in the nested structure within which Indian women operate. In this context, the Indian community strives harder to preserve cultural norms and practices in a host country. In many cases, this means prioritising family unity and keeping up appearances over addressing violence and abuse. It is amply evident that not only the Indian migrant community but also the service

provision and policies in the host country are pivotal in helping Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence navigate safety.

While I am certainly not the first to use an ecological model of domestic violence (e.g. Assari, 2013; Carlson, 1984; Levendosky & Graham-Bermann, 2001), I believe that my model makes a useful contribution to understanding and responding to domestic violence as experienced by immigrant women in the context of a host society. The ecological model has proven helpful in presenting a clearer picture of the constraints under which Indian migrant women navigate their safety, which could otherwise lead to victim-blaming. For example, it shows why Indian migrant women hesitate to report abuse. It explains clearly why they stay in abusive relationships. Unless we understand Indian women as living their lives constantly negotiating their position and safety in the family and community, there is a risk that they will be blamed for making the choices they do.

Similarly, although poorly informed outsiders may think that the obvious way for the woman's family to deal with domestic violence is to encourage their daughter to leave the perpetrator, this is not usually the case with Indian families. That is, given the wider context of community and Indian culture the family lives in, it becomes clear why they encourage their daughter to stay in the relationship despite the abuse. The wider community expects them to follow cultural norms that maintain the lower status of women. As my research shows, too often families do exactly that. To do otherwise would invoke the rhetorical question: What will people think? The same dynamics follow for the immigrant community. The immigrant community in the nested structure operates in the host society and feels judged and under surveillance for not directly and effectively confronting domestic violence. In order to not be shamed

in a host society, the community tries to silence its women. This, however, does not imply that both the family and community can escape responsibility for keeping their women safe. As mentioned earlier, the host society is also responsible in ensuring safety of Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence.

These are the ways in which the model is successful in reducing the tendency to blame the victim. Instead, it helps in better understanding the cultural factors that act as challenges in help-seeking. While the complex interplay between the layers restrict women seeking help from NGOs and state agencies, it also poses barriers for these agencies to intervene when necessary.

In the previous chapter, in-depth analysis of the ecological model has also helped understanding that while migration can present positive opportunities for families, it can also add another layer that complicates the process of navigating safety for women experiencing domestic violence. That is, the ecological model when applied to domestic violence in India, comprises of the perpetrator, family, community and Indian culture as nested structures (see Figure 1). Migration adds another layer, the host society, as the environment into which Indian women transition. While migration may mean Indian women have access to some services and legal remedies superior to those at home, it also brings with it a gamut of challenges and barriers that both increase vulnerability of these women to domestic violence and hinder help-seeking. The addition of this layer to the nested structure reminds us that the host country has certain responsibilities to protect these women.

A woman who is experiencing domestic violence should not be viewed as a decontextualized individual who is assumed to have total agency in her

life. Neither should she be seen as half of a couple who are experiencing some sort of joint problem. Only a multi-level approach, considering the cultural factors and context will help understand domestic violence in Indian immigrant communities. It may also help identify areas that can be focussed on, in order to achieve positive outcomes for Indian migrant women, as I will now discuss.

Risk and Protective Factors

The ecological model discussed in Chapter 9 portrayed the complex dynamics within and between the layers that make Indian migrant women more vulnerable to domestic violence in a host country. Data collected from key informants and women who experienced domestic violence were analysed and discussed using the ecological framework (See Figure 1).

In this section, I will dissect the ecological model further in terms of risk and protective factors (See Table 1). That is, within each layer, there are risk (increase the risk of violence for women) and protective (that can reduce women's risk of violence) factors with regards to Indian women's vulnerability to domestic violence. It is important to explore these factors as they can play a key role in the prevention of domestic violence in the Indian immigrant context. Additionally, these factors provide a framework to apply strength-based approaches to both preventing and intervening in cases of migrant domestic violence. This approach has the potential to build on people's strengths and the positive influences in their lives, which can be maximized to help Indian migrant women live safe and healthy, violence-free lives.

It is important to note that risk and protective factors are not causal links, but rather correlated. For instance, an Indian migrant woman with non-resident status will not necessarily become a victim of domestic violence;

nor are financially independent migrant women immune to domestic violence. These risk and protective factors should be viewed in the context of the ecological model. That is, these factors, much like the layers in the model, interact with each other with regards to women’s vulnerability to domestic violence in a host country.

Table 1. Risk and Protective Factors in the Context of Indian Migrant Domestic Violence in New Zealand

Layers in the ecological model	Risk factors (What can contribute?)	Protective factors (What can we build on?)
<p>Immigration to a host society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveillance by host society which increases pressure to maintain face • Racism and stereotyping of immigrants as intellectually and morally inferior-making assumptions about their home country culture. • Loss of supportive family and friends (where these were present before migration). • Low expectations of what help might be available from police and other official 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host society understanding, appreciating and welcoming migrants • Greater awareness about culture migrants bring with them, particularly among “mainstream” service providers. • Increasing migrant women’s awareness of remedies available in the host society. • Increasing migrant men’s awareness of the consequences

	<p>agencies in host society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding by service providers and the wider host society about cultural aspects of domestic violence. 	<p>they may face in the host society for the use of violence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of culturally appropriate services.
Indian culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second class status of women • Normalization of domestic violence- culture of silence • Weak official action against perpetrators of violence against women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working towards gender equality and empowering women by providing equality with men in education, employment, inheritance, marriage and politics. • Encouraging conversations about injustices done to women. • Ensuring implementation of legislative measures that work towards women's safety.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance of traditional gender norms that lead to violence against women • Weak community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging unjust gender norms

<p>Immigrant community</p>	<p>sanction/ collusion with perpetrator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community leadership often vested in men who lack a gender analysis. • Little or no support for women who choose to leave abusive relationships • Especially among longer-term migrants, limited appreciation of changes in home culture. • Domestic violence viewed as a private matter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members who support women, thus acting as levers of change. For instance, religious leaders spreading messages about violence against women • Feminist leadership focussing on challenging traditional gender norms leading to holistic and effective community based responses. • Development of women in community leadership roles • Community support for bystanders who intervene
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference for sons over daughters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treating sons and daughters equally • Being supportive

<p style="text-align: center;">Family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercing women to make the relationship work irrespective of abuse • Demanding dowry • Internalised norms about maintaining face in the community. 	<p>of women's decision to leave abusive relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranging marriages only with the woman's freely-given consent, without involving dowry • Prioritising women's safety over "what will people think?"
<p style="text-align: center;">Perpetrator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being raised in a patriarchal household • Desire for power and control • Notions of male entitlement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being raised in a household where adults role model healthy relationships • Empathy/ concern for how one's actions affect others
<p style="text-align: center;">Woman</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation. • Non-resident status (especially when husband is principal applicant). • Language barriers. • Lack of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing women for potential challenges that accompany migration through awareness and education. • Education and awareness about legislation and

	<p>knowledge of services available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internalised norms of gender roles. • Financially dependent. 	<p>services available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build strong networks in the host society. • Economic independence. • Availability of role models of strong, assertive women. • Inner resilience built from a young age
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With regards to the top-most layer, immigration to a host society, some New Zealand key informants were of the view that host society's surveillance pressurized Indian communities to strive to maintain face. This also meant, driving social issues such domestic violence underground. That is, not acknowledging or addressing problems that made Indian women more vulnerable to abuse in the host country. Closely tied in with the surveillance is the racism and stereotyping of migrant groups in the host society, as people who are intellectually and morally inferior. According to some New Zealand experts, service providers and the wider host society understanding and appreciating migrants contributes towards ensuring women's safety and well-being. This in turn reduces face saving pressures the community experiences, thereby opening up avenues to address violence against women in the community.

Another risk factor in this layer of the ecological model, discussed in Chapter 9, is the loss of social networks available to women. This further isolates them and contributes towards making women more vulnerable to domestic violence in the host country. To counter this, increasing awareness of remedies available to Indian migrant women will assist in early intervention and building networks in host society.

One of the risk factors, discussed in Chapter 9, was the lack of understanding of the cultural aspects of domestic violence by service providers and the wider host society. This hindered help-seeking and in turn made vulnerable to domestic violence. A corresponding protective factor, which was a theme that emerged both in the key informant interviews and case studies, is the development of culturally appropriate services. These will not only ensure that women feel safe and protected when they seek help but also encourage women to approach services when they need help. This will be further discussed later in this chapter.

In the next layer of the ecological model, Indian culture, the risk factors that contribute towards violence against women are the status of women and tolerating and accepting domestic violence as a norm. These were discussed in Chapter 9. According to some Indian key informants, the status of women in India can be improved by providing them with equal opportunity in education and employment. This in turn will contribute towards gender equality, thereby empowering women. Indian experts also shared their view that there is a need to generate more conversations around violence against women. They added that the culture of silence contributes towards injustices done to women. Perhaps conversely, injustices lead to further silence owing to shame and saving face in the wider community.

Some Indian experts pointed out that although there was legislation in place for domestic violence and dowry; it was poorly implemented leading to weak official action against perpetrators and/or their families. Ensuring effective implementation of existing laws would help ensure women's safety.

The immigrant community layer in the ecological model has several risk factors embedded that contribute towards making women vulnerable to domestic violence. As discussed earlier, from the data collected, the acceptance of traditional gender norms contributed towards violence against women in the Indian community. In my case studies, it was evident that some community members colluded with the perpetrator which led to escalated abuse and acted as a barrier in seeking help. Further, on a community level, there was little or no help for women who chose to leave abusive relationships. In fact, they were victimized further by members of the community who, in some cases, isolated them and blamed them for breaking up the family.

According to my key informants, some protective factors that will trigger positive outcomes for women on a community level include community members who challenge traditional gender norms thereby leading to strong support systems for women within the community.

From the data collected, it was evident in some cases that bystanders failed to intervene owing to the negative consequences they may face on a community level. If members of the community are encouraged and supported to stand up against injustices done to women, women will feel more safe and men will be aware that they will face consequences if they resorted to violence.

On a community level, it was evident from my interviews with New Zealand experts that male community leaders who often lack a gender analysis colluded with the perpetrator and acted as gatekeepers in women seeking help. There is a potential to achieve positive outcomes for women on a community level by encouraging women to take up community leadership roles.

The risk factors within the family layer in the ecological model discussed by both Indian and New Zealand key informants start with the birth of a daughter. The preference of sons over daughters has been discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 9. However, some experts pointed out that effective change will be triggered when Indian parents treat sons and daughters equally. In the data collected, it was evident that women are usually coerced by their parents to stay in abusive relationships. However, an Indian key informant discussed about the changing trend she has seen in parents coming forward to help and support their daughters who experience abuse. In some cases, these parents insist that their daughters leave their abusive husbands.

Another risk factor on a family level that has been discussed throughout this thesis is dowry. This and arranging marriages entirely without considering women's opinions or desires about choosing a partner can make them more vulnerable to abuse. On the contrary, arranging marriages with women's freely-given consent, without involving dowry will serve protective against extended family abuse.

According to the data collected, attitudes of families around saving face and internalizing traditional gender norms exacerbate women's vulnerability to violence. On the other hand, if parents prioritized their

daughters' safety over saving face, women will feel more protected and secure.

On the perpetrator level of the ecological model, key informants shared their view that being raised in a household where they saw violence being tolerated, accepted and normalized. An expert in India pointed out that in her experience boys who are raised in households where healthy relationships are nurtured, are more likely to treat women as equals and are more aware of their privilege.

Indian migrant women face unique challenges that act as risk factors in contributing towards domestic violence. In Chapter 9, these challenges have been discussed by experts and by women who shared their experiences of domestic violence. Some experts were of the view that making women aware of these potential challenges and preparing them for the same will serve protective against domestic violence. In addition, educating women about New Zealand legislation and services available will assist them in breaking barriers to reporting abuse.

Some Indian experts were of the view that young girls being prepared for adversity after marriage displayed inner resilience that helped them cope with situations of abuse. Although this might not be viewed as a "normal" or "standard" approach to ensure women's safety, the cultural context should be considered. This aspect of feminist discourse was discussed in Chapter 3.

While the risk factors portray a grim image of Indian migrant domestic violence, the protective factors provide a platform for positive change and indicate hope for Indian migrant women.

The upcoming sections will discuss implication for further research and policy and practice. These will throw further light on the protective factors and strength-based approaches discussed in this section.

Implication for Further Research

Far from exhausting the discussion, I hope my efforts here will instigate future research in the area. There is a paucity of research in the field of extended family violence within Indian migrant community. All four women in my research experienced harassment by their in-laws.

Exploring in-laws' involvement in the couples' lives will help understand the family dynamics that perpetuate domestic violence in Indian migrant families and increase awareness among service providers about unique aspects of domestic violence in Indian families. Further, research on how New Zealand women married to Indian men navigate safety in the face of domestic violence will help understand the role of Indian cultural norms and practices in perpetuating domestic violence.

In my research, key informants talked about protective factors for women who experience domestic violence. In the stories women shared with me, Roopa and Shanti spoke about their parents being supportive of them leaving the abusive relationship. A few community members were also helpful. It would be useful to discover why such parents and other community members were able to step outside norms that tend to tolerate violence against women. Further research on such protective factors could provide potential ideas for change.

Similarly, Indian immigrant women are likely to benefit from research that identifies levers of change within the Indian community. Currently, the community's potential to make a stand against domestic violence is

largely undemonstrated owing to the tolerance of abuse by many community members. Since the community level is the one that maintains and reinforces cultural norms that promote tolerance of abuse, studies identifying and tapping into community resources that do not condone violence against women could contribute to meaningful social change within Indian communities.

Although this study has focussed on the pressures Indian women face on family and community levels, there is a gap in my research with regards to pressures the Indian migrant community, in turn, faces from the host society. That is, while several key informants made reference to the surveillance of the host society and its impact on the immigrant community, the impact of this on migrant women has not been thoroughly investigated. Research investigating the marginal status of Indian community in a host society and its impact on migrant women will help reveal the need for further involvement of state and mainstream agencies in intervention.

There is paucity in research about the experience of immigrants of feeling under surveillance and how that often leads them to cover up abuse. This will help reveal another layer of challenges Indian immigrant women face in reporting abuse. There is also a paucity of research about sexual abuse in domestic violence. I am aware that experiences of sexual abuse were not discussed by the women (Neha was a partial exception). This is not to say that these women did not experience abuse of this nature. As some researchers have noted, being forced into unwanted sexual activity is commonplace where there is domestic violence (Campbell, 2002; Coker, Smith, McKeown, & King, 2000; Lombard & McMillan, 2013). Discussions around issues of sex and sexuality are largely considered taboo in India.

This could be a reason women did not feel comfortable opening up about lived experiences of sexual violence. Nevertheless, exploring issues relating to sexual violence in the migrant context is needed if we are to fully understand the full intensity of women's experiences of violence.

This research illustrates the complex barriers not only Indian women but the Indian communities also face in the host society. But there is a gap in understanding why and how the experience of being under surveillance from the host society discourages community members from confronting domestic violence. This could potentially help the services in the host society understand the pressures faced by immigrant communities that act as barriers for them to help their women. It could also help explore the ways in which host society may assist the Indian community to deal with issues around domestic violence.

Implication for Policy and Practice

In addition to mainstream services, there have been various responses to domestic violence against immigrant women in New Zealand at the government and service provision level. Governments have enacted and amended immigration policies that have made it considerably easier for immigrant women to navigate their safety. However, being cognizant of the position of Indian migrant women within the ecological model will help improv provisions available to them in New Zealand. The ways in which the layers interact with one another to exacerbate the vulnerability of women provides deeper insight into the implications for policy and practice. A multi-level approach (perpetrator, family and community) towards Indian migrant domestic violence has the potential to yield positive outcomes. There is also a growing need for all professionals to

possess a culturally nuanced understanding of Indian migrant domestic violence.

Indian women operate at the core of the ecological model within multiple nested structures. As seen in Chapter 9, these structures hinder women's efforts to seek help in the event of domestic violence. It is essential for service providers to understand these constraints that women face in getting through the layers to the services for assistance. In realizing this, service providers should be persistent and patient in helping immigrant women. For instance, they should not give up if women are seen to be unresponsive. Service providers need to understand the pressures women face on a family and community level and the negative consequences of making a stand against the violence. Instead of giving up on immigrant women, agencies should make the most of the opportunities presented to them in interacting with these women. They should also do this in a culturally appropriate manner with the understandings of women's position within larger structures of their family and community.

In this section, I will first discuss the issues around special work and resident visa categories for victims of domestic violence. I will then explore the implications for Family Court, followed by implications for Indian communities. Finally, based on the analysis of the data collected, I will reflect on the implications for social services. These implications will be based on the ecological model for Indian migrant domestic violence (see Figure 1).

Special Category for work/ residence visa.

There are a few issues with regards to the special category work/ residence visa. Firstly, as mentioned in the previous chapter, many experts said that there was a lack of awareness in the Indian migrant community of the

existence of this provision. There are some problems with the visibility of special category work/ resident visas for victims of domestic violence. All the women I had spoken to were initially unaware of this provision. NGOs and women's organizations could actively assist in spreading awareness about this provision and about migrant women's rights in New Zealand.

Secondly, many experts also added that in their view, this provision had many processes involved which didn't make it necessarily accessible to Indian migrant women. It must be acknowledged that Immigration New Zealand has attempted to make this provision more responsive to the needs of immigrant women experiencing domestic violence. For instance, the earlier version of this provision required either a protection order, a conviction or a police report as evidence of domestic violence. Now a wider range of evidence is accepted, including a statutory declaration by a member of Shakti. However, this can still be a challenge for Indian migrant women. It is important to remember that the layers in the ecological model thwart women's efforts to seek help, even when it comes to accessing or applying for this special category visa as women have to navigate through the layers to reach these services. Most cases are unreported as women succumb to family and community pressures of "What will people think?"

A greater awareness within policy makers regarding the special needs of Indian migrant women facing domestic violence will support the provision of appropriate practice and its funding. That is, understanding that Indian immigrant women do not find it easy to access this provision owing to barriers they face in reporting the abuse.

Family court.

As discussed earlier, there are some problems concerning provisions the Family Court makes available for victims of domestic violence. One must keep in mind that some of these problems affect native-born women and immigrant women alike. For instance, legal aid lawyers assigned to women are often less experienced than the perpetrators' lawyers. Sometimes, they don't help women with language difficulties understand details of legal documents.

As in the case of other professionals, there is a tremendous need for legal aid lawyers, assigned to Indian migrant women, to understand the dynamics of migration and pay close attention to sociocultural aspects of the home country. For instance, according to some experts in my research, dowry and in-laws involvement in abuse are largely overlooked in many cases by women's advocates. The reason for this is the lack of knowledge among service providers about these issues. Cultural considerations should be made around the barriers migrant women have had to overcome to seek help. That is, professionals, including legal aid lawyers should be cognizant of the pressures facing Indian women on a family and community level. Perhaps this awareness can be achieved if professionals asked the 'right' questions when women approached them for help. For instance, asking them about their relationship with their in-laws has the potential to reveal the tough constraints she operates under while navigating their safety.

With regards to the Family Court, the process of selecting interpreters should ensure that the women are not put at greater risk. Language is not the only factor to consider while choosing interpreters. Although there are certain rules around recruitment of interpreters, these processes should be

closely monitored so as to not further victimize Indian migrant women. For instance, many experts shared their experiences with interpreters who failed to adhere to the confidentiality clause they usually agreed upon, during their recruitment, thereby putting women at greater risk at the hands of the perpetrator, family and wider community. As one can deduce, if the details of the woman's story spread through the community, she faces the risk of being ostracised for bringing shame to the family and community.

Orders preventing removal of children from New Zealand are sometimes sought by perpetrators. If they are granted, these orders effectively force women to stay in New Zealand after they have left the relationship. It should be noted that most of these women are isolated. That is, their families and friends live in India. This puts immigrant women under considerable amount of stress as they are presented with a situation of either staying in New Zealand for their child or giving the child up to the perpetrator and going to India to have family by their side during this period of distress. This was clear in Roopa's story. She did not want to leave her daughter in New Zealand but she had no choice. She was not coping here and had to leave their daughter in the custody of her husband. This shows that there is an urgent need for the Family Court to consider the predicament facing these women. That is, who is applying for these orders? Why are they applying for it? Once these probing questions are asked, the manipulative tactics used by perpetrators to emotionally abuse women using their children can be understood better.

Family Court judges should be vigilant about community leaders' efforts to coerce women to stay in the abusive relationships, thereby formalizing it in the form of a document. Neha was asked to sign a document at a community meeting organized by the community leaders. In her case, the

Family Court judge recognized the cultural pressures that led Neha to sign this document where she had agreed to the withdrawal of protection order against her husband. However, this might not be the case with the other judges. There are two issues here. One, the potential hazards of community meetings where women are coerced to stay in abusive relationships. Two, the judge accepting community agreements to, for instance, withdraw protection orders. This runs a high risk of putting women's safety in jeopardy. Good practice requires judges to be aware of the cultural imperatives that limit Indian migrant women's choices within the layers of family and community.

Indian communities.

On a community level, there seems to be inadequate response to domestic violence owing to the attitudes widely held in the Indian community. From my data, it is evident that many of the community members tolerate abuse or collude with the perpetrator. Many experts explained that service providers face resistance by gate keepers of the community. But experts also added that there are some community members who support women experiencing domestic violence and assist them. Therefore, it is evident that there is a need for change *within* the community *by* the community. This is indicative of a bottom-up approach which is pivotal in bringing about community change. That is, community-led initiatives could yield positive results for Indian women.

The analysis of the ecological model of Indian migrant domestic violence has helped us understand that intervention must involve a multi-level approach. As mentioned earlier, community is the layer that ensures that Indian women are made to follow cultural norms, by their partners and

families, so as to not bring shame to their family and community in a host country. Considering the complex nested structure that Indian women operate in, there is potential to address these cultural norms that add to the disadvantaged position of women at the community level as opposed to individual or family-level approaches.

Community education will help inform Indian migrant population about the legal consequences and social concerns regarding issues of domestic violence in New Zealand. It will also help neighbours, friends and concerned family members spot early signs of abuse and learn ways to intervene.

Access to information: On a local level, Indian migrant women should have access to information about services and New Zealand legislation. Flyers with this information should be placed in public areas like supermarkets, bus stops and schools, where women can easily access it. Migrant-related services and mainstream services that migrant women access on a regular basis such as health care and services related to their children, need to be aware not only of physical indicators of abuse but also of the social and cultural aspects of Indian migrant domestic violence.

Education: It is evident from the data collected that NGOs and state services face challenges in getting through the layers, to women in need. Therefore, community-led interventions by community leaders, who challenge sociocultural norms that support male privilege and control over women adding to their disadvantaged position, would be beneficial in helping women navigate their safety and educating other community members. Similarly, multi-level social marketing approaches by these community leaders themselves, designed for Indian migrant community

could help generate discussions about domestic violence in the community.

New Zealand experts in my research noted that Indian immigrant women were wary of local authorities, a caution acquired from experiences with authorities in the home country. These experts were of the view that educating Indian migrant women of their rights was pivotal in breaking negative attitudes towards authorities in the host country. Such education can also involve community conversations with elders in the community, women and officials. This might help achieve two goals. Firstly, it would inform Indian migrant women about their rights in New Zealand. Also, it would help change their attitudes about officials. Over time, when a rapport between the authorities and the community has been established, this sort of interaction can make a positive difference to the lives of Indian migrant women.

Social services.

Many key informants in my research stressed the need to develop a multi-agency approach to Indian migrant domestic violence. That is, different agencies sharing their best practices and working in unison towards a goal. A multi-agency, cross-sectoral approach has the potential to bring changes on a family and community level, thereby contributing to the safety of Indian migrant women and children.

As discussed earlier, while Indian migrant women who experience domestic violence face barriers in seeking help, social services are also faced with challenges to reach women in need. This can be attributed to the complex dynamics between layers in the ecological model. Although there are several social services working towards the safety of Indian migrant women experiencing domestic violence, there is still scope for

improvement in service provision. Closing these gaps will enable more effective catering to their cultural needs. To avoid perpetration of domestic violence and help victims come forward in seeking help, service providers should recognize that the needs of Indian migrant women, who experience domestic violence, differ from those of mainstream population. Thus, strategies in service provision need to be altered to acknowledge the rise in number of Indian migrants in New Zealand and their unique needs.

Migrant women often access health services. All four women I interviewed fell pregnant in New Zealand. This implies they had accessed health services. Neha and Usha had approached doctors for injuries inflicted on them by their partners. It is important for doctors and nurses to be aware of the cultural nuances of Indian society. This will not only assist them in asking the right questions, but also in culturally appropriate service provision. For instance, Neha's husband was not asked to leave the room when Neha was being consulted by the doctor. She did not feel safe discussing the abuse in the presence of her husband. It is possible that the doctor felt it was culturally inappropriate to ask the husband to leave the room. Such assumptions could further hinder help-seeking. In addition, cultural considerations must be made in recognizing domestic violence through appropriate screening.

Education can also serve helpful in informing services about the cultural aspects that disadvantage Indian migrant women. It is important to note that not all instances of arranged marriages involve the practice of dowry. Also, not all instances of dowry lead to domestic violence and not all domestic violence in the Indian migrant community is caused by dowry. However, it is important for service providers to be vigilant about these cultural factors that play a vital role in tolerating and accepting injustices done to women.

In paying attention to sociocultural aspects of domestic violence that influence and are influenced by layers in the model and the challenges posed by migration, there will likely be an improvement in not only the safety of women and children but also long term statistics of incidence of domestic violence in the Indian immigrant community in New Zealand.

Reflections

I believe self-reflection on my personal and academic journey through this research process has not only enhanced my research (c.f. Campbell & Wasco, 2000) it has also been part of a significant life change for me and my family. This study has been like my baby - it has taken over my life, kept me up at night and has changed me. It has been something that has existed in my inner-self for a long time and this research project and thesis were the outlet.

Having a clear plan of what I wanted to achieve by the end of four years really helped to give me confidence for this long process, but I still didn't have any idea of the ways in which it would test me both academically and personally.

However, there are a few things I'd do differently and for the benefit of future researchers, it may be useful to briefly canvas the reasons why I'm sharing my story. I believe my story is an exemplar of some issues covered in the thesis that could also provide useful advice for future researchers in the area. I also hope readers get to understand what I bring to the research so that the research is more transparent.

To start with, I grossly underestimated the challenges I might face through the research process. I felt that being an Indian and knowing the language, it would not be difficult for me to enter the Indian migrant community to

talk about domestic violence. However, I was mistaken. I realized that I had to navigate my way around gatekeepers in the community. However, there was no way to do that other than to approach organizations for help. In retrospect, I should have spent more time networking within with the Indian migrant community to understand the dynamics in order to refine my approach. I also should have taken time to network with other agencies that could be potentially helpful in approaching communities. My naiveté in this aspect hindered my data collection with regards to case studies.

I interviewed four Indian migrant women who had powerful stories to share and whose struggles could be used as an exemplar of other women in their situations. However, owing to the diversity of India, this research could have benefited from including Indian migrant women from other parts of India as well, and not just from Punjab, although the issues discussed may be largely generalized to experiences of women from other states as well.

It is important to reflect that researchers involved in similar areas need to be resilient and have good self-care strategies. It is also important to keep your emotions at bay during such interviews. Although it can be difficult for women to narrate their experiences of violence, when interviewed in a non-judgemental manner in an appropriate setting, many women will open up and share these experiences. This became evident to me during my interactions with Indian women. My experience with the Indian migrant women I spoke to was powerful and unforgettable. I was surprised at the depth of information they were willing to share with me and awed by the resilience they showed, despite the horrific abuse they had experienced. They showed bravery and compassion in wanting to help other women like them, by being part of my research. It was

heartening to see how even with all the forces acting against them - family, community and inadequate service provision - these women were moving forward with their lives and wanted to make a difference for others. I was amazed at their strength and determination and their positive attitude. However, that didn't make their stories less heart wrenching. It made me feel helpless for the all the other women who were and are suffering at the hands of the perpetrators, their families and community, at large. My participant's stories also affected me personally as they took me back to my past - to the times I had faced such oppression, when I had felt helpless. To keep me afloat and focussed, I had to constantly remind myself that my research was going to make a positive contribution in the field of Indian immigrant domestic violence.

This research process and my reflections led to a change in my perspectives on gender issues, at large. It also changed my relationships, with family and friends. When I think back about how I handled these issues in the past, I must admit that I had internalized some of the tolerance the women in my family showed, as had the women in my research. However, that has changed drastically now.

It is important for researchers in this field to be prepared for the strong likelihood that their work will change them profoundly. That is, some things that have been learnt in the process of research cannot be unlearnt. This comes with its own set of pros and cons. As I embarked on this journey, a few months after setting foot in New Zealand, little did I know how this research would change me. For instance, an Indian male friend was talking to me about dowry. He was of the view that the practice of dowry in itself was not harmful. His opinion was that it helped newlyweds, financially, to start their lives together. However, he was

unaware of the systems of oppression involved in this practice such as the extent of dowry deaths and its link to female foeticide. I tried to throw some light on these issues, but I was unable to relate to him the same way I used to, before this conversation. When I return to India, I am also more cognizant of the male privilege and entitlement around me. I am aware now, more so than ever, that it makes me angry. But this anger and this sadness drive me to help women in need.

There is also a need for future researchers to constantly reflect on how the research is shaping your worldview and vice-versa. This helps in both personal and professional development in the area. In the introduction chapter, I talked about my experiences growing up in a traditional patriarchal family in India. This research has helped me reflect how those attitudes are internalized over time in my own case but also in my observation of my community. I realized that in order to work towards the safety of Indian migrant women, I have to first take care of myself. In the sense that, not let male entitlement and patriarchal attitudes come in the way of my personal and professional development. One day, I was sitting in a café when I heard some men cat calling me and passing lewd remarks on my appearance. This instantly took me back to the times in India that this had happened. Women are expected to tolerate this behaviour, as I had many times in the past. As a result, I froze. The men left. This incident led me to introspect as to what I needed to do for myself before I could speak for other Indian women in New Zealand. I felt guilty. I felt like I had let down the women I had spoken to in my research. I thought about how I should have raised my voice and stood up against such appalling behaviour. Fortunately, a few days later, I saw one of those men on the street. I stopped him and confronted him. I told him how treating women with disrespect is unacceptable. He apologized. Did I feel better? Yes and

no. Personally, it was a herculean milestone for me. This was the first time I had actively stood up against harassment towards me, since the bus incident in India, discussed in Chapter One. This helped me feel somewhat better. But at the same time no, because my research has made me more aware than ever of the complexities and the levels of oppression migrant women experience, I am also aware of the amount of work that needs to be done in this area, not only to ensure women's safety but also to help them make informed, independent decisions. Domestic violence researchers may need to be prepared to find that they can no longer sit on the side-lines and/or gloss over the gender injustice around them.

If this incident had happened to me four years ago, before I started this research, it may not have taken my thought process on this tangent. It would have left me sad and angry but with no clear direction in which to focus these thoughts and feelings. At that time I would have been much more likely to have accepted that these injustices, although inhuman, were a common occurrence and little or nothing could be done to stop them from happening. Not now. Not today. I feel like a phoenix who has risen from its ashes. I could relate to the women who shared their stories with me with regards to this inner resilience they possessed.

Final comment.

While talking to Shanti, Usha, Roopa and Neha, what really stood out, was their undeniable resilience. The domestic violence they experienced was brutal, both physically and psychologically. They also faced challenges on a family and community level that made their decision to leave their husbands a difficult one. Despite this, the hope for a better future, for themselves, their children and women like them, was not dead. This is what keeps my passion alive - to see that these women who have

gone through adversities still look forward to a better future. I might not live to see the day when there is no domestic violence, but I am determined to be a part of the change I want to see in this world of women's empowerment.

"What will people think?" was a rhetorical question I heard frequently while growing up in India. This question has also taunted the women I have spoken to. The question made their decision to leave a hard one. From my experience and what I have heard from women in my research, I am aware this question evokes fear as Indian women often have to work towards protecting themselves and their families from the impending shame. This cultural pressure contributes to the tolerance and acceptance of violence against women. "What will people think?" is code for collusion, for turning away, for telling women to accept their lot.

But in my imagined future, the question could have another meaning. What if "What will people think?" is used not to silence women but to challenge families and communities who collude with the perpetrator? What if the possibility of shame that is implied by the question is not to be attached to women for being abused but to their abusers and to the parents, uncles, aunts, parents-in-law, neighbours and community leaders who failed to step up and help women who experience abuse? What if we all, collectively, accepted our responsibility to help ensure justice for women?

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Appendix A: Key Informants' Information Sheet

“Navigating safety in the context of Immigration: Indian women experiencing domestic violence in Aotearoa/New Zealand”

Information sheet for potential key informants

What is the project about?

My study aims to contribute to community psychology research in domestic violence by increasing awareness of cultural perspectives that foster violence and abuse, as well as cultural beliefs and practices which are protective against domestic violence. I want to investigate the way in which Indian immigrant women in New Zealand who are experiencing domestic violence navigate the challenges they face in the context of family and community. I intend to identify those aspects that are working as well as identify the areas for improvement including barriers that prevent women from seeking help and practices which may endanger and/or further disempower women. In the first phase I will be working in collaboration with community partners, especially local women's advocates. I hope that my research may be used to enhance the responsiveness of families and communities to Indian immigrant women who are being abused in intimate partner violence.

Who is the researcher?

My name is Sripriya Somasekhar. I am a PhD candidate at the University of Waikato. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and two Masters degrees, one in Social Work and the other in Counselling Psychology from Chennai, India. I moved to New Zealand in 2012 aged 27 years. Having been brought up in India, my views on domestic violence were shaped by the society I grew up in. My move to New Zealand has given me a new perspective on these issues. Being able to experience a different level of communication and openness between couples, I realised how much I brushed aside my own country's attitudes, where injustices against women, although horrific, were tolerated and almost expected. I am now able to look at these with fresh eyes and am determined to be part of the change I wish to see in the people of my home country.

Why am I being asked to participate?

I believe that you can help the study by sharing your experiences with Indian immigrant women who experience domestic violence in New Zealand. I invite you to do this in a face-to-face semi-structured interview.

In addition, you may be able to help me by “nominating” women who might be prepared to be interviewed for the case studies and by helping me get in touch with them.

What will I be asked in the interview?

You will be invited to respond to broad questions such as:

- What are the pressing issues of domestic violence in the Indian immigrant community in New Zealand?
- What are the attitudes of Indian immigrant victims?
- To what extent do the socio-cultural values that they have brought up with have an impact on these attitudes? In what ways?
- What intervention approaches are currently available to the Indian immigrant domestic violence victims in New Zealand?
- Who gains access to these resources, and how do they go about doing it?
- What are the main barriers to accessing resources in New Zealand?
- What are the attitudes of the families of the victims towards this intervention?
- How important is familial support to these victims?
- What recommendations do you have for change?
- What issues do you think I should be including in the case studies?

What will happen to my information?

Our conversation will be audio taped. In addition, I may take written notes. From these, I will develop a summary of our discussion which I will send to you for comment and correction. You will also be able to withdraw any information you feel should not be included.

You will be asked to give any feedback within two weeks. If I do not hear from you by then, I will assume that you are fine with the summary.

The summary of the discussion will be added to other information I am collecting and used to my thesis. Later, this information will be used to publish journal articles.

Will other people know who I am?

Generally, no. In the thesis and journal articles, I will refer to key informants only by their role/ position (e.g. women's advocate, social worker). I will ensure that identifiable information like place names or events are omitted. However, while I will take all possible care in protecting your privacy, you may be identified by some readers, especially if you have a high profile and your views are well known.

What if I agree to participate and then change my mind?

You may stop the interview at any time. Any information recorded about you will be returned or destroyed.

You may also withdraw from the research any time up to 2 weeks after the interview. However, if at any time in the future you feel any concerns about your on-going participation in the research, please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss your options.

How can I find out about the results of the study?

I will send you a summary of the project – if you so wish.

Who can I speak with about my participation in this project?

You can call/ e-mail me or one of the people mentioned on the contact information list.

Will I be asked to sign anything?

Yes. Before you begin, I will ask you to sign a consent form acknowledging that you have been adequately informed about: a) the study, b) what you are being asked to do, c) what will happen to your information, and d) your right to withdraw without being disadvantaged or penalised.

What do I need to do now?

If you would like to participate in my research, please contact me. We can negotiate a mutually convenient time and place to hold the interview. I would prefer to talk to you in person, but if that is not possible, I could interview you over the phone. You can also email me your views. (Contact information below.)

If you would like to “nominate” a woman to participate in the case studies, please discuss this with her. There is an information sheet (enclosed) specifically for women who might volunteer for my study. It is important to explain to women that **I cannot interview every woman who volunteers**. I will compile 8 case studies. The criterion for potential participants will be that they will have to be Indian immigrants who have been brought up with Indian values and are married to Indian men and currently live in New Zealand. This project has received approval from the School of Psychology Ethics Committee.

The Research team and contact information:

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(Chairperson, Research and Ethics Committee)

Appendix B: Information Sheet for Case Studies

“Navigating safety in the context of Immigration: Indian women experiencing domestic violence in Aotearoa/New Zealand”

Information for Indian immigrant women who are victims of domestic violence

What is the project about?

My study aims to contribute to community psychology research in domestic violence by increasing awareness of cultural perspectives that foster violence and abuse, as well as cultural beliefs and practices which are protective against domestic violence. I want to investigate the ways in which Indian immigrant women in New Zealand who are experiencing domestic violence navigate the challenges they face in the context of immigration. I intend to identify those aspects that are working as well as identify the areas for improvement including barriers that prevent women from seeking help and practices which may endanger and/or further disempower women. In the first phase I worked in collaboration with community partners, especially local women’s advocates in New Zealand as well as India. The second phase of my research will include case studies which will increase understanding of the link between immigration, Indian family dynamics and domestic violence. I hope that my research may be used to enhance the responsiveness of families and communities to Indian immigrant women who are being abused in intimate partner violence.

This project has received approval from the School of Psychology Ethics Committee.

Who is the researcher?

My name is Sripriya Somasekhar. I am a PhD candidate at the University of Waikato. I hold a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology and two Masters degrees, one in Social Work and the other in Counselling Psychology from Chennai, India. I moved to New Zealand in 2012 aged 27 years. Having been brought up in India, my views on domestic violence were shaped by the society I grew up in. My move to New Zealand has given me a new perspective on these issues. Being able to experience a different level of communication and openness between couples, I realised how much I brushed aside my own country's attitudes, where injustices against women, although horrific, were tolerated and almost expected. I am now able to look at these with fresh eyes and am determined to be part of the change I wish to see in the people of my home country.

Why am I being asked to participate?

I believe that you can help this research by sharing your experiences of domestic violence as an Indian immigrant woman in New Zealand. As an immigrant, you might have a unique perspective on the challenges you face in the context of family and community with regards to domestic violence which will be very helpful in understanding of the link between immigration, Indian family dynamics and domestic violence. I will write up your story as an example of the ways in which Indian immigrant women who experience domestic violence navigate safety in the context of immigration.

What will I be asked to do?

I would like to interview you at a time and place which suits us both. You are very welcome to bring someone along to the interview with you. I expect that the interview would take about an hour. If needed – and if you agree – I might want to do a follow-up interview to fill in any gaps and to check that I have understood your story correctly.

I would also like to talk to other members of family or friends or other people who have helped you (e.g. lawyer, advocate). The experience of such people can often help us understand how best to help women facing domestic violence. If there is anyone who you think it would be useful for me to talk to, I would like your permission to do so.

What will I be asked in the interview?

I am really interested in your domestic violence experiences as an Indian immigrant woman. That is I would like to discuss such things as:

- A brief outline about your family and where you spent most of your life.
 - The cultural values you were brought up with.
 - The challenges you experienced in the face of migration, if any.
 - The experiences which lead you to contact community agencies.
 - Your relationship with your husband and husband's family.
 - Your changes in perception about domestic violence post migration, if any.
 - The people who have been supportive during trying times.
 - Any ways in which community agencies have made a difference to you and your family.
- Any general comments.

What will happen with my information?

Our conversations will be audio taped. In addition, I may take written notes. From these, I will write up your story which I will send to you for comment and correction. You will also be able to withdraw any information you feel should not be included.

You will be asked to give any feedback within two weeks. If I do not hear from you by then, I will assume that you are fine with your story as it is.

Your story will be added to other information I am collecting and used to complete my theses and to write articles for submission to academic journals. Theses and journal articles are all potentially accessible by the public. If you wish, a summary of the findings of this phase of the research will be made available to you when it is completed.

Will other people know who I am?

Generally, no. In writing up my research, I will use pseudonyms to refer to you and other family members. I will omit or disguise potentially identifying information such as place names and easily identifiable events. However, while I will take all possible care in protecting your privacy, it is possible that you may be recognised by readers who know you really well (e.g. family members or close friends).

What are my rights and what can I expect from the researcher?

You can:

- Ask questions at any point during the study.
- Ask for the audio recorder to be turned off at any point during the discussion.
- Decline to answer any specific questions.
- Withdraw from the research at any point during the interview or after the interview up to two weeks after I send you the draft of your story for comment.
- Similarly, to have the information you have provided corrected, added to or ask to have information removed.
- Expect to receive a summary of the final thesis and be given details of how to access the full thesis.
- Expect that information you provide will be kept in secure storage. (I will keep it for up to five years after I have finished the research and then ensure that it is destroyed.)
- Contact myself or my supervisors if you have any concerns, questions or would like further information about the study.

What do I need to do now?

If you would like to participate in this study, please contact me (contact information below) or ask the person who has given you this information sheet to pass on your contact details to me. We will negotiate a time and place to meet. This project has received approval from the School of Psychology Ethics Committee.

The Research team and contact information:

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