

A Study of Domestic Violence among South Asian Women in Hong Kong

A thesis submitted for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Jenny ChingkhannemTonsing

Centre for Criminology and Sociology
Royal Holloway, University of London

2014

Declaration of Authorship

I, Jenny Chingkhannem Tonsing hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Abstract

Although there is considerable literature on the issue of domestic violence, this remained under-researched and unexplored in the context of South Asian women's experience of domestic violence in Hong Kong. This study aims to fill the gap in the literature and to address this lack of documentation, using a qualitative approach. The purpose for using a qualitative approach was to acquire an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perceptions of domestic violence in the women's own words, hearing their accounts and privileging their subjective views.

An in-depth qualitative interview was conducted with fourteen South Asian immigrant women who had experienced domestic violence. Additionally, six helping professionals were interviewed from four social service agencies. Participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling.

The findings of this study revealed that women's perceptions, experiences and responses in the face of domestic violence were influenced and determined by a multitude of factors, such as traditional beliefs and values, role of wife and mother, importance of family and marriage, stigma of divorce, gender inequality. Further analysis reveals that structural factors including women's legal status, immigration and availability of services, increase women's vulnerability to abuse. Additionally, interviews with six helping professionals from four social service agencies that provided services for ethnic minorities also highlighted the gap in services for ethnic minority women experiencing domestic violence in Hong Kong.

The present study utilised the ecological model to demonstrate intervention and policy at four levels-by merging the person, family, community and society for effective intervention and prevention for South Asian women experiencing domestic violence in the context of Hong Kong.

This study is the first empirical qualitative research to examine the domestic violence experiences of South Asian women in Hong Kong. The findings of this study also highlight that domestic violence in intimate relationships cannot be separated from the personal, situational and sociocultural factors connected to it. Therefore, this study not only enhances our understanding about domestic violence, but also supports and extends our knowledge of ethnicity, gender, and the need for appropriate service provision. Study limitations and areas for future research are also highlighted.

Publications

Two articles, based on material from this thesis have successfully been published in the following peer reviewed journals.

Tonsing, J.C. (2010). A study of domestic violence among South Asians in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Science*, 5(1), 367-376.

Tonsing, J.C. (2011). Using ecological model to understand intimate partner violence. *International Journal of Arts & Science*, 4(13), 435-443.

Table of Contents

<i>Declaration of Authorship</i>	2
<i>Abstract</i>	3
<i>Publications</i>	5
<i>Table of Contents</i>	6
<i>List of Tables</i>	11
<i>List of Figure</i>	12
<i>Dedication</i>	12
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	14
CHAPTER ONE	16
INTRODUCTION	16
1.1. Aims of the study.....	19
1.2. Rationale for the study.....	20
1.3. Significance of this study.....	21
1.4. Organisation of the thesis.....	23
1.5. Chapter summary.....	24
CHAPTER TWO	26
REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE	26
2.1. Introduction.....	26
2.2. Brief background of South Asians in Hong Kong.....	27
2.4. History of domestic violence movements.....	36
2.5. Domestic violence situation in Hong Kong.....	39
2.5.1. Studies on domestic violence in Hong Kong.....	42
2.5.2. Services for victims and abusers of domestic violence and response to domestic violence in Hong Kong.....	45
2.6. Local studies on South Asians in Hong Kong.....	47
2.6. Process of literature review.....	52
2.7. Studies of domestic violence among immigrant women.....	53
2.8. Immigration-specific factors as related to domestic violence.....	58
2.8.1. Migration issues.....	60
2.8.2. Language barriers.....	61

2.8.3. Fear of isolation from the family and community	63
2.9. Factors that hinder migrant women from leaving	64
2.10. Culture and domestic violence	71
2.11.1. Patriarchal beliefs	77
2.10.2. South Asian traditional family structure	83
2.11.3. Marriage.....	86
2.11. Framing the research questions	88
2.12. Chapter summary	90
CHAPTER THREE	93
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	93
3.1. Introduction	93
3.2. Ecological model.....	93
3.3. Adopting the ecological framework for the present research.....	95
3.4. Grounded theory and Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model	98
3.5. Chapter summary	101
CHAPTER FOUR.....	102
RESEARCH METHODS	102
4.1. Introduction	102
4.2. Research paradigms in Social Science	103
4.2.1. Interpretivism and constructivism	105
4.3. Research methods: Quantitative, Qualitative and Triangulation.....	108
4.4. Rationale for the use of qualitative research method	110
4.5. Study Design	111
4.5.1. Pilot study	111
4.5.2. In-depth interviews	113
4.5.3. Focus group	114
4.6. Data collection procedures	115
4.6.1. Recruitment procedures	116
4.6.2. Selection criteria	118
4.6.3. Sample size	119
4.6.4. Research participants in the current study	120
4.6.5. Interview procedure	124

4.7. Ethical considerations	128
4.7.1. Informed consent	129
4.7.2. Confidentiality and anonymity	130
4.7.6. Storing of collected data	131
4.7.4. Minimising participant’s distress.....	131
4.7.5. Deception.....	132
4.7.3. Ensuring participant’s safety	133
4.8. Data analysis process	134
4.8.1. Grounded theory approach to data analysis.....	139
4.8.1.1. Constant comparative analysis.....	140
4.8.1.2. Theoretical sampling.....	141
4.8.2 Coding	142
4.8.2.1. Open-coding.....	142
4.8.2.2. Axial coding.....	143
4.8.2.3. Selective coding.....	144
4.9. Credibility of data.....	144
4.10. Personal reflection on the study	147
4.11. Chapter summary	156
CHAPTER FIVE	157
RESULTS I: PARTICIPANTS’ STORIES	157
5.1. Introduction	157
5.2. Women’s stories	158
5.3. Chapter summary	188
CHAPTER SIX	191
RESULTS II: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS	191
6.1. Introduction	191
6.2. Themes generated from the interviews with women who have been abused	193
6.2.1. The women’s perception of domestic violence	195
6.2.1.1. Types of abuse as experienced by the women	196
6.2.1.2. Social isolation.....	201
6.2.2. Culture	203

6.2.2. 1. Collectivist culture	204
6.2.3. Concern for the children	209
6.2.4. Importance attached to marriage and family	211
6.2.5. Interference from in-laws	215
6.2.6. Make the marriage work.....	218
6.2.7. Stigma of leaving the relationship	219
6.2.8. Maintain social face.....	221
6.2.9. Gender Inequality	224
6.2.10. Summary of analysis of interviews with women participants.....	227
6.3. Themes that emerged from the interviews with the helping professionals ..	229
6.3.1. Nature of existing social services serving ethnic minorities	230
6.3.1.1. Gap in Service.....	234
6.3.2. Cultural factors and domestic violence	236
6.3.3. Proposed remedies to help South Asian women tackle domestic violence	240
6.4. Concluding summary	242
CHAPTER SEVEN.....	244
DISCUSSION	244
7.1. Introduction	244
7.2. Locating Grounded Theory in Qualitative Research.....	259
7.2.1. Theoretical Model.....	263
7.3. Concluding summary	274
CHAPTER EIGHT	276
CONCLUSION	276
8.1. Summary of findings	279
8.2. Contribution to research	284
8.3. Theoretical contributions.....	286
8.4. Implications for policy	288
8.5. Implications for practice.....	300
8.6. Limitations	304
8.7. Future research direction.....	306
8.8. Overall conclusion.....	309

REFERENCES.....313

LIST OF APPENDICES.....347

Appendix 1: Ethical Approval.....347

Appendix 2A: Information sheet (for the women).....348

Appendix 2B: Consent Form (for the women).....349

Appendix 3A: Information sheet (for the women) in Hindi.....350

Appendix 3B: Consent Form (for the women) in Hindi351

Appendix 4A: Information sheet (for the women) in Urdu352

Appendix 4B: Consent form (for the women) in Urdu353

Appendix 5A: Information sheet (for the women) in Nepali354

Appendix 5B: Consent form (for the women) in Nepali.....355

Appendix 6: Background information sheet (for the women)356

Appendix 7: Interview guide (for the women).....357

Appendix 8A: Information sheet (for Helping Professional).....360

Appendix 8B: Consent form (for Helping Professional)361

Appendix 9: Interview guide (for Helping Professional).....362

Appendix 10: Demographic profile of Helping Professionals364

List of Tables

Table 4-1: Demographic characteristics of the participants.....	122
Table 4-2: Demographic characteristics of helping professionals	124

List of Figure

Figure 3-1: An adaptation of the ecological model as a conceptual framework for the present research.....	96
---	----

Dedication

I dedicate this project to the women who share their stories with me. Your courage, strength, experiences, and feelings, provide the foundation of this research. I sincerely hope that I have represented your voices truly. I extend my deepest gratitude for your participation in this project despite your painful experiences. I hope someday life will become better and kinder.

Acknowledgements

My faith in God is my pillar of strength that has sustained me throughout life's journey.

I wish to acknowledge and express my gratitude to Royal Holloway University of London, for the full scholarship awarded that has enabled me to be part of such a remarkable PhD programme.

I express my deep and heartfelt appreciation to my supervisors Professor Ravinder Barn and Dr. Vicki Harman, for their support and understanding throughout this project. Professor Barn, your wisdom inspires me, your incisive critiques and questions, challenging my thinking were invaluable. Thank you for being so thorough and conscientious about your appraisal of my work. I am also deeply thankful for your kind understanding, sensitivity and intuition toward me as an international student in my initial adjustment to my new environment when I first joined. Dr. Harman, I am deeply thankful for all your support and for your valuable input.

I also wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Jane Yamaguchi, California State University, for her time in reading the thesis.

Special thanks to the staffs of the social service agencies for extending their support with the initial recruitment of participants and to the six helping professional of the four social service agencies for allowing me to interview them.

I must also acknowledge the love and support received from all my family members, in so many different ways, whose belief in me never falters. My deepest gratitude and love to all my family. Kay, I could not ask for a better sounding board. And thank you for listening patiently when I needed to share about the research, conceiving out ideas and when I thought-aloud my research/theories. Lis, thank you for at critical moments, helping me maintain a sense of humour and putting up with me and my various idiosyncrasies and for bringing laughs. Pauline, thank you for being so helpful to search/send me the books, journals/articles when I needed and asked for it. I can never thank you all enough for your generous soul, kindred spirit and support. Thank you for always being there for me and for believing in my dream.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Domestic violence has been acknowledged as a worldwide social problem (Hague and Mullender, 2006) and is one of the leading causes of injuries among women (Griffin and Koss, 2002). Violence affects the lives of women worldwide, over long time periods, and in many forms. It cuts across ethnic, class, culture and impedes the rights of women to fully participate in society (United Nations, 1996). The fact that no race is exempt emphasises that social structure, socio-cultural norms and value practices legitimise the control men exercise over women. Domestic violence has deep historical roots and continues to be condoned and even sanctioned in many societies. Dobash and Dobash (1979) have placed abuse in its historical context as a form of behaviour that has been prevalent for centuries as an acceptable and desirable part of a patriarchal family system within a patriarchal society through the subordination, domination, and control of women and which is still reflected in many of our cultural and social institutions. Patriarchy produces gender inequality in marriage, in the family setting, in religion and in the economy (York,2011). In a patriarchal society, men are still viewed as the heads of their households, privileging men over women, and they employ violence as a means to control women, preserving the role dictated by society. Such an act, which constitutes domestic violence, is aimed at taking power from women and increasing the power of the abuser (Mullender et al.2002).

Domestic violence is not a new phenomenon and has been prevalent in both the West and East for a long time. For example, male domination, gender inequality and

issues of violence against wives were prevalent in Western cultures dating back to the first marriage law, instituted by Romulus in 75 B.C., which legally supported wife beating; this law existed throughout the early twentieth century (Dobash and Dobash, 1979). Additionally, physical violence against wives in the name of chastisement was even legal in the United States until the mid-1800s (Straus and Gelles, 1990). Until the late 19th century, under the English common law, marriage was structured to give the husband superiority over his wife, with the right to demand obedience from her, and to subject her to corporal punishment if she disobeyed his authority, and thus wife abuse was considered to be essentially a family affair, not a societal interest (Tuerkheimer, 2004). Therefore, domestic violence is indicative of the patriarchal society in which we live, which promotes and normalises violence against women as a form of discipline or chastisement within the family/marriage. It is from the early 1970s, scholars, policy makers, and the criminal justice community started to identify domestic violence as a social and legal problem (Kelly and Johnson, 2008).

Activism on the part of women's groups at the grassroots level has thrust violence against women onto the world stage as a human rights issue (Heise et al., 1994). The efforts and early advocacy of women activists, social workers, and abused women themselves played a pivotal role in addressing domestic violence, especially marital abuse, at both the micro and macro levels (Abraham, 2000a). One of the key issues addressed at 'The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women' held in Beijing 1995, was the elimination of violence against women, and acknowledgement of domestic violence as a human rights issue.

Although the study of domestic violence, especially among ethnic minorities and immigrant groups, has been the focus of various studies (Abraham, 2000a; Dasgupta, 2000b; Han, Kim and Tyson, 2010a; Menjivar and Salcido, 2002; Nguyen, 2007; Raj and Silverman, 2002b; Wilson, 2006), this topic remains under-researched and unexplored among South Asian communities, specifically in Hong Kong. The lack of in-depth studies on the experiences of domestic violence within these communities in the Hong Kong context highlight that this issue remains uncharted. The situation of domestic violence needs to be acknowledged in order for society to become responsive to the needs of women affected by it, as the consequences of domestic violence are often devastating and long-term, affecting women's physical and mental well-being (Robinson, 2003; Humphries and Thiara, 2003), as there is a significant link between domestic violence and mental health problem (Barn and Sidhu, 2002). This study presents an opportunity to learn directly from the women affected by domestic violence. By incorporating the views of this population into the domestic violence literature, this study attempts to fill in the gap in the literature of domestic violence discourse among South Asian women in Hong Kong, in order to draw society's attention to the issue of partner violence which occurs within the South Asian community, and to the need for inclusive practice and policy.

The aim of using a qualitative study design was to achieve an in-depth understanding of the experience of intimate partner violence reported by women, using their own words, hearing their direct accounts and privileging their subjective views. This in turn can also help to contribute to the development of professional practice with abused women by allowing the helping professional to better understand the personal and cultural complexities which inform and shape women's decision

making in the face of partner abuse. It is important to recognise women as being the expert of their own lived experiences, whose insight would allow for timely effective and inclusive intervention strategies (Dasgupta, 2006). As Hague, Mullender and Aris (2003) have argued, policies and practice that are guided by discussions with women about their experiences are the hallmark of best practice. And the role of social work, evidence based practice, and training for domestic violence professionals must be consistent with the needs of the abused women themselves (Abel, 2000). Although progress has been made which has helped identify needed reforms, these changes have also revealed the need for a comprehensive response to domestic violence in which the voices of women experiencing abuse are centralised.

1.1. Aims of the study

This thesis aims to examine domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong, and will focus on women's perception of abuse and help-seeking. It is important to explore and examine how abused women understand and conceptualise their abusive situations, as these conceptualisations in turn may well determine their help-seeking process. This study will employ qualitative research methods in the form of in-depth one on one interview which can provide a rich text for describing and understanding the lived experiences of abused women. It has been noted that the most direct and accurate source of information regarding the experiences of violence may be best described by the women who are or have been abused (Abraham, 2000a; Heise, 1998).

Specifically, this thesis will answer the following research questions: What are South Asian women's perceptions of domestic violence in Hong Kong? Different cultures

define domestic violence differently. This question can help us to understand South Asian women's perceptions and meaning related to domestic violence. For example, are some abusive behaviours more acceptable than others, which may be influenced by cultural norms? At what point does an abused woman say that the relationship has become abusive?

The second research question- What are their help-seeking practices? This question can help us to better understand what abused women do when encountering domestic violence. For example, whether they seek help and support from family or friends or from community/social services, and whether they seek separation or divorce or remain in the relationship due to various reasons. In addressing these contextual aspects, that is, the availability of systems which provide emotional, material and informational support, the ecological framework is relevant as it addresses the varied factors from the individual, interpersonal and systematic levels.

1.2. Rationale for the study

In reviewing the literature it is evident that there is a dearth of information on the experiences of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong. To date, no in-depth research has been conducted to investigate the domestic violence situation among South Asian women in Hong Kong. This has also been confirmed in the report submitted to the government by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service in which it was stated that, "...There is no research done yet in domestic violence situation in EM (ethnic minority) group in Hong Kong..." (Hong Kong Council of Social Service, 2008 , para 5). As such it is important to explore and to understand their experiences with domestic violence and their help-seeking process. This is the

gap in the literature which this study aims to fill.

The focus on South Asian women is not to suggest that their experiences are any worse than other groups, but is rather an attempt to provide an understanding of their experiences with abuse, providing the readers with a more detailed and nuanced analysis of the specific perceptions and understanding of domestic violence as experienced by South Asian women in Hong Kong. South Asians comprise one of the largest sub-groups among the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department, 2007). Although the term ‘South Asian’ includes people from the Indian subcontinent of India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, in the present study it will mainly focus on Indian, Pakistani and Nepalese women who are residents of Hong Kong, because these three groups comprise the largest sub-groups and are also the fastest growing groups among South Asians (see section 2.2. for further detail on the background of South Asians in Hong Kong). As observed from the 2006 Census data of Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department, 2007) there are no separate statistics available for Bangladeshi and Sri Lankans, who have been clubbed together under the term ‘Other Asians’ in the Census statistics. Hence it is difficult to ascertain their population in Hong Kong. Moreover, most of the Sri Lankans and Bangladeshi are migrant workers on contract visa (temporary stay) and are not permanent resident of Hong Kong.

1.3. Significance of this study

The impetus for this study comes from the awareness of the dearth of in-depth research on domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong. Although there is considerable scholarship on the issue of domestic violence, the voices of

South Asian women who are in abusive relationships are absent from empirical research or underrepresented in the context of Hong Kong among South Asian community (Tonsing, 2010). This study attempts to fill this gap in the literature. For this reason, the present study is important for the literature and represents a valuable source for further studies.

This study is therefore significant. First, it adds to the literature specific to the South Asian situation concerning intimate partner violence. Second, it documents, for the first time, South Asian women's experiences of domestic violence in Hong Kong as part of our understanding in the discourse of violence against women. Third, it is certainly of great importance to draw society's attention to the issue of partner abuse within the South Asian community, and the need for inclusive services and policies for South Asian women experiencing domestic violence, which highlights the relevance of this study. It is against this background that this study becomes relevant in filling such a missing gap in our knowledge in the issue of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong. This lack of research echoes the reality that there is a great need for this study. Domestic violence cannot be ignored, it must be addressed because of the detrimental effects that it has on abused women and children.

In this study, the researcher draws attention to South Asian women in Hong Kong, whose voices have been silenced by the lack of inclusion of their narratives in the discourse of domestic violence in the context of Hong Kong. This study attempts to understand and represent women's subjective understanding and experiences of domestic violence as reported by the women in their own words. In this way, the

findings reflect the accounts of those who have experienced domestic violence, and aim to bring women's views and experiences to the forefront.

1.4. Organisation of the thesis

In chapter one, the author introduces the research topic, aims of the study, research questions, and significance of the research and also discusses the rationale behind conducting the present research.

Chapter two provides a brief historical background of South Asians in Hong Kong dating back to their arrival in the early 19th century. This discussion is intended to provide a better understanding of their migration history and their current situation in Hong Kong. This is followed by a discussion of pertinent literature reviews on studies of domestic violence. Since domestic violence is a broad term, a brief explanation is provided of the different terms employed in domestic violence literature. Because of the dearth of literature on domestic violence among South Asian populations in the Hong Kong context, this chapter also covers a review of the domestic violence situation in Hong Kong as well as of the prevailing support services and programs for domestic violence. The literature review also encompasses a discussion on the domestic violence movements, followed by studies and research which focus on domestic violence among immigrant women. These studies were conducted mostly in western societies such as the United Kingdom and the United States, since these are receiving countries for large immigrant populations, including South Asians. This chapter also explores some of the immigration-specific factors which are seen to exacerbate the situation of domestic violence among immigrant women. The main research questions are also highlighted in chapter two.

Chapter three focuses on the conceptual framework for the present study. The conceptual framework is adapted from Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory, which is used to examine and explore women's perceptions of domestic violence and help seeking behaviours.

Chapter four discusses the research methodology of the present study. It begins with a discussion on research paradigms, followed by research designs and the rationale behind adopting a qualitative approach. Detailed discussions on data collection procedures, recruitment of participants, and data analysis are also highlighted. The ethical considerations and personal reflection are also presented in chapter four.

The findings of the study are presented in two parts in chapters five and six. In chapter five, the biographical background and individual stories of the women are presented, which set the stage for the analysis of the themes that emerged from the in-depth interviews and are detailed in chapter six.

Chapter seven discusses the findings of this study. Implications of the study findings for practice, policy and research are presented in chapter eight. As with all research, there are also certain limitations of the present study, which are outlined in chapter eight. Suggestions for future research directions are also highlighted.

1.5. Chapter summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the background for the study of domestic violence among South Asians in Hong Kong, including the rationale for conducting this research and the significance of the study. This chapter has also highlighted the

issues of violence against women as a global issue and the lack of in-depth study on domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong. The next chapter will explore the more substantive issues emanating from violence against women.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Relevant Literature

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of pertinent literature which focuses on studies of domestic violence. Although the present study focuses on examining the issue of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong, a review of the literature reveals a dearth of research on domestic violence among this population in Hong Kong. Hence, the literature review in this chapter encompasses studies on domestic violence conducted among immigrant women in general, and South Asian women in particular, in western societies such as the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US). These literature reviews can help us to better understand how domestic violence affects women in general and South Asian immigrant women in particular.

The first part of this chapter provides a brief historical background of South Asians in Hong Kong, which helps to provide a better understanding of their migration history dating back to the early 19th century and to their present situation in recent times. Since domestic violence is a very broad term, a definition of the terms used in the present study is also highlighted. This is followed by review of pertinent literature which focuses on studies of domestic violence. The literature review encompasses a discussion about the early domestic violence movements, which helps to provide a better understanding of how domestic violence awareness movements were mobilised, and their instrumental role in highlighting the issue of domestic violence, specifically marital violence, and changing it from being

perceived as an individual problem into an important social problem. It is only when a phenomenon is perceived as a social problem that it leads to the development of social policies and implications for services to address the issue (Blumer, 1971; Alcock, 2008). A review of local studies on South Asians in the context of Hong Kong is also provided, followed by a discussion on the problem of domestic violence in Hong Kong.

While it is true that the prevalence of domestic violence is not higher among immigrant women as compared to their non-immigrant counterparts, it is important to understand how various immigrant-specific factors could further exacerbate immigrant women's experiences with domestic violence (for example, see Raj and Silverman, 2002a; Menjivar and Salcido, 2002). Therefore, the literature review also focuses on some of these immigration-specific factors related to domestic violence.

2.2. Brief background of South Asians in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is a predominantly homogenous society with 93.6% of its total population being comprised of people of Chinese ethnicity and the remaining 6.4% made up of *ethnic minorities* (Census and Statistics Department, 2012). The term *ethnic minority* (EM) is used in the Hong Kong Census to refer to persons of non-Chinese ethnicity which include 'Asian (other than Chinese)', 'white' and 'mixed' (Census and Statistics Department, 2007). Amongst these, the largest subgroups are from South and South East Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Nepal, the Philippines, and Indonesia, which make up about 73% of the total ethnic minority population. The majority of the Filipinos and Indonesians are migrant household workers who are on contract visas and are not permanent residents of Hong Kong.

On the other hand, the majority of the South Asians such as Indians, Pakistanis and Nepalese are permanent residents who have Right of Abode in Hong Kong.

Generally, South Asian refers to people originating from the Indian sub-continent, such as India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Before the partition of 'India' into the nation state of present-day India and Pakistan in 1947, and the independence of West Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh) in 1971, nationality was not an issue and the term 'South Asian' had no specific reference in the early days. Therefore, people from these regions were all referred to as 'Indians' in local parlance (White,1994) irrespective of their diverse geographical, linguistic and religious origins. After the British gained control over India, it used the vast materials and human resources there for the overall expansion of the British Empire, leading to large-scale Indian emigration to various parts of the British colonies in the early days of the empire (Vaid, 1972). The majority of the 'Indians' at that time were deployed by the British to Hong Kong to work in the military and police force (Vaid, 1972; White, 1994). There were also private individuals who engaged in trade and business (Vaid, 1972).

In Hong Kong population censuses have been conducted every ten years since 1901 (Vaid, 1972), but it was not until 2001 that data were recorded by ethnicity. Prior to this period, Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankans were grouped together, so it is difficult to estimate their exact number. According to the 2001 population census there were 18,543 Indians and 11,017 Pakistanis residing in Hong Kong. Over the past ten years, there has been a steady increase, and in 2011 there were 28,616 Indians and 18,042 Pakistanis (Census and Statistics Department, 2012). No

separate data were available for Bangladeshi and Sri Lankans who were clubbed together under the term “Other Asian” which recorded a total of 7,038 persons in the 2011 population census.

The ‘Indian¹’ community has been in Hong Kong since the early 20th century, and migrants from the Indian subcontinent started settling in Hong Kong after the British took possession of the Colony in 1841 (Welsh, 1997). The Indians initially came to the China coast as British subjects and their involvement in trade and other vocations were part of the overall British operation in China and the Far East (Vaid, 1972). The majority of the ‘Indians’ at that time were deployed by the British to Hong Kong to serve as policemen and prison guards (Vaid,1972;White,1994). After their retirement from the services, many of them returned to their home country, while some remained in the Colony, and brought their families to join them. Additionally, many Indian Muslim traders in Hong Kong came from different regions of India, and built up business links with various groups of people from various geographical regions and also established close social links with the Chinese residents through intermarriage with Chinese women (Weiss, 1997).

The settlement of the Nepalese in Hong Kong can be linked to the Gurkha soldiers who initially came to the territory in 1948 as part of the British Gurkha regiments (FEONA, 2000). The Gurkha war, fought between Nepal and the British East India company from 1814-1816, ended with the signing of the peace Treaty of Sugauli in 1816 (Chauhan,1996). Under the Terms of Treaty, Nepal agreed to concede the territories which she had captured from India, and to allow Britain to recruit Gurkhas

¹ During the early days, in local parlance, everyone from the Indian subcontinent was regarded as ‘Indian’ (Weiss, 1991)

for their military services. During the war the British were very impressed by the fighting and other qualities of the Gurkhas soldiers, and after the war ended a large number of Gurkhas were recruited as volunteers into the British East India Company. From these volunteer services, the first regiment of the Gurkha Brigade was formed (Chauhan, 1996). After India gained independence in 1947, about 8000 Gurkhas who had previously served under the British regiment in India were deployed to Hong Kong (Yung, 1992). The main duties of the Gurkhas in Hong Kong consisted of patrolling the border area between Hong Kong and China, guarding the Shek Kong Vietnamese detention centre, and helping catch smugglers and illegal immigrants from China. After the return of Hong Kong to China, the majorities of the Gurkhas returned to Nepal, while some ex-Gurkhas remained in Hong Kong and were recruited to provide top security services to business organisations and private homes.

The Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 granted the Right of Abode (ROA) to all Gurkha soldiers, and all Nepalese children born in Hong Kong prior to 1983. However, it was only during the mid-1990s that many Nepalese began migrating to Hong Kong. One of the main causes for this can be attributed to political reasons. With the impending return of the sovereignty of Hong Kong from Britain to China in 1997, the fear that the policy of the Right of Abode might change after 1997 led many Nepalese to exercise this right during the early to mid-1990s. Over the following years, the Nepalese population in Hong Kong has also gradually risen, from a total of 313 persons in 1991 (Second Report of the HKSAR 2005) to 14,180 in 2001; and in 2011 the Census record showed a total of 16,518 Nepalese residence in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department, 2012).

As mentioned above, the term ‘ethnic minorities’ is used in the Hong Kong Census in reference to all who are of non-Chinese origin. However, in the local context this term is used mainly in reference to South and Southeast Asians. The term ‘immigrant’ in general refers to all those who have migrated from their country to settle in another country. Although South Asians have lived in Hong Kong for decades, most of the South Asians in Hong Kong in contemporary times have recently migrated to Hong Kong, as indicated by the ‘Place of Birth’ information in the 2011 Census and Statistics data, which shows that a majority of them were born outside Hong Kong (example, about 77.3% Indians, 60.5 % Nepalese, and 61.3% Pakistanis were born outside Hong Kong). In the present study the term ‘South Asian women’ is used in reference to women from India, Pakistan, and Nepal, and the term ‘ethnic minority’ is used in reference to those from other South and South East Asian countries, unless otherwise specified.

With regard to demographic characteristics, according to the 2011 census data it can be observed that the majority of South Asian women (that is, Indian, Pakistani, and Nepalese) are married (73% and above for all three groups) and have one or more children. The remaining 27% include those who are unmarried, divorced, separated and widowed. However, there are no separate data to indicate whether most of the unmarried were in a relationship. In terms of labour force participation, it can be observed that a higher percentage of Nepalese (65%) and Indian (49.9%) women are employed, as compared to only 12.4% of Pakistani women (Census and Statistics Department, 2012). With regard to types of occupation, there are variations in the distribution of occupations among the different ethnic groups. For example, the majority of female working Pakistanis (42.6%) are employed as professionals

(example, teacher); whereas the majority of Nepalese women (47%) are engaged in clerical support services and sales; and a large proportion of working female Indians (42.9%) are employed in elementary occupations (examples, waitress, cleaner, security guard) (Census and Statistics Department, 2012).

2.3. Defining Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a broad term that includes different types of violence such as spouse battering, child abuse, elderly abuse, domestic abuse, intimate partner violence, and violence against women (Mccue, 2008). Domestic violence also refers to violence and abuse that occurs within same-sex relationships, violence by women against men, and violence and abuse perpetrated by one family member against another (Shipway, 2004). Terms such as ‘woman abuse’, ‘violence against women’, and ‘male-to-female violence’ have also been employed (DeKeseredy and Dragiewicz, 2009), while others argue that women can also be violent in marriage or cohabiting relationships and prefer to employ gender-neutral terms such as ‘family violence’ or ‘intimate partner violence’ (Dutton, 2006).

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO 2002b) the term ‘battering’ refers to the phenomena where abuse occurs repeatedly in the same relationship. In Hong Kong, the term ‘spouse battering’ or ‘battered spouse’ is defined as ‘...an act of violence committed by a partner against another partner in a lasting relationship which is more than just a brief encounter, and the partners can be married couples, co-habitants, separated partners’ (Working Group on Combating Violence, 2004, p.2-3). Amongst the various domestic violence categories, spouse battering is the most significant form of abuse in Hong Kong (Women Commission, 2009a).

The Women's Commission Report of Hong Kong has defined domestic violence as 'any intentional use of physical force or power against another person, that either results in or is likely to result in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation' (Women's Commission, 2006,p.21) The Social Welfare Department (SWD) of Hong Kong (2000) defines domestic violence as 'an act of violence committed by any member against another member of the family or co-habitation'. For the purpose of police intervention, the Hong Kong Police Force defines domestic violence as 'any incident involving an assault, or breach of the peace between parties who could generally be described as married or having a family relationship', which also includes those who are co-habiting, separated or divorced (Working Group on Combating Violence, 2004). While the definition adopted by the Women's Commission is broader, the definitions given by the SWD and the Police Force are more specific to intimate partner violence, as it refers to acts of violence, be it physical and/or emotional/psychological, by one partner against another partner in intimate relationships, either married or co-habituating in a domestic setting.

Domestic violence can take many forms such as psychological abuse (example, degrading, isolating, verbal abuse, rejecting and denying emotional responsiveness), physical abuse (example, slapping, punching, the use of weapons to injure), and sexual abuse. Domestic violence may also vary across culture and countries, and includes forced marriage, rape, honour killing and dowry abuse, and death (McKie, 2005).

Violence versus abuse: The term 'violence' is generally used to refer to behavioural acts that can cause physical injury to another person (Straus and Gelles 1990), while

the term 'abuse' includes a broader range of physical, emotional, verbal, and psychological acts intended to harm or control another person in an interpersonal relationship (Freeman, 2008; Gordon, 2008). In violence research, the terms 'violence' and 'abuse' are often used in reference to domestic violence/domestic abuse to refer to the violence perpetrated by one family member on another member with the intent to dominate and control physically, psychologically, emotionally or even financial deprivation (Shipway, 2004).

Researchers in the fields of sociology and criminology have defined violence in a way that can be operationalised for the purposes of empirical study. For instance, Gelles and Straus (1988) defined violence as 'any act carried out with the intention of, or perceived intention of, causing physical pain or injury to another person'. As this definition of violence includes only behavioural aspects of violence, other researchers have attempted to provide a wider definition of 'violence' to include other forms and acts of violence. For instance, Stanko and colleagues (Stanko et al., 1998) had defined 'violence' as 'any behaviour by an individual that intentionally threatens, attempts to inflict, or does cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm to others...' (p.1). This definition of violence covers a wider range, including physical, sexual and/or psychological harm. Similarly, researchers in the fields of psychology, mental health and social work have frequently defined 'violence' as any 'physical, verbal, or sexual acts that are experienced by a woman or a girl as a threat, invasion, or assault, which have the effect of hurting or degrading her and/or taking away her ability to control contact with another person' (Koss et al., 1994). Proponents of these broader terms of definition agree that this can aptly represent the experiences of abused women who have revealed that the verbal and psychological

abuse were more harmful than the actual physical abuse, and have the effect of hurting her or degrading her (example, Follingstad et al., 1990; Walker, 1979; Fitzpatrick and Halliday, 1992).

Intimate partner violence: Intimate partner violence (IPV) is another form of domestic violence that occurs between people in intimate relationships and may include physical, psychological, verbal and sexual abuse (Arias and Corso, 2005; Heise et al., 2008) and economic coercion (Hattery, 2009). It also includes various forms of controlling behaviours such as restricting the partner/spouse from seeing their family and friends, and limiting their access to information and assistance (WHO, 2002b). In general, IPV refers to violence or abuse which occurs between persons who have a current or former marital, dating or cohabiting relationship (Hampton, 2004). While it is true that domestic violence affects both men and women, research evidence indicates that generally it is women who are more commonly the victims of domestic violence, and although women may also engage in some physical aggression, it has been observed that violence is more often perpetrated by men against women than vice versa (Espinosa and Osborne, 2002; Venis and Horton, 2002), and furthermore, male-female violence also has more detrimental effects than female-to-male violence (Archer, 2000; WHO, 2002b).

From the above discussion it is clear that domestic violence is a broad term and refers to a wide range of violence and/or abuse. In the present study the focus is on intimate partner violence in heterosexual relationships. Hence, the terms ‘domestic violence in an intimate relationship’ and ‘intimate partner violence’ may be used interchangeably unless otherwise specified, to refer to violence which occurs within

an intimate marriage or cohabiting relationship, and perpetrated by the husband/male partner against the wife/female partner.

2.4. History of domestic violence movements

Domestic violence has been an issue for many years, and while domestic violence itself has not changed, how it is viewed socially and politically has witnessed change. This section will discuss the early domestic violence movements which have helped to bring domestic violence to the forefront as a social issue. The efforts of these early movements have helped to alter the issue of marital violence from being considered 'private' to being one of public concern, and to enhance the efficacy of the larger efforts to end violence against women (Abraham, 2000a). The latter part of this section will also provide a brief discussion on the issue of the domestic violence situation in Hong Kong.

Domestic violence movements can be conceptualised as historically significant in the way in which they have helped to move the issue of domestic violence from being perceived as a private individual affair to one of public concern (Schneider, 2000). Prior to the 1970s, domestic violence, especially marital violence was generally conceived to be a private family matter and as such not much attention was paid to it (Abraham, 2000a). It has been stated that recognition of a phenomenon as a social problem is a necessary precursor to the development of social policy and services required to address it (Blumer, 1971; Alcock, 2008). Starting in the early 1970s, scholars, policy makers, and the criminal justice community began to identify domestic violence as a social and legal problem (Kelly and Johnson, 2008). It was also around this period that the feminist movement in England and the United States

began raising public awareness about the issue of domestic violence and started organising support for abused women. The women's movement can be conceptualised as historically significant since these movements have helped to bring domestic violence to the forefront of public awareness as a social issue. As a result, many shelter homes were started in various parts of the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) during the late 1970s and early 1980s (Abraham, 2000a; Gill and Ellen, 1993). The efforts and early advocacy of women activists, social workers, and abused women themselves played a pivotal role in addressing domestic violence, especially marital abuse, at both the micro and macro levels (Abraham, 2000a). The opening of refuge centres in the early 1970s in the UK did much to publicise the existence of violent partners and the need for women to escape from them (Val, Gina and Judy, 1985). The Chiswick's Women Aid in London was the first refuge centre for women, and was opened in 1971 by Erin Pizzey, a pioneer for the women's movement (Pizzey, 1974). This movement achieved an important goal; the plight of abused women, once socially invisible and impenetrable, is now the subject of public discussion and concern.

The South Asian Women's Organisation Network was initiated and established during the early 1980s (Abraham, 2000a) for the purpose of addressing the problems faced by women within the community. Like all movements, the various South Asian Women's Organisations also grew out of a variety of initiatives. For instance, *Awaz* (voice), one of the earliest South Asian women's groups in Britain, was formed in 1977 in London as a political organisation which drew in many young South Asian women (Wilson, 2006). It was initially set up to address both their needs and those of other South Asian women. Gradually, *Awaz* also began

campaigning for setting up refuge centres to be run by Asians for Asian women who are facing domestic violence in the UK, and in the early 1980s, in collaboration with other South Asian organisations, it set up the '*Asha Project*' in South London (Wilson, 2006). Another leading feminist organisation is the Southall Black Sisters¹, established in 1979 in London, to provide services to ethnic minority women (Asian and African-Caribbean) in the UK who are facing domestic violence (Wilson, 2010).

In the United States, domestic violence within the South Asian communities came into focus in 1981 when Amita Vadlamudi, an abused wife, killed her husband in New Jersey. As a result of this case and the recognition by the women in the community that services for South Asian women were needed, South Asian Women's Organisations began to be formed in the early 1980s (Abraham, 2000a). One such organisation is *Manavi*² which was founded in 1985 by a group of six South Asian women as a consciousness raising group, to address the unmet needs of South Asian women (Dasgupta and Dasgupta, 1993). However, *Manavi* soon expanded its goals in response to requests from the community and began to provide services for abused women. *Manavi* was one of the first South Asian Women Organisations in the US to specifically address the issue of domestic violence among South Asian women. Since the inception of *Manavi*, many other South Asian organisations have also been established in the US, which provide services to South Asian women facing domestic abuse, such as *Narika*³ in California (established in 1992); *Sakhi*⁴ in New York (established in 1989), and *Apna Ghar*¹ in Chicago

¹ Southall Black Sisters is a not-for-profit organisation, established in 1979 in London. For further details see the link - <http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk>

² <http://www.manavi.org/about-herstory.php>

³ Narika - <http://www.narika.org/index.php>

⁴ Sakhi - <http://www.sakhi.org/about/index.php>

(incorporated in 1989). These Organisations were specifically organised to address the problems faced by the women within their communities. For the past years since 1985 South Asian women have organised domestic violence services for abused women by creating safe spaces for women seeking help and by organising around the violence against women movement (Abraham, 2000a). South Asian domestic violence services were established on the principle that intervention for abused women can be successful only when the service providers understand all the factors that affect these abused women. South Asian services providers are unique in that they understand the cultural, psychological and social factors that South Asian abused women face (Agnew, 1998).

The above discussion on the domestic violence movements has helped us to understand the increased recognition of domestic violence as a social problem. Domestic violence has been transformed from a subject of private shame and misery to an object of public concern. The movements which were started in the early 1970s, instrumental in this transformation, provide examples of how a social movement can reveal social problems and successfully mobilise them into public concerns. Because of the efforts of these early movements, domestic violence became an object of public concern and government policy. The efforts of these early movements have also helped to bring out legislation for the protection of women, and highlight the significance of domestic violence in intimate relationships.

2.5. Domestic violence situation in Hong Kong

Historically, domestic violence has been considered a taboo subject in Chinese

¹ Apna Ghar - <http://www.apnaghar.org/about-us/history>

families and was never discussed openly, either in the private or public level (Chow, 2009). Many families in Hong Kong still adhere to the traditional doctrine of respect for the elderly, or the male, in a patriarchal setting. This has important implications, since the abusive parties in domestic violence are predominantly male. The importance given to ‘face saving’ and the pressure to maintain family honour also hinders many abused women from speaking out (Chow, 2009).

Domestic violence is legislated in Hong Kong since the enactment of the Domestic Violence Ordinance (DVO) (Cap 189) in 1986 (Law Reform Commission, 2005). The Ordinance was designed to provide victims of abuse in a domestic setting the right to seek speedy injunction against the other party (Liu, 1999). However, there were certain drawbacks to this Ordinance. For instance, injunctive relief under this Ordinance was available only to heterosexual spouses and to those who are currently cohabiting at the time redress was sought (Chow, 2009). Under this Ordinance, threat of bodily harm was not considered sufficient cause, and no injunction was carried out against the offending party unless there was actual bodily harm to the applicant (Chow, 2009). Despite the various limitations and inadequacy of the DVO to provide necessary protection to those who suffer from domestic violence, however, it remained in operation for more than two decades without any substantive amendment (Chow, 2009).

The issue of domestic violence (in Hong Kong) was rarely addressed in legal academic circles until the incident of the Tin Shui Wai tragedy in 2004 (Scully-Hill, 2011). In April 2004, a mother and her two daughters were murdered by her husband when the wife attempted to leave him. The public outcry was amplified when it was

made known that the mother had previously appealed to the Hong Kong Police and welfare agencies on various occasions, for their help to leave her husband, knowing that her husband would become violent if she attempted to leave. Unfortunately she received no help and it ended in tragedy when she and her twin daughters were murdered by her husband who then fatally wounded himself (Scully-Hill, 2011). This incident also brought the issue of domestic violence to the forefront, and there were pressing demands upon the Social Welfare Department (SWD)¹ and the Hong Kong Police Force to improve the measures and strategies for assistance to victims of domestic violence (Chow, 2009).

After the Tin Shui Wai incident in 2004, there was increasing public demand to make amendments to the DVO (Cap. 189), and finally in 2006 the Government proposed to amend the DVO by introducing the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill 2007, which expanded the DVO's scope (Lee, 2008). This Bill proposed, among other amendments, the inclusion of former spouse and former cohabitants when applying for injunction order, as well as a clear definition of 'domestic violence', so that it now includes psychological abuse and intimidation, without waiting for actual bodily harm to occur (Lee, 2008).

In recent years there has been a record increase in the number of reported incidents of domestic violence (Chan, 2005). This increase in reported cases of domestic violence can be seen as a successful outcome of the publicity and education initiatives concerning domestic violence, as well as being due to the adoption of

¹ The Social Welfare Department plays a central role in Government's response to domestic violence, and the Department is involved in the policy and service intervention, publicity campaigns, training, services and research.

improved reporting procedures by both the Hong Kong Police and the Social Welfare Department (Scully-Hill, 2011). The government, the SWD and the Police Force have also stepped up various measures and strategies for responding to domestic violence cases, and have also conducted various publicity campaigns to arouse and raise public awareness and attention to the issue of domestic violence. According to the statistics of the Social Welfare Department (SWD), there has been an increase in the number of reported cases of domestic violence, rising from 3,598 cases in 2005 to 6,843 cases in 2008 (Chow, 2009). Sadly, this increased trend in reported cases of domestic violence also indicates that domestic violence is still a significant social problem. On the other hand, however, it also reflects that more individuals who face domestic violence are willing to come forward to seek help (Women Commission, 2009). It must be noted here that these figures only represent cases from among the local Chinese population in Hong Kong. No data were available on reported cases of domestic violence among other ethnic minority groups.

2.5.1. Studies on domestic violence in Hong Kong

In reviewing the local literature on studies of domestic violence in Hong Kong, it has been revealed that most of these studies were conducted among local Chinese women and immigrant women from Mainland China who have migrated to Hong Kong. This section will provide a brief discussion on some of these studies in order to provide a better understanding of the issue of domestic violence in Hong Kong.

One of the earliest studies on domestic violence in Hong Kong was a survey conducted in the mid-1980s among abused women (N=50) who sought assistance from the Emergency and Accident Department of a local hospital (Mackay and Lo,

1985). More than 90% of the women reported that they had experienced repeated abuse from their partner/husband, and that it had begun soon after their marriage. Some of the main reasons for the abuse were financial issues, gambling behaviour and alcohol use.

In another survey conducted among 1,132 married women, the extent and pattern of wife abuse among Hong Kong Chinese families were examined (Tang, 1999). The rate and frequency of wife abuse were measured using the Conflict Tactic Scale, which revealed that about 67% of the respondents reported having experienced at least one form of verbal abuse (example, husband refusing to talk to their wives), while about 10% of the women shared that they had experienced at least one form of physical abuse. Findings from Tang's (1999) study revealed that verbal abuse was the most common form of abuse reported by the women. One of the strengths of this study was its random sampling method, and as such the findings can be considered to be reflective of the situation of wife abuse in Hong Kong at that time.

In a territory-wide household survey conducted during the period April 2003 and April 2005, the prevalence and incidence of spouse battering in Hong Kong were examined among 5,049 adult respondents (Chan, 2005a). Findings revealed that about 13.9% of the respondents reported having been battered by their spouses at some point in time, while 4.5% reported being physically assaulted during the year prior to conducting the survey.

In most of these cases, the abusers are men, usually the husbands as indicated by figures from the Central Information System on Battered Spouse Cases of the

Government of Hong Kong SAR. For instance, it was recorded that out of a total of 3,298 cases of domestic violence handled by the SWD in 2004, 88% of spouse abuse victims were women, and about 82% of the perpetrators were their husbands, and 78% of the cases involved physical violence (Chan, Chiu and Chiu, 2005). In a household survey conducted in 2003-2004, it was also reported that about 13.9% of respondents had at some time been battered by their partners (Chan, 2005a). In the same survey, it was also reported that about 10.6% of household members reported being battered by their partners at some point or the other during the period under review. Again, it must be noted here that these figures are for the local Chinese and the household survey does not include other non-Chinese ethnic groups. In 2009 the Hong Kong Police reported an average of 6 cases of criminal domestic violence (such as intimidation, wounding and assault) every day in the first three months of 2009 (Chow, 2009). Violence in intimate relationships is often compounded with family conflicts, which are often regarded by the couple as a daily routine of stress between the couples (Chan, 2005a). Many abused women often accept some abuse as 'normal' (Huisman, 1996; Perilla, 1999). For instance, in a household survey conducted in Hong Kong (Chan, 2005, p.8), some instances of minor physical assault were considered part of 'a daily routine of stressed couple' and thus were not consider to be abusive acts.

Thus, from the above discussion it is apparent that domestic violence cases in Hong Kong are rising, as evident from cases reported by the police and the Social Welfare Department (SWD). In recognising this as a significant social issue, various measures and strategies have also been taken by the government, the SWD and the police in how they respond to domestic violence cases.

2.5.2. Services for victims and abusers of domestic violence and response to domestic violence in Hong Kong

Social services for victims of domestic violence are provided by the social welfare department (SWD) and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which includes services such as refuge centres for women, hotline services, counselling and outreach services (Social Welfare Department, 2003).

The first refuge centre for women was set up in Hong Kong in 1985 at Harmony House when it opened its door to abused women and their children. Four years later in 1989, the Government also commenced its own refuge services (Chow, 2009). Currently there are four refuge centres run by the SWD which provide temporary accommodation and support services to women and their children, as well as a few centres run by NGOs (Lee, 2008). A number of hotline services have also been provided which are mainly operated by social workers, volunteers or an interactive voice processing system (Social Welfare Department, 2003). In addition, the Social Welfare Department also provides a coordinated one-stop service which includes outreach, crisis intervention and statutory protection. One of the first domestic violence survivor groups was organised by Harmony House with the goal of providing counselling and empowering survivors (Harmony House, 2005).

Medical professional and medical social workers may also provide counselling and tangible support services to victims of spouse battering cases. Additionally, victims of spouse battering may also apply for financial and housing assistance such as Comprehensive Social Security Allowance (CSSA), housing allowance and

Compassionate Re-housing (Social Welfare Department, 2004). However, battered women have to show that they are divorced or divorcing before they can avail themselves of the CSSA. Additionally, although battered women can apply for compassionate re-housing, the process can take a long time, since the policy on compassionate re-housing is operated jointly by the SWD and the Housing Department. Even if approval for compassionate re-housing is obtained from the SWD, permission must still be obtained from the Housing Department. This can considerably lengthen the process time (Kirkwood, 1993).

Although the issue of domestic violence is still considered a taboo subject in many families, the impact of violence against women in intimate relationships has begun to be recognised from a social perspective as well as from the health, legal and judicial perspectives (Women Commission, 2006). To tackle the issue of domestic violence and to address violence against women, the Government set up an interdepartmental Working Group on Battered Spouses in 1995, which consisted of representatives from the social and health welfare system, and members from the housing, education, health and legal departments (Women Commission, 2006).

In the latter part of the 1980s a coalition of women's groups advocated for the extension of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to Hong Kong, and to set up a working group to focus specifically on women's policies in government. This was also backed by the UN CEDAW Expert Committee. And in January 2001 the Women's Commission (WoC) was established (Women Commission, 2006). One of the major tasks of the WoC was to enhance women's safety and to tackle the problem of

domestic violence. The Working Group on Safety was thus set up in 2004, which focuses on various strategies to tackle domestic violence, such as organising a public education and publicity campaign to arouse public attention (Women Commission, 2006).

2.6. Local studies on South Asians in Hong Kong

There have been a few local studies on South Asians in Hong Kong by scholars, researchers and concern groups which have focused on examining various issues, such as the employment conditions, racial discrimination and education systems faced by these communities in Hong Kong (Ku, Chan and Sandhu, 2005; Loper, 2001; 2004; Tang et al., 2006; Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service, 2002). In a survey conducted by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Hong Kong Christian Service (2007) among the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, it was reported that the majority of the respondents had encountered numerous difficulties in the spheres of employment, education, housing and access to social services and resources. Other studies on ethnic minorities have also focused their attention on the education system in Hong Kong, revealing unequal education opportunities, and a language policy of using Chinese as the medium of instruction in schools (Loper, 2004; Ku et al., 2005). Because of these factors, many ethnic minority students have been unable to obtain admission into the mainstream schools due to the use of the Chinese language as the medium of instruction in the majority of the schools. Therefore, the ethnic minority students are concentrated in certain ‘designated schools’ which have a large concentration of ethnic minority students (see Loper, 2004 for further discussion on education system in Hong Kong).

Other studies have also explored the issues of discrimination faced by ethnic minorities in various spheres such as cultural barriers and social injustice, which further hinder their integration process into the mainstream of society (Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor, 1999; Ku et al., 2003; Loper, 2001; Tang et al., 2006). These studies have helped to raise public awareness about issues such as racial discrimination, unequal education and unequal employment opportunities because of the attention drawn to this issue by scholars, concern groups, welfare organisations and the media. Many of the Pakistani respondents in the study by Ku et al. (2003) revealed that the difficulties they encounter in finding jobs were not only due to the language barrier, but were also attributed to the presence of racial discrimination. Racial discrimination has been considered by many researchers to be an important barrier to the social and labour market inclusion of ethnic minorities (Quraishy, 2007). This is detrimental, as successful inclusion in the labour market remains the most powerful catalyst for the integration of ethnic minorities.

After much discussion and talk over more than a decade following the introduction of the first consultation paper on race discrimination in the 1990s, the enactment of the Legislation of the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) was finally legalised in July 10, 2008, due to the efforts of various concern groups, the ethnic minority communities and other advocates. Although this bill is a way forward in addressing the various issues pertaining to race discrimination, it has also been greatly criticised for its many 'loopholes' in the form of 'exemptions' for various governmental bodies (Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor and et al, 2009). For example, the Education Bureau is not bound by the RDO in their implementation of school place allocation for either primary or secondary schools, and many ethnic minority parents face

difficulties in securing school placements for their children. Neither does the RDO include any statutory equality plan in which the government and public authorities are required to eliminate racial discrimination and to promote racial equality. This means that the police, immigration and other law enforcement authorities are not constrained by the RDO in exercising their authority, despite the fact that many ethnic minorities have reportedly been subject to racial discrimination and harassment by law enforcement (Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor et al., 2009). Although the RDO was passed in 2008, recent studies have highlighted that ethnic minorities still encounter discrimination in their daily lives (example, Ashencaen Crabtree and Hung, 2010/2012).

A number of studies have been carried out by various researchers on the Indian community in Hong Kong. A historical account of the Indian settlement in Hong Kong from the earliest days dating back to the early 18th century was provided by Vaid (1972). In her studies of the Indian community in Hong Kong, White (1994), explored the different regional and religious groups, further providing an understanding of the historical and cultural background of the various Indian ethnic groups in Hong Kong. Pluss (2000) tackled the issue of transnational identities among Hong Kong Indians in the second half of the 20th century, which also provided a discussion on the complexity of the phenomenon of diaspora and the dynamism of Indian communities in Hong Kong. Kwok and Narain (2003) studied the Indian community in Hong Kong and focused on the historical background of their presence in Hong Kong. They provided a comprehensive history on their diversities, sociocultural lives and their cross-cultural experiences. All these studies have helped to bring out a better understanding of the historical background and

cultural lives of the Indian communities as a distinctive group in Hong Kong, as well as to explain their present situation.

The few local studies that have focused on the Pakistani community in Hong Kong (Ho et al., 2007; Ku et al., 2003; Ku, 2006; Ashencaen Crabtree and Wong, 2010/2012) have mainly focused on the difficulties the Pakistanis have encountered in accessing community resources such as public housing, children education, employment, and health care. These studies have revealed that experiences of exclusion are common, and that Pakistanis do indeed have poor access to public housing, subsidises for their children's education, and social security allowances. Although many of the Pakistanis have migrated to Hong Kong and plan to make Hong Kong their home, they are still treated as outsiders by many local Hong Kong people (Ku, 2006). The study by Ho et al. (2007) specifically focused on issues related to health care access for Pakistani women and children. Findings show that they encounter various barriers in accessing health care due to the language, as well as a lack of knowledge about health issues. Ku (2006), in his study of Pakistani women in Hong Kong, focused on the relationship between dress and cultural exclusion. Based on his findings, the author reported that the social practices in Hong Kong were insensitive to cultural diversity. Ashencaen Crabtree and Hung (2010/2012) in their studies among low- income Pakistani families also help to shed light on the various barriers encountered such as discrimination pertaining to employment and access to public resources including social service support.

Studies on the Nepalese are few and scant. Frost (2004) has discussed the Nepalese and provided an account of how Nepalese have been exploited in the construction

sector with hardly any chance for upward mobility. A study organised by the Society for community organisation (SOCO, 2004), on the Nepalese community in Hong Kong, examined various issues such as employment, split family situations, financial difficulties and poor integration into Hong Kong society. Findings from this study have revealed that the unemployment rate was high among the Nepalese, who are mainly concentrated in jobs such as construction and security guards. Other major difficulties are related to their children's education and access to the health-care system. Two other reports on the Nepalese community in Hong Kong have focused on women's rights against gender discrimination, and on the issues of general discrimination among ethnic minorities in Hong Kong (FEONA, 1999; 2000).

From the review of local studies on South Asians in Hong Kong, it can be observed that most of these studies have focused on various issues such as employment, housing, education and discrimination experiences. No doubt these studies have helped us to better understand their everyday life situations and the varied challenges and difficulties they encounter. However, it has also highlighted the lack of in-depth studies conducted to explore the issues of domestic violence among these communities. Hence, very little is known about the domestic violence situation among South Asian women in Hong Kong, how they respond, and what they do when facing domestic violence. These are important concerns which require exploration to help us understand the situations of domestic violence within South Asian communities in Hong Kong. Therefore, the researcher believes this qualitative study on domestic violence among South Asian in Hong Kong is important, as this is an area that truly needs to be explored in greater detail.

2.6. Process of literature review

The process of literature review covers relevant book chapters, reports, and journal articles that were searched from databases including the Social Service Abstract, ERIC, JSTOR, Nursing, Project Muse and Springer Link. Besides, the reference list of relevant studies was also reviewed for further searching. The following terms were included in the keyword search: *domestic violence, intimate partner violence, violence against women, migrant women, South Asian immigrant women, Pakistani, Indian, and Nepalese*. These search terms were employed following Neuman's (2006) suggestion that a literature review should be 'selective, comprehensive, critical and current' (p.123).

Using various combinations of these keywords (example, domestic violence AND South Asian women; Intimate partner violence OR partner violence AND immigrant women, etc.) the search from the database under 'keywords', 'title', and 'abstract', generated over 1450 studies. This includes journal articles, book chapters, reports, and abstracts. Only studies that contained descriptions of women experiencing domestic violence, physically, emotionally and/or psychologically; as well as those that contain themes such as domestic violence, intimate partner violence, immigrant women, and South Asian women, were retained. After examining these articles and studies generated from the keyword searches, about 650 related journal articles, book chapters, abstract and reports were retained. As suggested by Neuman (2006) the process of selection includes reading the title first, followed by reading the abstract. A good title is specific and indicates the nature of the research, while good abstract summaries often provide critical information about the study, which aids in the process of selecting the relevant articles/reports/studies from the vast amount of

output generated from the database searches.

2.7. Studies of domestic violence among immigrant women

With the dearth of information related to the experiences of domestic violence among South Asian communities in Hong Kong, this section will examine past and current research on domestic violence among immigrant women in the context of the West. This discussion can help to expand the knowledge base of the practice and policy literature on domestic violence among immigrant groups, as well as to provide a better understanding of how domestic violence is viewed within these communities and the various factors that interplay with their worldview of violence in intimate partner relationships.

Domestic violence against women is a widespread social problem, with negative consequences for the victim, irrespective of whether it is physical or psychological abuse or both (Smith et al., 2002; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Levinson, 1989). It also affects the lives of women worldwide regardless of their socioeconomic status, and cuts across ethnic, class, culture and impeding the rights of women to participate fully in society (United Nations, 1996). Although domestic violence affects both immigrant and non-immigrant women, and while there is not much difference in the rates of incidence of domestic violence among both groups (Menjivar and Salcido, 2002), numerous studies have reported that immigrant women also have to contend with certain immigration related factors which could further exacerbate their experiences with domestic violence (for details see section 2.9 below).

Numerous studies among Asian immigrant groups in the United States (US) have

reported that domestic violence is a serious problem (Ayyub, 2000; Raj and Silverman, 2002a) despite denying this problem (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000). Therefore, prevalence rates may vary among the different Asian immigrant populations. For instance, in a study conducted among Chinese Americans in the US (Los Angeles), about 10% of the study samples reported experiencing abuse over the preceding year, while 18% reported having experienced physical abuse from their spouse at least once in their lifetime (Yick, 2001). Within the South Asian communities in the US, domestic violence is also considered to be a serious problem (Midlarsky, Venkatapamani-Kothari and Plante, 2006). In an earlier study (Raj and Silverman, 2002b) among South Asian women in the Boston area (N= 160), it was revealed that 40% of the women surveyed reported experiencing physical abuse with their current partner within the previous year. The participants in Raj and Silverman's (2002b) study were highly educated middle class women between the ages of 16 to 62 years. In another study conducted among Bangladeshi immigrant women in Texas (US) it was revealed that more than 90% of the women surveyed (N= 29) agreed that domestic violence existed within their community (Rianon and Shelton, 2003).

In a recent study conducted among Indian and Pakistani immigrant women (N = 78) in the US (Adam and Schewe, 2007), it was reported that 77% of the women revealed that they have experienced some form of domestic violence in their lifetime (example, physical, sexual, injury, psychological), while 71% reported having experienced domestic violence within the preceding year. In another study among South Asian women in the UK (Richardson et al., 2002), it was also reported that the lifetime prevalence rate of experiencing physical abuse was 41%. These findings are

also comparable with other studies on the prevalence rate of domestic violence within the Asian communities in the US. For instance, participants in Kim and Sung's (2000) studies among Korean American families (N= 256) also noted a high rate of domestic violence experience (example, conjugal violence). In another study among Japanese women (N=211) 80% of the participants reported experiencing domestic violence during their lifetime (Yoshihama, 1999).

In terms of forms of domestic violence, studies among Asian immigrants in the US have revealed that physical violence is the most common form of violence (Adam and Schewe, 2007; Raj and Silverman, 2002b). For instance, findings from a community-based study conducted among South Asian women in the greater Boston area (N = 160) highlighted that physical abuse was the most common form of domestic abuse reported by the majority of the female participants (Raj and Silverman, 2002b). Sexual abuse, although less often reported than physical abuse, was also found to be another common form of abuse reported in studies among various immigrant groups (Abraham, 1999; Davila and Brackley, 1999; Thapa-Oli, Dulal and Baba, 2009; Adam and Schewe, 2007; Yick and Agbayani, 1997). While physical abuse is more readily recognised as domestic violence, most women are less likely to acknowledge sexual assault by an intimate partner as a form of abuse, due to feelings of shame and guilt (Siddiqui, Ismail and Allen, 2008). It is also probable that acceptance of the patriarchal norms may influence women's understanding of domestic violence (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005) possibly causing them to consider certain acts as 'normal' or as 'part of the marriage'. In some instances, a husband's actions committed in private may not be considered abusive by their community, depending on how the community defines domestic violence. For instance, the

conjugal rights of the husband may be accepted as normal, and as such, marital rape by the husband may not be viewed as abusive since it happened in private (Midlarsky et al., 2006; Yick and Agbayani, 1997). Some studies among Asian communities have also observed that these women were often unwilling to consider forced sexual acts as assaultive when perpetrated by their husbands, despite the harmful effects it had on them (Abraham, 1999; Yick and Agbayani, 1997). Other forms of abuse cited by both Asian and non-Asian immigrant women include sexual decision making by the male, and threats of infidelity (Abraham, 1999; Morash et al., 2000; Tran and Des Jardins, 2000), and sexual inadequacy (Abraham, 1998).

Psychological and emotional abuses are also forms of abuse which can have negative consequences on women. Verbal abuse, such as name-calling (stupid, crazy), and being ridiculed or faulted for their feminine attributes (examples, the way they look or dress, cooking ability, or sexual modesty) are other forms of abuse that devalue a woman as a person (Morash et al., 2000; Raj and Silverman, 2002a). In a study conducted among Nepali immigrant women in the US (N = 45), a majority of the participants reported being subjected to various forms of emotional and psychological abuse, such as being constantly compared to other women, being put down in front of their friends, and name-calling by their spouse/partner (Thapa-Oli et al., 2009). This type of emotional abuse is often used by the abusers to control and manipulate the emotions and feelings of the victims, undermining their sense of self-worth through constant criticism. This will greatly influence their belief systems and the abused women may begin to exhibit low self-worth (Dugan and Hock, 2000). It has been observed from past studies among victims of partner abuse that they consider physical violence to be a less damaging form of abuse, compared with the

relentless psychological abuse which cripples and isolates them (Sasseti, 1993).

Economic dependence is another tactic that an abuser might utilise as a way to enforce control (Bhuyan et al., 2005; Abraham, 2000b). Sometimes the husband will withhold money from his wife, thereby increasing his control over her. While these types of abusive tactics have been reported in studies among both immigrant and non-immigrant groups, for immigrant women economic dependence can also arise from immigration laws which prevent them from working.

Literature has also shown that migrant women often try to minimise or justify the abuses received from their spouse/partner. This may be an attempt on the part of the women to forget or to minimise the effects of domestic violence (Gill, 2004). On the other hand, some researchers have opined that this may be a coping strategy employed by abused women to deal with their abuse (Kelly, 1988). For instance, in a study among South Asian migrant women, Gill (2004) noted that some of the women participants in the study conveyed that the abuses they had experienced were minor and that they did not see the need to seek help. In a study among Pakistani women in the UK, Siddiqui and colleagues (2008) noted that the Pakistani women would internalise their partner's abuses as being their own fault, and try to keep the domestic violence within the family. Similarly, studies among Latin and Asian migrants (Bauer et al., 2000) also observed that the need to maintain an intact family was considered more important than the individual need; hence the women would hesitate to seek formal help for domestic violence. As women in most Asian cultures are expected to maintain the family honour, they would often keep silent about domestic violence even though they may not necessarily condone the violence

(Yuval-Davis, 1997).

In reviewing the domestic violence literature, it is apparent that there has been a considerable amount of research conducted on this issue. Although research into issues of domestic violence in intimate relationships among immigrant communities has lagged behind compared with research on the mainstream population, it has been observed that there is not much difference in the prevalence of domestic violence in intimate relationship among immigrant and non-immigrant population (Klevens, 2007; Menjivar and Salcido, 2002; Raj and Silverman, 2002a; Tran and Des Jardins, 2000). However, the incidence of domestic violence among immigrant women may be further intensified by immigration-specific factors. Thus, it is also important to look at some of these immigration specific factors which may further contribute to domestic violence among immigrant women.

2.8. Immigration-specific factors as related to domestic violence

Findings from numerous studies have observed that domestic violence against women in intimate relationships is a widespread social problem, and affects both immigrant and non-immigrant women, however, for immigrant women their vulnerability to domestic violence may be further exacerbated by immigration-specific factors (Tran and Des Jardins, 2000; Klevens, 2007; Menjivar and Salcido, 2002; Raj and Silverman, 2002b). Some of these factors include language barriers, uncertain legal status, immigration laws, availability and accessibility to resources and economic support. These immigration-related factors can also affect woman's decision to leave the abusive relationship and/or in seeking help. From the various studies conducted among immigrant groups, it has also been highlighted that some

of these immigration-specific factors are also possible predictors for domestic violence against women by their husbands/intimate partners (Bui and Morash, 1999; Menjivar and Salcido, 2002; Raj and Silverman, 2002b).

Findings from a recent study conducted among immigrant (N = 807) and non-immigrant (N = 497) women in the US reported that immigrant women reported higher likelihood of encountering barriers to leaving compared with their non-immigrants counterparts (Amanor-Boadu et al., 2012). The participants in that study included African American, Latino, Middle Eastern, South Asian; European descent/White; and biracial/multiracial women. The researchers examined personal and structural barriers to leaving among both immigrant and non-immigrant women. The study findings revealed that factors such as financial, social and legal risk were reported by immigrant women as barriers to leaving the abusive relationship; whereas for non-immigrant women perception of risk of future physical harm and perceived risk to children's physical safety were some of the factors that influence their decision to leave (Amanor-Boadu et al., 2012). A number of studies among immigrant women have also reported that legal risk factors such as fear of deportation might hinder immigrant women from leaving (Latta and Goodman, 2005; Sullivan et al., 2005). Additionally, the abuser, often their husband or partner, may also manipulate the immigration system, for instance, not allowing the woman to access her own immigration papers, or not informing her of immigration policies (Crandall et al., 2005). Burman and Chantler (2005) also reported that immigration related issues constitute a major barrier for a majority of the participants in their qualitative study (N = 23) which consisted of African, African-Caribbean and South Asian women, and was conducted in the United Kingdom (UK). Some of these

factors related to the immigration status of the women, lack of access to information or knowledge about resources and services, or about immigration laws, also make the women vulnerable to domestic abuse which would not be encountered by non-immigrant women (Burman and Chantler, 2005). For instance, according to the UK immigration laws, if a woman enters the country to join her husband but the relationship breaks up after a year, the law gives the husband the right and power to have the woman deported (Chantler et al., 2001). This leaves the woman in a vulnerable position for further abuse, since the abuser can use this to his advantage. Wilson (Wilson, 1979) in her book “*Finding a voice: Asian women in Britain*” provided a rich account of South Asian women’s struggles and experiences as immigrants in Britain during the early 1970s, with issues such as immigration legislation, their sense of isolation and racism, their courage and resilience amidst their struggles, and the rise of the earlier South Asian women’s group in Britain (for further details on the early women’s movement groups, see section 2.4 above).

2.8.1. Migration issues

Migration has life-changing effects, as it entails leaving one’s home country, familiar environment, families and friends and moving to a new country to build up new social networks and adjust to a new cultural milieu. The experiences for immigrant women from each different cultural group may be different, since their experiences are influenced by a number of factors, such as the resources they bring with them to their host country. However, there are common experiences shared by many immigrant women, such as economic, informational, cultural and linguistic barriers (Bayne-Smith, 1996), feelings of isolation due to relocation from their familiar home environments, and experiences of discrimination in accessing social services and

resources (Menjívar and Salcido, 2002). Some migrants arrive in their host country with assets such as occupational skills, and educational qualifications, and some may already even have social networks awaiting them in their host country (Kofman et al., 2000; Menjívar, 2000). Most often, however, women arrive with disadvantages in social status and human capital resources as compared with the men, which further limit their participation in the host society (Abraham, 2000b; Bui and Morash, 1999; Hagan, 1998). Moreover, the multiple responsibilities of caring for their family and home may further limit the women's opportunities to learn the host language or access resources and services (Ahmad et al., 2004). Migration also increases the risk of abuse for women. For instance, the expected gender roles for women might be challenged, especially when migrating from a traditional culture to a less traditional culture (Lim, 1997; Dion and Dion, 2001), which could result in further stress and tension within these immigrant families. Additionally, within some immigrant communities, patriarchal beliefs and ideologies may be increasingly propagated as a way of preserving their traditional cultural beliefs and values in a foreign country (Dasgupta, 2006). This could further increase women's vulnerability to abuse from gender power imbalance.

2.8.2. Language barriers

Numerous studies have also highlighted that the language barrier is also another factor that may post a barrier for immigrant women to access support services (Raj and Silverman, 2002a; Bui and Morash, 1999; Abraham, 1998; Erez, 2000; Lee, 2002; Bauer et al., 2000). Abused migrant women such as Asian, Latin and Middle Eastern women, are often hindered from seeking formal health and social services due to their inability to speak the local language (usually English), and their inability

to communicate their needs to community service providers. Huisman's (1996) in-depth interviews with service providers in the US have revealed that Asian migrant women facing domestic violence were hindered from effectively navigating the legal, health, and social service systems due to the language barrier. In her ethnographic narratives of women residing in a shelter in Chicago, Supriya (2002) noted that 40% of the participants reported a significant language barrier, i.e. they could not speak English well enough to participate in mainstream culture, experiencing language difficulties in manoeuvring around the legal system and accessing services. In another study among Latinas it was reported that they could not receive assistance from local services and organisations, or protection from the police due to language and cultural barriers (Bonnilla-Santiago, 2002). In some instances, the abusers take advantage of the language barrier faced by their wives and threaten to deport them if they report the abuse to the authorities (Raj and Silverman, 2002a).

Additionally, the lack of knowledge and awareness of the laws and available resources are also factors faced by migrant women within their host country. The lack of culturally sensitive support services may also hinder migrant women from accessing mainstream domestic violence support services (Huisman, 1996; Raj and Silverman, 2002a; Bui and Morash, 1999; Abraham, 1998). The availability of multi-lingual and multi-cultural services to provide psychosocial assistance to abused migrant women is of importance and is necessary for the needs of the abused women. Women accessing domestic violence services may require a range of practical and emotional advice, support, and information and when language is a barrier, the worker will have difficulty providing information and support; hence this presents a considerable barrier for women in their help-seeking process.

2.8.3. Fear of isolation from the family and community

Cultural change is hard for most people, and coming to a new country can be extremely difficult, since they are leaving behind all that is familiar to them. Many immigrant women also experience a deep sense of loneliness in their new environment, often compounded by social isolation (Huisman, 1996; Kang and Kang, 1983). Due to pressure to conform to family norms, such as loyalty to family members, protecting the privacy and honour of the family, and fear of being excluded from the community, many abused women may often deny the abuses and remain in the relationship (Gill, 2004). Fear of isolation may compel many abused women to keep silent about these abuses. For instance, in a study conducted among Ethiopian immigrant women in the US (Sullivan et al., 2005), a majority of the participants revealed that the fear of losing support from their community, or being intimidated by the community, often hindered them from seeking outside help from abuse. This is especially hard for women whose only source of support may be from the community, and hence community sanction may become too much to bear. Hence, this may deter them from reporting abuse, or from seeking outside help.

In her study among South Asian women in the US, Abraham (1998) also noted that their lack of family and social networks often made these women feel powerless and vulnerable to abuse from their spouse/partner. Being socially isolated is all the more difficult for immigrant women who may not have any supportive networks in the new society. Moreover, if the husband is the only family they have in the new country, or if he is the only source of support, leaving the husband may mean not only losing his financial support but also losing all extended family. In some cases,

the husband may refuse to let his wife work outside the home, or acquire training to improve her skills, or learn the host language, so as to increase or maintain his wife's economic dependence on himself (Bhuyan et al., 2005; George and Rahangdale, 1999; Morash et al., 2007). By keeping her isolated, the abuser is also allowed to exert control over his wife (Abraham, 2000b). The husband may also apply various controlling tactics, such as restricting the amount of time his wife can meet with family and friends and limiting her access to information and assistance (Abraham, 1998; Melhotra, 1999). Thus, for immigrant women, social isolation coupled with economic deprivation also makes them vulnerable to abuse from their husband/partner.

2.9. Factors that hinder migrant women from leaving

One of the questions often asked of women in violent relationships is 'why do women stay'? Various researchers, social scientists and psychologists have sought to understand what factors influence some women to remain in an abusive relationship, even when they have been psychologically and physically abused (some examples, Gelles, 1976; Snyder and Fruchtmann, 1981; Strube and Barbour, 1983). It appears that there is no one specific reason that can account for the women's decision to remain in the relationship (Goodkind, Sullivan and Bybee, 2004).

In one of the earlier studies, Gelles (1976) highlighted three major factors that are likely to influence a woman's decision to remain in an abusive relationship, based on a sample of 41 families. These three factors are: (i) frequency and severity of the violence: the less frequent, and the less severe the violence, the more likely the woman will choose not to leave; (ii) having been victimised as a child and/or

exposed to violence is also more likely to influence a woman's decision to remain, compared with those who have not been exposed to violence; and (iii) a lack of resources was also found to be another influencing factor that is likely to influence women to stay. However, the small sample size limits the conclusions drawn from that study. Nevertheless, the study was one of the first attempts at understanding the factors that are pertinent to relationship decisions, and also highlights the complexity of this decision process. Based on the phenomenon of psychological entrapment, Strube and Barbour (1983) predicted and found that the length of time a woman had been in an abusive relationship, as well as her economic dependence, also influenced her decision to stay in the relationship. The responsibilities of caring for children and financial needs are part of a complex and complicated everyday life which may also influence many women to stay (Baker, 1997).

Over the years, various other researchers have also conducted numerous studies to investigate and explore the factors associated with women's decisions to remain in abusive relationships. Some have drawn upon the notions of 'learned helplessness' and 'battered women's syndrome' (Caplan and Gans, 1991). However, framing domestic violence on these notions tends to turn it from a social condition into a list of psychological characteristics, be it that of the perpetrator or the victim (Dobash and Dobash, 1992). Furthermore, this also leads to failure to take into account the structural, material and cultural barriers which contribute to keeping women, particularly minority immigrant women, in abusive relationships (Burman and Chantler, 2005). Many psychotherapeutic approaches have also asserted that women have the choice to leave an abusive relationship (Burman and Chantler, 2005). However these assertions also fail to take into account that the 'choices' to leave or

stay are frequently determined by various social and economic factors, and for many immigrant women, there are also a number of immigration-specific factors which may further influence their decision process. Factors such as love for their partner, the belief that the partner will change, and the hope that the situation will get better, along with economic reasons, and having nowhere else to go were also cited as some of the reasons that influence abused women's decision to remain in a relationship (Giles-Sims, 1983; Short et al., 2000). Many abused women believe that their partner will change, and believing that their partner will change if they persist in being patient and forgiving, many abused women often stay with their partners (York, 2011). The societal expectation of being a 'good wife', which means being supportive, forgiving, and self-sacrificing, may also cause women to view their partner's violence- as a failure in their relationship and to blame themselves for that failure (Laviolette and Barnett, 2000). These expectations of being a 'good wife' are also generally reinforced by society (such as family, friends, literature, religion and media) (York, 2011). Thus, the belief that one's partner will change may pertain to women's desire to live up to the societal ideals of being a 'good wife' or a 'good mother', rather than to emotional attachment (Dasgupta and Warriar, 1996; Kelly, 2009).

Choice and Lamke (1997) suggest that a woman contemplating whether to leave or stay will evaluate the options in terms of whether she will be better off leaving and whether she can actually do it, and her decision to leave or stay will be influence by her answer to these options. In evaluating whether she will be better off leaving the relationship, a woman assesses her satisfaction with her relationship, the quality of her alternatives, and also her subjective norm. They further stated that the woman's

decision will also be influenced by the availability of resources, in terms of personal (example, feelings of control, self-efficacy) and/or structural (example, access to services and shelter, economic independence, employment) and other potential barriers to leaving (Choice and Lamke, 1997). Furthermore, a woman in an abusive relationship will also consider the risks involved when contemplating leaving, such as, harm to others (example, her children) and to personal, financial, social and legal risks (Hamby, 2008).

The immigration status of the woman has also been identified as a potential deterrent for many abused immigrant women seeking help. Migrant women who are on dependent immigration status are often not legally allowed to work (Abraham, 2000a; Narayan, 1995), and thus are dependent on their husband economically as well. In some instances the abuser may take advantage of the woman's legal status and use threats of deportation to blackmail her from reporting the abuse, or if he knows that his wife is planning to leave him (Abraham, 2000a; Alaggia, Regehr and Rishchynski, 2009; Parmar, Sampson and Diamond, 2005). Thus, the pressure of an uncertain immigration status may also hinder many women from leaving or taking action against their abusive partner for fear of deportation.

In a study among Haitian immigrant women in the US (Latta and Goodman, 2005), it was also observed that the women hesitate to report abuse for fear that the abuser may be deported, or that she and her children will be deported. Thus, they have to deal not only with the fear of their own deportation but also the imagined and real effects that would result should the abuser be detained or deported if criminally charged (Latta and Goodman, 2005). Other studies have also reported that many

immigrant women hesitate to come forward and disclose the abuse or to seek social services due to the possibility of losing custody of their children (Alaggia et al., 2009). Dasgupta (2000a), from her experience of working with migrant women in the US also observed that such threats are a possibility, especially when the legal status of the women is conditional upon their husband/partner's continued sponsorship.

Thus, the uncertain immigration status and the threat of deportation by their partner/spouse, as well as the fear of losing custody of their children to their permanent resident spouse, also influences women's response to abuse and their decision to seek help (Dasgupta, 2000a; Abraham, 2000a; Raj and Silverman, 2002a; Erez, 2000). The threat of deportation can further lead to distress and a sense of insecurity and uncertainty for abused women (Burman and Chantler, 2005). The threat of deportation may also be added on to other dimensions, such as stigma of divorce, the shame of having failed to please one's husband, and the fear of dishonouring family, which may hinder them from seeking formal assistance or from leaving an abusive relationship (Dasgupta, 2006).

Lack of awareness of support services has also been reported to be one of the structural barriers to leaving that have been found among non-immigrant women (Short et al., 2000). In some cases, the women may not know how to access such resources or services (Erez and Harteley, 2003; Keller and Brennan, 2007). On the other hand, a lack of culturally specific services may also hinder many women from seeking help from such services. Experiences of racism on the part of formal organisations could further hinder them from seeking help or accessing such support

services for domestic violence (Burman and Chantler, 2005; Ranjeet and Purkayastha, 2007). With no financial support and a lack of knowledge about the available resources and support in their new host society, leaving may be an impossible option for many immigrant women in abusive relationships. Previous studies have also supported the idea that social isolation and financial dependency on one's husband/partner also increases the risk of abuse among immigrant women and further hinders them from leaving (Abraham, 2000b; Bhuyan et al., 2005; Erez, 2000).

Violence against women by an intimate partner such as a partner or husband may be viewed differently in different countries and cultures, as evinced by the laws against such practices (Heise et al., 1999). Many immigrant women are often unaware or unwilling to accept that domestic violence against women in an intimate relationship is a criminal offence (Huisman, 1996; Sorenson, 1996; Tran and Des Jardins, 2000), and many abused women often accept some abuse as being 'normal' (Huisman, 1996; Perilla, 1999). In some culture, certain forms of marital violence or domestic violence may be interpreted as part of married life (Ranjeet and Purkayastha, 2007). For instance, in a household survey conducted in Hong Kong, it was reported that some instances of minor physical assault were considered to be part of 'a daily routine of a stressed couple' and was thus viewed as simply an abusive act (Chan, 2005, p.8). Sometimes abused women may also begin to rationalise the violence as normal. According to sociologist Eva Lundgren (2004), a woman in an abusive relationship tend to gradually internalises the man's abuses and his reasons for the abuse and the woman 'starts to see herself with his eyes' (p.29), and may then begin to normalise the husband's behaviour. Migrant women who come from societies, in

which some forms of domestic abuse are perceived as ‘normal’ or as an accepted part of the relationship, are less likely to seek help when faced with such forms of abuse from their husband/partner (Rhee, 1997; Menjivar and Salcido, 2002; Yoshihama, 2001). Moreover, if the woman does not perceive a situation as abusive she may not even realise that abuse has occurred (Ahmad et al., 2004). Studies among Asian immigrant women have also observed that women who come from families that uphold strong patriarchal beliefs and specific gender roles may not consider some abusive behaviour on the part of the husband to be a form of domestic violence (Ahmad et al., 2004).

Various researchers have also suggested that the traditional demands and expectations placed upon women to nurture and maintain the relationship may also serve to keep them in abusive relationships (example, Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Short et al., 2000). Recent studies among Nepalese immigrant women in the US (Ranjeet and Purkayastha, 2007) have also highlighted that in most cases the women try to find a solution to the violence. Rather than facing the stigma and humiliation of having failed to keep their marriage intact, many women make every attempt possible to maintain the marriage and endure the abuse silently. The social risks of leaving, such as family breakup, a feeling of betraying their culture, and the stigma and shame of divorce have also been reported in previous studies among both immigrant (Dasgupta and Warriar, 1996; Tran and Des Jardins, 2000; Crandall et al., 2005) and non-immigrant women (Shalansky, Erikson and Henderson, 1999; Busch and Wolfer, 2002). A community survey conducted among Chinese women in Hong Kong in 2005 also revealed that about 80% of the respondents did not believe in divorce, which also hinders them from considering leaving the abusive relationship

(Harmony House, 2005).

The current literature does not show any one specific reason why women stay in an abusive relationship; rather it shows several explanations as to why they continue to remain in an abusive relationship, including individual, sociological, cultural and environmental factors. Fear of retribution and sanction from the community, lack of other means of economic support, concern for their children, emotional dependence, lack of support from family and friends, and the hope that ‘he will change’ are some of the reasons that may influence a woman’s decision to remain. Additionally, factors such as being a minority in a foreign land, fear of external agencies, immigration laws, and lack of awareness of external help and support, may also prevent many abused women from reporting or disclosing the abuse. Other factors, such as cultural and linguistic issues, may also hinder many abused women from seeking help (Adam, 2000; Dasgupta, 2006; Gupta, Upadhyay and Gupta, 2005).

2.10. Culture and domestic violence

To understand the role of culture in relation to domestic violence, it is important to deconstruct our biases that cause us to view culture as the cause of domestic violence, and to be able to view culture from a different lens. For many abused women among various immigrant groups, cultural beliefs and values, the responses from their ethnic communities often form the basis of their perception of available options when faced with abuse. The focus on ‘culture’ here is not to excuse or imply domestic violence as a pathological presence, but rather the discussion here is to provide a better understanding of the influence of cultural values and beliefs on women’s responses to domestic violence and the role of cultural factors.

Culture includes the “beliefs, practices, values, norms, and behaviours that are shared by members of a group” (Sullivan and Rumptz, 1994). It serves as standards of behaviour which manifests itself in the ways that people perceive and interpret their world (Taylor, Magnussen and Amundson, 2001). It is not a static phenomenon, being constantly redefined as individuals interact with their culture (Kasturirangan, Krishnan and Riger, 2004). To understand the role of culture in relation to domestic violence, it is important to understand how cultural beliefs and values are viewed, which in turn shape and influence women’s experiences of domestic violence. For instance, among many Asian communities, family honour overrides personal freedom, and the group takes precedence over the individual, so that it is common for women to remain silent in order to preserve the family honour (Prasad, 1999; Winter and Young, 1998).

In many Asian countries, culture plays an important role in propagating the philosophy of harmony (Huisman, 1996). Cultural norms and values such as the importance of maintaining ‘*izzat*’ (honour), ‘saving face’, and the notion of ‘*sharam*’ (shame), are still upheld in many Asian families. Generally, the responsibilities of preserving and maintaining family honour and adhering to traditional norms and values are placed on the women (Gill, 2004). Therefore, women may be less willing to disclose their experiences of domestic violence for fear of bringing shame and dishonour to their families. Shame is not merely an individual consequence; rather the entire family is shamed. The notion of shame, *izzat* and immigration issues are also often depicted in South Asian films, such as in Deepa Mehta’s ‘*Heaven on Earth*’, a story about an immigrant Indian woman in Canada who had an arranged marriage with an Indo-Canadian man and was subjected to persistent domestic

violence by her husband.

Cultural factors pertaining to marriage and family honour had a significant impact on women's help seeking. In a study conducted among Indian and Chinese immigrant women in Northern Ireland, it was highlighted that many of the women participants felt pressured not to disclose abuse outside the family, due to the shame it would bring to the family, and also due to the fear of being ostracised from their communities should they seek outside help (Morton, 1997). Bui and Morash (1999), in their study among Vietnamese immigrants in the US also observed that many of the participants were reportedly reluctant to seek outside help when faced with domestic violence due to the notion of 'saving face' and the desire to maintain family unity. As women's identity and status are strongly linked to marriage, the breakdown of a marriage could be viewed as extremely shameful for the women and their families. Often, many abused immigrant women do not seek help because domestic violence is culturally perceived to be a family issue, and is not to be discussed with outsiders (Jang, Lee and Morello-Frosch, 1991).

Understanding how the community defines domestic violence and its attitude towards domestic violence is also important as this will influence the community's response to domestic violence. When domestic violence is generally accepted or condoned as part of the culture, there is greater tolerance for such acts within the community. For instance, in a recent study conducted among Ethiopian women in the United States (Sullivan, Senturia, Negash, Shiu-Thorton, and Giday, 2005), many of the participants revealed that there were occurrences of domestic violence, such behaviours were considered to be a private issue that should not be discussed openly.

This may be due to the fact that acts of domestic violence is often tolerated in Ethiopia, which further support the abuser rather than the abused (Sullivan et al., 2005). The women participants in that study conveyed the need for their community to acknowledge that domestic violence is against the law, and not to respond to it as they would in their country (Ethiopia), which tolerates such acts. In another study conducted among Haitian women in the United States it was also revealed that domestic violence was a common occurrence in Haiti and considered to be 'very accepted' or 'just what happens' (Latta and Goodman, 2005, p.8). Thus, the community 'tolerates' such acts when they occur. In yet another study, conducted among Asian and Middle Eastern immigrant communities in the United States, a majority of the respondents agreed that it was culturally acceptable for men to use physical abuse as a form of discipline should the women deviate from their prescribed roles (Huisman, 1996; Kulwicki and Miller, 1999; Tran, 1997). When men's violent behaviour is condoned by the community, they are likely to get more support from the community, and when abused women try to seek help from the community, they are often seen as 'complaining' (Sullivan et al., 2005). There is a need to emphasise the importance of educating the community, in order to bring about a change in the mind-set of the people, to no longer accept domestic violence as being a man's right.

Based on various research studies carried out among Asian communities in the United States, Nguyen (2007) listed three major cultural commonalities with regard to the issue of domestic violence amongst these communities. These three commonalities are: (i) low reporting of domestic violence to law enforcement; (ii) cultural commonalities in handling domestic violence; and (iii) cultural

commonalities associated with domestic violence. In some countries, reporting incidences of domestic violence to the police may not be helpful, especially if the police consider such incidences to be a family issue. Hence, many women may refrain from reporting abuse to the police. Another common reason for low reporting of domestic violence cases is that women are generally taught to live with the virtue of suffering and perseverance (Tran and Des Jardins, 2000). Moreover, the family and the individual are viewed as interdependent and interconnected (Nguyen, 2007). Therefore, many women keep silent to avoid public shame (Lovell, Tran and Nguyen, 1987). This is true for both immigrant and non-immigrant women who suffer from domestic abuse, and often the fear and shame stop them from going public with their pain (Weitzman, 2001). However, for immigrant women there are also other factors such as the issue of being a minority, fear of external agencies, immigration laws, and a lack of awareness of support services, which may further hinder them from reporting the abuse and/or seeking outside help.

Studies of domestic violence among the Asian communities (for example, in the United States) have revealed that the most common form of coping mechanism adopted by victims is to tolerate and endure abuses, and not to talk about it (Lee, 2002). The guilt of bringing shame and stigma to their family (Dasgupta and Warriar, 1996; Huisman, 1996), the fear of ‘what the community will say’, and of dishonouring their family (Gill, 2004) may prevent many abused women from reporting the violence or seeking outside help. For many Asian cultural groups, the family is a critical agent of socialisation and of resolving conflicts and problems. Therefore, their concept of ‘self’ includes a familial and community aspect. Many Asians families also espouse the values of maintaining the pride (*Izzat*) of the family,

and deviations from such norms have potentially negative consequences (Gill, 2004; Ramistty-Mikler, 1993). An individual's present behaviour affects not only that person but also the entire family and the ancestral lineage. Thus, even when domestic violence occurs, effort is made to keep it a secret in order to save the family from the disgrace it would suffer if it became public knowledge that domestic violence occurs (Ho, 1990). For many Asian, Latino, and Middle Eastern immigrants, divorce is often not an option, since women are often the ones blamed for the break-up of their families, and in such circumstances both women and children can be stigmatised and ostracised by their communities (Bui and Morash, 1999; Dasgupta and Warriar, 1996; George and Rahangdale, 1999; Huisman, 1996).

The literature on violence studies has emphasised that domestic violence occurs across all societies regardless of race or class group. While this is important as in terms of bringing the issue into the mainstream, Burman and Chantler (2005) argued that this homogenising approach can overlook the race and class dimension of abuse and failure to attend to such dimensions can exclude minority ethnic women's access to required services. Immigration issues are another dimension that need to be taken into account when looking at domestic violence situations among ethnic minorities and immigrant women (Burman and Chantler, 2005). As discussed under section 2.9 above, immigration-related factors also play a crucial role in determining how immigrant women respond to domestic violence. Although domestic violence affects women from all cultural backgrounds, immigrants are also more likely to be vulnerable due to immigration policies. For instance, if the women are sponsored by their abuser, the fear of deportation will hinder many women from reporting cases of domestic violence, or from seeking help from social services (Alaggia et al., 2009).

Bhuyan (2008) also reported that for many Asian immigrants in the US, the threat of deportation and lack of economic resources are some of the major factors which prevent them from leaving an abuser.

2.11.1. Patriarchal beliefs

The focus here on the concept of patriarchal beliefs in relation to domestic violence is not for the purpose of expounding on the foundation and existence of patriarchy, which is also beyond the scope of this study, but is rather brought out to discuss and highlight how violence against women is one of the many outgrowths of patriarchal systems.

Patriarchy is defined as a universal ideology which refers to a set of ideas and beliefs that justify male control over women (Ahmad et al., 2004; Dobash and Dobash, 1979). Patriarchal beliefs operate by affording men the right to exercise power within their family (Yllo and Straus, 1990). Throughout history, in most male dominated societies, women have often been treated as subordinate to men, and have been vulnerable to male violence (Kennedy and Dutton, 1989; Straus and Gelles, 1986). Patriarchy produces gender inequality in marriage and the family setting (Dobash and Dobash, 1991). Patriarchal norms are often link to wife assault, and wife beating can be viewed as one form of men's use of control over women (Levinson, 1989).

The concept of patriarchy may be defined as having two components that make up a *structure* in which men are seen to have more power and privilege than women, and as an *ideology* which legitimises this conception (Smith, 1990). Some theorists have

also elaborated that the concept of patriarchy can be further broken down between “social” and “familial” patriarchy (Smith, 1990, p.257). While the former refers to male dominance in society as a whole, the latter refers to male dominance within the family (example, Barrett, 1980; Millett, 1969). Although the structures of familial patriarchy may have slowly dwindled over the past few decades or so, the ideological aspect appears to still be prevalent (Barrett,1980; Ahmad et al., 2004). The literature on familial patriarchy highlights that this ideology is based to a large extent on the notion of the wife’s adherence to her husband, in terms of respect, loyalty and obedience, as well as in dependency and sexual fidelity, and husbands may resort to physical violence if the wives do not follow these ideals or are seen to violate them (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Kim, Lau and Chang, 2007). Numerous studies have also cited culturally bound, traditional gender roles as facilitating the abuse of women (example, Bui and Morash, 1999; Morash et al., 2007; Song, 1996).

Although patriarchy is a universal ideology and may be found globally, how it is viewed and practiced may differ across regions and cultures. For instance, the economic development and increased education and autonomy of women in most Western societies have led to a decrease in overt patriarchy. On the other hand, extreme manifestations of patriarchy are still prevalent in some countries, including countries in South Asia (Johnson and Johnson, 2001; Ahmad et al., 2004). Patriarchal control over women includes restrictive codes of behaviour, gender segregation, and an ideology that links family honour to family virtue (Almeida and Dolan-Delvecchio, 1999).

Conformity to patriarchal, traditional gender roles is common in most Asian

communities (example, Bui and Morash, 1999; Yoshioka, Dinoia and Ullah, 2001; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Kibria, 1994). The concept of patriarchal beliefs has caused many Asian women to silently tolerate violence and to conform to the “ideals of a good wife and mother...” (Dasgupta and Warriar, 1996, p.3). In most traditional societies wife beating is generally accepted as a man’s right to inflict physical punishment on his wife and may be accepted as a ‘normal’ part of marriage, especially in marital disputes, and hence may not be considered to be an abusive act (Krug et al., 2002; Nguyen, 2007). For instance, studies among women in both rural and urban China have revealed that wife beating is considered to be an acceptable part of an institutionalised form of male domination (Tang, Wong and Cheung, 2002). Such cultural ideologies can increase the likelihood of abuse against women. Women are also at greater risk of abuse by their partners in societies where there are greater inequalities between men and women, such as strict gender roles, and cultural norms that support the idea that men have the right to inflict violence on their partner.

Patriarchy and traditional belief systems also create a power imbalance that may perpetuate violence (Erez, 2000). For instance, men who uphold traditional beliefs about gender roles are more likely to sanction the use of violence (Dobash and Dobash, 1979). Strict gender norms are usually aimed at controlling females, whereby they are expected to uphold the reputation of the family through conformity to traditional roles as good and dutiful wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law, which are further supported by conservative cultural and religious value systems (Takhar, 2013; Siddiqui, 2013). Often men try to justify their abusive action as necessary for the purpose of regulating their actions and behaviours to comply with patriarchal norms (Thiara and Gill, 2010; George and Rahangdale, 1999; Bui and Morash, 1999),

while society, including family members, often refrains from defining the matter as a social problem. Previous studies have also observed that men's justification of wife abuse and aggression towards women are mainly due to patriarchal beliefs and ideology (Haj-Yahia, 1998; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Yllo and Straus, 1984).

Some societies and ethnic communities with strong cultural and patriarchal ideologies may deny domestic violence, and instead put the blame on the women for not upholding their duties (Dasgupta, 2000). For many women in such situations keeping silent may become the preferred choice rather than speaking out or seeking outside help when faced with abuse. For instance, in a study conducted among a Russian-speaking community in the United States, findings also highlighted that domestic violence is considered as the norm in relationships between men and women (Crandall et al., 2005). Within this community there is also a clear distinction in the roles of men and women, in which men were seen as heads of their households, while the women are kept in a subordinate position. Keeping the family together is an important value and hence the women attempt to balance things out with their partners.

In a study conducted among Indian and Chinese immigrant women in Northern Ireland (Morton, 1997), it was also highlighted that the women felt pressured not to disclose the abuse outside of their family, due to the shame it would bring upon the family, and also due to a fear of being ostracised from their communities should they seek outside help. Studies conducted among Asian and Middle Eastern immigrant communities in the United States have also highlighted that both men and women within these communities hold the view that it is culturally acceptable for men to use

physical abuse as a form of discipline should the women deviate from their prescribed roles (Huisman, 1996; Kulwicki and Miller, 1999; Tran, 1997). Besides gender role ideology, the acceptance of violence against women is also likely to lead to further intimate partner violence (Heise et al., 1999).

It has also been noted that not all women accept this oppression meekly, but at times they may be actively involved in various strategies for negotiating with or resisting patriarchal relationships (Kandiyoti, 1988). Kandiyoti discussed the different strategies utilised by women within a set of concrete constraints in order to maximise their security and life options, a concept she coined as ‘patriarchal bargaining’ (p.274). She provided an example in constructing two systems of male dominance within the Sub-Saharan African pattern, and Classic patriarchy (which includes South and East Asia, North Africa and Muslim Middle East). According to Kandiyoti (1988) the women in Sub-Saharan Africa appear to have more substantial negotiating power, and greater overt resistance to men’s attempts at controlling either them or their labour. However, due to the practice of polygamy, these women cannot get support from the men especially their husband even though they are able to maintain relative autonomy. On the other hand, women from the classic patriarchy belt were observed to be more subservient to men and not likely to demonstrate overt resistance. However, these women may develop strategies through which they operate and bargain with the men and systems of classical patriarchy in an effort to secure their economic and social well-being. Kandiyoti further pointed out the cyclical nature of the power held by women within the family structures. In classic patriarchal systems, married women enter into their husband’s household, which is often headed by their father in law, and may assume a weaker structural position as

the daughter-in-law, subordinated to all men and senior women in the household. Although these women continue to adhere to the traditional roles in an effort to secure their economic and social well-being, they are also conscious and critical of the cost attached to the role they assume, and perceive the assumption of such roles to be short term. These women aspire to bear sons and in time assume the powerful role of mother-in-law themselves (Kandiyoti, 1988).

Kandiyoti's (1988) concept of patriarchal bargaining, which elucidates how women strategise, negotiate and make compromises to optimise their social positioning and life options within a particular set of constraints, has since been much criticised (for further discussion see, Hammami, 2006; Herzog and Yahia-Younis, 2007; Kandiyoti, 1998). Kandiyoti herself called it an "analytically flawed piece" (Hammami, 2006, p.1350) and which had been published during the late 1980s at a time when Islamic gender studies was still at its early stage. Since then, she has also revisited her earlier work and offered a critique to her earlier concept of patriarchy, arguing that this concept, which draws upon issues of class struggle and consciousness, maybe problematic in application to gender relations (Kandiyoti, 1998). Since then, many other studies have explored the various ways in which women deal with patriarchal arrangements, either in the private or the public-political arena (example, Arat, 1989; Hutson, 2001) which highlights the social role of women as active agents of social change.

Traditional feminist perspectives have argued that violence against women result from socially constructed and culturally approved gender inequality (Yllo, 1993). However, in recent times this notion has been challenged by scholars, survivors of

domestic violence, advocates and even by activists as well (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005). Using gender inequality as the sole explanation for domestic violence is inadequate, as “we exist in social contexts created by the intersections of systems of power (examples, race, class, gender, and sexual interaction) and oppression (examples, prejudice, class stratification, gender inequality, and heterosexist bias) (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005, p.43). Although the concept of patriarchy has been useful in explaining violence against women, it has also been criticised, amongst others, as oversimplifying the power relations, and that the concept cannot fully help us to understand why only a few men resort to violence against women in societies characterised as patriarchal (Hunnicut, 2009). Therefore no single dimension such as gender inequality, or race, or ethnicity alone is adequate to explain domestic violence. Moreover, gender violence in the form of violence and control by men is not the only form of violence experienced by abused women. A lack of support in terms of social services, welfare and other institutional support (example, public housing) are other levels of violence experienced by abused women (Coker, 2000; Razack, 1998).

2.10.2. South Asian traditional family structure

To better understand how domestic violence works within the South Asian communities, it is also important to understand the family structure and power distribution, along with the cultural context, in relation to partner abuse. Family is as important as other cultural factors and social structure in understanding women’s circumstances.

Family is often the one stabilising force that enables immigrants to withstand the

turbulent process of migration. The family structures in most Asian cultures are patrilineal, with males usually having the most authority and females are being expected to obey that authority (Okamura, Heras and Wong-Kerberg, 1995). Maintaining family harmony within the traditional roles is the foundation of many families and women in particular find their identities in their roles as daughter, wives and mothers (Okamura et al., 1995). This is especially prevalent in societies where patrilocal-patrilineal complexes are dominant, such as India, Pakistan, China, Turkey, and Iran, which all uphold patriarchal ideologies (Kandiyoti, 1988).

As in other Asian communities, most South Asian families also follow a traditional family structure, that is, a high value is placed on family honour and women are expected to be nurturing. It is often a joint family system, and the normative order is usually patrilineal and patriarchal (Hegde, 1999), in which the household is often led by the father, followed by the next oldest male in the family, and then by other male relatives. The mother, daughters or any other female relatives, are at the bottom of the family system in terms of rights and decision-making (Dasgupta, 2000). Personal identity stems from one's relationship with the primary males in the family, and social, legal and communal power is assigned to and through males. Extended families can provide social support to women in terms of emotional comfort, financial support, and child care (Sharma, 2001). Additionally, respected elders in the family can also provide protection to women from possible abuse. The constant presence of family members also reduces the likelihood of the woman being isolated by her abuser (Ho, 1990). On the other hand, extended families can also support abuse (Sharma, 2001). For instance, mothers-in-law may support their sons' abusive behaviours as a form of upholding the power structure within the family, or they may

also inflict verbal and physical abuse (Kasturirangan et al., 2004).

From an early age, girls are socialised according to patriarchal norms, to be obedient and submit to their male guardians, be it-, father or husband (Ayyub, 2000; Abraham, 1998; Ahmad et al., 2004; Raj and Silverman, 2002a). Normatively, mothers train their daughters in their culturally expected gender-roles. Daughters also learn appropriate gender roles by observing the relationship between their own mother and father. Thus, each girl is brought up with the expectation that she will nurture and care for her family, and that she will sacrifice her personal desires, minimise conflict, hide her problems and endure suffering for the sake of her husband and children (Ayyub, 2000; Abraham, 1998). A high value is placed on family honour and women are taught that saving face and maintaining family honour overrides the need for individual safety (Gill, 2004). Divorce is not an option for many because it is considered taboo (Nankani, 2000), bringing shame and disgrace not only to herself but also upon her family (Ayyub, 2000; Shirwadkar, 2004). In some situations, a husband may consider it his prerogative to control the behaviour of his wife (Dobash and Dobash, 1979) and if the need arise he can discipline her by using physical punishment (Huisman, 1996). In such an environment partner abuse is tolerated, sustained and perpetuated (Ayyub, 2000) as well as socially endorsed (Bhuyan et al., 2005).

It can be argued that gender role expectations within the South Asian culture form the foundation of the various struggles and pressure felt by the women as they are expected to preserve the traditional values and norms of their cultures. The concept of shame and the responsibility of maintaining the family honour, which is often

placed upon the woman, are often used as a form of control to keep women from seeking further help (Gill, 2004). Thus, fear of dishonouring the family and of potentially incurring the wrath of the extended family may also hinder many abused women from seeking help, or from leaving an abusive relationship.

2.11.3. Marriage

In most South Asian cultures, marriage is regarded as an ideal, a duty, and as a social responsibility that the wife is expected to maintain and nurture. Traditionally, marriages are arranged by the parents and it is considered a contract between families, rather than between individuals. Arranged marriages are strongly reinforced by a belief in *kismet*, that one's mate and fate are predestined by a supreme force within the universe (Gupta, 1976). Hence, dating and love marriage are not encouraged, in the belief that true love will develop after marriage (Ballard, 1978; Hogg, Abrams and Patel, 1987). However, romantic love before marriage or outside of marriage has been presented in various forms, such as in literature (example, the *Kamasutra*, an ancient Hindu text on human sexual intercourse/ behaviour in Sanskrit literature), and other sacred books. Bollywood movies also depict young couples falling in love, and fighting against the external forces that try to separate them (example, parents and society).

South Asian families traditionally follow arranged marriages. Arranged marriages are often based on power and control, which the groom's family exerts to ensure they get what is most favourable to them (Abraham, 1998). While emphasis is placed upon upholding the institution of marriage and on obligation toward family and society, little or no importance is given to the women's opinions (Ayyub, 2000).

After marriage the woman becomes a part of her husband's family. Since she is now being supported by her husband and his family, she is expected to be loyal and obliging to her 'new' family. There are strong expectations for a woman to tend to the needs of her husband's family, and if this role is not performed to the desired standard, violence may be carried out as a means of exerting punishment upon the woman for failing to care for the family satisfactorily. The new wife's roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and interpersonal conflicts and marital problems are supposed to remain within the family, and not to be shared outside. Elders in the family, along with other family members, are supposed to provide support and counselling to the couple, to try and resolve conflicts. However, this may not always happen. Sometimes, the joint family system can also introduce the risk of violence. Brides traditionally move in with extended families headed by their fathers-in-law, and are subordinate to all men and senior women in the household, with daughters-in-law usually placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy (Kandiyoti, 1988). Hence, they are extremely vulnerable to violence, as failure to conform to culturally-accepted behavioural norms justifies abuse, usually from the husband and often from the in-laws as well (Ranjeet and Purkayastha, 2007). Norm violations in such a context range from disobedience, not doing housework, ill-temper, and disrespect shown to family members. Sometimes there can be rivalry between the new bride and her mother-in-law and sister-in-law, due to the fear that the wife could take the husband out of the joint family system and thus cause fragmentation in the family, resulting in abuse from her mother-in-law and/or sister-in-law (Agnew, 1998). Moreover, power dynamics within the home can also result in abuse by men in an attempt to dominate their wives, or by other women (example, mother-in-law) who are trying to assert their authority within the home (Almeida and Dolan-Delvecchio.,

1999).

In South Asian cultures, marriage is considered a cultural marker of female identity and social status; hence, many women strive to preserve their marriage regardless of the cost so as to maintain their status (Abraham, 1998). Thus, apart from the economic dependence on her husband's family, there is also a social cost in leaving the family (Agnew, 1998). These cultural norms related to a woman's position and her duty to her husband and family often make it harder for the woman to challenge the hierarchies of gender, age and status, which also makes it difficult for family and friends to intervene in the case of domestic violence (Agnew, 1998). If a woman were to openly challenge these patriarchal norms she may lose her status, and also bring shame to her natal family. Thus, these social practices, the strict gender roles within the marriage, and the importance attached to marriage can further result in the perpetuation of domestic violence (Dasgupta and Warriar, 1996; Kanuha, 1987; Prasad, 1999).

2.11. Framing the research questions

The literature review has highlighted that domestic violence is a prevalent problem within all cultural and ethnic groups. Most studies on domestic violence among ethnic minority immigrant groups (example, Bhuyan, 2008; Ranjeet and Purkayastha, 2007; Raj and Silverman, 2002a; Sharma, 2001; Gupta et al., 2005; Abraham, 1998; 2000b; Dasgupta, 1998a; Dasgupta and Rudra, 2009; Nankani, 2000), have predominantly examined and explored the causes, prevalence, and impact of domestic violence against women, as well as factors that hinder abused women from leaving. While these studies can help to understand and expand our knowledge base,

focusing only on the factors affecting the abused women tends to present the abused women as helpless victims. An abused woman's personal agency can also play a role in enabling them to cope with the abuse (Pinnewala, 2009). It is also believed that most abused women are resilient and able to recover and rebuild their lives. On the other hand, for many South Asian women, factors such as traditional and cultural values and beliefs, family obligations, and fear of further isolation, may prevent them from viewing separation or divorce as an effective or alternative strategy. Thus this study aims to generate a deeper understanding of abused women's perceptions of domestic violence; as how individuals evaluate and define their problems may well in turn influence their help-seeking. This exploratory study also presents an opportunity to learn directly from women affected by domestic violence by incorporating their views, which have been previously unexplored in the discourse of violence against South Asian women in Hong Kong.

Thus, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are South Asian women's perceptions of domestic violence in Hong Kong?
2. What are the help-seeking practices of South Asian women when faced with domestic violence?

Different cultures define domestic violence differently. The first question can help us to understand South Asian women's perceptions and meaning of domestic violence. For example, is some abusive behaviour more acceptable than others, namely, those which may be influenced by cultural norms? At what point does an abused woman say that the relationship has become abusive? It has been noted that women may

have different attitudes towards domestic violence, for some, verbal abuse may not be considered 'domestic violence' while for others even the threat of harm can be traumatic. For example, in Japan, overturning a dining-table is a culturally specific form of abuse that questions the woman's legitimate role in the family and dousing a woman with liquid connotes that she is impure and contaminated (Yoshihama, 1999). By Japanese standards, these are powerful and symbolic acts, and some may rate this form of abuse as being more severe than acts such as slapping, grabbing, throwing objects, pushing or may not even consider the latter as being abusive at all. How women interpret the abuse or evaluate and define their problem may in turn influence their process of help-seeking.

The second question can enable us to better understand what abused women do when encountering domestic violence. For example do they seek help and support from family/friends/ community/social services, or do they seek separation or divorce or remain in the relationship due to various reasons. In addressing these contextual aspects, that is, the availability of systems which provide emotional, material and informational support, the ecological framework is relevant as it addresses the varied factors from the individual, interpersonal and systematic levels.

2.12. Chapter summary

Domestic violence is a complex phenomenon, with various factors that intersect with each other. Although research on abused immigrant women is limited, from the above literature review, it is apparent that the factors associated with domestic violence are much more complex, and there is no one factor, but various factors that are interlinked, which may co-occur in various situations. Domestic violence has

been documented as a social problem across diverse ethnic and cultural groups with an increasing awareness that women's responses to abuse vary, in part because of the specific social and cultural context in which the abuse takes place.

The literature review has also provided a discussion on the history of the domestic violence movements, and on how the efforts of these early movements helped to publicise domestic violence, moving it from being considered a private issue to one of public concern. The campaigns organised by the Social Movement of Women against Domestic Violence were also instrumental in arousing public awareness of this issue. As a result, various refuge shelters were also set up during the early 1970s and 1980s to provide services and support for abused women.

This chapter also highlights the importance of taking immigration related factors into account when discussing domestic violence among immigrant women. From the above literature review it can be observed that various sociocultural and structural factors such as language, gender roles, financial resources, social support, availability of culturally competent help, and immigration status also influences abused migrant women's responses to abuse, how they interpret abuse, and their decision to either seeking help or reporting the abuse. Findings from various studies have also highlighted that while domestic violence does occur in all societies, for immigrant women, certain immigrant-specific factors cause them to be even more vulnerable to domestic violence. The literature review also discusses some of the factors that may influence abused women to remain in the abusive relationship. Some of these factors pertain to love for their spouse/partner, economic reasons, the belief that he will change, and fear of losing custody of their children.

The literature review has also provided a discussion on culture and domestic violence. As indicated in past studies, cultural beliefs and values can act as protective factors which decrease the likelihood of abuse, or they can also serve to increase the likelihood of abuse (Raj and Silverman, 2002a). The cultural factors that are likely to increase the vulnerability of women to spousal abuse include gender roles, societal acceptance and justification of the abuse and violence, and the fear of isolation from the community which may also be used as a form of control by the abuser (Raj and Silverman, 2002a). Although many studies have cited culturally bound, traditional gender roles as the factors that facilitate abuse among immigrant women (example, Bui and Morash, 1999; Morash et al., 2000), it is important to note that culture alone cannot be blamed as the specific cause of domestic violence among immigrant populations. Doing so can be dangerous, as it will further lead to the isolation and oppression of immigrant women in a foreign country. It is also important to take into account the contextual, social, legal and economic barriers that are interrelated with migrant women's experiences of domestic violence. From the literature review it is evident that the subjective and objective realities of abused women's experiences of domestic violence must be situated within the larger cultural, socioeconomic and political context. This study, therefore, seeks to utilise a conceptual framework which takes into account these women's wider context. This is discussed in chapter 3.

CHAPTER THREE

Conceptual Framework

3.1. Introduction

In reviewing the literature on domestic violence, there are a number of approaches and theories that have been used to explain the social structure, cultural traditions and personal behaviours that lead to abuse and violence (Campbell and Humphreys, 1993). Numerous researchers have also put forward various theories and frameworks that have been used to explain the causality of domestic violence. In order to provide a better understanding of abused women's experiences, perceptions, and behaviours based on a more inclusive contextual framework, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory has been adopted for the present research.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological approach to the study of human experience seems suitable, since the ecological approach attempts to understand people not as individuals removed from the context in which they find themselves, but instead includes both the individual and their environment (Perilla, 1999). Based on the literature review, research questions, and findings from previous studies, the conceptual framework for the present research is based upon the ecological approach to help provide a more comprehensive understanding about the experiences of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong, and their perception of domestic violence, which may well influence their process of help-seeking.

3.2. Ecological model

Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed the ecological systems theory to explore the

relationship between an individual and the environmental contextual factors in order to understand human development. The ecological model comprises four nested systems: Microsystems, Mesosystems, Exosystems and Macrosystems. The model was later adapted by Belsky (1980) to help explain child abuse and neglect. Since then, the model has been applied by various theorists and has been conceptualised in numerous ways (Heise, 1998). It has also been widely applied as the analytic framework in much of the violence research, such as intimate partner violence (examples, Laisser et al., 2011; Han, Kim and Tyson.S.Y, 2010b; Heise and Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Little and Kantor, 2002). For instance, Laisser and colleagues (2011) conducted a study to explore community perception of Intimate Partner Violence in urban Tanzania, utilising the ecological model as its framework and the grounded theory approach to analyse their data. Han and colleagues (2010) also applied the ecological framework in exploring the experience/causes of intimate partner violence among Korean immigrant women in the United States from varied factors such as cultural factors (macrosystem), stress related to immigration (exosystem), and marital relationships (microsystem). The World Health Organisation (WHO) has also adopted this framework as a public health approach to understand the risk factors of violence, and for developing preventive measures (WHO, 2004).

Heise (1998) also adapted the ecological model for her study of intimate partner violence. The four levels in the adapted version of the ecological model as described by Heise (1998) are briefly explained here. As in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model, the first level is the individual level which corresponds to the microsystem in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) , and includes factors such as the personal characteristics of the individual, as well as their perceptions, and beliefs. At the second level is the

family/relationship level, or the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) which examines the social relationship among families, partners and friends. The third level is represented by the community/social structures which is similar to the exosystem in Bronfenbrenner's (1979), and encompasses both formal and informal social structures, such as social networks. The fourth level is the societal level, or the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which refers to the availability of social support, and the larger society, including legal and policy frameworks (Carlson, 1984; Heise, 1998; Levinson, 1989; World Health Organisation, 2004). The ecological framework thus illustrates the various factors at the different levels and attempts to link domestic violence to the broader social environment (Depanfilis, 1998). According to Bersani and Chen (1988, p.76), "a person's environment can be understood as a series of settings, each nested within the next broader level, from the micro environment of the family to the macro environment of the society".

3.3. Adopting the ecological framework for the present research

In an effort to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong, the researcher seeks to utilise the ecological model to organise the ecological factors involved in the domestic violence experiences of abused women, as well as in their perceptions and help-seeking. These will be organised into the four nested levels of the ecological model. It must be noted here that although some of the variables that apply to each level are indicated in the model, some of these levels invariably overlap and interact with each other.

Using the ecological model as a guide, the researcher will explore how abused

women perceive domestic violence. With the dearth of information on the domestic violence situation among South Asian community in Hong Kong, the present study seeks to understand domestic violence in these communities more fully than what is known at present. The conceptual framework is presented below in Figure 3.1.

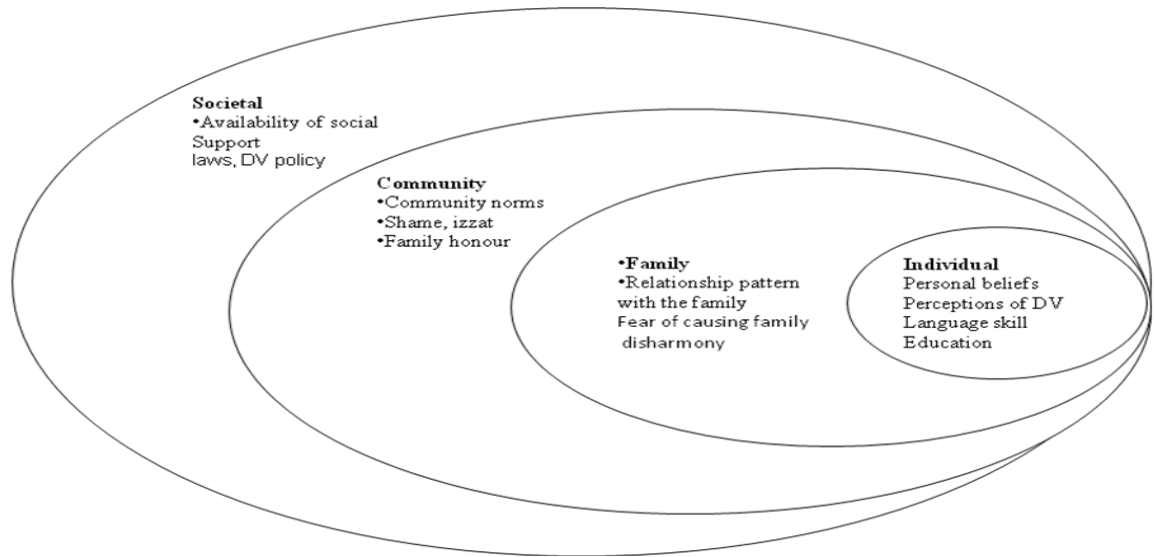


Figure 3-1: An adaptation of the ecological model as a conceptual framework for the present research

At the individual level (microsystem) it will focus on abused women’s perceptions of domestic violence. This is salient because women’s perceptions will largely influence the meanings related to and actions taken toward help-seeking. It will also examine the woman’s stage of readiness to address the issue and her beliefs and views about domestic violence. This requires a woman to assess her situation, including her safety, and her children’s safety (if applicable), as well as available resources. This study also focuses on the personal and demographic characteristics of the individual (the abused women). Demographic factors include the educational level of the woman, host language proficiency, and employment status (whether she

is currently employed/- working, and whether she has held employment in the past).

At the second level, the family level (mesosystem), the study focuses on factors such as family structure, environment and family interactions. This includes an examination of the dynamics between family members and relationship patterns, also examining the quality of spousal relationships. It also examines filial piety, in terms of women's devotion to family, and the fear of family disharmony that might result from leaving. For many South Asian women, divorce is rarely an option as it is considered to bring dishonour to the family (Nankani, 2000), and many abused women continue to remain in an abusive relationship for varied reasons. Therefore the study also examines what strategies the woman adopts when faced with domestic violence.

At the community level (exosystem), it is important to focus on societal norms. Cultural and traditional ideals, such as maintaining family honour (*izzat*) and the notion of shame, may also have important implications on how women respond to domestic violence and on their help-seeking processes. At this level, it is also important to focus on women's access to power and resources. It is assumed that if women hold some degree of power or have access to resources such as strong social support from community, families and friends, abuse and intimidation will be less, compared to those without such support or resources.

At the societal level (macrosystem) this study focuses on examining the availability of formal support such as social services for domestic violence, and policies and programs that are in place to intervene in domestic violence, which affects women's

lives directly or indirectly. The availability of supportive social services can also enable many abused women to know where they can turn to when faced with violence.

The ecological model provides the researcher with an organising framework from which to explore the relationships among various factors of interest from different systems in the environment of abused women. It is crucial to have a broader and more in-depth analysis and exploration of abused women's perception and help-seeking based on a more inclusive contextual framework, especially in the study of domestic violence. Women's responses to domestic violence, as well as their help-seeking, will be addressed from the ecological dimension, which includes both the person and her ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Edleson and Tolman, 1992). The use of the ecological model is suitable for this study, as the ecological model can help to address these contextual aspects by looking at the varied factors from the individual, interpersonal and systematic levels. While past studies have used the ecological framework to investigate the etiology of domestic violence from multiple levels, in the present study the ecological model is adapted from Bronfenbrenner's ecological model through which to explore women's perception of domestic violence, and to examine factors such as the woman's beliefs system (individual level), maintaining family honour, relationship patterns, shame (family level), societal norms and expectations (community level), and availability of support services and resources (societal level).

3.4. Grounded theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological model

Researchers using grounded theory techniques have relied on sensitising concepts as

a starting point to help provide the researcher with a sense of how observed instances of a phenomenon might fit within the conceptual categories (Bowen, 2006). Sensitising concepts can help to provide guidelines to researchers as "...a way of seeing, organising, and understanding experiences..." (Charmaz, 2003, p.3). Conceptual frameworks are thus utilised to provide a link between various concepts and the building of a theory (Seibold, 2002). For instance, in his exploratory work on community-based antipoverty projects in Jamaica, Bowen (2006) also combined the use of grounded theory techniques with a conceptual framework. Bowen (2006) used a conceptual framework based on sensitising concepts such as community participation, social capital, and empowerment, which were derived from a review of literature on social funds, poverty reduction, and community development, and adopted the grounded theory techniques for theory formulation and data analysis. According to Bowen (2006), conceptualisation helps to provide context and direction, and the concepts also serve as an analytic framework to guide the data analysis. A qualitative study conducted by Laisser and colleagues (2011), also utilised the ecological framework to explore community perception of Intimate Partner Violence in urban Tanzania and used the grounded theory approach for analysing their data. In the present research, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model will be used as sensitising concepts with which to explore and examine women's perception of domestic violence and help-seeking (see Figure 3.1).

A major academic debate among scholars with regard to grounded theory is the relevance of conducting a pre-research literature review, as grounded theory places the emphasis on producing theory from data. According to Glaser and Holton (2004), a grounded theory researcher should postpone the literature review until after the

data collection, and a pre-research literature review is considered to be a ‘waste of time’ (para. 44), as ‘grounded theory begins with no preconceived idea and then generates one during data analysis’ (para. 19). However, Schreiber (2001), argued that ‘plunging into the field research without delving into the relevant literature would be folly’ (p. 58). Strauss and Corbin (1990) had also asserted the importance of having ‘some background in the technical literature’ to help ‘stimulate theoretical sensitivity by providing concepts and relationships which are then checked against the actual data’ (p. 50). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), theoretical sensitivity in grounded theory refers to the personal qualities of the researcher, the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to the data, the capacity to understand and the capability to separate the pertinent from that which is not. All this is done in conceptual rather than concrete terms. This indicates an awareness of the subtleties of meaning which can come from previous reading, -such as literature, research, theory, and also personal experience with or that is relevant to, a specific area. Therefore, having this background information sensitises the researcher to what is going on with the phenomenon that is under study.

In the current study a literature review has been conducted and the grounded theory approach has also been utilised for guiding the data analysis, with potential for theory-production from the data (Bowen, 2006). In keeping with grounded theory, there is no working hypothesis as part of the study but the generation of theory will instead occur as a result of data analysis, in order to relate the findings of the data to the framework. The findings will be summarised and later integrated into the framework. The analysis of the data through the grounded theory process is more likely to capture meaning from data which is based upon participants’ reports

(Rennie, 2000). Thus, theory that is derived from the data will be more likely to resemble the reality of the women's experiences as recounted by them (Crawford, Liebling-Kalifani and Hill, 2009). Various studies which focus on examining women's in-depth experiences of domestic violence have also used grounded theory for data analysis (examples, Burke, Oomen-Early and Rager, 2009; Crawford et al., 2009; Kearney, 2001; Hague, Thiara and Mullender, 2011; Laisser et al., 2011).

3.5. Chapter summary

In the present research the ecological framework has been adopted by which to examine and explore the domestic violence experiences and help-seeking practices among South Asian women in Hong Kong. This model has been adopted for the present study as a guide to examine and explore the multiple factors that might influence the help-seeking process of the abused woman, both in the individual and sociological context. The ecological framework, which encompasses a far wider environment, can help to guide the researcher in the exploration of domestic violence experiences of abused women, along with their perceptions and help-seeking, and to explain the interactions of multiple factors at different levels. By drawing our attention to factors linked to domestic violence from various factors at all levels of a person's environment, the ecological framework can help us understand the complexities involved in domestic violence.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Methods

4.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the methodological approach adopted in this qualitative study. It begins with a brief discussion of research paradigms and approaches in Social Science. The objective of the discussion on paradigms is not so much to align with one approach as opposed to another, but rather, to help identify a paradigm best suited for the study of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong. This will be followed by the rationale for the choice of qualitative research method employed in this study. Following an outline of the study design, the main approaches to the data collection and analysis are discussed together with ethical considerations.

The preceding chapters that focused on the review of the literature and the theoretical framework outlined the goals of this study and identified the research questions. The present research is an exploratory study that seeks to examine the experiences of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong (for details on background of South Asians in Hong Kong, see chapter 2, section 2). The guiding research aim is to explore South Asian women's perception of domestic violence, and how their perceptions influence their help-seeking practices. Given the complexity of the factors that can impact on a woman's experience of domestic violence, and the exploratory nature of the study, the present research adopts the inquiry method of in-depth interviews in an attempt to understand how abused women understand and respond to domestic violence. In addition, a pilot study and a

focus group will be incorporated. The researcher does acknowledge that open-ended interviews and in-depth discussions with participants are by no means an exhaustive method of enquiry, and that there are other forms such as quantitative surveys. As domestic violence is a sensitive topic, and given the fact that this topic has not been researched in-depth among South Asian women in the context of Hong Kong, it is argued that a quantitative survey would be inadequate in capturing the conceptual complexities and the dynamic interplay of the various factors in the lived experiences of domestic violence among the women. Arguably, qualitative inquiry methods can help to better understand and explore these phenomena about which little are currently known (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

4.2. Research paradigms in Social Science

The objective of this section is not to align with one author or argue against another, nor to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of their classifications. Instead it will attempt to identify a paradigm that is best suited for the study of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong.

A paradigm may be referred to as a world view (Patton, 1990), a set of beliefs and ideas for determining the truth and the ways of knowing and understanding it (Eisikovits and Peled, 1990). According to Avramidis and Smith (1999), it is the paradigm or world view of the researcher that guides the research process. The philosophical assumptions that guide the inquirer's approach to research are based on the epistemological, ontological and axiological assumptions and undertakings (Pathirage, Amaratunga and Haigh, 2008). Ontology refers to a set of assumptions which is concerned with the nature of the reality or the world. The two ontological

assumptions are realist and idealist (Johnson and Duberly, 2000). Realists hold a predetermined stance on the nature and structure of a commonly experienced external reality (Sexton, 2004), while idealists assume that reality can differ from place to place and from time to time depending on the observer's viewpoints (Collins, 1983). Epistemology refers to 'how' a researcher knows about the reality, that is, the knowledge of the reality, and how that knowledge should be acquired and accepted, while axiology deals with the value system (that is, ethics and values) (Pathirage et al., 2008). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), although inquirers may be unable to prove exactly what the world is, the paradigms they choose embody what they think about the world. Thus, all the actions they undertake as inquirers are guided by those paradigms.

The paradigm debate has been on-going for several decades in the social and behavioural sciences, between the two major social sciences paradigms: the positivist/empiricist approach which underlies the quantitative methods and the constructivists/phenomenological approach that underlies the qualitative methods (examples, Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Historically, the predominant paradigm in social science research has been positivism, which is derived from the study of natural sciences. The positivist approach assumes that there is a universal truth and that causal relations can be discovered through objective methods (Lykes and Stewart, 1986; Unger, 1996; Walker, 1995). As such, it is typically associated with quantitative methods which utilise highly structured, impersonal formats, and predefined categories based on a large sample size. This reduces the analysis to observable behaviours and categories,

which tend to minimise or exclude the social context and structural relations (Nicolson, 1997; Sherif, 1992). Although these categories may increase objectivity and reduce bias, this may not necessarily reflect the true experiences, needs and perspectives of the study participants. Thus, from the positivist approach reality is construed as a fixed entity (Guba and Lincoln, 1994), suggesting that it is possible to describe what is 'out there' (Willig, 2008). Positivism implies that epistemology is objective, and the goal of research is to produce objective knowledge. Therefore the inquirer must remain detached from the research, so that the objective knowledge is unbiased and impartial, and free of personal involvement and vested interests.

The phenomenological approach on the other hand believes that human knowledge is confined within the parameters of people's lived experiences. It involves a "qualitative and naturalistic approach to inductively and holistically understand human experiences in context-specific settings" (Patton, 1990, p.37). According to Neuman (1994), the two major phenomenological classifications are: interpretive social science and critical social science. Interpretive social science refers to a systematic analysis of how people create and maintain their social worlds by directly observing people in their natural settings. Critical social science on the other hand refers to a critical process of inquiry that seeks to uncover the real structures in the material world so as to help people change the conditions and build a better world for themselves (Neuman, 1994).

4.2.1. Interpretivism and constructivism

This section will provide a brief description of the interpretivist and social constructivist paradigms, and will link these paradigms to the present study.

The Interpretivism approach assumes that the way people perceive their reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, and situational factors and as such is subjected to the positions, identities and perspectives of the individual (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). To the interpretivist, the social world consists of and is constructed through meanings attributed by the person. Thus, theorists who adopt the interpretive approach believe that the theory of knowledge is transactional and subjective, and that 'truth' is value-mediated and is thus adapted in accordance with the dialectical methodology. This implies that theory alone should not be used for guiding data collection, but that the researcher also takes an active part in improving the situation under investigation (examples, Creswell, 1998; Weis and Fine, 2000). Thus, to understand a particular action the inquirer must grasp the meaning behind the actions, which can thus enable him/her to interpret the action (Schwandt, 2000).

Constructivists draw attention to the fact that the social reality of the individual is shaped by social contextual factors (i.e. culture, time, position), and that reality is not objective and exterior (Burr, 2003). Rather, it is socially constructed and given meaning by people (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 2002). The constructivist approach in research seeks to identify various ways of constructing the social reality rather than just reflecting it. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966, p.1), "reality is socially constructed and that sociology of knowledge must analyse the process in which this occurs". Findings are generally presented in terms of the criteria of grounded theory (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

In general, the research problem and purpose of the study should indicate what

research methods or designs should be adopted. The primary purpose of this research is to explore and study the experiences of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong. It does not assume causal relationships or verification as in a positivist approach, but rather it seeks to understand how South Asian women perceive and understand domestic violence in intimate relationship. By narrowing the foci of the study, the paradigms are also narrowed down to the interpretivism/constructivism approach. Thus, the appropriate theoretical informed approach for the study of the problems may be formulated within the realm of this paradigm. There are various forms of enquiry that are commonly associated with this paradigm such as ‘naturalistic’, ‘phenomenological’, ‘ethnographic’, and ‘qualitative’ (Avramidis and Smith, 1999, p.27). Qualitative inquiry, also referred to as a ‘reformist movement’, encompasses multiple paradigmatic formulations, as well as methodological, epistemological and ethical criticisms of traditional social science research (Schwandt, 2000). Qualitative methods support the notion that the social reality of the individual is shaped by their social context, such as culture, history and position (Schwandt, 2000), and the goal of such an inquiry is to learn about the individual’s social reality as constructed by them. Thus, this recognises that the inquirer cannot impose his/her definition of reality on the experiences of reality of those from whom they want to learn.

Given that the study of domestic violence is a sensitive topic, and that this topic is an unexplored and under researched area amongst South Asian communities in the context of Hong Kong, a qualitative method is deemed suitable for this study to be able to capture the complexities and interplay of various factors in the lived experiences of the women who are facing domestic violence. Thus, this section has

attempted to align the present study to specific forms of the construction of theory of knowledge such as social constructionism.

4.3. Research methods: Quantitative, Qualitative and Triangulation

This section will provide a brief discussion of some of the research methods such as quantitative, qualitative and triangulation methods. This will be followed by the rationale for the choice of research method for the present study.

Quantitative research methods are considered to be a more objective measurement and as such are not easily affected by the researcher's personal values (Atherton, 1993). The emphasis is on the measurement and analysis of the causal relationship between variables, not processes (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Quantitative methods emphasis causes and effects, quantifying the phenomena, and generalisability of the findings to the population (Flick, 2009). Thus, quantitative research is considered to be objective whereby the subjective views of the researcher and of the participants in the study are eliminated as far as possible through controlling the phenomena and relations under study.

In contrast, qualitative research methods aim to provide an in-depth understanding of people's experiences and perspectives in the context of their personal circumstances or settings. It is a field of inquiry that involves "an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.3). Qualitative researchers study things or phenomena in their natural settings and attempt to interpret or make sense of these things according to the meanings people bring to them. They seek an understanding of how social experiences are constructed and given meaning. Thus, in qualitative

research, the findings are not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Although some qualitative data can be quantified (example, census, demographic information), in general the bulk of the analysis is interpretative. Some researchers may gather data through qualitative methods such as interviews and observations and code these data in a way that can be statistically analysed. In other words, they are quantifying qualitative data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). For the purpose of the present study, the qualitative research methods refer to the non-statistical process of interpreting the data, which is conducted for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in the raw data. Although qualitative research has often been criticised for being non- scientific, too context specific, and for using samples that are unrepresentative, this type of method is however more suitable for exploring substantive areas about which little is known (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Triangulation refers to the method of combining various qualitative methods, as well as combining qualitative and quantitative methods (Flick, 2009). It also refers to the use of a multi-method or mixed method in which both quantitative and qualitative research methods are combined in order to provide a more complete set of findings than could be arrived at through the administration of a single method. Thus, the use of triangulation may be conceived of as the complementary compensation for the weakness of a single method. The term triangulation is also used to refer to those specific occasions in which researchers seek to check the validity of their findings by cross checking them with another method. Denzin (1970) extended the idea of triangulation beyond its conventional association with research methods and designs, and distinguishes four types of triangulation methods. The first is *data triangulation*

in which data on a variety of people are gathered through various sampling approach methods at different times and in different situations. The second type is *investigator triangulation* in which more than one researcher collects and interprets data. *Theoretical triangulation* is the third type whereby more than one theoretical point is used for interpreting the data. The fourth type is *methodological triangulation* in which more than one type of research method is used for collecting data.

In the present study, the researcher utilised a pilot study and in-depth interviews. Thus, it can be said that a form of triangulation is used for this study.

4.4. Rationale for the use of qualitative research method

This exploratory study aims to examine women's experiences of domestic violence in a manner that will provide an opportunity for the women to share their experiences in their own words. This would not be possible through quantitative research methods such as surveys or questionnaires. It has been suggested that qualitative research methodology is most suitable when the topic of the research is a phenomena about which little is known, such as in the present study, and when conducting research which seeks to delve in- depth into the complexities and processes (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). While quantitative methods tend to cast participants in a certain mould of personality, behaviour or attitude, qualitative methods provide participants with an opportunity to express themselves in their own words and present their circumstances from their own perspectives and in a personal way. In this sense, the findings pertain to real people not abstraction. Moreover, this study will focus on the individual's lived experiences with domestic violence. To be able to understand how the participants attribute meaning to these experiences, it is

imperative for the researcher to attend to their thoughts, feelings, beliefs and assumptions, and to be able to understand the deeper perspectives which can best be captured through face-to-face interactions. Besides, as this topic is under-research and unexplored, the participants' experiences, as told from their own perspectives can provide a rich contextual understanding of the complex dynamics (Mahlstedt and Keeny, 1993). Thus, employing a qualitative research method was thought to be more suitable to suit the sensitive and exploratory nature of the present research, and for gaining an insight into how the women perceive the phenomenon from their contextualised position. This method can also enable the researcher to capture the meanings which the individual place on the events, processes and structure of their lives.

4.5. Study Design

This study utilised a qualitative research approach in the form of in-depth one-on-one interviews to study the lived experience of South Asian women experiencing domestic violence in Hong Kong. Conducting a qualitative research was assured to be a more suitable way for gaining an insight into how individual perceive a phenomenon from their contextualised position, as it captures the meanings women place on the events, processes and structures of their lives. These data were obtained through semi-structured qualitative interviews with participants. Prior to conducting the in-depth interviews, a pilot study was conducted.

4.5.1. Pilot study

A pilot study was also incorporated into this research. The term *pilot study* is used in two different ways in social science research. It can refer to a so-called 'feasibility

study' which is a small scale version, or a 'trial run' which is usually done in preparation for the major study (Polit, Beck and Hungler, 2001, p.467). In the present study, a pilot study was conducted mainly to do a 'trial run' on the interview guide prepared for the semi-structured interviews. This kind of trial run can also help to reveal whether the respondents are able to understand the structure of the interview guide, otherwise participants may be unable to provide useful answers. Conducting a pilot study can also help to reveal unanticipated problems in the way that items in the interview guide are worded, as well as the use of language and terms.

The pilot study was conducted in October 2011 with two South Asian women, referred by staff from two social service agencies that serve ethnic minorities. Both women had experienced domestic violence from their husbands. While one was divorced, the other was still in an abusive relationship at the time of conducting the interview. The first participant had been married for 11 years and divorced for the past two years. The second participant has been married for 11 years and currently lives with her husband and four children.

As noted above, the main purpose of the pilot study was to test-run the semi-structured interview guides, to see whether the questions asked could be easily understood by the participants, and whether they were acceptable and appropriate. The women confirmed that the flow of the questions and the wordings were appropriate and did not appear offensive. Based upon their suggestion, slight modifications were made to the order of the items in the guide. For example, items in question #3 asked respondents about the kind of abuse they experienced such as

sexual, physical and/ or verbal abuse. The respondents suggested asking first about verbal abuse, then physical abuse, and then sexual abuse. Asking about verbal abuse prior to asking about sexual abuse was deemed more appropriate than asking about sexual abuse in the first instance.

4.5.2. In-depth interviews

In order to understand the contexts and situations in which domestic violence occurs in the lives of the women and the ways in which they respond when faced with domestic violence, it is imperative to look at their experiences and the contextual factors in their entirety. To understand their social realities, it is imperative to examine the women's experiences of domestic violence as told in their own words. The use of in-depth interviews will allow the active involvement of the respondents in the construction of data about their lives (Reinharz, 1992). This approach can enable the researcher to explore abused women's experiences of violence in a more personal and holistic way, providing for the women to define their experiences in their own words, while the researchers take on an active, subjective stance and engages in co-creating the research narratives (Creswell, 1998; Weis and Fine, 2000).

Through in-depth interviews, qualitative research can be used to understand the feelings and thoughts, and the meaning which the participants ascribe to their perceptions and experiences of the world (Hammersley, 1989; Kvale, 1996). As participants share their experiences of domestic violence, this enables us to understand the deeper perspectives of how women deal with the violence, and how they negotiate their way around the various social and political structural barriers. In this instance, utilising a quantitative method may be insufficient to fully capture the

lived experiences of the individuals, as it would provide only limited and condensed information, and the decoding of the connotative meanings would be unduly restricted. On the other hand, in-depth interviews can help to provide a fuller picture in a contextual way as the respondents describe and interpret their experiences (Gergen and Davis 1985). Such narratives help to provide a deeper understanding and analysis that cannot be fully captured by using quantitative methods. Additionally, the detailed information gathered from in-depth interviews is likely to yield a more comprehensive picture of the issue of domestic violence among South Asians in Hong Kong in all its complexity.

Various researchers have used in-depth qualitative research methods in their studies of domestic violence, which have provided rich data, as told from the perspective of the first person (example, Abraham, 2000a; Dasgupta, 2000a; Melhotra, 1999). Lewis and Maruna (1999, p.15) opined that “if we understand how individuals understand their own lives, we will be in a better position to explain why, when, and how various policies will be effective with different populations”.

4.5.3. Focus group

Focus groups are a qualitative research method usually conducted with small groups of participants, in which a moderator uses the group process to stimulate discussion and gather information on participants’ beliefs, attitudes or views about a specific topic (Krueger, 1994). In a focus group, there is a focus, or common theme on which the discussion is centred (Edmunds, 1999). According to Krueger (1994) and Morgan (1997), focus groups can be conducted with either a more structured approach or a less structured approach. In the first type, the moderator will often use

an interview guide with established open-ended questions and direct the group discussion around those questions. In a less structured approach, the researcher just introduces the topic, and leads the discussion with minimal direction. It has been suggested that the structure of the focus group should be adapted according to the research purpose. For instance, an unstructured approach would be most suitable when conducting a focus group for the purpose of exploring a topic or issue (Krueger, 1998; Morgan, 1997). Based on the focus group interview the researcher gathers the opinions and viewpoints of the participants which can shed further light on the specific topic under discussion (Berg, 2004). In terms of group size, various researchers have suggested that having 5-6 members has its advantages as smaller groups can allow for greater observational opportunities, placing more emphasis on the topic and less on polling the participants (Edmunds, 1999; Green and Hart, 1999). Others have suggested having between 8-12 members (Brown, 1999; Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999). The idea of conducting a focus group was abandoned due to the constraint of time and place and difficulty in getting the numbers of participants required.

4.6. Data collection procedures

This section will provide a brief outline of data collection procedures and methods. Qualitative analytic technique will be utilised in data collection through the snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling refers to the method of initially identifying one person from the population and then asking her to identify others and so on (Engel and Schutt, 2005). The Snowball sampling method is most appropriate when conducting research with a hard-to-reach population or when such a population is difficult to locate (Engel and Schutt, 2005; Rubin and Babbie, 2008). The collection

of data will be through in-depth, face-to-face and open-ended interviews with participants. To attain prolonged engagement (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) each interview is expected to last between 60-90 minutes. Data collection for this study was carried out between November 2011 to May 2012.

4.6.1. Recruitment procedures

When conducting research on sensitive issue or taboo topics such as domestic violence, one limitation is the recruitment of participants (Lee, 1993; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1981). For instance, individuals may hesitate to disclose information about such incidents, which makes it difficult to identify a large pool of participants for studies of such nature. Given that the present study is an exploratory study on the issue of domestic violence among South Asians in Hong Kong, which is also a sensitive and taboo issue among the community, it was not viable to identify a large pool of participants. Therefore, the researcher employed various recruitment strategies in the present study. For instance, not-for-profit (NGO) social service agencies providing services to ethnic minorities were contacted to solicit their assistance in the recruitment of potential participants. Moreover, the researcher had previous contact with staff members from these social service agencies when she had worked as a registered social worker in Hong Kong a few years ago.

The researcher initially contacted eight social service agencies to ask for their assistance in the recruitment of potential participants. Only four of the eight agencies responded positively and they assisted by referring five of the participants in the present study. The researcher also contacted various community and religious organisations to solicit their assistance in the recruitment of potential participants.

Additionally, the researcher contacted four existing mainstream shelter (refuge) homes (there are none existing specific shelter home or shelters for ethnic minorities at the time this study was conducted) to solicit their assistance in the recruitment of potential participants, but all four shelter homes were unable to assist. One of the shelter homes responded that they did not have any South Asian women in the shelter home at the time of contact. Another shelter home responded that due to the issue of confidentiality and the sensitivity of the topic they could not make any referrals. Due to insufficient information it could not be ascertained how many South Asian women were in the shelter home at that time. Another shelter home responded that they could not assist in the recruitment of participants due to confidentiality issue as they were, at that time, collaborating with an academic institute in an on-going research. The fourth shelter home did not respond.

Additionally, the snowball sampling method was utilised, which involved asking participants to suggest other women who were in similar relationships, or, who had been in abusive relationships. The snowball sampling method is often utilised for exploratory studies, and is considered an appropriate method when the study is among members of a vulnerable or stigmatised group who are difficult to locate (Lee, 1993; Rubin and Babbie, 2008). Additionally, efforts were also made to contact women who may not have access to social service agencies through resource persons in the community. Given that this was an exploratory study and the major purpose was to give women a voice and identify issues and areas of importance to this group, the need to find women was more important than ensuring variability in the sample. Therefore, the researcher made various efforts in recruiting participants for the present study.

After potential participants were identified and the initial contact was made, the researcher spent some time establishing a rapport with each participant prior to conducting the interview. The building of a rapport can help to lessen, to a certain extent, the discomfort that may arise during the interview process, as participants share and recount their experiences of domestic violence. During this process of rapport building, the researcher also provided a brief introduction to the research, and explained the procedures of participation, and the ethical considerations such as confidentiality, anonymity, and the voluntary nature of participation. Before commencing the interview, participants were asked to sign the informed consent form. Then the researcher began the interview with an interest in learning more about the participant's experiences of a violent relationship.

4.6.2. Selection criteria

This research is an exploratory, qualitative and small scale study; hence the selection of the participants was not a random selection. Rather, purposive and snowball sampling methods were utilised in selecting potential participants. Purposive sampling is a non- probability technique that involves the conscious selection by the researcher of certain people to include in a study (Neuman, 2006). Participants are selected because they have particular characteristics that are of interest to the researcher. Thus, the participants of the present study were heterosexual South Asian women living in Hong Kong who had experienced some forms of abuse or violence by an intimate partner or spouse. Although violence in an intimate relationship may refer to a same-sex relationship, the present study focuses only on heterosexual women, irrespective of their marital status (that is, whether cohabiting or legally married, divorced or separated). Thus, South Asian women who had been in an

abusive relationship (within the past two years) or are currently in an abusive relationship were included in the present study. For the purpose of this study, South Asian women are defined as those originating from India, Pakistan and Nepal.

4.6.3. Sample size

In qualitative research, the sample size is based on whether it can adequately answer the research questions rather than generalisability of the findings. Thus, the number of subjects required will be determined as the study progresses, based on an iterative process. This process involves collecting data until new categories, themes or explanations stop emerging from the data, or until data saturation is achieved (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006; Marshall, 1996a). However, this is not to say that sample size consideration is not relevant.

Qualitative researchers have to make sampling decisions such as how many interviews to conduct, and the duration of each of the interviews. These decisions are made with the goal of attaining prolonged engagement and making persistent observations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Although sample size is not fixed when using qualitative research methods, it is important to have a reasonably good sample size which will be sufficient enough to provide meaning to the data and analysis (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005). A review of the literature highlights that data collection should continue until it has achieved saturation point (Guest et al., 2006). However, “there are no published guidelines or tests of adequacy for estimating the sample size required to reach saturation” (Morse, 1995, p.147). Various researchers have therefore provided some rule of thumb for estimating sample size. For instance, Creswell (1998) recommended 5-25 interviews for phenomenological studies, while

Bertaux (1981) argued that for qualitative studies the minimum should be 15 interviews. Based on their recent experimental study, Guest and colleagues (2006) suggested that for purposive samples, about 12 interviews would be sufficient to reach saturation. They argued that in purposive samples participants are selected based on some common criteria and hence the group may be homogenous to a certain extent. In the present study, a certain degree of homogeneity is also expected among the participants, in the sense that the participants will be women who have experienced or are experiencing some type of abusive relationship. Moreover, in situations where time and resources are limited, Kvale (1996), observed that 10-15 interviews can still provide a reasonable likelihood for saturation. With time limitations and difficulty in accessing women, a sample size of 12-15 interviews was initially targeted.

4.6.4. Research participants in the current study

4.6.4.1. Characteristics of the women participants

A total of fourteen South Asian women who had experienced domestic violence and six helping professionals from four social service agencies (social service agencies staff members) were interviewed in the present study. Among the fourteen women interviewed, five were referred by the four social service agencies. The other nine participants were referred by the first five participants through snowball sampling method. The snowball sampling was useful as it facilitated accessing women who had been abused, through previous participants who helped to identify potential participants for this study.

Demographic information of the women participants are provided in Table 4.1. This

is based on information collected at the time of interview. The mean age of the women participants was 33.9, and ranged from 27 to 39. The majority of the participants (ten women) were from Pakistan, while two were from Nepal, and two from India. Most of them immigrated to Hong Kong to join their husband.

With regard to educational qualification, the majority of them reported having attended some level of high school, and one had a university degree. All of these women had obtained their education in their home countries. In terms of occupation, as observed in Table 4.1, the majority of them were housewives. Only four of the women were currently employed, mostly in elementary occupation such as dishwasher shop assistant and cleaner. Except for one, all the women reported they had one or more children. In terms of marital status, five of the women were still married, while five were divorced, three were separated, and one was co-habiting with her partner.

Table 4-1: Demographic characteristics of the participants

	Participant+	Age	Length of residence	Marital status	Length of marriage	Nos. of children	Educational level	Employment status	Country of birth	Religious affiliation
1	Ash	34	4	Separated	11	4	<High school	Part-time	Pakistan	Muslim
2	Nadira	29	3	Divorced	4	2	High School	Homemaker	Pakistan	Muslim
3	Amira	27	4	Separated	8	1	Graduate	Part-time	Pakistan	Muslim
4	Reenu	34	7	Divorced	4	3	<High school	Homemaker	Pakistan	Muslim
5	Nina	33	4	Married	17	2	High school	Homemaker	Pakistan	Muslim
6	Shamin	31	10	Married	11	2	High school	Homemaker	Pakistan	Muslim
7	Bobby	35	20	Divorced	14	2	<High school	Part-time	Pakistan	Muslim
8	Shashila	39	7	Co-habitat	6	1	<High school	Homemaker	Nepal	Buddhist
9	Sunita	33	15	Married	13	2	High school	Homemaker	India	Sikh
10	Saira	32	12	Separated	10	3	High school	Homemaker	Pakistan	Muslim
11	Sofia	38	22	Divorced	9	0	High school	Homemaker	Pakistan	Muslim
12	Tamira	34	14	Married	16	5	High school	Homemaker	Pakistan	Muslim
13	Anita	39	14	Divorced	9	2	High school	Part time	Nepal	Hindu
14	Madhu	37	20	Married	11	2	High school	Part-time	India	Hindu

+ Pseudonyms of participants.

Part-time employment = dishwasher, shop assistant, cleaner; < High school = high school not completed.

4.6.4.2. Characteristics of the helping professionals

With regard to the helping professionals interviewed (see Table 4.2), the majority of them had been working with ethnic minorities for about five years or more. The helping professionals were recruited from four different social service agencies which provide social services to ethnic minorities. Some of the staff members of the social service agencies were known to the researcher through her previous work contacts during her employment as a social worker in Hong Kong. Eventually, six helping professionals from four social service agencies were interviewed. All the interviews with the helping professionals were conducted in English at their places of work.

The age range of the helping professionals was twenty to thirty-five, with one worker being in her early twenties and another in her mid-thirties. It can be observed that the age-range of the helping professionals was relatively similar to that of the women participants in this study (see Table 4.1). The majority of the helping professionals were university graduates and they had been working with ethnic minorities for about five years (see Table 4.2). Of the six helping professionals, three were local Hong Kong Chinese and were registered social workers; two of these are Centre-in-Charge (manager of the project) of their respective social service agency. The other three helping professionals were South Asian programme workers (similar to community workers).

Table 4-2: Demographic characteristics of helping professionals

Characteristics	Number
Age range	
20 to 25	2
26 to 30	2
31 to 35	2
Education level	
College	2
Graduate	4
Number of years in Ethic Minority social service agencies	
1 to 2 years	2
2.1 to 5 years	4
Position	
Centre in Charge/Manager/Social Worker	2
Social Worker (SW)	1
Program worker (PW)	3
Country of origin	
Hong Kong	3
India	1
Pakistan	1
Nepal	1

Note: Pseudonyms of helping professional = HP1-Manager 1; HP-Manager2; HP-SW; HP-PW1; HP-PW2; HP-PW3 (for further details refer to Appendix 10).

4.6.5. Interview procedure

Individual, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 South Asian women who had experienced domestic violence. Each interview lasted between 60-90

minutes. All interviews were conducted in a setting that was most convenient and comfortable for the participant. All the interviews were conducted in person by the researcher, and except for five, all were conducted in English with some Hindi. Attempts were made to follow the participants' own grammatical style during transcription. Four of the participants were interviewed in Hindi/Urdu and one participant was interviewed in Nepalese, with the help of the social service agency staff and previous participants who had made the referral and acted as English interpreters. The researcher could also understand and speak some Hindi/Urdu and used these accordingly during the interview. All transcription was done verbatim and for the interviews which were done with the help of English translators, these were transcribed verbatim based on the English translation provided by the translator, but were verified independently by acquaintances fluent in Hindi/Urdu/Nepalese. Besides the fourteen participants interviewed, six helping professionals from four social service agencies were also interviewed in English to get their perspectives on the issue of domestic violence among South Asian women and the services provided by the social service agencies.

Prior to the interviews with the participants, the researcher spent some time engaging in casual conversation with the participants so as to establish a rapport, and to make them feel at ease and comfortable. The researcher then briefly explained the nature and purpose of the research. An information sheet which discusses the purpose of the research and outlines the participant's ethical rights (see Appendix 2) was provided to each participant. The same was done with the helping professionals (see Appendix 8A).

Participants were also informed that the interview would be audiotaped so as to ensure that the interviewer could fully attend to the woman during the interview, rather than being distracted by taking notes. However, only nine women agreed to the audiotaping of the interview, the remaining five women did not feel comfortable with the interview being audiotaped. The researcher therefore had to rely on notes taken during the interview. The researcher also wrote down notes and a summary as soon as each interview was concluded. Once the participants understood and agreed to participate, they were asked to sign the informed consent form. After that the researcher asked some preliminary information such as their demographic background (see Appendix 6). Participants were informed that all audiotapes and notes would be stored safely in a locked cabinet, with all identifying information removed.

Prior to conducting the interviews, each participant was asked for their consent and whether they felt comfortable to be interviewed through a translator. As the translators were South Asian staff at the referral agency and were also known to the participants, the interviewees did not raise any objections, and the interviews were conducted smoothly without any discomfort to the participants. The interviews were conducted at various places including the participant's residence (while her husband was out of the country), a private room at a social services agency, depending on whichever location was most convenient for the participant.

The informed consent form (see Appendix 2B for English version) was discussed with

the participants. For those who did not understand English, a consent form was made available in their native language (Appendix 3, 4, & 5). Participants were also assured of privacy and confidentiality in terms of the research process and were also given a pseudonym. The participant's right to refuse to answer a question or to end the interview at any time without any consequences was also discussed.

Although an interview guide was prepared (see Appendix 7), the interviews with the women participants were designed to be as open-ended as possible. In the first few interviews, the researcher had to look at the interview guide from time to time, looking for prompts. However, after a few interviews the researcher became more comfortable and experienced with her interview techniques. The women share their stories, and their relationship, and they were allowed to tell their story at their own pace. Sometimes the researcher had to use pre-defined prompts (see Appendix 7) or spontaneous prompts such as "can you tell me more about that", or "what was it like for you". At the end of each interview, the researcher summarised what was discussed and went through the narrative of each woman's story for clarity. This provided the opportunity to the woman to give their feedback on their story, and to add to or omit anything from their narrative. After the interview, some women informed the researcher that the interview had allowed them to experience a sense of relief because they were finally able to share their stories and talk about their experiences from the beginning to the end and for some it was their first time of telling their story. Most of the participants also said that although it was sad and painful to re-live their experiences, they felt good to be able to share their

experiences and hoped that their stories may be helpful for other women in similar situations. At the end of each interview, the researcher said positive words to the women and also thanked them for their time and for sharing their stories.

The helping professionals were also provided with an information sheet (Appendix 8A) and were given the informed consent form to sign (see Appendix 8B) prior to interviewing them. An interview guide for the helping professional was also prepared (see Appendix 9).

4.7. Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was sought prior to collecting the data from the College Research Ethics Committee of Royal Holloway, University of London. The researcher will be responsible and accountable to the College Ethics Committee for ensuring that the study is conducted in a proper way, and that participants in the study are led to make an informed decision. Research represents an intrusion into people's lives as it often requires participants to reveal personal information about themselves that may not be known to their friends and associates (Neuman, 2006). Thus, in any type of research, ethical concerns are essential factors that must be given due consideration. Moreover, when conducting research on issues or topics such as domestic violence, which sometimes may bring some discomfort and emotional pain as participants recount their experiences of abuse, it is extremely important to consider the ethical concerns. This includes ensuring participants' safety, minimizing participant's distress, assuring

confidentiality, and obtaining informed consent (Ellsberg and Heise, 2002). Other ethical guidelines also include the participants' right to know about the nature and purpose of the study, and the consequences of participating in the study. The following section will provide a brief discussion on these sets of ethical principles.

4.7.1. Informed consent

Prior to conducting the interview, all participants were provided with information about the nature and purpose of the present research. This is also explained in the information sheet (Appendix 2A). The principle of informed consent means that consent should be given by someone who is competent to do so, and it should be given voluntarily (Allmark, 2002). Thus, it is imperative that participants know what will be required of them through their participation, and the procedures and risks, if any, which are involved. This enables them to make an informed decision about whether to participate or not. After potential participants had agreed to participate in the research, each participant was then asked to sign the informed consent form (Appendix 2B). The information sheet and the informed consent form were made available in English and also in the native languages of the participants (that is, Hindi, Urdu, and Nepali; see Appendix 3A & 3B; 4A & 4B; 5A & 5B).

The translation of all the materials used in the present study (such as, invitation letter, information sheet and informed consent form) followed the translation-back-translation methods (Brislin, 1970). This requires translation of the original document to the ethnic

language by a bilingual translator. Thereafter, the translated version was then back-translated to the source language by another bilingual translator. Both versions, that is, the original and the translated versions were then compared. Participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary, which meant that they were not being coerced to join the study, and they had the choice to withdraw from it or end the interview at any time without negative consequences. If they withdrew, they were not required to provide reasons for their withdrawal. The informed consent forms will be stored separately from the research data so as to preserve the anonymity of participants. The researcher assured the participants that no-one besides the researcher and her research supervisors will be privy to the form. The researcher also informed the potential participants that they could use a pseudonym to sign the form but all of them signed their actual name and informed the researcher that they trusted her.

4.7.2. Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality refers to the way in which the information provided by participants is treated, with the expectation that this information will not be disclosed without their consent. Anonymity suggests that even when this information is shared it will be done in such a way that participants cannot be identified through the disclosed data (Jones, Torres and Arminio, 2006). Basically, the principles of confidentiality and anonymity were operationalised through the statement of informed consent form which participants were required to sign prior to engaging in the research process.

After potential participants were identified, the researcher briefly explained the purpose and nature of the research, and that they would be asked to share their stories if they agreed to participate in the research. They were assured of the confidentiality of their information and the anonymity of their identity through using pseudonyms. Furthermore, the researcher also assured the participants that their personal data would be kept in a safe place and that only the researcher would have direct access to this information and data would be erased once the project has been completed. Participants were asked for permission to use excerpts from their interviews (using fictitious names) for the purpose of this research and for publications.

4.7.6. Storing of collected data

Participants were assured that all data collected, audio and written, would be stored safely, and kept under lock at all times, and that only the researcher would have access to this information. This is to safeguard the data. The research information may be shared with the researcher's supervisory team but only for research purposes. Even then, the participant's identities will not be revealed. The signed consent form and the anonymous data collected will be kept separately to afford further protection of the data. All data will be destroyed once the research is completed.

4.7.4. Minimising participant's distress

When interviewing participants on sensitive topics, sometimes it may cause distress upon the individual as they share and recount their stressful relationship and experiences.

The researcher continually strove to develop sensitivity during the interview, and responded appropriately to symptoms of distress by being empathetic to their pain (Lee, 1999). A help card, listing the telephone number of social services (such as Integrated Family Service Centre), and referrals for counselling were provided to each respondent at the start of the interview. Additionally, the researcher was cognisant of the distress the interview questions could cause the participant, and would have ended the interview if it was causing distress, or if the interviewee wished to stop the interview. The researcher also made an effort not to rush the interviews, but allowed the participants to share their stories at their own pace. At the end of each interview, the researcher thanked each participant for sharing their story. The researcher also made sure that she ended each interview on a positive note, reinforcing the participant's own coping mechanisms and strength and reminding her that the information she shared was important and would be used to help other women in similar situations.

4.7.5. Deception

Emphasising on informed consent, the Social Science codes of ethics oppose the use of deception in research (Christians, 2005). When conducting research, deception should be avoided as much as possible, as “deception is neither ethically justified nor practically necessary...” (Bulmer, 1982, p.217). On the other hand, there might be situations in which some information cannot be obtained without some form of deception by omission, such as in psychology or medicine (Christians, 2005). In such cases, if the information to be obtained, and “the knowledge to be gained from deceptive

experiments” are valuable to society, then some modicum of deception may be permitted in the process (Soble, 1978, p.40).

In the present study, there is no deception or misrepresentation involved. As mentioned above (see section 4.7.1), participants were informed at the outset about the nature and purpose of the research and the procedures of participation. Thus, all participants were made aware of the process of their participation, and were provided with sufficient information that they could make informed decisions about participating in the research.

4.7.3. Ensuring participant’s safety

To minimize the risk to participants and also to the researcher, the researcher took into consideration the environment in which the interview took place. It is important to take into account the safety of the location, where both the interviewee and the interviewer feel safe. As such, the researcher arranged the interviews at the social service agency whenever she could successfully negotiate a space there, at the residence of the participants at their suggestion when the husband was out of the country. The researcher also took steps to develop awareness of personal safety, for instance, she carried her mobile phone with her at all times, and a list of telephone numbers of family members and friends. The researcher also informed a family member of the time and location of each of the interviews, to keep them abreast of her schedule and location.

4.8. Data analysis process

Data analysis involves the ‘interplay’ between researchers and data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Data analysis in qualitative research is the process of systematically examining and organising the interview transcripts, field notes and other relevant materials which the researcher accumulates. It is through this process that the researcher can increase her own understanding of the data and ensure clear presentation of what is discovered from the data to others (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). Unlike quantitative data analysis which is arrived at through statistical methods, in qualitative research data comprised of words, and it is the responsibility of the researcher to decode the meaning, categorising them into themes and making sense out of them. “Words” are the mode through which various realms of argument and experiences are connected (Collins, 1984, p.353).

After each interview, the researcher made notes about the interview, including the researcher’s impressions and reactions regarding the interview, and any important behavioural observations. At the end of each interview, the researcher summarised and went through the narrative of each woman’s story for clarity with the participants and giving them the opportunity for their feedback on their story to delete and/or add. All interviews were transcribed by the researcher. Although this was a laborious process, it provided the researcher with a firmer grip on the interview data.

The grounded theory approach proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) was chosen as a tool for data analysis for the current study for a few reasons. First, an area was being

investigated that has gone almost unexplored scientifically, and there is an absence of scholarly literature on the subject. Second, the study sought to explore interactions and processes, not only between people and the environment, but also in individuals' thought processes and feelings. Finally, to make sense of the significant themes that emerge- integrating a useful model grounded in the data collected from interviews. This study was intended not only to describe what was going on, but also to conceptualise it. The goal was to develop a model, developing a model of 'what is going on' and 'why' based on the data, that could guide practice and policy for domestic violence service.

Interview transcripts were coded according to the grounded theory process of coding by Strauss and Corbin (1990). In the first phase of analysis, open coding was conducted. Open coding is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising the data. Open coding is the part of analysis that pertains specifically to the naming and categorising of phenomena through close examination of data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) indicate that conceptualising the data is the first step in analysis. Conceptualising refers to the process of breaking down and taking apart an observation, a sentence, or a paragraph, and giving each discrete incident, idea or event, a name (i.e., naming of phenomena) which is something that stands for or represents the phenomenon. This is done by asking questions such as: what is this? What does it represent? The researcher compares the incident with each other in the process of analysing the data so that similar phenomena can be given the same name. The name the researcher chooses is usually the one that seems most logically related to the data it represents (Strauss and

Corbin, 1990).

In the open coding phase of this study, each interview transcript was examined for any references to the woman's perception/understanding of domestic violence and help-seeking that the woman related to her experience. Revision of the coding was made on an on-going basis as new codes were added and thematic patterns emerged. Open coding leads to the identification of possible core concepts on which the analysis begins to build.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), the second phase of data analysis in a grounded theory approach is axial coding. Axial coding involves refining and differentiating the various categories that were identified in the open coding process and making connections between categories and subcategories once these have been created. The focus in this phase of the analysis is on specifying a category by describing the context-, in which it exists, the conditions that led to its creation or maintenance, the strategies through which it persists, and the consequences of those strategies. Although open and axial coding occurs in two separate phases, they can proceed simultaneously as researchers attempt to organise and analyse the data.

The third phase of the grounded theory approach according to Strauss and Corbin (1990) in the analysis of the data is selective coding, in which a core category is identified and tied to the other categories and subcategories in the form of a meaningful storyline. A

story line is the “conceptualisation of the story” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.116). The final phase of the analysis is the theoretical proposition, whereby the theory obtained from the data analysis process will be modelled and articulated in the form of a narrative structure or a list of propositions (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The researcher began the analysis by reviewing the transcript of each interview and going over the field notes, memos and journal several times in order to foster clarity of thought and gain familiarity with each woman’s story. Researcher read and re-read the data several times. During these readings the two research questions were kept in mind: what is women’s perception of domestic violence? What is their help-seeking process? Text that was relevant to the research concern was retained and irrelevant text was discarded which make the text easier to work with. Categories which emerge from one stage of data are then compared with those that emerge from the next. Data are continually compared and contrasted at each level of analysis. The researcher began to determine some of the obvious categories and wrote these down. For instance, when reading participants’ narratives of domestic violence, it was clear that there should be a category called “types of abuse”. The researcher saw themes emerge from the data. For instance, when abused women were talking about their experience of domestic violence, they explained why they could not speak about domestic violence or get divorced because it is not in their culture to talk about it and divorce was not acceptable. At this point, it was clear that the issue of culture and the influence of cultural factors play a strong role in their experiences of abuse. Although the word culture was not used in the

interview questions, the participants frequently used this word. Furthermore, the participants had concerns about many more issues and the researcher saw many parts of their lives being affected by cultural factors (some examples are the stigma of divorce, and to keep family unity at all costs). These were also further substantiated by the interviews with the six helping professionals (staffs) of the social service agencies. It was clear to the researcher that one of the themes under 'perception of domestic violence' would be culture.

As the researcher proceeded to re-examine the different categories and their properties, the researcher looked within each theme for recurrent statements or meanings through a process of axial coding (understanding the relationship between categories in order to understand the phenomenon to which they relate). The researcher separated pertinent information from irrelevant information and eliminated the overlapping ones or combined those which shared common characteristics. For example, originally, the researcher had both view of 'marriage' and 'family' categorised differently. The researcher decided to eliminate the overlapping categories and grouped together that shared a similar pattern such as marriage and family.

The researcher had also kept memos. Memos are short notes that one writes for oneself. They served as reminders and provide a certain amount of reflection. In the memos, researcher asked questions, making comparison, throwing out ideas, having mental dialogue that stimulates the thinking process. Memos are helpful in helping researcher

to crystallised ideas and not lose track of her thinking on the topic. Also, the researcher wrote down her personal reflections in a journal.

According to Strauss and Corbin (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), theoretical sensitivity in grounded theory refers to the personal qualities of the researcher, the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to the data, the capacity to understand and the capability to separate the pertinent from that which is not. All this is done in conceptual rather than concrete terms. It indicates an awareness of the subtleties of meaning which can come from previous reading, -such as literature, previous research, theories, and also personal experience with or which is relevant to, an area. Therefore, having this background information sensitises the researcher to what is going on with the phenomenon that is under study. Theoretical sensitivity relies on the researcher's intuitive and interpretive analysis of the data.

4.8.1. Grounded theory approach to data analysis

The grounded theory approach to qualitative research was first proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Grounded theory varied from study to study depending on which elements of grounded theory the student used. However, early on in its development the two researchers parted ways. Now there are two fundamental schools of grounded theory- the Glasserian school and Straussian School (Stern, 1994). Glasser and Strauss diverge in their perspectives regarding approaches to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000). Glaser takes the stance that the researcher should have an empty mind and go straight

into the field, while Strauss permits a general idea of the area under study (to do the literature review first and then go into the field). While both can be characterised as objectivist approaches to grounded theory data analysis, Glaser leads with the principle that theory should emerge while Strauss uses structured questions to lead the emergence of the theory (Charmaz, 2000). Kathy Charmaz came up with her version of constructionist grounded theory later on (for further details on Charmaz's version see: Charmaz, 2000; 2006).

Grounded theory methodological techniques is suitable for the present study in helping to provide practical guidelines on the process of analysis, such as, identifying categories, and then linking them and establishing the relationship amongst the categories (Willig, 2008). This process of identifying categories and then linking and establishing relationship between the categories involve various procedures such as constant comparative analysis, theoretical sampling and coding (Willig, 2008). The following section will discuss these procedures in further detail.

4.8.1.1. Constant comparative analysis

Constant comparison method refers to the process in which concepts and categories which emerge from one stage of the data analysis are then compared with those that emerge from the next (Kearney, 2001). This process of constant comparison of the emerging data allows the researcher to find similar and different incidents among participants, which in turn provide useful insights into identifying the categories and

themes from their stories. This method of identifying themes and patterns also helps to shed light on what further questions need to be asked, or any additional data that is needed for further examination (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Constant comparative analysis enables the researcher to move back and forth between the emerging categories, and identify the similarities and differences within these categories (Willig, 2008). This is also to ensure that researchers are not simply building up categories, but rather the identified categories are then compared which further allows for the construction of subcategories (Charmaz, 2000). This process of comparative analysis continues until it is said to achieve theoretical saturation (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), that is, when no further enrichment of the categories can be obtained or generated, or when data no longer promises new knowledge (Flick, 2009).

4.8.1.2. Theoretical sampling

In grounded theory, the process of collecting data, coding, and data analysis are done simultaneously and in an iterative manner. This means that, when the data are collected they are coded into categories, and these categories are further classified according to the emerging themes (Charmaz, 2006). This process enables the researcher to identify any gaps in the data and the researcher can then go back to the field to collect further data to fill these gaps or holes. Thus, theoretical sampling involves the collection of further data based upon the emerging categories derived from the earlier stages of data analysis, until it reaches theoretical saturation. The aim is not to increase the size of the original sample, but rather, it is concerned with refining the existing analytic categories

rather than simply focusing on a wide range of descriptive categories. Theoretical saturation refers to the process whereby no more categories can be obtained or gathered from the data. During the data collection and data analysis process of the present study, the researcher also utilised the theoretical sampling technique for expanding or refining the concepts and theory that have already been developed (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984).

4.8.2 Coding

Interview transcripts were coded according to the grounded theory process of coding as proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990). In grounded theory analysis, coding is the most basic and fundamental process which involves a process of reducing the data by dividing them into units of analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998). These units are then classified according to emerging themes, and each theme represents a concept or concepts. This enables the researcher to capture the meaning within the transcript data. The established categories from the initial analysis will provide the links, context, and conditions amongst the themes that emerge from the data. Substantial codes are developed which are used to describe, name, or classify those under study (Flick, 2009). Revisions to the coding continued on an on-going basis as new codes were added and thematic patterns began to emerge. Strauss and Corbin (1990) have identified three main methods of coding which are discussed in the following section.

4.8.2.1. Open-coding

Open-coding is the first step in the coding process. It involves close examination of the

data and then breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising the phenomena. It is this part of the analysis which pertains specifically to the naming and categorisation of phenomena, identifying the differences and similarities among the varied categories, which in turn can allow for differentiation (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Comparing the different categories can also enable the researcher to group similar phenomena under the same name (or category). The naming or labelling of segments of data can enable the researcher “to group similar events, happenings, and objects under a common heading or classification” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.103). The coding of data into categories may be based upon imagery or meaning derived from the data, or “in vivo” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.65). Generally, the researcher selects a name that seems most logically related to the data it represents. Categories can be thought of as “strings that have conceptual connections with other categories rather than as isolated constructs” (Dey, 1997, p.7). The process of open coding produces a large amount of unstructured data (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1995), which may be mostly descriptive labels for occurrences or phenomena. To establish the links between such categories, and to refine and differentiate the various categories that are identified in the open coding process, Strauss and Corbin (1990) propose using a coding process referred to as “axial coding”.

4.8.2.2. Axial coding

In axial coding the various categories identified during the open coding phase are further refined and differentiated, and connections between categories and subcategories are

then established and clarified. This clarification involves naming possible relations between phenomena and concepts which are then used to facilitate the discovery or establishment of structures of relationships between the phenomena, concepts, and categories (Flick, 2009). The focus in this phase of the analysis is on specifying a category by describing the context, in which it exists, the conditions that led to its creation or maintenance, the strategies through which it persists, and the consequences of those strategies. This process of identifying the relationships and categories is verified against the text and data iteratively. Although open and axial coding are said to occur in two separate phases, they often proceed simultaneously as the researcher attempts to organise and analyse the data.

4.8.2.3. Selective coding

In the third step of coding, the processes in axial coding are continued at a higher level of abstraction. This involves identifying and elaborating the core concepts or core variables, and then linked to the other categories and subcategories in the form of a meaningful storyline (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998) the central process is conceived as a case rather than a person or a single interview, since the objective is to provide a short overview of the story.

4.9. Credibility of data

As qualitative study is concerned with meaning in context, ensuring the credibility and validity of the research findings is also a concern of the researcher. How to ensure the

soundness and validity of the research has been a question faced by qualitative researchers. To demonstrate the trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative research findings, Lincoln and Guba (1985), proposed four criteria: *credibility* (internal validity), *dependability* (reliability), *transferability and/or generalizability* (external validity) and *conformability* (objectivity).

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings of the present study, the researcher employed some of the techniques as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), such as peer debriefing and members checks. After the end of each interview the researcher summarised and went through the narrative of each woman's story with the participant. This provided the opportunity to the woman to clarify their story, and to omit or add anything from the narrative. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), peer debriefing involve presenting the analysed data to other experts in qualitative research to help clarify the meanings and the basis of interpretations of the data analysed by the researcher. As part of the debriefing process, the researcher also discusses the analytical process with her supervisors during supervision and with a doctoral student which served to provide as external checks. This process also helped to ensure in getting relevant and significant feedback. Moreover, the researcher also applied a form of checking and cross checking with each element of the methodological process such as interviews data, memos, transcription, coding, field notes, chapter writing.

The term dependability in qualitative research closely resembles the notion of reliability

as applied in quantitative research, and refers to the consistency of findings, and whether results are replicable in other settings when parallel conditions are followed (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This can be achieved by providing a full description of data collection process, data analysis, and interpretation, using a consistent method of data coding and recoding (Kairuz, Crump and O'brien, 2007). Thus, in the present study, the researcher provided a detailed description of data collection procedures and methods for data analysis, providing an opportunity to the readers to determine the trustworthiness of the methodology.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) *confirmability* refers to the extent to which the results of the study can be confirmed or corroborated by others. It also refers to the careful assessment of the findings in order to ensure that accuracy is maintained. Confirmability is thus concern with how data are organised and reconstructed rather than emphasising on the role of the researcher (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). It is therefore imperative that themes and conclusions are derived from the data must be done in a systematic way so that it can be easily traced and substantiated to the source. In the present study the researcher also took steps to ensure that collected data are process and systematically organised and stored. Moreover, the researcher also continuously took down field notes which were usually recorded at the end of each fieldwork day. The researcher also wrote memos about codes, and kept a reflective journal to jot down the field experiences, her own learning and feelings throughout the entire process. These notes includes general observations about what happened during the interview, as well

as the researcher's own personal reflection. All these related documents can be used to run an audit trail when necessary. Additionally, in the chapter of the results, the researcher also provided numerous quotations from the interview to support the interpretation of the data.

Validity in its traditional sense is not an issue in grounded theory, instead validity should be judge by relevance, workability and modifiability (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; 1998). A relevant study deals with the real concern of participants and is not only of academic interest but also for practice. Workability is when the theory works which explains how problem is being solved with much variation. A modifiable theory can be altered when new relevant data is compared to existing data. The goal of grounded theory is to discover the participants main concern and how they try to resolve it. Grounded theory aim to conceptualise 'whats going on' using empirical data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), the result of grounded theory is about the relationship between concepts that explain people's action regardless of time and place (Glaser, 1998).

4.10. Personal reflection on the study

Various authors refer to the use of reflexivity or reflection as a critical component of qualitative research method (example, Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000; Brown, 2006). It is the practice of reflexivity that is a central part of creating rigour within the qualitative research process (Brown, 2006). Rennie (2007) and Willig (2008) indicates reflexivity as having self-awareness, which involves reflecting upon the ways in which our own

values, experiences, interests, beliefs, and wider aims in life have shaped the research and how the research may have affected and possibly change us as a person and as researcher. Reflexivity is an awareness of the influence the researcher has on the research (of what is being studied) and how the research process affects the researcher (Probst and Berenson, 2013). It is impossible to remain detached outside one's subject while conducting research, and reflexivity acknowledge the impossibility of remaining outside of one's subject matter (Willig, 2008). Because the researcher had been keeping a logbook/journal, she was able to report some of the personal reflection on this study. Self-reflection in qualitative research serves to normalise the researcher's emotions as part of the research process, it can inform the research process and provide depth and meaning to empirical research work (Arditti et al, 2010). Since the researcher is such an integral part of both the research process and the reporting of findings, it is important that the researcher remain aware of her biases. Keeping a journal about the researcher's reactions and feelings during the data collection and data analysis helped the researcher recognise the influence that the researcher is having on the research and, just as importantly, the influence that the research is having upon the researcher.

In this study, reflexivity was imperative in understanding the encounters with participants and the data. This involves actively listening to participants during interviews, responding reflexively to emergent concepts in the data, and acting upon analytic hunches. For example, the researcher actively listened to participants concerns about their children's future, and responded by refining questions to probe more deeply

into how they handle such issues. Such reflexive processes allowed the researcher to respond to participants' underlying tensions and concerns, and to enter more deeply into their worlds. Throughout the data analysis, the researcher stayed with the data closely; allowing the data to unfold, and raising questions such as, 'what is this data about? What is it saying? What is the context, what are the consequences?' Through dialoguing with the data, it stimulates her thinking process and enabled the researcher to start to 'feel' them, to understand from the viewpoint of the women who had the experience, and to view it through their perceptions. The researcher also applied a form of checking and cross checking within each element of the process she used, such as interviews, journaling, field notes, memos, transcribing, coding, and chapter writing.

Data collection can be an intense experience when researching sensitive topic and stressful human experiences as it is entering the lives of others and hearing personal accounts of participants' painful lives experiences (Dickson-Swift et al, 2007). Researching on sensitive topic (such as domestic violence) and interaction with the study participants during data collection had profound effect on the researcher's emotion, and emotional upset can occur through contact with research participants who are going through painful or traumatic events (Bloor et al, 2010).The researcher found interviewing the women poignant at times, when she felt overwhelmed with their pain and the abuse they had undergone or for some, were still undergoing at the time of the interview. The initial interviews were hard on her emotionally as she heard and thought about the stories of abuse which the women told. She said to herself, 'if I felt this way,

how much more distressing it must be for the women who actually experience and have to live through violence in their lives'. As their stories unfolded, the researcher admired their strength and courage in the face of adversity, and for some in re-building their lives all over again after their divorce/separation. It was inspiring to see the strength and resilience displayed by all of the participants in their goal to live, not just survive, after their painful experiences. Many of these women were tackling larger issues such as living with financial difficulties, housing issues, legal issues, migration issues, raising children alone, and/or acculturating to a new culture, and language.

The researcher cannot help but be touched by their stories. There is something about the interaction that occurs between the participant and researcher during the interview/ data analysis that has altered how she thinks and feels about marital violence. This has to do with taking the role of the other, feeling for a short time what it is like to be in their shoes. As she worked with the data, at times the researcher felt anger at the circumstances that brought these women into violence and the rules of engagement that made it so difficult for them to respond/fight back differently. At the same time, she is aware that one must not allow one's emotions to get in the way of doing the research. It is okay to feel, but at the same time one must retain the ability to do justice to the stories of participants and not get carried away by other emotions.

Although the researcher had anticipated that recruitment would be difficult given the sensitivity of the research topic and the issues related to the cultural group which she

was attempting to access, she was unprepared for how arduous this stage of the research process would be, such as accessing women and gatekeeping by service providers presented major obstacles during this process. Research in the area of intimate violence is difficult because of ethical and practical considerations, for example, asking people to re-live distressing experiences, as well as the embarrassment, shame, fear and the perception of intimate violence as a private problem (Agnew, 1998; Strube, 1988).

In her reflections on the research process, the researcher learned to understand the concepts of sisterhood or insider in research relationships. Before the researcher began this research, the researcher thought that sisterhood or insider would grant her easy access to the community. However, when she solicited participation from some women whom she knew in the community they turned her down. Her insider and sisterhood privilege did not grant her the right to infringe on their privacy or take them for granted. Therefore the researcher deeply appreciated these women who were willing to be interviewed and who had chosen to be so open and honest about sharing their painful experiences with her and for some it was the first time to share their stories in full details. The interview also provided women a new avenue to express their experiences, to share this new learning in broader ways, through publishing, presentation and support for women experiencing abuse through inclusive services and policy.

Although the literature on qualitative research had sensitised the researcher to some of the issues she experienced, it was difficult to prepare for, or anticipate some of the

difficulties reviewed above. However, she believes that these challenges not only introduced a whole new facet to the research process, but were also an important part of her learning experience. Some issues such as inaccessibility, and frustration of getting access to women for interview, also afforded her with some insight into the experiences of these brave participants who met with her, a total stranger, to share some of the most intimate painful details of their lives. The researcher showed utmost respect and interest during the interview process.

Researcher's cultural knowledge (about the study population) is critical in the research process as it can enhance interpreting and representing study participants in ways that honour and give voice to them who have often been silenced, misinterpreted and placed on the margins (Milner 1V, 2007). The present researcher's cultural knowledge (of the study population), ethnicity and gender make room for shared commonalities with the study participants. An important advantage of such a perspective is the ability of the researcher to "really get it" or tune into certain aspects of participants' cultural values and beliefs. This validates the 'research with, and for people' approach as opposed to the 'research on people' position (Milner 1V, 2007). Moreover, these shared commonalities of ethnicity, gender, and culture helped the researcher to understand and tune into participants' cultural values and beliefs (regarding the role of wife, mother and daughter) and gain insight into their experiences. Additionally, it also aided to build rapport and serves to facilitates the participants' sense of comfort during the interview and enhance their openness to share their painful experiences of partner abuse. The women in this

study are helping to raise awareness about their experiences of partner abuse (through participation in this study) and the researcher honour their subjective experiences. Furthermore, the researcher's professional background as a counsellor and social worker informed her commitment to social justice and to this research project. This research project aims to give voice to women's experiences of partner abuse, an important step toward promoting social justice and facilitating change. Women should be able to help inform the services and support they need while adding their voices to a body of literature that truly reflect their experiences. Researcher can acquire truth in research when they value and listen to the self, to others and the self in relations to others (Probst and Berenson, 2013).

The researcher did not position herself as an "expert" but acknowledged that participants are the "experts" on their own lives. They had life experiences with a phenomenon and knew more about it than she did; therefore the researcher abandoned the "expert" stance. She had to forgo her bias and privilege the subjective views of the participants, as they are the "experts" on their own experience. To emphasise subjectivity, is to give voice and meaning to women's experiences of abuse and to understand their experiences from their standpoint. Interpretive qualitative study means entering the research participants' world, and respect for our research participants pervades how we collect data and shapes the content of our data by making a concerted effort to learn about their views and actions, and to try to understand their lives and interpret the data from their perspective (Charmaz, 2006). Analysing the problem of

abuse begins by understanding it from the perspective of the women, within their context and within their worldview.

As a researcher, she is aware that she has a deep responsibility to those who trust her with their stories, and to present those stories accurately and fairly. It is their side of the story that she is trying to capture in this study. To really bring out the complexity of their experience, it must be placed in the context of everything else.

Looking back upon her fieldwork experiences, in many ways the process was also a journey with moments of joy as well as frustration encountered because of the delay in gaining access for the interviews. On the other hand, the initial period of fieldwork was also a period of learning, when the senses are heightened by exposure to new stimuli, and a time of testing one's social, intellectual and emotional capabilities. There were nights when she lied awake worrying about getting access to women who would be willing to be interviewed, and there were also times when she would get up in the middle of the night when an idea formed, to write it down lest she forgot it in the morning. Although the review of the relevant literature had, she thought, prepared her for some of the tasks she would face in the data collection and when conducting interviews on a sensitive topic such as women experiences of violence in their lives, the experience itself proved to be far more illuminating than learning from someone else's words (i.e., previous research, journals, and books).

Having the opportunity to conduct this study, the researcher learned much about the situations of South Asian immigrant women who were abused in the context of living in an unfamiliar country. More importantly, she also learned a lot about herself. It taught her the value of self-discipline and time management because she had to seek motivation from within herself. It also made her feel a greater commitment to social justice. There were times when she was frustrated and discouraged, which most doctoral student go through. But as she looked beyond academia and focused on the needs of the study, it sustained her vision to carry on and to persevere. She believes that, as researchers we have social responsibility not only to take/gather information from the study population but also to give back in return what the research findings can do to improve their lives. It is from research findings that the possibility of intervention and policy can come about as research and practice are intertwined. With this insight, the researcher found meaning in conducting this research. It is hope that the findings of this research will have some bearing on policy and practice implication, and that this study will make a small contribution towards making audible the voices of underrepresented South Asian women who are experiencing domestic violence in Hong Kong.

The goal of this study is not simply to describe the phenomenon; the question is how this study can be of use in the struggle for social justice. Qualitative research can be used to benefit marginalised groups (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003). Qualitative methods honour subjective experiences of participants. It is from such investigation that new theories are developed, or theories are expanded, phenomena are better understood,

policy are implemented from research findings, and professionals can be better informed about concepts that can guide their practice.

4.11. Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter contextualised the study and outlined the research methodology employed in the present study. It also highlighted how the use of qualitative methods was relevant for the research focus and questions of the present study. The grounded theory approach to data analysis remained the key approach that guided the data collection and data analysis process. This chapter also provided a discussion on research paradigms and perspectives in the social sciences. Additionally, this chapter provided a detailed discussion on the research procedures, data collection, and participant recruitment strategies. It also highlighted some of the important ethical considerations that need to be followed and observed throughout the research process.

The following chapter (chapter 5) will put forward a brief story of each of the fourteen participants so as to provide readers with an understanding of the background of each participant's experiences of abuse, and it will also set the stage for a more detailed discussion of the findings which will be presented in chapter 6.

CHAPTER FIVE

Results I: Participants' Stories

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a biographical profile of each of the participants who shared their stories. A total of 14 women who experienced domestic violence participated in this research and contributed their time and story. Prior to discussing the themes that were generated from the data, readers are provided with the individual story of each of the women interviewed. The biographical profiles aid in understanding the background of each participant and the unique aspects of their experience of domestic violence.

Out of the fourteen participants interviewed, nine were interviewed in English and Hindi and attempts were made to follow the participant's own grammatical style during transcription. The other five participants were interviewed in their native language (i.e., Hindi = 2; Urdu = 2; Nepali =1) with the help of translators. The researcher also could understand and speak some Hindi and used this accordingly during the interviews. All transcription was done verbatim, and those interviews done with the help of English translators were also transcribed verbatim based on the English translation provided by the translator, but was verified independently by acquaintances fluent in Hindi/Urdu/Nepali. Besides the fourteen participants interviewed, six helping professionals from four different social services were also interviewed in English to get

their perspective and to get an understanding of the nature of their respective social services provided.

The themes that emerged from the data sets (both the abused women and the helping professionals) are discussed in further detail in the following chapter (see chapter 6).

5.2. Women's stories

The following section briefly introduces each participant; pseudonyms were assigned to replace their true identities and to protect their confidentiality.

Ash

Ash is a 34 year old Pakistani Muslim woman who came to Hong Kong four years ago to join her husband. Ash had an arranged marriage in Pakistan, to a Pakistani man living in Hong Kong. A few days after the wedding, her husband returned to Hong Kong while Ash lived with her in-laws in Pakistan for eight years. During these eight years, her husband would come to visit her in Pakistan a few times a year. They have three sons and a daughter currently living with their paternal grandmother in Pakistan. Her husband sponsored her immigration to Hong Kong four years ago. The interview lasted 60 minutes, during which Ash described her life and the abusive marriage, as well as the isolation and loneliness she felt. She talked about her husband's attempts to control her social contact with her friends by restricting her from going out or joining the social activities at the social service agencies.

Ash's interview focused on her experiences of physical and emotional abuse from her husband. Ash reported that two months after arriving in Hong Kong, she learned of her husband's extra-marital affair. She was devastated and asked her husband to end the relationship. She said that was when the arguments and abuse ensued as her husband was unwilling to end the relationship. In fact, her husband wanted her to return to Pakistan so that he could marry his girlfriend, but Ash refused to leave. This also exacerbated the abuse, which was both physical and verbal. Because of her beliefs about marriage and family, she would not consider either divorce or leaving her husband.

She also mentioned that her husband did not allow her to meet other friends or join the activities and programmes organised by the social service agency. She also felt that he tried to keep her isolated so that she would not be able to obtain any information or seek help outside and thus would not challenge his authority. Ash also felt that her husband took advantage of the fact that she does not speak the local language (Cantonese), does not know much about Hong Kong, and is financially dependent on him; hence he can exert his control over her.

Ash also described how her husband would abuse her physically, sometimes he would pull her hair or use objects to hit her. Once, it was so bad that she had to be hospitalised for a burn injury caused by her husband. After she was discharged from the hospital, the police referred her to a shelter (refuge) home. While in the shelter home, her husband asked his friends to talk to her and to forgive him for the injury, otherwise he would be

punished by law and be imprisoned. So, she forgave him, and returned to her husband after 22 days in the shelter home. She explained that in her culture, even if her husband hurt her, the community would blame her if her husband was sent to prison. Ash shared that if she returned to Pakistan as a divorced woman, she feared that she would lose the respect of her community, as she said that divorced women are often looked down on in her community, and that women are blamed for the failure of their marriages.

Ash reported that she had shared her experiences of abuse with a few people in her community, the people she mentioned were well educated and respected in the community, and she also shared her experiences with social service agency staff. Since her visa was sponsored by her husband, she was advised by all to tolerate and remain with her husband if she wished to live in Hong Kong or else risk being deported. However, about a year ago, her husband asked her to leave, and when she refused, he gave her '*talaq*' (a form of divorce under Islamic law wherein a husband, by saying '*talaq*' three times renounces the marriage). He also withdrew the sponsorship of her visa. The social service agency staff tried to intervene on her behalf by talking and requesting her husband not to withdraw his visa sponsorship, even if he planned to divorce her, but the husband got angry and shouted at the staff and told them not to interfere.

At the time of conducting this research, Ash is working part time as a dishwasher to support herself. Staff of the social service agency where this interview was conducted

are also helping with her application for residency¹ permit and the legal immigration paper work, although its complicated, the process is on-going. She has also started joining some of the program and activities organised by the social service agency.

Ash also shared that she knew many women in the community who are suffering silently and enduring the abuses from their husband because they are afraid to speak up for fear of further reprisals from their husband, and also being deported if husband withdraws the sponsorship. Ash expressed the need for protection of abused women who are in such a situation. She said that due to the Hong Kong Immigration Law which requires 7 years of continuous residence, many abused women whose visas are sponsored by their husband remain in the abusive relationship and suffer for 7 years. Ash talk about the immigration law, and shared that it posed a hindrance for women experiencing domestic violence in limiting their options of leaving if they chose to do so. She also expressed the need for legal protection for abused women, and hoped the government would do something to help abused women regarding the 7-years residency law.

Nadira

Nadira is a 29 year old Pakistani Muslim woman, and was married to a Hong Kong resident Pakistani man. She has two children aged 4 and 6 years old. The interview,

¹ According to the Hong Kong Immigration requirement, a permanent residency status is granted to a person who have live continuously for 7 years in Hong Kong, and who have decided to make Hong Kong their home. However, this does not apply to household domestic workers, irrespective of whether they have lived for 7 years or not.

which lasted for about an hour, was conducted in English at the social service agency that made the referral. Nadira described her marriage to a Hong Kong Pakistani man and her life with her in-laws in Pakistan after the marriage. A few days after their wedding, her husband returned to Hong Kong while Nadira remained in Pakistan with her parents-in-law. Her husband would come to visit her in Pakistan a few times a year. Nadira also went to Hong Kong for both of her sons' deliveries and returned to Pakistan after the birth of each child.

Nadira recounted that she had a good relationship with her husband during the early days of their marriage. But her mother-in-law's interference affected the relationship between Nadira and her husband. She shared that her mother-in-law criticised and complained about Nadira to her husband whenever he visited Pakistan or when he called on the phone, saying that Nadira was not taking good care of her. When Nadira tried to explain to her husband he would get angry and often physically abuse her, and accuse her of lying. Nadira described her mother-in-law as a jealous woman who did not have a happy marriage with her own husband. She said that her mother-in-law made life difficult for her and exerted control over her social life, restricting her meeting with her friends and her own family. Nadira's husband supported her financially but the money was controlled by the mother-in-law, and Nadira recounted that her mother-in-law did not even give her any money to buy clothes for herself and the children. But instead her mother-in-law spent the money on herself and her unmarried daughters buying clothes for them.

Nadira reported that she began to observe a difference in her husband's attitude after the birth of their second child. Whenever he visited Pakistan he would ignore her, and did not want to talk or sleep with her. He also ignored the children and did not bother to talk or play with them. Even when he called from Hong Kong he would only talk with his mother and siblings. Nadira said his behaviour and attitude hurt her. When she tried to talk with him and ask him about it, he became irritated, shouted at her, and told her to divorce him. Nadira found his behaviour strange- she was concerned and felt something was not right. She asked her friend in Hong Kong to find out about her husband. Her friend informed her that her husband had married a local Chinese woman and had a child with her. Nadira was devastated and shocked. She informed her sister that she wanted to go to Hong Kong to find her husband and talk with him. Her mother was in the last stages of cancer so she did not want to inform her mother about her marital problems. Her father had passed away before her marriage.

Her mother-in-law tried to stop her from leaving Pakistan by locking away her passport and the children's birth certificate. However, one day Nadira managed to unlock the safety deposit box. She took her passport and the children's birth certificates, borrowed money and went to Hong Kong. Upon her arrival, she could not find her husband (because he was in the United Kingdom with his new wife and child) and when she phoned him he told her that he did not want to see her and that she should return to Pakistan. Nadira contacted her friend and stayed with her for one day as she had nowhere to stay. Her friend helped her to contact a social service agency, which in turn

referred her to a shelter home where she (Nadira) lived for one month with her two little sons.

While living in the shelter (refuge) home, a social worker at the social service agency helped her to locate her husband after several attempts made to arrange a meeting at the social agency and the social worker acted as the mediator. However, her husband told her in front of the social worker that he did not want to see her or the children and asked her to divorce him and return to Pakistan. He also told her and the social worker that she (Nadira) and the children were no longer a part of his life and should not trouble him anymore either by phone or by arranging a meeting. Nadira said she “cried and cried” when she heard these “harsh words” from her husband. But Nadira refused to initiate the divorce because she said that she would have lost custody of her sons. Also, she could not return to Pakistan as a divorced woman because of the shame and stigma of being a divorcee. Nadira shared that divorced women are frowned upon and people (the community) would gossip and label her as a ‘bad woman’ they would blame her for the divorce, as a failure of her marriage. Nadira reported that when she refused to initiate the divorce and return to Pakistan, her husband got angry and threatened her. He said “I will make life difficult for you, you cannot survive in Hong Kong”, and he used many harsh words such as “I will kill you”.

Nadira described that her husband had made a false complaint to the police, accusing her of trying to poison the children. The police came to the shelter home to arrest her

and took her to the police station. The shelter manager also informed the police that they could guarantee that Nadira had not tried to poison her children. But she was taken to the police station. Nadira shared that she was not even aware that she was being arrested and it was the first time in her life that she had stepped inside a police station. After being interrogated by the police with the help of a Pakistani interpreter, Nadira was asked to pay bail of HK\$1000. She informed the police that she only had HK\$ 200 with her, but she was told that she could not leave unless she paid the bail money of HK\$1000. As she could not leave the police station she asked her friend to fetch her children when school finished and to bring them to the police station as they had no one to take care of them. She and her children were locked up in the police station. Eventually she was bailed out with HK\$200 after five hours in the police station with her children.

At the time of conducting this interview, Nadira was already divorced from her husband. She said that her husband eventually initiated the divorce when Nadira refused to grant him the divorce, as he wanted to legalise his marriage with his second wife. After the divorce her husband tried to take custody of the children. Nadira suspected that her mother-in-law was behind this. However, Nadira applied for legal aid with the help of a social worker, and after two years of court hearings, Nadira was granted custody of her children. She felt safe in Hong Kong and said that if the divorce had happened in Pakistan the law would not have protected her and she would not have got custody of the children. Since the divorce she has no contact with her husband, nor does he ever

come to visit his children. Nadira said she now lives for her children and wants to give them a better future. She believes that they will have better future prospects in Hong Kong than in Pakistan. Nadira reported that she is concerned for her children, and the impact the divorce may have had on them, as in school when the other children ask her sons, “where is your father?”, the older son looks down and does not answer.

Amira

Amira is a 27 year old Pakistani Muslim woman. She had an arranged marriage to a Pakistani man from Hong Kong eight years ago. Two months after the wedding in Pakistan, her husband returned to Hong Kong while Amira lived with her in-laws in Pakistan for two years. Due to the ill-treatment by her in-laws, she moved back to her parent’s home and lived with them for another two years before immigrating to Hong Kong four years ago to join her husband. The interview was conducted in English and lasted for 90 minutes. At the time of conducting the interview Amira was separated from her husband. She was working part-time at a Pakistani grocery shop and she also volunteered at a social service agency.

Amira gave birth to a baby girl after arriving in Hong Kong four years ago. She felt that her husband became distant after the birth of the child as he had wanted a baby boy. She felt hurt by his rejection of the child, and said “the sex of the child is not within my control. I can’t choose whether the baby is a boy or a girl. It is given by god”. She said her husband started to withdraw after the birth of the child, and he also became abusive,

both verbally and physically. But, since she was on a dependent visa, Amira said that she would keep quiet whenever he shouted at her for fear that she would aggravate his anger, and that he might withdraw the visa sponsorship. She said she would have to wait two more years before obtaining her permanent residency in Hong Kong.

Amira said that she did not disclose the abuse and pretended in front of others in the community that everything was alright as she was afraid that people would talk and blame her for her “marriage problems”, and that they would label her as a “bad woman”. She also said that in her culture, women do not fight with their husbands, and that divorced woman loses the respect of her friends and the community and no one would like to talk with her and they will begin to avoid her.

Amira reported that she had shared only with two of her closest friends, who provided emotional support, and at times, financial support as well. Amira said that when she felt sad and unhappy about her marriage, she focused her thoughts on her daughter. The hope of a better future for her daughter in Hong Kong gave her the strength and courage to move on.

At the time of conducting the interview, Amira was separated from her husband, which was initiated by him about two years previously. Although they were still legally married, Amira lived alone with her daughter. Amira said that her daughter motivated her and gave her a reason to live. She said “my daughter means everything to me and I

live for her”.

Nina

Nina is a 33 year old Pakistani Muslim woman married to a Hong Kong Pakistani man. She has been married for 17 years and has two children aged 13 and 16 years, both born in Hong Kong. After her wedding, Nina lived with her husband in Hong Kong for a few years. A few years later, after giving birth to her sons, Nina returned to Pakistan to live with her in-laws, at the insistence of her mother-in-law who said that the children could attend a proper Islamic school in Pakistan. But, Nina suspected that the main reason was that her mother-in-law wanted Nina to take care of her. Nina described her life with her in-laws as very stressful because her mother in-law controlled her movements and restricted her from even meeting her parents. Nina also shared that whenever her husband visited her from Hong Kong they fought, mainly because of her mother-in-law's interference and that she would complain about Nina to her son. When Nina tried to offer her explanation, her husband would get angry and scold her, and accuse her of lying.

Nina eventually returned to Hong Kong four years ago to take care of her sick father-in-law who was living with them in Hong Kong. She described it as a hard time, taking care of her sick father-in-law who also had a mental health problem.

Nina described her marriage with her husband, who abused her both verbally and

emotionally. She said that her husband was always angry with her even for small things and that he shouted at her using derogatory words like “*bekaar*” (of no regard/unworthy). Nina said that it hurt her feelings when he called her “*bekaar*”. She said, “it makes me feel useless and I feel like rubbish”. She found it very stressful and she suffers from a constant severe headache. Three years previously, in 2007, she went to see a doctor for her constant headaches and the doctor diagnosed her with depression. She had been on anti-depressant medication since then. She said that she felt depressed only after her marriage and that the depression had got worse since 2007.

Nina said that at times she had thoughts of suicide. Nina explained that she could not share with her parents as they were too old and could not help her. She said the thought of her children being without a mother gave her reason to live. She did share with two of her closest friends in Hong Kong and she felt relief talking and sharing with them as she felt they could understand her and her pain, as these friends were also experiencing domestic violence.

Nina reported that the medical social worker at the hospital which handles her case had asked her if she wanted to divorce her husband, but Nina said that she would not consider divorce because “it is not in my religion to divorce”. She said it’s her “*kismet*” (fate) to take care of her husband and children, and that divorce is not an option. However, at the suggestion of her social worker Nina once went and stayed at a shelter (refuge) home but returned to her husband after three days. This was because her

husband had called Nina's brother, who was also living in Hong Kong, and informed him that Nina had gone to stay in a shelter home. Her brother talked to her and said that it was a "disgrace for him", that his sister has gone to live in a shelter and he asked her to return back to her husband or to come and live with him and his family for a while. Nina explained about her marriage problems to her brother but also told him that she could not tell him everything as she did not want to create any problems in his own marriage since her brother was married to her husband's sister. Her brother said he understood but asked her to leave the shelter home, and so she returned to her husband.

Reenu

Reenu is a 34 year old Pakistani Muslim who was married to a Hong Kong Pakistani man. She has three children aged between 3-7 years. She came to Hong Kong seven years ago to join her husband. At the time of conducting the interview, Reenu had been divorced from her husband for three years, since her youngest child was three months old. The divorce was initiated by her husband. She lives in public housing with her children and is relying on welfare assistance.

Reenu's story focuses on the abuse she experienced from her husband after arriving in Hong Kong. She described her marriage to her abusive husband, who both verbally and physically abused her. Her husband would often lock her in the house and did not allow her to go out to meet friends, or to use the phone. Sometimes he would disappear for days without informing her of where he was going, or when he would be coming back,

and he would not leave any household money. When she asked where he had been or if he would leave some spending money for household, her husband would get angry and shout at her. Reenu also found that her husband was having affairs and spending money on others, and when she asked him to end the affairs this would lead to an argument and he would shout at her and beat her with a stick. Reenu described how upset and unhappy she was with the situation, which was compounded further by her isolation and lack of familiarity with the local language.

Reenu also shared that her husband's family in Pakistan pressured him to send Reenu and the children back to Pakistan because they wanted him to remarry so that his new wife could bring in a "good dowry" (bride money). But she refused to comply and this led to arguments, and her husband would get angry and often beat her after such ensuing argument. Reenu shared that even if she returned to Pakistan she had nowhere to live; her father had passed away and her mother was living with her older brother and his family. Moreover, she said that in Hong Kong there would be better opportunities for her children. When the abuse started Reenu said that she shared with her friends and cousins, but they told her, "this is your family problem, you settle it". They did not want to get involved in what they considered a 'family matter'. Reenu said that the main reason her husband became abusive and beat her was because his family pressured him to remarry and he wanted Reenu to leave Hong Kong so that he could get married and bring his second wife to Hong Kong.

Her husband ultimately divorced her three years ago, and has since remarried and is living with his second wife in Hong Kong. Reenu has also obtained her permanent residency status in Hong Kong and continue to live in Hong Kong with her children. She remarked that her husband never came to visit her or the children and does not provide any support. Since her children are still young (aged between 3 to 7 years) she is currently dependent on social welfare. She hopes to be able to find a job soon.

Shamin

Shamin is a 31 year old Pakistani Muslim woman from Pakistan, and was married to a Hong Kong Chinese Muslim man. The marriage was arranged through her relative in Hong Kong. She has been married for 11 years and has two sons aged 8 and 10 years. Shamin described her early years of married life as 'happy' with 'no problem'. She was just 20 years old when she got married, and was looking forward to married life with her husband in Hong Kong. But after the birth of her first child, she said her husband's attitude changed and he would either ignore her or criticise her.

Shamin reported that her husband was controlling and suspicious. He would always check on her, who she talked with on the phone, whether it was a man or woman, and he would restrict her friends from coming and visiting her in the house. Shamin said that one day when she was talking on the phone with her best friend, her husband took the phone from her and told her friend not to come to their house anymore, and then he slammed the phone down. Her husband also discouraged her from joining social

activities or programmes organised by the social service agency. She said her husband did not like her to go out and meet her friends; he wanted her to stay at home and do household chores. But, no matter how much she did household chores, cooked and kept the house clean, her husband was never satisfied. He always complained, found fault with her housework and criticised her all the time.

Shamin also shared that she felt neglected because her husband did not like to sit and talk with her. When she went near him to sit and talk, he would walk away and watch television or play computer games. She reported that her husband was not interested in having sex with her and at one point pushed her away from the bed. She said she felt rejected, ignored and hurt by his behaviour. All of this made her feel very unhappy and sad.

Shamin said that she felt bad when her husband shouted at her or called her “crazy woman”. Her son once asked her, “Why is papa always shouting?” She said her older son was also beginning to behave like his father, and when she told him not to talk to her in a disrespectful way, her son replied “my dad also talk the same way, so why can’t I?”

Shamin also shared that most of the problems in her marriage may have been due to the different cultures, age gap, which she described as “too much different”. She said, “I think it is culture problem, he is Chinese and I am Pakistani, he does not understand”.

She felt her husband did not understand her, and just ignored her or criticised her. Her husband on the other hand, told her that she do not fully understand him. He said he had wanted to marry an older woman as he felt that an older woman would be more understanding. Shamin also said that she felt hurt when he compared her to Chinese women, saying things like “Chinese women are hardworking; they do not have many friends and waste time chatting”. She felt that her husband was implying that she was not hard working and that she had too many friends, and idled her time away talking with them.

Shamin is dependent on her husband financially. Whenever she asked for some spending money he would scold her and ask her to stay at home. Shamin shared that she had considered leaving her husband, but when she thought of her children she could not leave but said that when one day she had “enough”, she would leave. Shamin said that in the beginning when he shouted at her or scolded her she will keep quiet. But now she said she also shouts back at him, and sometimes he will then keep quiet. Shamin reported that she is so unhappy and sometimes she wants to commit suicide.

Bobby

Bobby is a 35 year old Pakistani Muslim woman and lives in Hong Kong with her two sons aged 12 and 13 years. She was married for 14 years and has been divorced for six years. Bobby’s marriage to a man from Pakistan was arranged by her family, and she sponsored her husband’s visa to Hong Kong.

About six years into her marriage, Bobby found out that her husband was having an affair with another woman. Prior to this, Bobby had suspected her husband's infidelity, and she felt her husband just married her for the chance to come to Hong Kong. When she confronted him about the affair he denied it at first. But he would often come home late at night, and sometimes he would not come home for several days. When she ask him where he had been or why he came home late, he got angry and beat her. Bobby shared that whenever she asked him to stop the affair and spend time with his family he would get angry and become abusive both physically and verbally.

When the abuse started Bobby said she informed her parents but they told her to "bear it" and when after few years she said she would like to file for divorce because of his infidelity and abusive behaviour, her father told her that they would not support her if she filed for divorce, and told her, "if you divorce, do not come home, you are dead to me". But eventually her husband left her for another woman, and told Bobby that he did not wish to live with her and the children. This led her to file for divorce and she got custody of her children. She said that if she were in Pakistan, it would be impossible to get custody of her sons as they would be automatically given to the father, but here in Hong Kong the law is fair and she is happy that she got custody of her sons. Bobby also said that divorced women have no standing in the (Pakistani) community and they are looked down on by the people.

Bobby reported that although the divorce was hard on her and it took a long time for her

to get over it, she felt “good” to no longer be in an abusive relationship. She said that she was happier now with her life, and that she no longer had to endure her husband’s abuse. At the time of conducting the interview, Bobby was working part-time.

Saira

Saira is a 32 year old Pakistani Muslim woman from Pakistan and she married a Hong Kong Pakistani man 12 years ago. She has three children between the ages of 2-7 years. After 10 years of marriage, she initiated the separation from her husband two years ago because the abuse was becoming more frequent and severe and she could no longer tolerate it.

Saira’s story focused on her husband’s abuse since the beginning of her marriage. She said that her husband abused her verbally and physically, and expressed that the beating and shouting was “not good” and what he did to her was “wrong”. Saira recounted that at times her husband would leave home for 3- 4 days without informing her where he was going, and that he would not leave any money to buy food for her and the children. When she asked him where he went, or why he disappeared without telling her, he would slap her on the face, shout at her and tell her it was none of her business. Sometimes when she asked for money for groceries or household expenses he would get angry and beat her. She also said that two years ago he had stopped supporting her financially.

Saira said that she had tolerated the abuse from her husband for ten years, thinking that he would change, and stop the abuses, and that the children could have a father. But she said she was wrong. The abuse did not stop but instead became more severe and frequent, and she could no longer tolerate it. Saira said “that is why I have to take the step to separate from my husband”. Her family in Pakistan also supported her decision to leave her husband. She also shared that many women whom she knew, faced domestic violence but tolerated it and stayed in their relationships, thinking that their husbands would change, but that was not the reality, “husband will never change”, she added. Saira also said that before her marriage she heard of domestic violence happening to relatives but said she never thought or imagined that it would happen to her. She described the ten years of her marriage being a “torture”.

Saira reported that she now lives for her children, and that she wants to provide a better future for them. At the time of conducting this interview, Saira had been separated from her husband for two years. She and her children were living in Hong Kong while her husband now lived in Pakistan. But Saira said she continued to live in fear because her husband threatened her and told his friends (in Hong Kong) to inform her that if she did not come back to him he would harm her and take the children away from her.

Sofia

Sofia is a 38 year old Pakistani Muslim woman and has lived in Hong Kong for 22 years. Her marriage to her first cousin was arranged by her family, and she sponsored her

husband's visa to Hong Kong. They were married for nine years before her husband gave her '*talaq*' (a form of divorce under Islamic law in which a husband renounces the marriage by saying '*talaq*' three times to the wife). At the time of conducting the interview Sofia had been divorced and lived alone as she does not have any children.

Sofia said that the abuse started a month into her marriage. Her husband's family in Pakistan were poor and thus expected him to support them by sending money. Although he worked two jobs, he felt pressured and frustrated when he could not meet his family's demands to send them money and took his frustration out on her by shouting and scolding her even for small things. Sometimes he would abuse her physically. Once he hit her with a table fan and hurt her intestines for which she had to be hospitalised.

When she shared with her family and relatives the abuse from her husband, they told her to try and make the marriage work and to keep the issues within the family. Because she was married to her first cousin (paternal uncle's son), Sofia reported that the family put pressure on her to maintain the marriage because if she divorced it would also affect the relationships among the other family members (her husband's family and her family members who are related to each other not only through marriage but also by blood). She also said that divorce was not socially accepted in their community, and most often women were blamed for the break-up of a marriage even if it was the husband who had abused the wife. When the abuse first started Sofia mentioned that she shared it with her sister. But when her husband came to hear about this he forbade Sofia from talking with

her sister. Because she wanted to save her marriage, and she did not want to anger her husband, Sofia said she stopped talking to her sister.

Sofia reported that her husband left her without informing her and went back to Pakistan a few years ago, where he married another woman. Sofia said that her husband never loved her and did not want to have a child with her. She said that she was still seeing a psychiatrist and continued to take sleeping pills as a result of the abuse she endured from her husband. Although her family had encouraged her to remarry, Sofia said it was hard for her to trust another man.

Sofia reported that domestic violence among Pakistanis in Hong Kong is a big problem and that many women are affected. But due to family pressure many are reluctant to share or talk about it with others. Sofia also said that for many years she did not share her marital problems with anyone, but now she is able to talk about it as her psychiatrist has advised her to talk and share with others. She further remarked that it is also important to convince women who are experiencing domestic violence to talk about it, and to share with others.

Tamira

Tamira is a 34 year old Pakistani Muslim woman. She had been married for 16 years to her first cousin; this was arranged by the family. She had lived in Hong Kong for 14 years. Tamira had five children aged between 10-15 years. Tamira's story focused on her

husband's drinking and his abusive behaviour.

Tamira reported that her husband drank every day and that when he got drunk; he lost his senses and became abusive. Her husband had been drinking since the age of 16 . Tamira said that arguments between a husband and wife are quite normal if it occurs a few times a month, but when it occurs every day she said, "it is totally wrong". She reported that when her husband drank he shouted at her and hit her for no reason and she said that he just does what he wants, like shouts, scolds and beats her for no reason. This occurs every day since he drinks every night after his return from work. When the abuse got worse Tamira said she would often lock herself in the room, but sometimes her husband would forcefully open the door. She shared with her relatives who were also living in Hong Kong, and asked them to tell her husband to control his behaviour. But her relatives were afraid of her husband's anger and told her that they did not want to interfere.

Tamira also shared her concern about the impact her husband's abusive behaviour would have on the children and asked him not to shout or hit her in front of the children. But he would not listen and would abuse her in front of the children. Tamira attributed his abusive behaviour to his drinking. She said that when he was drinking he did not understand anything as he lost his senses. She also said that when he was drunk, he was like crazy.

Tamira shared that she would not consider divorce because it would bring a bad name to the family. She said that divorce was not socially acceptable in her community, and divorced women lose respect in the society. Moreover, she did not want her children to grow up without a father. She was also concerned that if the family broke up it would affect her children as they were still young.

Tamira resigned her herself to her situation as her fate, “the will of Allah”. She wanted to make the marriage work and believed that her husband’s abusive behaviour was due to his drinking. Since she could not convince him to give up his drinking, Tamira said she reported her husband’s abuse to the police with the intention that her case would go to court. She believed that the court would have the power to force her husband to be hospitalised or sent to a detox centre to give up his drinking. At the time of conducting the interview, Tamira was awaiting the court case hearing.

Anita

Anita is a 39 year old Nepalese woman from Nepal. She has lived in Hong Kong for the past 14 years and has two children aged 12 and 14 years living with her. She had an arranged marriage with a Nepali man living in Hong Kong; they were married for nine years. Anita’s story focused on her husband’s abusive behaviour which began after the birth of her first child. Her husband started going out with other women, and spending most of his time with his friends and he was hardly ever at home. Whenever she raised this issue and asked him to spend more time with his wife and children, he would get

angry, and an argument would ensue. Sometimes during the argument he would hit her. Anita mentioned that she informed her brother living in Hong Kong when the abuse started, but her brother told her, “to bear it, this is part of marriage” and to try to make the marriage better.

Anita said that her husband ignored her and the children, and that she felt unloved and neglected. For Anita, being ignored and unloved by her husband was the worst abuse of all. Each time they had argument the beating got worse. She said that hitting her became a part of his habit, a normal daily routine for him. Anita said that he would hit her with his belt, sometimes with his hands and sometimes kick her. Anita reported that she decided to leave her husband as she could no longer tolerate the abuse and beatings, which were getting worse each time they had the argument, and she also worried about the impact of the abuse on her children’s well-being. Her decision to leave her husband was also in part influenced by her concern for her children. She did not want her children to grow up being neglected and ignored by their father. She also said that she was concerned that the abuse would have a negative impact on her children, which also influenced her decision to leave her husband. At the time of conducting this interview Anita had been legally divorced for a year, and she lived with her two children. She did not receive any financial child support from her husband. Anita worked part-time.

Shashila

Shashila is a 39 year old Nepalese woman from Nepal. Due to a failed marriage and the

gossip and stigma of being divorced, she felt the need to get away from her community and went to Hong Kong in 2003. After living in Hong Kong for a few years, she met her partner who is also from the same country. At the time of conducting the interview, she and her partner had been living together (co-habitation) for the past six years and they had a two month old baby.

Shashila's story focused on the long-term abusive relationship she had with her partner. She described her partner as jealous and abusive during the six years of their relationship. She said the most difficult aspect of their relationship was her partner's suspicion that she was having affairs with other men. She reported that her partner would often beat her and shout at her even for small things. Shashila said that her partner considered women as inferior to men and treated her with no respect. He shouted at her during arguments and beat her. She also shared that due to the fallout from her previous marriage, she wanted to make this relationship work, especially now that they had a child. She wanted the child to have a proper family and to provide a better life for the child.

After the birth of the baby, Shashila had stopped working to stay home and take care of the baby herself. She was dependent financially on her partner. She said that although he supported her financially, sometimes the money was not enough and when she asked for spending money to buy food and other essential items, he got angry, scolded her and would become abusive both physically and verbally. She said that when her partner got

angry she tried to calm him, sometimes it worked but sometimes he became angrier.

Shashila shared with her friends the problems in her relationship, but they advised her to remain in the relationship, especially now that she had a baby to consider. They also told her that every relationship has problems and she must learn to deal with hers. She said that her friends did not understand her feelings or emotion because they are not in abusive relationship. Shashila also shared that sometimes she wanted to seek help but did not know where to go to find help as she was not aware of any services for domestic violence.

Sunita

Sunita is a 33 year old woman from India, a resident of Hong Kong. She has been married for 13 years, and has two children aged 9 and 12 years old. Her marriage to a man from India was arranged by her parents. Sunita sponsored her husband's visa to Hong Kong. Sunita said the abuse started when she became pregnant with their first child. She said her husband was very controlling and he did not allow her to talk with any male other than her own brother. She said her husband suspected her of having an affair with another man, and that he had an inferiority complex and was a jealous man. When she wore pretty dresses he criticised her and accused her of trying to attract other men.

When the abuse first started Sunita said that she called her parents and brother, who also

live in the same building complex. When they tried to intervene, her husband shouted at them and told them not to interfere in his marriage, and he forbade them from coming to their house. She said her husband usually stayed home and got drunk on Saturdays, which is also his day off work and that when he got drunk he became more abusive. She said the abuse was more frequent and intense on Saturdays. Sunita attempted to rationalise his behaviour as being due to stress at work. Sometimes he would break things in the house such as the television or chairs or tables. Once he threw her mobile phone from the building.

She said her husband was very controlling and that she had to seek his permission even to meet with her friends. Although he provided for the family financially, she said he never gave money for household expenses voluntarily, but expected her to ask him every time. Sunita also shared that he was never remorseful, and in fact he blamed her for making him angry. When he was angry he became physically abusive as well. Sunita reported that he once hit her with a clothes hanger. Another time, he hurt her ribcage and she had to be hospitalised.

When she shared with some of her friends her husband's abuse, they said to her, "this is normal part of marriage" and that she should keep quiet when he got angry. But she felt that her friends did not understand her because they did not suffer abuse from their husbands. At the same time she also said that she was reluctant to seek outside help such as from social service agencies for fear that her community might hear about her

marriage problem. She was also concerned for her two children and their reactions to the abusive behaviour which they are constantly exposed to.

Sunita said that when her husband got angry and shouted at her or beat her, most often she kept quiet. Sometimes she said that she would withhold sex from her husband for two months. Sunita indicated that separating from her husband was not an option because of the stigma associated with being a divorced woman. Sunita reported that often times she thought of committing suicide.

Madhu

Madhu is a 37 year old Hindu woman from India, and has lived in Hong Kong for the past 20 years. She initially came to Hong Kong for employment, where she met her future husband, who is also from India. It was a love marriage and she has been married for 11 years and has two children, aged 3 and 9. Her husband had informed her that he had been married previously in India but that he was now divorced. After a few years of their marriage, they went to India to visit his family. Madhu was shocked to learn that he was still married to his first wife, and that he had lied to her about being divorced.

Madhu said that her mother in-law did not accept her as her son's wife and told his son to sleep with his first wife. But when he refused to comply his mother got angry and told him that the first wife was their (parent's) choice and that he should respect that. Madhu said she felt hurt and humiliated by this incident. But her husband told her that he did

not love his first wife and it was she, Madhu who he loved. Two years later when they went back to India to visit his family, his first wife told her husband that if he gave her money to buy a land then she would leave him. Madhu told her husband to give the money and also to divorce his first wife legally. However, Madhu reported that after that her husband's attitude towards her changed and he became verbally and emotionally abusive towards her. He would often compare her (Madhu) to his first wife and said things that hurt her feelings.

He always said positive things about his first wife whilst finding fault with Madhu. She said he never abused her physically, but his constant comparison with his first wife, his criticism, and finding fault with small things was hurtful and also made her angry. This would often lead to arguments between them. Madhu also said that she took out her anger on her children and sometimes beat them. But later she realised that this was not healthy and she stopped beating her children.

At the time of conducting this interview Madhu was still married to her husband. She described her distant relationship with her husband and her attempts to improve the relationship. She was unhappy in her relationship but she did not want to separate or divorce from her husband for fear of the stigma attached to being divorced. Moreover, her children loved their father and she did not want to deprive the children of their father. She wanted to make the relationship work for the sake of her children. She said that her children's future meant everything to her, and that she wanted to provide them with

better future prospects. Madhu also shared that she would feel ashamed in front of her friends and community because they would think that it was her fault if her marriage had failed.

5.3. Chapter summary

The qualitative account of the participants' background detailed above helps to provide the context within which to understand the women's experiences with abuse. The themes generated from the data of the abused women are presented in the next chapter (chapter 6) in greater detail. Due to the snowball sampling, the majority of the participants in this study are Pakistani women.

From the interviews with the women it was observed that most of the participants came to Hong Kong mainly for marriage migration. In terms of age, the majority of them were in their mid to late thirties. Except for one, all of the women had between one and five children. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of the participants have attained some level of high school education. At the time of conducting the interview, most women were divorced/ separated, and six were still in the abusive relationship. Among those divorced or separated, except for two, the divorce or separation was initiated by their husband.

Among the fourteen participants interviewed, three were residents of Hong Kong and married their husbands in their home country and then sponsored their husbands visa to

Hong Kong; one came to Hong Kong for employment, met her husband who was also living in Hong Kong and nine married their husbands in their home country and later their husbands sponsored them to come to Hong Kong for marriage union; one met her partner in Hong Kong and they had been living together for the past six years.

In this study, divorce is not an option to consider and women are expected to maintain family honour, and often they would keep silent about the abuse even though they may not condone the abuse. Socio cultural norms often make it difficult to leave. In a way, the women responses had a lot to do with family obligation and responsibilities, and the pressure they were under further constraint since they often include strong beliefs that marriage should be maintained at any cost. Family ties, lack of support from both internal and external and consideration for the children put additional pressure on women. In most South Asian communities' single parent families are often stigmatised and looked down on and no woman wanted that for herself and her children. And in most cases, even when the divorce occurred it was initiated by the husband for these women. Of the two women who had initiated separation/divorce from their husbands, they recounted that the abuses was getting more severe and more frequent and finally they chose to leave their husbands. They were also concerned that it could have a negative impact on their children.

The women in this study knew they cannot change their situation, hence they changed their thought process and attitude by focusing on their children future, thinking of the

long term goal. This helped them not to be beaten down by their experience of abuse and help them to override the abuse they were experiencing in their own way by focusing on their children future which gave them meaning to live.

CHAPTER SIX

Results II: Presentation and Analysis of Findings

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the findings from the data set taken from both the abused women and the helping professionals. In the first part, the analysis of the data set from the abused women will be presented, which describes the lived experiences of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong. A qualitative research approach was utilised to examine the women's perceptions, understanding and experiences of domestic violence. The themes that emerged from the interviews with the fourteen women have been organised in a manner that encompasses as many of the important elements of each woman's story as possible. These themes will be discussed in a descriptive manner, using the women's own words to illustrate identified patterns and areas of importance.

The researcher began the analysis by reviewing the transcript of each interview several times, so as to foster clarity of thought and to become familiar with each woman's story. During these readings, the two research questions were kept in mind: 1) what is women's perception of domestic violence and 2) what are their help seeking practices? During these readings, texts that are relevant to the research have been maintained while irrelevant texts have been discarded, which makes it easier to manage the large amount

of data. The researcher then began to write down some of the obvious categories. For instance, when reading participant's narrative of domestic violence, it was clear that there should be a category labelled as "types of abuse". The researcher also noted the themes generated from the data. When abused women were talking about their experiences of domestic violence they also talked about their cultural values and traditional beliefs which influence their attitude towards domestic violence. For instance, many of the women shared that it was not in their culture to talk about domestic violence or to divorce. Thus, it was obvious that the issue of culture and the influence of cultural factors also play a strong role in their experiences of domestic violence. The cultural factors (i.e., values and beliefs) were also further substantiated by the helping professionals interviewed in the present study. At this point, it was clear to the researcher that one of the themes under perception of domestic violence would be "culture".

As the researcher proceeded by re-examining the different categories and their properties, the researcher looked within each theme for recurrent statements or meanings through a process of axial coding (understanding relationship between categories in order to understand the phenomenon to which they relate). The researcher separated pertinent information from irrelevant information and eliminated the overlapping ones or combined those that shared a common characteristic. For example, the researcher originally had both view of 'marriage' and 'family' categorised differently. The researcher decided to eliminate the overlap and grouped together the items that

shared a similar pattern, such as marriage and family.

6.2. Themes generated from the interviews with women who have been abused

The findings of the research indicate that South Asian women in this study have experienced feelings of shame and isolation, which, along with a lack of support (internal and external), contribute to their difficulty in disengaging from a violent relationship. It is also clear from the analysis of the data set gathered from the helping professionals that existing social services for ethnic minorities have limited experience in dealing with domestic violence, since most of these supporting services are geared towards facilitating the social integration of ethnic minorities to mainstream society (for detail of nature of social services for ethnic minorities see section 6.3.1). Analysis of the data has also revealed that the participants of this study have a wide range of roles and responsibilities as a wife and mother and to fail at any of these evokes a sense of shame. Therefore, to some extent, one can argue that in such circumstances, women refrain from disclosing abuse and/or remain in the abusive relationship.

The major purpose of this qualitative research was to explore how abused women perceived domestic violence, and how their perception of the abuse might influence their help seeking process. Although interviews with the participants were kept open-ended, the interview guides and prompts were prepared in alignment with the purpose of the research. The major themes generated from the data set gathered from the abused women include: perception of domestic violence, culture, concern for the children,

expectation within the marriage, interference from in-laws, making the marriage work, stigma of leaving the relationship, maintaining social face, and gender inequality. Under these major themes, subthemes were also highlighted and discussed in further detail.

The first theme relates to how the women in this study perceived domestic violence. Under this theme types of abuse and social isolation as a form of control exerted by their husbands were also discussed. The second theme which was identified pertains to cultural values and beliefs regarding marriage and relationship. Concern for their children was the third theme identified. All of the women have children, except for one, and when the women shared about their experiences of domestic violence, their concern for their children also influenced how they respond to the abuse. Many of the women also shared that the thought of their children gave them the strength to tolerate and bear the abuse. The women also talked about expectations within the marriage (Theme Four), interference from in-laws (Theme Five), and their desire to make the marriage work (Theme Six). The seventh theme identified in this study pertains to the notion of shame and stigma attached to divorce and/or separation (Theme Seven). A related component of stigma attached to divorce is the notion of maintaining social face (Theme Eight). As in many Asian cultures, the notion of saving face and ensuring that the family is well thought of by the community is considered to be very important. As a result, many women in this study were also hesitant to share their experiences of abuse due to the strong emphasis on social obligation to maintain family honour. Gender inequality (Theme Nine) was the final theme identified in this study. Detailed discussions of each

of these themes are provided in the following sections.

6.2.1. The women's perception of domestic violence

Analysis of the data gathered from fourteen women who had experienced domestic violence revealed that the context in which domestic violence was experienced influenced and shaped how the women understood, interpreted, and explained domestic violence. It is important to understand how women conceptualise domestic violence as this conceptualisation in turn may influence their help seeking practices. The most direct and accurate source of information regarding women's experiences of violence is from those who experienced it, and is based on how they define it. Hence, as much as possible, women's direct quotes are provided. Hague, Mullender and Aris (2003) argued that policies and practice that are guided by discussion with women about their experiences are the hallmark of best practice. Therefore, it is essential to understand domestic violence from the lived experiences of the women themselves. Until we can develop an understanding of the meaning of those experiences we cannot begin to develop an understanding of methods of helping or enhancing services/intervention for the women. This study begins the process of uncovering these meanings through the women's subjective narratives of abuse.

For the majority of the participants, their perception of domestic violence was defined by how they explained the meanings they attached to the abusive behaviours of their spouse. Among the different types of abusive behaviours, most of the participants reported physical abuse, as in the form of slapping, pulling the hair, and being hit with

an object. Participants also talked of emotional and financial abuse, immigration related issues and their husband's extra-marital affairs, which influence how they perceived domestic violence. In describing how participants understand and define domestic violence based on personal incidences and experiences, attempts were made to follow the participant's and/or interpreter's English and grammatical style during transcription. The names used are pseudonyms.

6.2.1.1. Types of abuse as experienced by the women

For the participants in this study, their perception of domestic violence was defined by how they explained the meanings of their husband/partner's abusive behaviours. There were different types of abuse reported by the women. These include physical, verbal, emotional and financial abuse. Some women also talked about immigration related matters and their husband's extra-marital affairs, which were also associated with the abusive behaviours they endured from their spouse. The most common forms of abuse reported were physical abuse by their husbands. A few quotes from the women who suffered physical abuse are highlighted below:

There are two kinds of marriage, a good marriage and a bad marriage. Bad marriage is where domestic violence happens. Domestic violence is when a husband shouts, beats and is not kind and loving to the wife (Amira)

My husband has a girlfriend and that started the abuse, the beating and shouting. When I would question him about it, and asked him to end the affair, and to spend more time at home with me and the kids, he beat me with his hands and

sometimes with a stick ... (Renu)

For Amira, her perception of domestic violence is related to being shouted at and beaten by her husband. She identified two types of marriage, and believes that a marriage should be kind and loving. When the husband ill-treats the wife, and is not kind and loving, then it is considered domestic violence.

For some participants, physical abuse was also linked to the husband's extra marital affairs. Therefore this is also discussed under physical abuse. Most of the participants in this study reported that their husbands had girlfriends and/or affairs with other women, and when the wives found out about these relationships and confronted the husband to end the relationship and to focus on the family, marital conflict would usually arise. Often the husband would resort to violence when their wives asked them to end the affair or to spend more time at home. Renu, one of the participants, shared that her husband was having an affair and that he would spend most of his time outside, usually came home late, and did not spend enough time with the family. When she asked him to stop seeing the other woman or to end the affair, this would result in arguments and he would get angry, shout at her, and beat her.

The second type of abuse reported was emotional abuse. Some of the participants also shared that they had been ignored by their husband, which they considered to be the most hurtful, as it hurts their feelings and makes them feel unloved. Some shared that

their husbands called them names, or use degrading words. Thus, for these women, their perception of domestic violence was related to being ignored by their husbands, and to name calling and emotional abuse. Being ignored here refers to the feeling of being excluded from the husband's life as if the wife were invisible. Some of the participants shared their feelings:

My husband ignores me when he comes home from work. When I try to sit next to him on the sofa, he walks away... he just ignores me and watches the television. If I want to talk with him, he does not want to talk or listen... he does not want to sleep with me ...and sometimes he pushes me from the bed and I sleep on the floor... and he always criticises me, my dress, not keeping the home clean. Every day I clean the home and tidy up but he still complains and says it is not clean... he wants me to do household work all the time and does not like it when I sit down to watch television or use the computer or talk to my friend on the phone. One time, he took the phone while I was talking with my friend, and told my friend on the phone not to come to our house anymore or to phone me... (Shamin)

Being ignored by my husband is the worse abuse, the feeling is very bad... the feeling is worse than being hit by him. He is out of the house every day, and comes home late at night. He does not want to spend time with me and the children, and is more interested to spend (time) outside with his friends... when I tell him to spend more time at home with me and the children, it turns into an argument... he beats me... he wants me to do household work and to keep quiet, and does not want to talk with me or the children when he is at home... (Anita)

Shamin felt that her husband only wants her to do household chores. She shared that her

husband does not like it when she sits down to watch television, or when she talks to her friend on the phone, or even when she uses the computer. He often criticises her through her housework, complaining about her housekeeping, or even criticising the way she dresses. Although Anita was physically abused by her husband, she felt that being ignored was worse than the physical abuse. She felt that her husband treats her like she was non-existent when he ignores her and does not even want to talk with her. Previous studies have also noted that many women have shared that physical abuse would be better than being ignored or being put down by their abusive partners (Fitzpatrick and Halliday, 1992).

Name-calling or using degrading words is another type of abuse reported by the women. This type of abuse can be humiliating, and is an indirect way in which the abuser denies the woman's value as a person (Raj and Silverman, 2002a). Nina shared that her husband used degrading words and that being referred to as "*bekaar*" hurt her feelings, making her feel inadequate, and lowering her self-worth as a person: Nina shared:

It hurts me a lot when my husband calls me "*bekaar*" (unworthy/ of no regard), it makes me feel useless and I feel like rubbish (Nina)

Thus, for Shamin and Anita, domestic violence is perceived as being ignored by their husbands. Moreover, they also felt that their husbands just want them to take care of the household chores, keep the house clean and stay at home, while their husbands ignored them.

Financial control is another method used by men to dominate their wives/partners, for example, by not providing enough money for groceries or household needs. By withholding money, an abusive husband restricts her contact with the outside world (Abraham, 2000b). Since most of the participants in this study are housewives and do not work, they are dependent on their husband financially. The husband is the only wage earning member of the family and is supposed to take care of the household's needs. Most participants also shared that when they asked for money the husband got angry and shouted at them. As Saira remarked:

He stopped giving money for the household and sometimes would disappear for days without telling me... Whenever I asked him for household money, he would slap me and shout at me...it is to buy food for the children...it is not good, it is wrong, what he does (Saira)

Most participants also shared that their husbands would withhold financial support even to buy essential household items. Sometimes the husbands would disappear for days without informing their wives. Most of the women shared that when they asked their husband for money, it escalates into an argument, usually resulting in the husband using physical violence.

From the women's personal accounts of domestic violence, it can be observed that the women define and have presented domestic violence in terms of physical, emotional and financial abuse, while some also perceived social isolation. These findings relate to the

in-depth qualitative study of abuse experiences done by Adames et al (2005), gathered from 8 Latina immigrant women in the United States, as well as Gill's (2004) qualitative study, which examined the subjective experiences of abuse among 18 South Asian women in the United Kingdom. Their findings also highlighted that immigrant women mostly explained domestic violence in terms of physical aspects, although they also mentioned verbal, emotional and financial abuse, and social isolation. It is probable that the focus on physical violence may derive from the fact that they (women) have physically experienced abuse in their bodies and can explain this much easier as it relates to their lived experience, which to them is also a significant marker of reality (Harding, 1987).

6.2.1.2. Social isolation

Most of the participants shared that their husbands did not want them to go out, or to join activities at the social service centres for fear that they (the wives) would be influenced by others. The participants also shared that their husbands prefer them to stay at home, and to have as little interaction with others as possible, and in this way she is not able to obtain information. It appears that keeping their wives at home; not wanting them to go out and meet other people, is a form of exerting control by the husbands over the wives so as to make their wives dependent on themselves. Some excerpts from participants' are as follows:

I cannot speak Cantonese (the local language). I do not know much about Hong

Kong and my husband takes advantage of this and does as he likes...because he knows that I do not know Hong Kong and cannot get help...he does not allow me to join the activities in the (social service) or go out . He does this so that I do not get information... then I will obey him (Ash)

My husband locks me in the house when he goes out and disconnects the phone so that I do not talk to other people... He does not like me to go out and meet other people. He wants me to stay home all the time... (Reenu)

For Ash, not knowing the local language also hinders her from obtaining information about resources, and her husband uses this to his advantage. Her husband does not want her to join the programs or activities in the centre, in order to exert his control over her. Ash said that her husband thinks that if she joins these activities in the centre, and meets with other women, she will have more information and thus he will not be able to do as he likes. It appears that the husband is trying to use the social isolation tactic to maintain control over her. This isolation is made even more difficult, when her husband, the only person a woman can depend on for social interaction, isolates and abuses her (Abraham, 2000b). Abraham further adds that isolation tactics may be deliberately used by a husband to increase the power and control he has over his wife. This isolation also contributes to the invisibility of intimate violence in immigrant communities. Thus, for many migrant women who are dependant (socially, economically, and emotionally) on their spouses, when the husband restricts them from going out or meeting their friends, the social isolation can be a painful form of intimate violence.

Most migrant women in Hong Kong lack proficiency in the host language (Census and Statistics Department, 2007), which also hinders them from accessing resources or information, and they feel isolated and confined within their home environment. From Reenu's and Ash's case one can see how isolation techniques have been used by their husbands to control them. They were forced to rely on their husbands by means of their husbands trying to cut their contact with others and keeping them inside the house, isolated. Their experience reveals that factors such as financial dependence and lack of social support may also contribute to social isolation. Being dependent on their husbands along with and the culturally related consequences of leaving an abusive partner, may keep women from seeking help and thereby contribute further to the feelings of isolation (Abraham, 2000b; Dasgupta, 2000).

6.2.2. Culture

With respect to the issue of culture, most participants as well as the social service agency staff interviewed touched on this subject, as seen in the interview excerpts. The researcher did not ask them specifically about culture, but in the course of telling their stories, the women themselves brought up the topic of culture in relation to other issues. For instance, the women's traditional beliefs influence their actions and how they respond to and handle social expectations and pressures in the face of abuse.

The recognition of the importance of culture in the present study is not meant as a cultural justification of abuse, but is instead intended to help provide a background

context for understanding women's experiences with abusive relationships (Abraham, 1998). It aims to provide an understanding of the influence of cultural values and beliefs which play a significant role in shaping a woman's experience of abuse and its meaning to her (Levy, 2008). An important aspect by which culture exerts this influence is the worldview, of either individualism or collectivism to which a woman subscribes (Levy, 2008). This fundamental belief system has an effect on interpersonal processes, including the sense of self-concept and conflict resolution and motivation (Tjosvold and Sun, 2002). As a result, in the face of conflict, collectivists tend to use collaborative strategies to maintain relationships and save face with others, even at the risk of personal cost (Ohbuchi, Fukushima and Tedeschi, 1999). In contrast, individualist cultures tend to place the emphasis more on personal pleasure, achievement and autonomy (Nibler and Harris, 2003). In the face of conflict, individualists tend to adopt a confrontational approach, and if deemed necessary, adversarial strategies with the aim of saving their own sense of face (Ting-Toomey, 1998).

6.2.2. 1. Collectivist culture

Acknowledging that most cultures have different levels of values placed on either individualism or collectivism, this seems to be a useful exemplar of describing varying levels of value orientation towards the self and the group. Collectivism considers the needs of the family and community to be more important than the needs of the individual, in contrast to individualist societies which focus on personal interests. This is not to imply that one culture is better or worse than another. The key here is rather, to

describe how individuals respond, or react to situations based on their worldview whether it is from a collectivist or individualist approach. For instance, in a collectivist society, where family honour overrides personal freedom and the group takes precedence over the individual, it is common for women to remain silent to save the family honour (Prasad, 1999; Winter and Young, 1998).

In the context of intimate partner violence, how an individual perceives and reacts to abuse is based on her worldview. For women from a collectivist culture, such as South Asian, her reactions to intimate partner violence is deeply influenced by the precedence she places over her own needs and goals in preference to those of the family and community to which she belongs. A woman with collectivist values does not have the same level of options for divorce, independent living or single parenthood as a woman from an individualist culture. As collectivist cultures place emphasis on obedience and harmony within the group (Levy, 2008) characterised by specific norms that regulate social interaction, those who deviate from such prescribed role behaviour may be faced with strong negative social consequences (example, shame, loss of face, ostracism).

Collectivists place strong value on the family and seeking help outside the group/community or the family is strongly discouraged and may be seen as bringing shame on the family (Yoshioka and Chio, 2003). Shame is not merely an individual consequence, but rather, the entire family is shamed. For instance, in India, women who do report violence are often isolated and ridiculed within their communities, and may be

intimidated into dropping legal charges (Prasad, 1999). In the present study, participant Ash dropped legal charges against her husband although she was seriously injured by him, and she reported that if her husband goes to prison, the community would blame her for sending her husband to prison. The stigma of public humiliation is an important tool that prevents families and communities from discussing “personal problems” (Kanuha, 1987). Thus, the cultural values, attitudes and beliefs including importance of family, role of the wife, values regarding disclosing family matters make it difficult for women to disclose the abuse to others. Thus the women’s understanding of their experiences and actions in the face of domestic violence is influenced by their cultural values and the context in which the women are situated.

Many participants in the present study also shared that they believe in the sanctity of marriage, and that divorce was not an option they would consider. This was mainly because divorced women are reported to have no social standing in the community, and are often said to be disrespected by the community as reported by the participants. Below are some excerpts from the women recounting why divorce may not be considered as an option when facing domestic violence.

It is not in my culture to divorce...women get the blame if others know that she has problems in the marriage or gets a divorce. Our culture does not allow us to fight with our husbands...divorce is not a good thing in our culture. If you divorce or if people know that you have problems in marriage, will lose respect from friends and community... (Amira)

Divorce is not a good thing...it is not in my culture to divorce. Divorced women, people do not respect, it brings shame... (Tamira)

I feel it is my *kismet* (fate) in life that I take care of my husband, my children. It is not in my religion and culture to divorce (Nina)

Even if I divorce, where I will go, who will take care of me and my children ... I cannot go back home as a divorce woman... shame and humiliation... (Sunita)

From the above excerpts it can be observed that their traditional beliefs, values and context influence their actions and thoughts and how they respond to domestic violence. The participants of this study somehow believe that it is their “fate” to maintain the marriage, whatever happens. For instance, they could blame their husband for the abuse, or their family for arranging a marriage to an abusive man, or the social conditions of their home country which overlook male dominance, but instead the women said it was their “fate” to take care of their family. In other words, they consider it their fate to tolerate and bear the abuse and they would not consider divorce or separation as an option for the sake of maintaining their family. Many of the participants said their marriage was arranged by their family members, and many of them were married to their first cousin. Therefore, even if the women were to consider divorce, they may be concerned that it would affect not only their immediate family but also the extended family. Moreover, in collectivist societies such as in South Asian societies, divorce is not favourably viewed (Toth and Kimmelmeier, 2009), and as also observed from the

present study, the women seldom consider divorce as an option despite facing abuse. Even when divorce or separation occurs, it is often initiated by the husband, as also observed among the participants in this study. This also indicates that the women take upon themselves the role and responsibility of maintaining the family's honour, of keeping the family intact and would make every effort to keep the family together. On the other hand, this responsibility does not appear to be binding on the men.

From the interviews with the women, it can be observed that they tend to keep silent in order to maintain the family honour and family unity. Additionally, the lack of an ethnic-specific domestic violence service for South Asian women in Hong Kong (for further details see section 6.3.1) may also hinder women from seeking help. Past studies among immigrant women have reported that in general the women may hesitate to disclose the abuse or seek help especially when there are no culturally specific services for them (example, Dutton, Orloff and Hass, 2000; Perilla, 2000). It is also probable that a lack of knowledge about available services and support systems in the community may also hinder them from seeking help (Krishnan et al., 1998). It would appear that a combination of institutional, cultural and linguistic barriers hinders women help-seeking (Barn, 2008). Some participants in the present study reported that they did not know where to get help. While cultural norms, values and beliefs influence their response to the violence and their help seeking attitudes, it is also probable that a lack of knowledge about available supportive resources may have influenced their attitudes towards seeking help.

6.2.3. Concern for the children

Traditionally in South Asian culture, the woman's role is considered to be that of nurturer and caretaker, and to be the source of family honour and respectability as wives and mothers (Assanand et al., 2005). In this study, the women also felt that it was their responsibility to maintain and preserve the family honour and commitment. This reveals the essence of the role of wife and motherhood, of putting the needs of her family above her own, so as to establish an intact family. At the same time, it has been observed that while the South Asian women in this study have also conformed to traditional values and norms, it is not only because of submissiveness, but rather also appears to be a conscious decision guided by their concern for their children's well-being and future prospects. The women shared that this concern for their children was a centre point in their life that gave them the strength to endure and tolerate abuse. As some participants related:

I do not consider divorce when I think of my children because I want them to have a father. The children love their father very much and the father also loves the children. Because of the children I bear it (abuse). We have to think of our children. I cannot financially support my children's schooling and needs without my husband's financial help...nowadays children's schooling fees, books, and clothes are so expensive. I cannot pay for all these without my husband's help. My children future is my main concern. I want my children to have a better future in Hong Kong; both of them were born here (Hong Kong) (Madhu)

Every time I am depressed because of the abuse, but I focus on my children and

their future, and just thinking about my children's future gives me the strength to bear it. I live for my children. They mean everything to me (Shamin)

I think about divorce but I cannot do anything because the children are young. Mostly women do not want divorce because they do not want a broken family for the children. Also I am concerned that divorce will have a bad effect on the children...the children can have emotional problems growing up without a father... (Tamira)

I think of my daughter and her future... it gives me strength. I live for my daughter. I want her to have a better future here in Hong Kong. She means the world to me (Amira)

For Shamin, the thought of her children gives her the strength in the face of experiencing abuse from her husband. Shamin also shared that despite his abusive behaviour towards her, the father loves his children and she knows that he would not hurt them. Similarly, Tamira's concern and love for her children also takes precedence over her own experiences of abuse from her husband.

From the above excerpts it is apparent that for these women their children are a profound and powerful source of strength through which to endure the abuse. On the other hand, some of the participants also mentioned a negative impact of the abuse on children. As participant shared:

I used to take out my frustration and anger on my kids and beat them, later on I realised this is bad and stop beating my kids (Madhu)

For Madhu, experiencing abuse from her husband affected her emotional well-being, which created stress and resulted in harmful parenting. Past studies have also observed that women's health problems (psychological and/or physical) resulting from their partner's abuse can also affect their parenting ability (Barn and Sidhu, 2004). Furthermore, the experiences of witnessing the abuse can also affect children, behaviourally and emotionally (Hughes, 1988), and they are then at risk of developing various problems including depression, anxiety, academic problems, and behavioural and psychological disorders (Wolfe et al., 2003; Kelly, 2000).

Some participants also shared their concerns about the effect of their husband's abusive behaviour on the children. As participant recounted:

My eldest daughter, who is 15 years old, feels depressed when she hears her father shouting and sees (him) beating me... this has affected her and she is not doing well in school. I am very concerned for my daughter (Tamira)

Tamira further shared that her daughter is not doing well in school and has become moody lately. Although the majority of the women shared their concern that their husband's abusive behaviour could have a negative impact on their children, none of them reported any abusive behaviour on the part of their husband toward the children.

6.2.4. Importance attached to marriage and family

In traditional South Asian families, marriages are generally arranged by the parents, and

marriage is considered to be a contract between families, rather than between individuals. Of the 14 participants in this study, 11 had an arranged marriage. Marriage is viewed as a cultural marker of women's identity and social status in South Asian cultures; and as such, women strive to preserve their marriage in order to maintain their status, regardless of the cost (Abraham, 2000a). Thus, the fear of losing their social status if their marriage were to dissolve (Dasgupta and Warriar, 1996), the social cost of leaving (Agnew, 1998), and the fear of shaming their family may result in reluctance on the part of many South Asian women to confront domestic violence (Dasgupta and Warriar, 1996; Kanuha, 1987). To speak about domestic violence experiences is to solicit public disapproval and humiliation. Thus, the message conveyed to women is that they must make the marriage work whatever the cost, and that they must put the needs of the family before their own, regardless of the situation.

Many participants in this study also shared that when they tell their family about their husband's abuse, they are often told to "bear it", to "keep quiet" or to "settle the family problem" within the family. Below are some excerpts from the women along with their family's responses when they shared about their husband's abusive behaviours:

When I shared to my brother about the abuse, he told me to try my best to live together with my husband and to keep quiet. He said such problems are part of marriage, and to be nice to my husband and to my in-laws (Anita)

My mother advised me to keep quiet and bear it. She told me that every marriage

has problems (Sunita)

When the abuse started, I shared with my parents. But they told me to bear it... and when I shared that I wanted to divorce, they said they would not support divorce. My father said, if you divorce, you are dead to me, do not come back home (Bobby)

For many South Asian women, the family values and close-knit family structure that provides security and stability may also form a barrier to seeking outside help (Gill, 2004). The role of the family can be a double-edged sword. The family system can be both a place where violence is perpetuated against women, and where women are provided stability, safety, and interdependence (Preisser, 1999). The tight close-knit family can be both strength and a weakness. For instance, some women may feel pressured by the family to stay, which in turn may cause them to feel trapped, and pose as a barrier to their seeking outside help or to leaving the abusive relationship. But on the other hand, that same tight-knit family fabric can be a support system, providing support to the women, and standing by them even if she decides to leave the abusive relationship. In the present study, while the majority of the women were pressured by their family members to tolerate the abuse for the sake of maintaining the marriage and the family, some participants also shared that their family supported them in their decision to leave the abusive relationship. As one participant recounted:

He beat me too much, always fighting... becoming worse, happening more and more. This is wrong, what he did. I could not tolerate it anymore, so I decided to

leave... I told to my family and they also supported me to leave (Saira)

For Saira, she was able to make the decision of leaving her abusive husband because she had come to the peak of her toleration point and because of the support from her family. She took this step because she said the situation was becoming intolerable and the abuse had become more frequent. Having the help and support from her family was crucial to leaving her husband. Some of the participants in this study also shared that they know of other women who are also facing domestic violence but would not talk because they are afraid of their husband. Some of the helping professionals who were also from the same ethnic community as the participants shared that many abused women were not willing to speak out or seek help because they fear that if their husband learns that they have talked with others or have tried to seek help, then he will become more abusive.

This study presents a significantly more comprehensive and in-depth picture of the complexity of domestic violence in the South Asian community. In this study family support seems to be utilised by women, in preference over external agencies, as the first step in their help seeking process. What is most evident is that in their search for help women not only have to wrestle with the decision to stay or leave but have to worry about the response of their family and community. The finding that South Asian women most often draw on family as a source of support indicates that they are not passive, but active in their search for help. However, the response they receive from family is not always supportive or helpful for some women. Sometimes women also take a certain

amount of autonomy indirectly in dealing with the abuse. For instance, Sunita shared that at times she would withhold sex from her husband for two months. Sometimes, women try to protect themselves from the abuse by locking themselves in a room when the husband becomes abusive, or by keeping quiet when the husband is angry, as can be observed from the excerpts below:

Sometimes, I hide and lock myself in the bathroom so that he cannot beat me (Reenu).

When he beats me so much, I do not give him sex for two months. Then he will become good for a while (Sunita)

I keep quiet, so as not to anger him, as I fear that he will stop the visa process. I have just two more years to wait before I get my residence card (Amira)

Some women also adopt other strategies, such as Saira, who said “before, I used to keep quiet but these days, I also shout back at him when he shouts at me”. This indicates that the women are not passively enduring the abuse but sometimes they also take action to resist the abuse from their husband.

6.2.5. Interference from in-laws

Many South Asian families still maintain the joint family system, and often women in such households may also experience abuse not only from their husbands, but also from other women, such as the mother-in-law, who may want to reinforce her own authority

within the home (Agnew, 1998). The mother-in-law traditionally holds power over her daughter in-law through her position as the husband's mother (Abraham, 2000a). According to Kandiyoti (1988), when married women enter their husband's household, they may assume a weaker structural position as the daughter-in-law, subordinated to all men and senior women in the household. Although these women continue to adhere to the traditional roles, they also perceived such roles to be short term, and aspire to bear sons and in time assume the powerful role of mother-in-law themselves.

A new bride in the family will have to find her place within the home next to a sister-in-law and a mother-in-law. The joint family structure can sometimes increase a woman's vulnerability to abuse, especially when the in-laws try to interfere in the relationship between the husband and wife, or through their silence in an abusive situation (Abraham, 2000a). In the present study, the participants also related the involvement of their mother-in-law, which often exacerbates their husband's abusive behaviour towards them. In some instances the mother-in-law influenced the husbands' attitude towards their wives. Below are some excerpts from the women wherein they recounted their experiences:

My mother-in-law always complains to my husband...whenever my husband gets angry at me is because of my mother-in-law complains to him. Whenever he talks to her (the mother-in-law) she asks him to send me home (home country) but I refuse to go. I tell my husband why I go, you are my husband, I will not go...and then he, my husband, gets angry and shouts at me... (Amira)

My sister-in-law and mother-in-law always interfere between me and my husband. They always tell my husband I am a bad woman...Whenever my husband hits me it is because my mother-in-law has told him lies about me. My sister-in-law also verbally abuses me and used very bad words like “prostitute”. When I told her not to interfere between me and my husband, she shouted and slapped my face (Nadira)

Whenever my mother-in-law talks on the phone to my husband, she asks him to send me back home to take care of her, but I refuse to go and my husband gets angry and shouts at me (Nina)

Amira and Nina live with their husbands in Hong Kong, and their mothers-in-law live in their home country. But their mothers-in-law want them to come back and take care of them. However, the daughters-in-law refuse to comply because they believe that their children’s future will be better in Hong Kong. Their refusal to go back to their home country to take care of the mother- in- law is often met with abuse from their husband. The family structure in most South Asian families is patrilineal, with the sons’ responsibility and duty being to take care of his parents. Therefore, some mothers-in-law, as also observed in the present study, may want their daughter-in-law to take care of them, and live with them. But when the women refuse to comply to such a request, arguments ensue between the husband and wife, and this is also one of the reasons for the husband’s abusive behaviour towards his wife.

6.2.6. Make the marriage work

In a society where marriage is more than an expected life event, and where divorce is frowned upon, women who divorce may be perceived as failing in their role of maintaining their marriage and providing their children with a father regardless of his conduct (Dasgupta, 2000). Thus, attempts are made to maintain the marriage and any problems within the family are not to be made public, as far as that is possible. Culturally, women's identity and status are linked to marriage, and therefore efforts must be made to keep the marriage intact at any cost (Abraham, 2000a). In a society where marriage and producing a male child is considered the ultimate goal for women, divorced women are often socially ostracised and stigmatised. Often the women are blamed for the divorce or separation, with the assumption that something must be wrong with her. This response from the community can often lead to social isolation for divorced women (Abraham, 2000b). Furthermore, this social exclusionary response by the community can also extend to the family whereby it may also affect the chances of marriage for other eligible unmarried daughters. Therefore, married women are expected to sacrifice for the well-being of the family, willingly and without complaint (Ayyub, 2000).

The participants of the present study also shared that they try their best to make the marriage work, and that they would not consider divorce as an option. Madhu shared that she wants to make her marriage work whatever the cost:

I do not think of divorce. I want my marriage to work. I want my children to have a family. Family is important. Divorced is bad for children (Madhu)

If divorced people will look down upon you and label you as a 'bad woman'. Divorce is bad in our community, people gossip and lose respect for you... people will stop talking to you, they avoid you. (Amira)

Similarly, Tamira also said:

I do not consider divorce because it will give a bad name to family and relatives. Also, because of my children I don't want the divorce; it will not be good for children. I want my marriage to work (Tamira)

Thus, the emphasis to make the marriage work is considered the woman's responsibility, and if it does not work then it is considered to be the woman's fault. Therefore, many women tend to tolerate and suffer all the hardship and abuses silently for the sake of making the marriage work.

6.2.7. Stigma of leaving the relationship

Shame and embarrassment, especially in South Asian communities is another factor that may inhibit women from disclosing the abuse to others (Ayyub, 2000). For many South Asian women, divorce is not an option as it is considered taboo. Often women are blamed for breaking up their families, and in such circumstances both the woman and her children can be stigmatised and ostracised by their communities (Nankani, 2000; Dasgupta and Warriar, 1996; Abraham, 2000a). As observed from the instances shared

by many of the women in this study, the stigma of divorce or separation often serves as an incentive to stay in the marriage and to try and make the marriage work. As some participants related:

I know, if I leave the marriage, I cannot go back to Pakistan if divorced. People [in Pakistan] will talk, and the shame, the shame on my family...it is not easy
(Nina)

Divorce will give a bad name to family and relatives... I do not consider divorce
(Tamira)

Similarly, Shamin also shared that divorced women lose the respect of friends and community, and they are socially excluded as well. She said:

Divorce is not a good thing in our [Pakistan] culture. We will lose respect from friends and community...and nobody will want to talk with you, they will say, she is a bad woman and avoid you (Shamin)

As observed from the above excerpts, for many of the women, divorce was not considered as a response to domestic abuse, due to the social and personal consequences. Not only is the responsibility of maintaining the family placed upon the woman, but the stigma attached to divorce, the feelings of shame, and not wanting to dishonour the family also forces many women to silently tolerate the abuse and remain in the abusive relationship. Due to the emphasis on keeping family matters within the family as much as possible, and of maintaining social face, many women may hesitate to speak

out or share about the abuse. Thus, for many South Asian women, as well as for women from other Asian cultures, the message that family problems should remain inside the family as far as possible, has kept many women silent in the face of domestic violence, and has made them to tolerate the abusive relationship so as to maintain the cultural norms (Kozu, 1999).

6.2.8. Maintain social face

Another theme that was generated from the data pertains to the cultural and traditional value of maintaining social face. In many Asian cultures, women are taught that saving face and maintaining family harmony overrides the need for individual safety (Gill, 2004). To save face means to avoid being shamed by others. In South Asian cultures, maintaining social face or ensuring that the family is well thought of by the community is highly regarded. As such, a strong emphasis is placed on social obligation (Ramisetty-Mikler, 1993) and maintaining one's status in society allows for upholding social face. In group-oriented cultures, the individual is often regarded as the ambassador who represents the family, whereby the failures of the individual to maintain the social obligation may result in the loss of face for the entire family. Therefore, there is "considerable pressure to maintain harmony and minimize any actions that would potentially jeopardise the family and community" (Abraham, 2000a, p.19). Thus, the women may be asked by their kin to remain in the (abusive) relationship for the sake of family honour (Ayyub, 2000).

With higher value given to the family as a whole than to the individual, there is strong emphasis placed against exposing what is considered to be 'private' family matters. Hence, family matters are kept within the family as much as possible and individual members are discouraged from speaking out or sharing about family matters. The fear of losing face in front of one's community, as well as the sense of failing in her marital commitments may keep a woman silent about being abused (Dasgupta, 2000). In line with this, some participants shared:

I pretend to my community and others that everything is alright in my marriage. I am afraid people will talk and blame the woman if she has marriage problems and say, 'she is a bad woman'. So I do not tell other people about problems in my marriage (Amira).

It is hard to let other people know about your marriage problems. And you don't want them to know, you want to cover it up (Madhu)

The above quotes reflect the participants' desire to keep family matters within the family in order to maintain social face and a social standing before people. For women like Amira and Madhu, maintaining social face is a guideline for social behaviour, and they are very concerned about how other people view them. If doing something would make them lose face, feel ashamed or give other people a chance to show disrespect, they try to conceal it from others. To save face means to avoid being shamed by others. In her study among South Asian women in the UK (N = 18), Gill (2004) observed that shame is a central factor for the women, regardless of whether they stayed or left the abusive relationship.

Apart from the pressure to maintain social face, participants also shared that the fear of disrupting the family relationship also kept them silent. Many of the participants in this study are married to their cousin. Hence, if they were to seek separation or divorce, it would affect not only her relationship with her husband, but also the relationship of the entire family. In Sofia's case, she was pressured by her family members to keep silent, not to speak out about her husband's abusive behaviours, for fear of jeopardising the relationships among the other family members. Nina, another participant, also said that she could not share her husband's abusive behaviour with her brother, who is married to her husband's sister, because she did not want it to affect her brother's relationship with his wife. Nina goes on to describe her situation:

I cannot tell much about my problem to my brother because if I tell him then it may also create a problem in his own home...he is married to my husband's sister so I cannot share too much (Nina)

Another subtheme relating to maintaining social face and the incentive to keep the relationship intact is the fear of "what other people will say". Very often, the women are blamed for the break-up of the family. Amira shared that not only is divorce considered "not a good thing in Pakistan culture", but if a woman gets divorced (even if the divorced is initiated by the husband) the blame is put upon her and her whole life is "gone". Amira also said that people in her community will talk and blame her for the marriage problem, and may label her as a "bad woman", so she pretends that everything is alright in her marriage (Amira).

6.2.9. Gender Inequality

The South Asian culture traditionally outlines gender roles, although there may be variability in the degree to which families ascribes to this (Segal, 1991). In most South Asian families there is a higher preference for males than females, and women are expected to be dependent on the males in the family: the father, husband and oldest son. In general, men are expected to provide for the family financially while the women are expected to nurture and take care of the family, and maintain the family's honour (Assanand et al., 1990). As in other patriarchal systems, in South Asian cultural context there is also an imbalance of power between male and female. Patriarchal beliefs operate by affording the right of the male to exercise power in the family. These cultural norms with regard to woman's position and her duty to her husband and family often make it harder for the woman to challenge the hierarchies of gender, age and status. Violence against women is also seen to be globally rooted in beliefs in male dominance over women, perpetrated and condoned through the strict gender role that is reinforced through the institution of marriage (Abraham, 1995; Siddiqui et al., 2008).

Women's roles in South Asian communities are inextricably linked to the men in their lives. According to Abraham (Abraham, 2000a), for South Asians, marriage is seen as an essential institution which defines the status of women, irrespective of class, religion, or where they are from. Within this marriage institution, patriarchal control is exercised over the woman, where the man dominates and demands various rights and privileges in his position as husband and son-in-law (Abraham, 2000a), and women are expected to

be self-sacrificing and obedient (Dasgupta and Warriar, 1996; Raj and Silverman, 2002a). These traditional gendered roles may be even more strongly maintained or emphasised within the immigrant community as a way of ensuring cultural continuity (Abraham, 1995; Almeida and Dolan-Delvecchio, 1999; Dasgupta and Warriar, 1996). In the present study, participants also talked about their husband's controlling nature and power imbalance in the relationships. The following are some excerpts from the interview data with the women:

My husband is very controlling. He controls the money, stops me from going out, meeting friends. He wants me to stay home (Ash)

My partner does not respect me and thinks women are inferior to men. He thinks that women do not know anything. He makes all decisions in the house, very controlling (Shashila)

He expects me to stay home and do housework and clean. He ignores me all the time, he does not care...he also does not allow me to go out and meet my friends. He does not leave me any money, even for the children bus fare to go to school, I have to ask him, he keeps all the money. (Shamin)

It is not good for me to ask him money all the time to buy for food; he should know better and leave some spending money with me for grocery. I do not want to ask him every time and when I ask he gets angry... my husband controls everything... he does not even allow me to talk to any male, even his own brother. He expects me to be at home and not go out or talk to my friends. He even restricts my meeting with my family... (Sunita)

For majority of the participants in this study, they talked about their husbands restricting their social activities as well as controlling them financially. Some of the women shared that their husband restrict their social activities due to the fear that if the wife is exposed to ideas from outside the home she may begin to assert herself and will become less likely to obey him. This highlights the gender imbalance and expectation of women to be subordinate to their husbands.

Migration also increases women's vulnerability to experience such expression of patriarchy, as immigrants also encounter economic, systemic, informational, cultural, and language barriers to accessing support and services (Bayne-Smith, 1996). The idea of male privilege, coupled with migration and unfamiliarity with the new host country, may play a role in exacerbating the existing power imbalance. In this regard, one of the participants remarked:

Men have affairs, and if wives start questioning them, then the husband beats them... the women cannot go out to ask for help as they do not know anything about Hong Kong...so they cannot go out to ask for help (Ash)

As mentioned above, within the family itself, males are more valued than females (Segal, 1991). Therefore, the birth of a daughter is often not met with joy and exultation, as would be seen at the birth of a son, since she is more likely to be perceived as an economic liability, costing the family money for her dowry (Kumar, 1991). Amira summarises this preference for the male gender:

When my baby was born and it was a girl, my husband was not happy and told me he wanted a boy. The sex of the baby is not within my control and I cannot choose whether the baby born is a girl or boy, it is god's given. Since the birth of the baby, my husband started to withdraw... and became abusive, verbally, physically. I feel hurt by his rejection of the baby... (Amira)

Another participant, Sofia shared her experiences:

My husband used to tell me that if I give birth to a daughter, he will divorce me (Sofia)

In all societies, there are cultural institutions, beliefs and practices that undermine women's autonomy and contribute to gender-based violence. In parts of South Asia, there is a strong preference for having sons, because they are expected to care for parents and continue the family lineage, whereas girls are considered economic liabilities, since the parents have to arrange for gifts in kind or cash to the groom that are considered to be a natural consideration of marriage when their daughter's marriage is arranged (Kumar, 1991).

6.2.10. Summary of analysis of interviews with women participants

In presenting the themes that were generated from the interview data gathered from the women, attempts were made to present their "voices" as much as possible by including direct quotations from the women which reflect the richness of the data and provide a frame of reference for the identified themes.

This study reveals that the influence of cultural and structural factors appears to be the common factors that the women have to deal with, as these factors intersect and interact with each other. These issues may be exacerbated within the immigrant context, where language difficulties, lack of support systems, and feelings of isolation become additional obstacles for women. Issues that are more unique to the South Asian culture, as identified by the participants, include the role of family honour, gender norms, and a woman's value through marriage, and the fear of societal ostracism associated with leaving a marriage. The women's socialisation into traditional gender roles; pressure to uphold not only their own but their families' honour; lack of support; and financial dependence on their husbands create a barrier for these women to live a life free from abuse. Their social behaviour is oriented around the home and family and influenced by the expectations of family and community. As observed from the findings of this study, family, relatives and friends are the first contact the women approach when they decide to seek help. The study findings also have revealed that the lack of language skill and lack of knowledge of information/services also hinders them from approaching formal support. It is important to understand that a combination of institutional, cultural and language barriers can serve to deter women from seeking help (Barn, 2008).

In the following section, the themes generated from the interview with the helping professionals are presented.

6.3. Themes that emerged from the interviews with the helping professionals

In the present study, six helping professionals (see Appendix 10) from four different social service agencies, working with ethnic minorities, were also interviewed. The interviews, which lasted between 30-60 minutes, were conducted in English. The helping professionals were primarily invited to their share the nature of the services provided by their respective social service agencies, and their overall view on their perspective of the issue of domestic violence among South Asians. Thus, the questions posed to the helping professionals were different from those posed to the participants. Their perspectives were also somewhat different from those of the participants as they have a different position and relationship to the subject matter. Consequently, the themes that were generated from the data set gathered from the helping professionals could also be different. Therefore, the researcher did not attempt to force similar themes to those that emerged from the data of the abused women for ease of comparison. For instance, the helping professionals also talked about the “culture” (values and beliefs) of the women in relation to the women’s experience of abuse and their help seeking. Thus, when the data from the helping professionals was analysed, “culture “was coded as “cultural factors and domestic violence” rather than as “culture”.

As mentioned above, the helping professionals were primarily invited to share about the service provision of their respective agencies, and to obtain their perspectives on South Asian women’s experiences with domestic violence.

Overall, the data were organised into four major themes pertaining to the situation of South Asian women and domestic violence. The key themes are: the nature of existing social services for ethnic minorities; cultural factors and domestic violence; proposed remedies to help South Asian women to tackle domestic violence, and the gap in services provided.

6.3.1. Nature of existing social services serving ethnic minorities

The majority of the social services for ethnic minorities (see chapter 2, section 2.2. for definition of ethnic minorities) are mainly geared towards facilitating their adjustment and social integration to the mainstream society. Currently there are five main support centres and two sub-centres operated by not-for-profit organisations and funded by the government (Race Relations Units, 2006; 2013). Thus the main services, programs and activities of these social agencies are focused on providing language classes, interpretation services, and other social integration programmes. Besides these five major support service centres, there are also a number of non-governmental organisations (NGO) providing other supporting services to ethnic minorities (Hong Kong Council of Social Service, 2008). These programmes and services include, but are not limited to, cross-cultural youth learning programmes; language programmes; mobile information services; and radio programmes in (three) ethnic languages (Race Relations Units, 2006; 2013).

With regard to domestic violence services, in Hong Kong there are five mainstream

shelter (refuge) homes providing temporary accommodation to women and their children facing domestic violence (Hong Kong Council of Social Service, 2012). There are also a wide range of welfare services (mainstream) provided to victims of child abuse, partner abuse and sexual violence by the Social Welfare Department, as well as by other non-governmental organisations (Social Welfare Department, 2003), which are also open to ethnic minority communities. Some of these services include outreach, crisis intervention, statutory protection, and counselling, as well as arranging referrals for other services such as legal services, job placement, housing assistance and other community resources. To the knowledge of the researcher, at the time of writing this thesis, there are no known ethnic specific domestic violence services and shelter homes. Although the mainstream services and shelter homes for victims of domestic violence also extend to all women facing domestic violence, these services mainly cater to Chinese-speaking women. Due to the language barriers it may be hard for many ethnic minority women, who do not speak the local language, to access such services even if they would like to, and some women may not be even aware of how to access such services, as reported by the participants and helping professionals interviewed in this study.

Findings from past studies (examples, Agnew, 1998; Dasgupta, 2000; Merchant, 2000) have revealed that ethnic minority women are more likely to seek support from ethnic-specific service agencies/centres. The main reason is that such ethnic-specific service centres/agencies may be more likely to understand and accept the behaviours and

cultural aspects of ethnic minority women that may not be easily understood by mainstream agencies. As also shared by the helping professionals:

The shelter homes (refuge) may not be adequate to meet the needs of South Asian women, which may be due to language barrier and cultural issues, and hence South Asian women may hesitate to go to mainstream services (HP-Manager1)

Some of the participants in this study who have stayed at shelter homes referred by the social service agencies (example, Nadira; Nina) shared that they did not feel comfortable, mainly due to the language barrier. Nadira and Nina were at a different shelter (refuge) on different occasions. They also shared that they had no one to talk with, there was no provision of *halal food* (foods that Muslims are permitted to eat under Islamic dietary guidelines), and the strict regulations of the shelter homes, for example specific times set for preparation of meals, was difficult for them, especially as their children were also with them in the shelter home. This is what they shared:

It was a hard time at the shelter. I had to cook my own food as they do not provide halal food, they give only Chinese food. The shelter has strict timing for cooking, like after a certain time, you are not allowed to cook, and they close the kitchen. So I had to cook within the specific time given, sometimes this was hard, as I had to attend and take care of my little two sons, and also attend to cooking for me and my children. Everyone was Chinese and I had no one to talk to or share with, as I cannot speak the language... it was a hard time for me and my little sons (Nadira)

At the shelter, me and my sons, we were separated. They told me boys stay in different room. It was difficult. I was not allowed to stay together with my sons, they (sons) were in a different room...I was the only South Asian woman there at the time; the others are all Chinese... the food was different; I cannot eat the food... (Nina)

The police made the referral for me to be at the shelter(refuge)... while I was at the shelter, I was by myself all the time as I cannot join the program and activities... it was all conducted in Chinese... I cannot speak the language. I could not talk to the other women there due to the language... (Ash)

The experiences describe by the women provide us with critical information, regarding the needs of women, and the services they accessed. Thus, it provides a necessary step in determining how to improve the existing services/ programmes that can also better serve other ethnic minorities women experiencing partner abuse which would enable the needs of women to be more adequately met, with having ethnic minority staff to communicate with women in their own language, thus being able to offer the emotional support that is so crucial to a woman fleeing domestic violence. It is important to take into consideration the language and cultural sensitivity issues of the women experiencing domestic violence who go through this painful process, and support for emotional counselling is crucial.

Current mode of service delivery must be re-examined and modify to create ones that are more flexible and accommodative to different ethnic groups rather than asking/expecting them to fit in and cope. It is also imperative that existing shelters be

sensitive to the eating habits and diets of South Asians. For instance, some South Asians may not eat beef due to religious reason, while Muslims are not allowed to eat meat unless it is *halal* meat. Some of the helping professionals also noted that South Asian women may be less willing to utilise the family services or counselling services provided by the government and other non-governmental organisations due to the cultural differences and language barrier. Although translator might be available to help bridge the language barrier, some of their cultural and behavioural norms may not be easily understood by the mainstream counsellors or service providers. Training in cultural sensitivity for service providers is important so that they are aware of issue that are unique to South Asian immigrant women. This may help women feel more comfortable and more likely to use the services (Huisman, 1996). Having ethnic-specific services and shelters for domestic violence can help to provide ethnic minority women with a safe place where they can mingle comfortably with others, and seek practical assistance without the barrier of language.

6.3.1.1. Gap in Service

During the interviews with the helping professionals from four social service agencies, they also reiterated that their social service agencies which provide supportive services to ethnic minorities are mainly geared towards facilitating the social integration of ethnic minorities into the larger society. Therefore, most of their services are program-based, such as providing language classes and cross-cultural programs, amongst others. The helping professionals also mentioned that since they are funded by outside bodies,

they (agencies) have obligations to fulfil the requirements stipulated by the funders. They also shared that the lack of man-power is another reason that they could not provide individual counselling or handle case work. As one helping professional stated:

Social workers do not have time, and due to a lack of man-power we are unable to provide counselling or probe deeper into their problems. Our job is to take care of the women programs/ activities. The nature of our service is program base and not case work (HP-SW)

Another helping professional further opined that:

The nature of service provided by our agency is mainly program-based, and focuses on programs and activities for social integration. Sometimes we assist them with their application for public housing or immigration-related issue. Our service is mainly program-based and it is a limitation as we are unable to provide individual counselling (HP-Manager 1)

One of the helping professional (HP-Manager2) also shared that their agency does not handle domestic violence cases or provide counselling. Even when service users seek for assistance from the agency, most often it pertains to tangible help such as applying for public housing or immigration-related issues. She further remarked that most of the women are housewives and do not have friends or social network. So they come to the agency and join the programs and activities so they can meet other women and build social and support network. She further added that:

The service users who come to our agency are aware that we are mainly program-based and do not provide counselling for issues related to domestic

violence. Mostly they come to us to ask for help with immigration related issues or housing issues when the husbands divorce them (HP-Manager2)

All the helping professionals also noted that in general the women approach their social service agencies in order to attend the various programs and activities organised by the respective agencies. The service users mainly seek their (agency) assistance for matters such as immigration-related issue, application for public housing, information about children's education, and employment-related issues, amongst others, and seldom share or discuss their personal lives. Even when a case of domestic violence does come to the surface it is often not because the abused woman came to share it, but that the story has come out indirectly. For instance, a woman might come to seek the agency's assistance for immigration-related issues. In general, most South Asian women in Hong Kong came to join their husbands, so their visa is also sponsored by their spouse. But when separation or divorce occurs, the husband may then withdraw their sponsorship of the visa. So when the women come to seek the agency's help with immigration-related matters, in the course of discussing their present predicament, the issue of domestic violence also comes to the surface. The helping professionals also stated that currently there are no ethnic-specific services for domestic violence and shelter (refuge).

6.3.2. Cultural factors and domestic violence

The helping professionals observed that in most cases the women were hesitant to share about domestic violence due to their traditional and cultural values. As one helping professionals remarked:

I think culture also plays a role; the women do not want to come out and seek help because they do not want to betray their family. For them it is taboo subject, they avoided not to shame. Women already separated/ divorced are more open to share, by our observation. (HP-Manager2).

I think, if there are specific South Asian services, perhaps it may give them an incentive to come out and seek help. I think that not sharing about the issue of domestic violence maybe due to the sensitivity issue and to their culture. The women believe that sharing about the problems in their marriage, about domestic violence in their marriage will bring shame to the family. I think mostly the women stayed in the marriage because they accept it as their fate. They accept it as a natural part of their marriage. This was the same in Hong Kong (Chinese) society some years ago (HP-Manager1)

Another helping professional further stressed that even when some women share about the problems in their marriage, it is not for seeking help, but rather to share and talk with someone. One of the helping professionals has this to say:

The women are afraid that if they speak out, people will look down upon them if they know in the community. Usually they feel relief just sharing... just to talk and share to me, but not to seek help (HP-PW1)

Another helping professional related that the women fear that if they share, their family stories will spread through their community, and they do not want to bring a bad name to the family. One of the helping professional said:

Women hesitate to talk because they fear that if others in the community know

about the abuse, they will look down on her and say that her husband does not respect her so he abuses her...so many women are hesitant to share with others because the community is close-knit, if one person knows, then that person will tell another and so on and the whole community will know and they will feel ashamed (HP-PW2)

Another helping professional remarked:

I think it is not only due to the culture that most women hesitate to talk. There are other factors involved as well. She is sponsored by her husband and mostly husband cut of the (visa) sponsorship when marriage breakdown. She cannot go back to her country as a divorced woman because of the shame. In Islam divorce is frowned upon so they rarely consider divorce and in most case, the husband is the one to initiate the divorce. She is concerned about who will take care of her even if she gets a divorce. She has no one here (in Hong Kong) to support her, no family or relatives (HP-PW3)

Interpersonal harmony within the group is an important value, to preserve this harmony; the individual's needs are often suppressed for the betterment of the group. Since South Asian communities still hold the traditional values of family above all else, maintaining the family unity is more important than the welfare of individual. Due to a strong emphasis on social obligation among South Asians (Ramisetty-Mikler,1993), maintaining family honour is considered very important. Therefore, considerable pressure is placed upon women to maintain the harmony within the family and community (Abraham, 2000a).

Consequently, community support may be lacking and religious and community representatives may refuse to acknowledge the domestic violence within their community and fail in their responsibility to support women who are experiencing domestic violence (Dasgupta, 2000b). Therefore, women may hesitate to reach out to their community for fear of being ostracised, and also for fear of dishonouring their family's name (Sheehan, Javier and Thanjan, 2000). As one helping professional said:

Many women are hesitant to share or talk about the abuse because they do not want people to know, and they do not want to bring a bad name to the family...
(HP-PW1)

Another helping professional remarked:

Many families (ethnic minority) are affected by domestic violence...but somehow because of the cultural thing, people do not like to go out and share about domestic violence. They do not want other people to know about the problems in their marriage, as it might reflect badly on their family (HP-PW3).

This helping professional (HP-PW3) stated that divorced is rarely considered by the women because it is frowned upon by the community. All the helping professionals mentioned also that in most cases, even when divorce or separation occurs, it is initiated by the husband. This also reflects the situation among many of the participants in the present study whereby the divorce or separation were initiated by their husband, except for two of the participants who initiated the divorce/separation themselves (see chapter summary in chapter 5).

6.3.3. Proposed remedies to help South Asian women tackle domestic violence

During the interviews with the helping professionals, they were also asked to share their perspectives on what they consider to be effective ways to tackle and respond to domestic violence within South Asian communities.

Ethnic minority helping professional stated:

Children are very important to the South Asians. So if they know that the abuse can have a negative impact on children then the women may be more open to seek help (HP-PW1)

Another helping professional stated:

If stories of (South Asian) women who have suffered domestic violence but have now overcome it, are to share with other women who are facing domestic violence, it may help to change the women's minds to seek help. Promotion on the right of women, let them know, she have alternatives, empower them to share (HP-Manager1)

Need for change in gender equality, provide public education, provide more awareness to the community, in-depth counselling requires (HP- manager-2)

Another helping professional also remarked that the women should be encouraged to find employment so that they not only have the opportunity to earn, but so that the earning will also empower them. As one ethnic minority helping professional said:

If the woman works and not stays at home, she will have money, and then she has some power. Now only the husband is working so he has the power, because

the women depend on their husbands for everything (HP-PW2)

The helping professionals also mentioned that an awareness program about domestic violence, that it is an offence under the law, should be broadcast to the community. As one helping professional stated:

To tackle domestic violence, the right of women should be promoted, to let them know that domestic violence is an offence under the law (HP-Manager1)

Since South Asians place emphasis on maintaining the family, helping professionals also remarked that couple counselling should be encouraged to help provide a better understanding between the husband and wives. They suggested that both the men and women should be encouraged to seek help, to work out the problems in their relationship and to know how best to resolve the conflict. Referring to this point, helping professionals further remarked that it would be better if such counselling is provided by counsellor from similar cultural backgrounds, or in their ethnic language. This will make them feel better understood.

Counselling for couples will be good, not only for women but also for men as well. Even in counselling, it will be better if the counsellor is from the same cultural background so they can understand the culture better (HP-PW3)

If both husband and wife are willing, and if both of them are willing to seek help, that will encourage them to stay together and work at their marriage, and start afresh, at least for the sake of their children... (HP-PW1)

6.4. Concluding summary

As we can see from the excerpts of the interviews with the helping professionals, many abused women are hesitant to talk because they fear they may dishonour their family. Fear of dishonour and shame often acts as a hindrance to women which are reinforced by external factors including language skill, lack of knowledge about their rights, lack of availability of appropriate services/resources and fear of deportation. Most of the women in this study are also dependent on their husbands, not only financially, but also for their visa. This means that if they are divorced, and the husbands were to withdraw his sponsorship, there is a fear of deportation. This may also hinder women from reporting abuse. It is important to understand women's experience in the context of various factors. Knowledge of this unique issue is important for service providers and creating culturally appropriate interventions.

As mentioned above, the existing social services for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong are mainly geared towards promoting social integration and social harmony, and not for domestic violence related issues. The helping professionals interviewed in this study also noted that service users of their respective agency usually come to attend the various psycho-educational programs and activities, and seldom share about their personal lives. This may be because the service users are also aware of the nature of the agency services, which consist of mainly psycho-educational programmes and activities and are not specifically designed for domestic violence. These limitations may also pose a barrier for women from seeking formal help from these services, as the present

services were not geared for domestic violence related issues.

It is very important to have an ethnic-specific domestic violence support services. Based on the analysis of the data of the helping professionals and the abused women, it is also apparent that there is a need for an ethnic-specific service to cater to victims of domestic abuse among ethnic minority women. The mainstream services and shelters may not be able to fully meet the needs of ethnic minority women due to the barriers of language and cultural difference. Having ethnic-specific services can help to overcome such barriers. The value of recognising specific cultural nuances can lead to more effective service provision. For example, understanding and respecting the specific dietary needs and religious practices of South Asian women can help ensure that the women are comfortable. By providing these services in a culturally respectable manner, a woman's dignity can be preserved. It is important to consider the many contextual factors of women experiences with abuse. Ethnic-specific services can also enable abused women to meet others from the same cultural background. They can build up support networks with other women who are also facing similar situations, and can know that they are not alone. Sharing a commonality can help them to empower each other.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Discussion

7.1. Introduction

This chapter will provide a discussion of the research findings, incorporating both the data set from the women participants and the helping professionals. The current study examines South Asian women's perceptions, understanding and experiences of domestic violence in the context of Hong Kong. The discussion of the research findings is based on the women's own understanding and explanation of their circumstances and experiences, based on their subjective reality, as participants have the relevant experience required to shed light on it. This study also places an emphasis on women's knowledge of their own experience as socially constructed (Grinnell and Unrau, 2005), and dependent on the specific locations and processes of social interaction, where the environment and the series of factors have a significance role in influencing women's decision making. The women's appraisals of their own situations undoubtedly shape their decision to seek help. A theoretical model that attempts to explain the situation of domestic violence among South Asian women in the local context is also discussed in this chapter.

When talking about domestic violence among South Asian women, it is also important to consider the cultural context, which has also been highlighted by both the women and

helping professionals interviewed in this study. The data analysis has also revealed that women's traditional beliefs pertaining to family and marriage also influence their actions and responses in handling social expectations and pressures when experiencing domestic violence. The recognition of the importance of culture in the present study is not meant as cultural justification of abuse, but rather to help provide a context for understanding women's experiences of domestic violence. An important aspect by which culture exerts influence is the worldview, whether individualist or collectivist, to which a woman subscribes (Levy, 2008) as both have different core values. Collectivism considers the need of the family and community to be more important than the needs of the individual, and interpersonal harmony within the group is a very important value. In the face of conflict collectivists tend to use collaborative strategies to maintain relationships and save face with others, even at the risk of personal cost (Ohbuchi et al., 1999). For instance, in this study, one of the participants (Ash) shared that she had to drop legal charges against her husband because the community would blame her if her husband was sent to prison, even though she was seriously injured by her husband. As collectivist cultures place the emphasis on obedience and harmony within the group (Levy, 2008), characterised by specific norms that regulate social interaction, those who deviate from such prescribed role behaviour may be faced with strong negative social consequences (for example, shame, ostracism). Malley-Morrison (2004) stated that the social behaviour of individuals from collectivistic societies is best predicted through group social norms and obligations. Interpersonal harmony within the group is an important value, and to preserve this harmony, an individual's needs are often

suppressed for the betterment of the group. An understanding of collectivist culture can help to provide a context for understanding South Asian women's experiences with abusive relationships. It also helps to provide a better understanding of the influence of cultural values and beliefs which play a significant role in shaping a woman's experience of abuse and its meaning to her (Levy, 2008). As such, women are discouraged from revealing 'shameful' events that may tarnish the family's reputation and honour within the community (Abraham, 2000a), and they often remain silent about issues such as domestic violence to save the family honour.

Another factor is the importance placed on marriage and the strict gender roles that are presented through the institution of marriage. Women are expected to uphold the family's honour and thereby they are encouraged to maintain their marriage at all cost (Dasgupta, 2000). As marriage is central to family life for many South Asians, there is strong resistance to divorce, which is considered a failure on the part of the wife to maintain the marriage. Hence, the women's understanding, experiences and actions in the face of domestic violence are also largely influenced by their cultural values. Thus, it can be argued that the role expectations within the family form the foundation of the various struggles and pressure felt by the women in this study, as they are expected to preserve traditional values and norms. Previous studies have also observed that maintaining family honour as well as the notion of shame were the presiding factors causing many abused women to keep silent, and to make every effort to make the relationship work (examples, Gill, 2004; Thiara and Gill, 2012; Midlarsky et al., 2006;

Abraham, 2000a; Raj and Silverman, 2002a; Ayyub, 2000; Mehotra, 1999). In the present study, it has also been observed that the women tend to make every effort to maintain the marriage even when experiencing domestic violence. The majority of the women in this study also shared that divorce is not socially and culturally accepted, and that divorced women are looked down upon by their community. Furthermore, the shame and stigma attached to domestic violence and divorce also underpin how they respond to the abuse. Thus, for many women, their struggles against male violence are also influenced by the need to maintain the social and cultural values placed on marriage, relationships and family roles. The concept of shame and the responsibility often placed on women of maintaining the family honour, are often used as forms of control to keep women from seeking further help (Gill, 2004). Shame is not merely an individual consequence, but rather, the entire family is shamed. The values, attitudes and beliefs including importance of the family and the expected role of wife, make it difficult for women to disclose the abuse to others.

Issues that are more unique to South Asian cultures, as identified by the participants, include the role of wife and mother, family honour, the strong role of the natal family in decision making, rigid gender norms, societal ostracism associated with leaving a marriage, shame and stigma of divorce and a women's value through marriage. This information supports and extends our knowledge of ethnicity and gender. In South Asian cultures, marriage is considered a cultural marker of women's identity and social status; hence, many women strive to preserve their marriage regardless of the cost so as

to maintain their status (Abraham, 2000a). Marriage is regarded as an ideal, a duty, and as a social responsibility that the wife is expected to maintain and nurture. A woman's value is designated first through her viability in making a good marriage, then through her marital status, and finally through her motherhood status. Furthermore, her ability and performance as daughter and wife carry with it the family honour within the community. Moreover, even if abused women were to consider separation or divorce, in most cases her family members are unlikely to support her decision. In the present study, some participants also reported that when they shared with their family members about the abuse they had experienced from their husband, they were told to "bear it" and to "try to make the marriage work". One of the participants (Bobby) shared that when she informed her parents about the abuses and asked for their support to leave her husband, they did not support her. In fact, her father adamantly told her, "*If you divorce you are dead to me. Do not come back to Pakistan...*" Thus, the fear of being ostracised by their own family also places added burden upon the women to endure the abuse.

With the responsibility of preserving the marriage being bestowed upon the wife, women in this study were under the added pressure to uphold the standards of family values. Previous studies conducted in the United States and United Kingdom among South Asian women (example, Preisser, 1999; Gill, 2004; Natarajan, 2002) have also highlighted that due to women's belief in the importance of being a good wife and mother they were reluctant to seek assistance from outside sources or to leave the relationship. In this study, cultural beliefs and values regarding marriage and family are

what trap many women in the relationship, even when they encounter domestic violence. Although the women in this study perceive their husband's abusive behaviours as wrong, the fear of being blamed, the need to remain loyal to the family, and a strong dedication to their children were identified by these women as some of the factors that influence their decision to remain in the marriage.

It is apparent that the findings of this study not only suggest how social norms and practices (that is, traditional values and beliefs) might have contributed to wife abuse, but that the different gender roles for women and men also mean that they, the women, are subject to different socialising processes. For example, women are taught to be a good wife, to make harmony in the home and to take care of the family, and men are taught to be the head and provider for the family. The existence of gender roles and norms affords more power to men, and women are expected to be self-sacrificing and obedient (Dasgupta and Warriar, 1996; Raj and Silverman, 2002a). The socialisation of gender roles, along with the cultural norms regarding the woman's position and duty to her husband, make it difficult for women to openly challenge these hierarchies of gender and status. If women openly challenge these patriarchal norms they may lose their status and shame their families (Dasgupta and Warriar, 1996; Kanuha, 1987). Thus, the maintenance of domestic violence is further reinforced through strict gender roles and power imbalance. It can be argued that the gender role expectations within the South Asian culture form the foundation of the various struggles and pressure felt by the women in this study as they are expected to preserve the traditional values and norms of

their cultures.

The findings of the present study also suggest that women's perception, understanding, and experience of domestic violence are influenced by their cultural and structural circumstances. The cultural factors, such as the sense of duty and responsibility for the well-being of the family; as well as the structural factors that pertain to immigration, legal status, and availability of support services for victims of domestic abuse, also influence their attitudes towards abuse and the actions they take when encountering domestic violence. These cultural and structural factors also contribute to a type of abuse marked by social isolation. Both the women and the helping professionals interviewed in this study also shared that the husbands often attempt to exert control over their wives' social lives, such as by restricting them from joining social activities and programs organised by social service agencies, or from going out and meeting with their friends. It is probable that the husbands want to confine their wives at home and restrict their social lives so as to prevent them from obtaining information and resources. When men's power over women is threatened, they are likely to use violence to preserve the gender hierarchy in which they hold a superior controlling status over women (Bhuyan et al., 2005; Bersani and Chen, 1988). Since the majority of the women in this study are dependent on their husband economically, and they do not have a regular social network to fall back on, it is probable that the women's desire to build wider social connections by joining the available social activities and making new friends may be viewed by their husbands as a threat to their power, and thus, the husbands attempts to control their social lives.

In addition, the findings of this study seem to support Abraham's (2000b) assertion that women's isolation is also compounded by a lack of finances. The majority of the participants in the present study are dependent on their husbands financially, and this is also used by the husbands as a form of control to restrict their social lives. Many women in this study also shared that their husbands chose to support their mistresses or girlfriends while denying financial support to their wives. When the wife would ask for his financial support, this often resulted in an argument, leading to marital conflict, and abuse from the husband.

The pressure of an uncertain immigration status may also hinder many women from leaving or taking action against their abusive partners for fear of deportation. The immigration status of the women has also been identified as a potential deterrent for many abused immigrant women from seeking help. For instance, an abuser may take advantage of the woman's legal status and use threats of deportation to blackmail her from reporting the abuses, or from leaving him (Abraham, 2000a; Latta and Goodman, 2005; Sullivan et al., 2005; Alaggia et al., 2009). A majority of the participants in this study are also dependent on their husband's visa, most of whom are Hong Kong permanent residents. According to the Hong Kong Immigration Law, women who come to join their husbands are subject to 7 years of continuous residency before they can obtain their own permanent residency permits. If the husband withdraws his visa sponsorship during this 7-year period for whatever reason, the women no longer have the right to remain in Hong Kong, and face probable deportation back to their home

country. Thus, the issue of domestic violence is complicated further for the women in this study, when it is compounded with immigration-related issues, which place women in a vulnerable position. Immigration policy is also another dimension that needs to be taken into account when looking at domestic violence among South Asians immigrant women in Hong Kong. The risk of deportation is an issue for the women, as they can face further abuse from their family for the breakdown of their marriage, and in some cases the family may not accept their return (example Bobby). For abusers, this becomes a platform to exercise control over their wives, who are in extremely vulnerable positions because of the fear of deportation if they disobey their husbands.

If given a more friendly immigration policy, women may gain increased options in their decision making when experiencing domestic violence and their attitudes towards separation/divorce can change to some extent when the risk and fear of deportation is alleviated. Under a friendly immigration policy, for example, in the United Kingdom, under the immigration rule, (Domestic Violence Rule) a woman can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), (thus the fear of deportation is diminish) if she can prove that her marriage has broken down as a result of domestic violence, by providing evidence either in the form of a court conviction, a police report, an injunction order or protection order against the abuser, a medical report from a hospital doctor, a letter from a social service department, or a letter of support or a report from a women's refuge(shelter) or other service provider recognised by the Home Office (Anitha, 2008).

Past studies have also observed that women's reluctance to seek help is also influenced by the availability and accessibility of services and shelter (Choice and Lamke, 1997). Dasgupta (2000a), in her research among South Asian victims of domestic abuse in the United States, also observed that ethnic minority women tend to seek support from ethnic-specific domestic violence services rather than from the mainstream services. Based on the analysis of the data gathered from both the helping professionals and the participants, it is also apparent that there is an urgent need for inclusive services for ethnic minority women experiencing domestic violence. As also observed from this study, mainstream services and shelters may not be able to fully meet the needs of ethnic minority women due to cultural and language barriers. In order to overcome such barriers, having ethnic specific services is crucial to in enabling ethnic minority women to feel safe and be more willing to open up and seek help. Moreover, ethnic-specific services or multicultural staff may be more likely to better understand the cultural needs and traditions of the people they serve, and to accept behaviours that may not be easily understood by mainstream services (Dasgupta, 2000a; Agnew, 1998; Merchant, 2000). A lack of understanding of the cultural and social factors may also hinder migrant women from accessing mainstream domestic violence support services (Huisman, 1996; Raj and Silverman, 2002a; Bui and Morash, 1999; Abraham, 2000a). As women accessing domestic violence services may require a range of practical and emotional support, advice, counselling and information, when language is a barrier it may be difficult for the helping professional to provide information and support, and this may present a considerable barrier for women in their help-seeking process.

Although most of the women in this study reported fear and feelings of helplessness from time to time, they did not seem to fit Walker's (1984) description of abused wives as being passive and incapable of practical action. Indeed, the women in this study were active agents in soliciting advice and assistance from family and friends. For example, some participants in this study (for example, Saira and Anita) took the initiative to leave the abusive marriage (for further detail, see the profile of the women in chapter 5). Saira and Anita shared that they could no longer tolerate the abuse as it was becoming more severe and more frequent. Saira was fortunate to get the support of her family when she decided to leave her husband, and so initiated the separation. Anita on the other hand, did not receive the support of her family. In fact, when she (Anita) shared to her brother, who also lives in Hong Kong, he advised her to '*bear it*' and to '*try and make the marriage work*'. Anita's decision to leave her husband was in part due to the severity and frequency of the abuse, and also due to her concern for the psychological impact it could have on her children. This gave her the strength to initiate the divorce and to try and live an independent life from her abusive husband. The other participants in this study, although they remain in their marriages, have also utilised other *resistance strategies* such as silence, locking oneself inside the room, withholding sex, shouting back at the husband, and seeking help from family, relatives and friends.

For instance, Reenu shared that she would lock herself in the bathroom when her husband became abusive. Amira said she would keep silent when her husband shouts at her as she fears that her husband may withdraw her visa sponsorship, and she has two more years to wait until she gets her residence visa. Shamin shared that in the beginning

she would keep quiet, hoping that her husband would stop shouting. But later on, she said she would shout back at her husband. She said, “*When he shouts at me I also shout back at him. Sometimes he keeps quiet...*” It is clear that the women were not passive, but utilise a variety of strategies to cope with their situation to whatever extent they are able, given the structural and cultural constraints they face.

The women in this study also shared their desire and belief in a better education and future for their children. This could be a way for them to cope with their present predicament which also enables them to endure personal pain and suffering for the greater good of their children. This suggests they have a futuristic orientation, formulating plans about the future through their children, which subconsciously tells them that they themselves have a future. Through this means, the women are able to make meaning out of their stressful situations and are able to activate internal resources from within themselves. For example, one of the participants (Amira) shared that whenever she feels sad and unhappy about her situation; she shifts the focus from thinking about her “*bad marriage*” and diverts her thinking toward her daughter, and to giving her a better future, which in turn gives her strength. Another participant (Saira) shared that “*my children are my life, they mean everything to me. I live for them and wait for them to grow up and have a better future...*” The women’s dedication to their children in this study is an important part of these women’s lives, and when they are aware of the negative impact of partner abuse on their children’s well-being, this can influence and motivate women to act when the children’s interest are at stake. For

example, participant Anita shared that one of the deciding factors for her to leave her abusive marriage was because of the negative consequences abuse can have on her children's well-being.

The women in the present study also demonstrate that although they have been socially isolated in many ways they were able to endure the abuse and social isolation by focusing on their goal of providing a brighter future for their children. For the women in this study, their children mean everything to them. This gives them meaning in their lives despite the abuses they have suffered. Their ability to make positive meaning out of their predicament highlights their inner traits and shows that they are not passive, but that they actively seek out various strategies to cope with the abuse. Thus, it is imperative for helping professionals and counsellors working with ethnic minorities to be cognizant of the limitations the women encounter, and to acknowledge the tiny steps women take to reduce their risks of domestic violence. Such efforts may not necessarily be huge or prominent, but it is what the women could manage at that time, and in her pace. Expecting and wanting these women to do things in certain ways which exceed their limits and boundaries will be disempowering for them. Therefore, it is important to honour women's choices and not mandate specific paths of action as the only way to cope with violence.

The findings of this study also revealed that when women decide to seek help they first turn to their natal family. However, most women are subsequently advised to remain in

the marriage. Moreover, the help available outside of their family and community may often be inadequate to provide support services to ethnic minority women facing domestic abuse (Latta and Goodman, 2005). In the present study some of the participants have also revealed that the assistance they received from social service agencies is usually in terms of tangible help in the form of information and application for public housing, or in dealing with immigration-related issues, but seldom for domestic violence related issues such as in counseling and emotional support. The helping professionals interviewed in the present study also remarked that since the majority of the social service agencies that cater to ethnic minorities are mainly targeted at social integration and social harmony programs, these social service agencies are not equipped to provide supportive services for domestic violence related issues. The mainstream domestic violence services in Hong Kong are mainly geared towards Chinese-speaking clients, and hence the language barrier also becomes a major hindrance for many South Asian women in accessing these existing support services for victims of domestic abuse. It is also apparent that there is a need for inclusive services, such as having ethnic- specific domestic violence support for South Asians abused women.

Although progress is slow, and despite the many fears these women have to contend with, it is encouraging to know that South Asian women in Hong Kong have begun speaking out against partner violence through participating in this study and through sharing their stories to a wider audience through the dissemination of this research. By

keeping issues that are a collective problem in the public arena and by allowing for on-going discussions, the taboo and shame around women voicing the oppression they face can begin to be drawn out and eliminated. It is hoped that this study, which highlights the experiences of domestic violence among South Asian immigrant women, will encourage service providers and conscientious community members to start contemplating ways to address the issue of domestic violence and to provide assistance, and deliver services to ethnic minority women who are forced to cope with the predicaments of abuse. Positively, it is hoped that some desirable changes will come out of this research and that the findings of this study will prompt others to develop further studies, lobby for community action, social services and government funding to initiate specific programs and services for South Asian women experiencing domestic violence.

Findings from this study on South Asian immigrant population are important, since they demonstrate the importance of identifying the factors involved, especially those of cultural significance that may enhance strategies for the intervention and prevention of domestic violence. The implication of the findings of this study can also enable service providers to have a better understanding of the social and cultural context of abuse and of the needs of abused women. Additionally, data on domestic violence among ethnic groups which take into account the cultural and structural factors are important for the development of applicable intervention and policies to address domestic violence.

7.2. Locating Grounded Theory in Qualitative Research

Grounded theory as a form of qualitative research was first developed in 1967 by two sociologists, Glaser and Strauss, at the University of California, School of Nursing during their studies of death and dying in hospitals. Overtime, Glaser and Strauss began to disagree about the nature of the method and how it ought to be practiced and they parted ways. As a result, different versions of grounded theory method have emerged. These include the ‘classical’ (Glaser) version and Strauss and Corbin’s more structured approach, and later on Charmaz’s version (see Charmaz’s 2003, 2006). Grounded theory has been applied and interpreted in a number of ways depending on which version of grounded theory is used. Beyond procedural differences, Glaser has made broad criticisms of Charmaz’s (2006) conception of Grounded Theory (see Glaser, 2002).

Grounded theory is described as the “most influential paradigm for qualitative research in the social sciences today” (Patton, 2002, p.487). Denzin (1994, p.508) further noted, “Grounded theory perspective is the most widely used qualitative interpretive framework in the social sciences today”. Grounded theory procedures (for data analysis) are a scion of qualitative enquiry, and qualitative inquiry is about interpretation of the data (Thomas, 2007).

Grounded theory studies can reflect the objectivist approach, or researchers can use grounded theory from other vantage points- feminist, marxist, phenomenologist-for their empirical studies and they need not necessarily subscribe to positivist or objectivist

assumptions (Thomas and James, 2006). Strauss and Corbin's (1998) grounded theory takes the objectivist (epistemological) underlying conception of grounded theory, which means the researcher, takes on an objective stand and lets the subjective perspective of the participants, take the forefront. Strauss and Corbin's position moves into post-positivism ontology because they also propose giving voice to their study participants, representing them as accurately as possible, acknowledging how participants' views of reality conflict with their own (see Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The present study utilised Strauss and Corbin elements of grounded theory for data analysis, where the researcher role is to discover the truth that lies within the subjective experience of the study population and to represent, in a systematic way, a clear picture of 'what is going on' in the social reality of the participants lives. This is located in the data, and the researcher's standpoint remains secondary-(allowing the data to speak for itself without the researcher trying to import her own assumptions and expectations into the data analysis).

In grounded theory, an explanatory theory emerges where concepts/categories are arranged into a narrative structure or list of propositions which gives a theoretical explanation of the social phenomenon under investigation (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). According to Friedman (2003), a theory in its most basic form is a 'model' that describes how something works by showing the relationships between the categories, and providing a narrative framework that summarises explanations and predictions of the phenomena, derived from empirical data. It is principally about conceptualization of the story, bringing all the concepts/categories into a storyline to help explain behaviour

and processes (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 150) advocated that the researcher describe their “gut sense” about the subject matter of the research in the conceptualization of the story. It is equally important that a researcher has ‘feeling’ and sensitivity for the topic, for the participation, and for the research (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). To do good analysis, the researcher has to be able to step into the shoes of participants and feel at a gut level otherwise one may lose some of the richness and depth of data. After several months of gathering the data, studying the data, writing memos, there is that inner sense of ‘gut feeling’ of what the data are all about. Grounded theory’s aim is to conceptualize ‘what’s going on’ by using empirical data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). In order to make sense of the data one must first “chew” it, “digest” it and “feel” it (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p, 140). The researcher has to take the role of the other and try to understand the world from the perspective of the participants in order to ‘feel’ it. As the researcher learns how participants make sense of their situation and experiences and how they act on them, the researcher begins to make an analytic sense of their meaning and action (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Charmaz (2009, p.131) suggests, “By locating participants meanings and actions, we show the connection between micro and macro levels of analysis, and thus link the subjective and the social”.

According to Chronister et al (2004) qualitative research provides a platform from which women abused can give voice to their experiences of abuse, and qualitative methodology highlights the unique differences inherent in each woman’s experiences. These unique differences guide the researcher to a better understanding of how women

conceptualise the abuse, which in turn influences their help-seeking process. The in-depth nature of interview helps the researcher to understand the participant's subjective world, as the participants has the relevant experience to shed light on it. Grounded theory is labelled as a qualitative approach-however; it can also incorporate both quantitative and qualitative method (Duhsher and Morgan, 2004). The present study utilised Strauss and Corbin's grounded theory approach (1990) to give voice to women's experiences of partner abuse, by reporting the results from the perspective of the participants (who had experienced the phenomenon). The research reflects the participants experience by using their quotation and stories to understand the experience of partner abuse and the context in which it occurs. Grounded theory method allows an in-depth understanding of the larger societal structure that impacts on the subjective experiences of abused women interviewed in this study. The use of qualitative research encouraged reflexivity and the researcher gave an account of personal reflection/reflexivity (see chapter 4, section 4.10). Strauss and Corbin (1994) suggest including presentation of 'self', in the research process, this indicates a possible reason for reflexivity within memo writing (Annells, 1997). Self-awareness expressed through memo writing is integral to the process of reflexivity (McGhee et al, 2007) (memo writing is where the researcher writes notes for herself during data collection and data analysis)

Domestic violence is complex and multifaceted, and a full conceptual understanding of it requires the grappling of many interwoven and overlapping issues and themes. Thus

the insights gained through this study provide an understanding that will guide the practice implications for what would work for South Asian women experiencing domestic violence in the context of Hong Kong, in order to bring about desired change. Additionally, it provides a profound understanding of the values and belief system of South Asian immigrant women, and also sheds significant light on the obstacles that South Asian women face when dealing with domestic violence, along with the ways in which they experience and respond to domestic violence. As seen within this research, the reality currently remains that leaving a relationship may not appear to be the most appealing option for women for various reasons. They may be destitute with no support, from both internal and external. They may have no source of financial or emotional support. They are also restricted by their loyalty and commitment to family and their traditional beliefs and values. Predominantly, the impact of abuse on their children can be a highly motivating factor for women to seek help when they understand/ or are made aware of the impact abuse can have on their children's development and well-being because children are the central point of the women's lives and are what gives them the greatest meaning.

7.2.1. Theoretical model- Cultural and Structural Effects

The theoretical model was derived from the data of experiences reported by the participants interviewed. The theoretical model is represented in a narrative structure as a dynamic system of interconnected themes- integrating a model grounded in the data collected from interviews. The model explains the social process, demonstrates the

causes and conditions under which the process emerges, and explains its consequences. To develop a model explaining the issue of domestic violence among South Asian community in Hong Kong is not to suggest the generalisation or universalisation of these women's experiences. The model highlight the importance of understanding how abuse is perceived or defined by those who experience it and issue of cultural and structural factors underpins their perception, experience and help seeking. The women actions were guided by the cultural and structural factors which reflects the meaning underpinning their perception and respond to abuse. Their action are constructed and based upon their interaction with other elements in their lives such as social roles, norms, strong family ties and the values women are socialized into (socialization that transcends culture) and the structural factors (such as, availability of services, economic dependence, women legal status) can affect their perception and definition, as well as their decisions around help seeking. In a way these women's responses had a lot to do with their values and beliefs of family, obligation and responsibilities as a wife, mother and daughter and the kind of social pressure they were under. It is important to note the influence of cultural and structural conditions that shape the nature of the situation/problem to which the woman responds in their experience with partner abuse, and to understand the difficulties and complexities women face, and to think about effective and culturally applicable means by which to meet the needs of these women.

What has emerged from the experiences of abuse shared by the participants is that in order to fully understand their experiences of abuse and the connected social processes,

it is critical that one understand the salient cultural and structural factors in the participants' lives. This is because these salient cultural and structural factors are the implements through which the women make meaning of their experience of abuse. These unique conditions need to be identified and understood in order to create relevant solutions to the abuse. From the review of the literature as well as from the data analysis it is evident that the subjective and objective realities of women's experiences of domestic violence must be situated within the larger cultural, social and political context. In contemplating a model, first of all, we must look at their cultural traditions and ask, what did South Asian immigrant families bring with them when they came to Hong Kong that might contribute to the abuse and that affects women's responses, either directly or indirectly. Clearly, because of the traditional values and beliefs these families brought with them which often grant men a higher social status, the husbands in these families are likely to feel that they should have more authority in deciding on whatever issues concern the family and that they should be automatically respected by their wives. For some of these couples, the abuse occurred even before their immigration to Hong Kong but for others it only occurred after immigration when the wife became totally dependent on her husband economically and had no other family support or social network support unlike in their home country. However, whether these women were dependent because their husbands asked them to stay home and take care of the family or because they do not have a higher education sufficient to compete in the job market, or because they feel it is their responsibility to care for their husband and children, or a combination of all these factors, they still strive to enrich their lives through joining

various social activities/programs provided at the social service agencies. This is often seen by their husbands as a threat of their becoming independent and exposed to new ideas, which in some cases has resulted in marital conflict. Although these women have found their lives restricted in many ways, they still look for new possibilities and learning opportunities in their new environment. As Dasgupta (1998b); Abraham (2000a) and Raj and Silverman (2002a) indicate, when the power imbalance grows between husband and wife, and when the husband wants to confine his wife in the home while she wants to have more freedom after being exposed to a new environment, partner abuse is likely to happen within South Asian immigrant families that observe traditional roles for men and women.

As claimed by Coutinho (1991), Menjivar and Salcido (2002), Perilla (2000) and Valiante (1993) the culture immigrant women have brought with them will influence the way they respond to their husband's abusive behaviours, and this certainly applies to the South Asian women in this study. Because South Asian women in this study were raised to embrace family unity and harmony, their first response to partner abuse is usually to do whatever will create the least disturbance or disorder to the family unity. Whenever possible, they usually rely on their internal resources and informal social networks to solve their marital problems.

Moreover, there are many aspects of South Asian culture that are important to consider in relation to domestic violence, such as strong family ties. Interpersonal harmony

within the group is an important value, to preserve this harmony; the individuals' needs are often suppressed for the betterment of the group. Because of their traditional family structure which places a high value on maintaining family honour and the concept of 'shame', these women may be very concerned about shaming their family and bringing dishonour to the family. Therefore their hesitation to report abuse should not be perceived as consenting to male violence, but is rather an indication of their use of a different approach to cope with their situation. This is because the notion of "shame" operates against women and their families and keeps them from recognising or addressing issues of domestic violence in order to prevent a loss of dignity on the part of the individual and the family.

The second important matter in developing a model to explain the issue of partner violence among the South Asian community requires an examination of the problem from another dimension. Although we must bear in mind that partner violence in South Asian families also happens in their countries of origin, we must ask what social conditions designate these immigrant women as targets for partner violence in a new country. In other words, we need to know what makes these women vulnerable in their new environment. As proposed by the women in this study, when women are isolated in a strange environment, their immigration status (for most women this immigration status depends on the husband and may cause them to be more tolerant of the abuse due to fear of deportation), lack of a support system, and having to overcome language barriers, and possessing no requisite job skills, makes them more vulnerable to domestic violence.

Some participants stated that because of lack of language ability they were blocked from accessing information. One cannot access something (information/ resources) the existence of which one is unaware, even if she has the language ability to inquire after it. However, in many cases, the women in this study do not have the language skill, have no idea about social rights perspectives in their new country, and often do not know to where or to whom they can go for information.

In addition to this, because they are more concerned about taking care of their husbands, children and families, than about gaining more personal rights, the women in this study felt they are responsible for making the relationship better so that an intact family could be maintained. In addition, some of the husbands have girlfriends and/or affairs with other women and when the wife finds out about these other relationships and confronts the husband to end the relationship and focus on the family, marital conflicts usually arise. Often, men who do not want to give in resort to violence to control their wives. Most of the participants in this study mentioned their husbands having marital affairs and/or girlfriends as the starting point of the abuse, beginning when the wife would question her husband about the affair and ask him to end the relationship with the other woman.

After postulating what might be the cultural social conditions which incubate the problem of partner violence, as part of developing a model, the researcher then discusses some gaps between the needs of these women and the availability of services. Such a

discussion helps us see what might have been missing in understanding South Asian women's situations and what might need to be done to help create culturally sensitive and applicable services for South Asian community. First of all, in addition to the language barrier, when a woman cannot speak the language she already stands at a disadvantaged position for gathering information. If the woman's literacy level is low, then she will be further disadvantaged. This is certainly the case with the women in this study. In addition, because of their unfamiliarity with their environment, many women are confined within their homes and are unaware of the information they need, thus feeling isolated.

Moreover, ethnic-specific services for domestic violence are non-existent in Hong Kong. The support available from the government is often limited because social services serving the ethnic minorities as existing programs and activities are based on social integration and social harmony and not on domestic violence. This was also mentioned by the six helping professionals that were interviewed for this study from four social service agencies serving ethnic minorities. They stated that their services are geared towards programs based on social integration and harmony rather than on casework (that is, not for domestic violence related issues). Not all of the helping professionals in this study felt that the women had been active in reporting their domestic violence experiences. This may be affected by the fact that these social service agencies are geared towards programs and activities focusing on social integration and harmony and not on the issue of domestic violence. Thus, it may be difficult and inappropriate for

women to share upfront about their domestic violence experiences when the social worker's role is to organise and implement programs and activities, and when they are not focused on case work (example, to unravel and help with issue of domestic violence) due to the nature of the services provided, as shared by the program managers/social worker interviewed for this study. The gap in services for ethnic domestic violence, the lack of support, and the lack of advocacy, all of which are essential services, act as barriers that will prevent women from disclosing abuse. A woman needs to be confident and assured that a strong support system and services are available to her while she contemplates her decision to disclose the abuse or seek help.

Another challenge within this community is the pressure, from family members, to stay in the marriage and keep the family together despite the abuse, as there is a very strong stigma attached to divorced women. Exploring how women's perception of domestic violence influences their help seeking and constructs their help seeking processes lends some understanding of how complex the issue of disclosure is for the women in this study. Findings from the interviews with the participants suggest that sometimes participants feel it is important to consider the unity of the family and to make the marriage work and maintain the family at any cost. This was seen when participants related that it was not in their culture to seek divorce. Some participants described how they did not want to disrupt their family unity. In other instances women explained that maintaining family unity and harmony was far more important to them. This aim is crucial for them in keeping the marriage and family going. Their firmness in seeking to

achieve this task has surprised many of the helping professionals, and they tend to come across as not being active in seeking help, often refusing to even consider going to stay in a shelter (refuge) home. This is because this solution overlooks cultural factors that make it difficult for the women under the social pressure they are in. This example is not intended to magnify the power of cultural forces at play. It is simply to point out that the relative role and magnitude of these forces must be assessed concerning each woman in order to fully understand the social forces at play in women's experiences of abuse and in the process of seeking a solution to the abuse. As a matter of fact, South Asian traditional way of handling or dealing with conflicts or adverse situations is often to begin with a process of personal self-reflection and of using one's own strength to resolve conflicts or adversity. When those passages prove to be unsuccessful, then she will turn to her immediate family or informal social network for advice. Only when such an approach is blocked or does not work, will she then go to a formal social network for help. In the current study sample, most women sought help first from a family member. If the participant's family network was not available she turned to her informal social network, consisting of a friend as an early step in the help seeking process.

An important strength of South Asian cultural group is family cohesiveness. Programs and services can build upon this strength and also focus on developing family support intervention to provide support to these women. As discussed in this study, most often the women will turn to the family for help when they experience abuse. Therefore, it is imperative to raise awareness about the nature and effects of partner violence on the

woman and children's mental health well-being to the family. For many South Asian groups, the family is an agent in resolving conflicts and problems. As such, the family can serve as an important support structure for abused women, and help to mediate and intervene as well as provide emotional support when the family is being made aware of the severity of the effect of abuse on the women and children's mental health and physical well-being. Using culturally valued reasons to challenge domestic violence can lead to more effective intervention and prevention strategies through family support (to enlist the family/community in applying pressure so that the abuser will be held accountable and domestic violence will not be tolerated within the community, and so that awareness will be brought to the family and community of the devastating impact of abuse on the women and children's mental well-being, and to enlist their support of women experiencing abuse).

The idea of professionalism seems to give more weight to what the expert has to say, rather than listening to what the client wants. This kind of practice has to be transformed via facilitation, it is not about the facilitator telling the client what is best for her but is about the client telling the facilitator what she wants. Therefore, the helping professional has to realise that the client is indeed the one who knows best what she wants and how much she can or is willing to do to achieve her goals. When providing services to members of ethnic minority group, it is important to take note of their values and beliefs, showing respect and understanding when the client is working on a strategy or decision. For example, the family is an important value in South Asian culture and helping

professionals working with South Asian women regarding the issue of domestic violence need to tread carefully, not taking the viewpoint that the woman is unwilling to get help or that she is being uncooperative if she does not see things from the professional's perspective. However, it may help the woman to see it as a health issue a woman needs to have energy to keep the family together and so she has to make sure that she has good health first. In this way, it will be more helpful to say to her that she must take care of her own health and emotional well-being so that she will be able to do other things. Knowing her cultural values and beliefs and being able to reframe the issue in such a way can make it easier to work together to find a solution to the abuse she is going through. Analysing the problem of partner abuse begins by understanding it from the perspective of the women, within their context and within their worldview.

For any social change to occur towards the treatment of South Asian women and abuse, it is also necessary that the views of the women themselves also change. In working with women who are being abused, it is vital to discuss the impact or effect of the abuse on their children (this strategy may help women to be more willing to come forward to speak out), because South Asian women place great value on their children, and on their dedication and their role as a mother. Helping professionals can utilise this value to motivate women in seeking help by bringing awareness to her, of the impact of the abuse on their own well-being and how it can compromise their ability to care properly for their children. As Perry (2009) has indicated, children's attunement to their primary carer's (their mother) emotional state means that children experience elevated cortisol

levels, mental and emotional strain as well as significant damage when their primary carer is threatened. This can also impair brain development in children, even in utero. Studies have also observed that infants and toddlers who are exposed to domestic violence will develop fewer neural connections and impaired development in the higher functioning centres of the brain, (Perry, 2001; Perry 2009), which are associated with brain functions such as thoughts and actions. This is critical information for service providers attempting to engage and earn the trust of South Asian women experiencing abuse. Since the value placed on motherhood and on one's children may be a motivating factor for reaching out to the women experiencing abuse, helping professionals can use this value to engage and motivate women who are uncertain about seeking help. Discussion of their children and the impact domestic violence has on children's emotional, cognitive, developmental and behavioural well-being and of her views on motherhood may help build trust in the early stages of seeking help, particularly when it is done in the spirit of recognising the importance she places on her children.

7.3. Concluding summary

The present research shows that domestic violence is an issue for this population and for policy, and that intervention needs to occur to prevent and reduce this social problem. As partner abuse cannot be separated from the cultural, social and political context in which it occurs, women's experiences must be considered within the contextual factors. Taking into account the interaction of the individual and their environmental factors, it is important to understand the interpersonal dynamics involved in domestic violence for

the development of effective policies and programs. Understanding the South Asian cultural traditions underlines the importance of providing culturally appropriate and accessible support service for South Asian women experiencing domestic abuse.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

This thesis makes a new contribution to the body of literature on domestic violence in general, and more specifically to the study of domestic violence among South Asian women living in Hong Kong in particular. This study fills the gap between the existing literature on domestic violence and the situation of South Asian women abuse in Hong Kong, and thereby expands the range of existing literature. Most importantly, this study give voice to the experiences of South Asian women who have lived through abusive and violent experiences within their intimate relationship by including their stories within the study of domestic violence in Hong Kong. This is particularly important within this group where maintaining family honour has clearly kept many women silent and alone during this process. Moreover, by providing women with a safe space in which they can discuss their experiences of survival, despair and resilience, without presuming to predefine their experience, this research seeks to covey a respect for these women's experiences.

The purpose of this research is to fill the gap in the literature of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong, and thereby to draw society's attention to the issue of partner violence occurring in South Asian community and to the need for inclusive services and policy for South Asian women experiencing domestic violence.

This study is just a beginning, and it is hoped that further more in-depth studies will be conducted into issues related to domestic violence among South Asian community in Hong Kong, where this subject has not yet been established and remains unexplored. Arguably, it is due to the failure to recognise or overlook domestic violence among South Asians in Hong Kong as a social problem within the community and society at large, and to a lack of research/data on ethnic minority women that this problem remains uncharted. Recognition of a phenomenon as a social problem is a necessary precursor for the development of social policy and services needed to address it (Alcock, 2008; Blumer, 1971).

Domestic violence has been transformed from a subject of private shame and misery to an object of public concern through the efforts of the women's movements which began in the early 1970s, and which were instrumental in this transformation, providing an example of how social movements can construct social problems and successfully mobilised them into public concern (see chapter 2, section 2.4). In the context of Hong Kong, efforts and advocacy on the part of concerned groups, researchers, service providers and social workers can play a pivotal role in addressing domestic violence among South Asian communities at both the micro and macro level.

Domestic violence is not a new phenomenon, and numerous studies have also been conducted on the issue of domestic violence among both immigrant and non-immigrant groups, including South Asian immigrant women. The literature review reveals that

most of these studies have mainly been conducted in western societies (for example, Canada, United Kingdom, and United States). In Hong Kong, the literature review highlights the dearth of research on domestic violence among South Asian communities. Thus, in carrying out this study, it helps us to hear the women's narratives of their experiences with domestic violence, which will allow for a better understanding of the personal and cultural complexities that inform and shape women's experiences and decision making in the face of partner violence. It is essential to understand domestic violence from the lived experiences of the women themselves. Until we can develop an understanding of the meaning of those experiences we cannot begin to develop an understanding of how to help or enhance services and intervention for the women. This study begins the process of uncovering these meanings through the women's subjective narratives of abuse.

An in-depth qualitative study was conducted with fourteen South Asian immigrant women who had experienced domestic violence at the time of conducting this research. Additionally, interviews with six helping professionals from four social service agencies were also conducted to obtain a general overview from their experiences of working with ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, and to find out about the nature of the services provided for ethnic minorities by their respective social service agencies.

This chapter presents a summary of the major research findings and highlights the strengths of the present study while noting its limitations as well. Based on the research

findings and on past literature, implications for practice and policy are also delineated. This is followed by suggestions for future research.

8.1. Summary of findings

Domestic violence is not a new phenomenon, and affects the lives of women worldwide, regardless of race, culture or ethnicity. Domestic violence has deep historical root and patriarchy, which justifies male control over women, has been prevalent for a long time. The fact that no race is exempted emphasises that social structure, and the practice of traditional socio-cultural norms and values legitimise the control of women by men. This study revealed that factors such as structural and cultural barriers and concern regarding safety influences the reaction women have to partner violence and the importance of safety planning on behalf of survivors of intimate violence. Even after separation these women are at risk of re-assault and intimate partner homicide. Additionally, this study support for the many themes that is common among women who experience intimate partner violence regardless of race or cultures. For examples, the issue of power and control, emotional consequences of violence (impact on their well-being), social isolation, and socioeconomic appear to be common factors that women regardless of culture, have to deal with.

Societal recognition of domestic violence began with the growth of the women's movement in the 1960s and the early 1970s (for further details see chapter 2, section 2.4). Since then, women's advocacy groups around the world have been working to

bring violence against women to the attention of society. These early women's movements can be conceptualised as historically significant, since these movements helped to bring violence against women to the forefront of public awareness as a social issue (see chapter two, section 2).

The findings of this study have revealed that woman's experiences of domestic violence, their perceptions of what constitutes domestic violence in an intimate relationship, and how this influences their help-seeking practices are not linear, and various factors interplay. As observed from the interview of both the women participants and the six helping professionals from four social service agencies serving ethnic minority groups, cultural aspects are also important to consider when examining domestic violence among South Asian women. As discussed in chapter six, themes such as *expectation within the marriage, collectivist culture, make the marriage work, stigma of leaving*, also reveal that their cultural values and beliefs also influence women's perception, experiences and responses in the face of partner abuse. One important ethnic-specific factor among most South Asian women is the need to keep an intact marriage (Abraham, 2000a; Warriar, 2000) since family is such a significant part of their lives. Issues that are unique to South Asian culture as identified by the women include the role of family honour, the strong role of family in decision making, gender norms, a woman's value through marriage, and the societal ostracism associated with divorce. This information supports and extends our knowledge of ethnicity and gender within this community.

Although the findings of this study are by no means conclusive, it can be observed that women's experiences of domestic violence, and how they perceive and respond in the face of partner abuse is influenced by various multiple factors including cultural and traditional beliefs and values connected to family, marriage and relationships, and the broader social structure and sociocultural environment (as discuss in chapter six). South Asians hold to traditional beliefs in order to maintain social cohesion within the family and community. The need for social cohesion and the need to maintain family unity and harmony have led them to remain silent about the social problems that exist within the community. Furthermore, there are immigration related issues and factors involved. It is vital to understand the nature of partner abuse within this population which is constrained by such contextual factors. It is also necessary to view South Asian women's experiences of partner abuse in relation to its broader social context, wherein the interplay of multiple factors also has an impact on their experiences and responses to their situation, and to recognise and link together the multiple factors involved.

Delving into the intricacies of domestic violence within this population is no easy task. The phenomenon cannot be extricated from the many socio-cultural forces that sustain it. One of the hurdles in conducting this study is the cultural view regarding the need to maintain secrecy surrounding family problems. A woman feels that she is not only betraying her husband if she discloses partner abuse, but that she is also shaming her family. Moreover, if domestic violence is disclosed, or if the woman seeks help, she will be blamed for the breakup of the family. In order to preserve family dignity, respect, and

honour, many women refrain from speaking out about the abuse. The findings of this study also reveal that due to the strong traditional values and beliefs enforced within the community, the family members would often tell the women to bear the abuse for the sake of maintaining the family honour and reputation in the community, and not to speak out. Some participants (example Anita, Bobby see chapter 5 on women's profile) Anita, who shared that when she disclosed the abuse to her brother, she was told to bear it, and that such marital problems are part of marriage life and thus the abuse was normalised. As for Bobby, when she disclosed the abuse and made it known that she would like to get a divorce, her father responded by saying that they would not support her in divorce and that she is not to return home if she did. Divorce could serve as a means of overcoming abuse for some of the women, but instead appears to present an obstacle, due to the fact that this concept is deeply influenced by traditional views. For South Asians, divorce is often associated with shame and stigma because society is rather intolerant towards 'divorce' and taking this negative attitude into account, the families of the women often refuse to accept their return. On the other hand, some families may also lend their support to the woman, enabling her to leave the abusive relationship (example Saira), although such situations are rare. Until societal attitudes move away from blaming women they will continue to feel stigmatised, with the blame being assigned to the women rather than to the men who are the abusers.

The participants in this study, who have left an abusive relationship, described the decision to leave as being due to reaching a breaking point. For instance, Anita and Saira

both shared that their decision to leave was motivated when they felt that the abuse was becoming more severe and more frequent and that they could no longer tolerate it. Short and colleagues (2000) reported that in their study among African American and White American in the US, most of the women described their decision to leave as having reached a breaking point. For some women this breaking point may come in the form of a severe injury, and for others it was due to their increasing concern that their children were being affected by witnessing the violence or mimicking it, or were being abused themselves. For Saira, her breaking point was that the abuse were becoming more severe and occurred more frequently, and that she could no longer tolerate it. For Anita, her breaking point was due to the violence becoming more severe, to her husband withholding his love for her and the children, and also due to her concern that the abuse will have a negative impact on her children.

Based on data from the women and the helping professionals interviewed in the present study, it can be deduced that a lack of ethnic specific services related to domestic violence may have hindered some women from approaching or seeking formal support. Apart from the language barrier, some of the women participants in this study also conveyed that the existing shelter (refuge) homes for domestic violence were insensitive to their cultural practices (example, food preparation, or halal food). Therefore, this study also suggests implementing culturally sensitive and ethnic specific support services for ethnic minority women experiencing domestic violence.

8.2. Contribution to research

Despite the methodological limitations (see section 8.6), this study represents an initial step in the exploration of an important, yet unexplored and understudied social issue, and helps to provide valuable insight on the experiences of domestic violence among South Asian immigrant women in the Hong Kong context. Although this study is conducted with a sample size of fourteen abused women, the rich data from the in-depth interviews with the women contribute to depict their experiences, perceptions and reaction to domestic violence. This study can also serve as a guide or framework for future research to delve into other areas of these women's experiences (see section 8.7 for future research direction).

Second, this study explores women's perception of domestic violence and how their perception influences their help seeking practices. This aspect has a salient advantage over previous studies which have mainly investigated the causes, prevalence, impact, and consequences of the abuse. As the first exploratory study on the issue of domestic violence among South Asian communities in Hong Kong, delving into how women perceive and understand the experiences of abuse from their partner is important, as this conceptualisation in turn influences their help seeking approaches. Given that domestic violence against women is a global social concern with negative consequences on their physical and psychological health, this is a timely research and advances the literature on the discourse of domestic violence among ethnic minority immigrant women in the Hong Kong context in particular. Given the dearth of information on this issue among

the South Asian population in Hong Kong, interviews from the women and helping professionals have revealed that domestic violence is quite prevalent within the South Asian communities in Hong Kong, and therefore warrants further research into this social issue to draw more attention from families, communities, and society to afford safety, protection, and a holistic support to women facing domestic violence.

Third, the findings of this study highlight the dynamic interaction between the cultural and structural factors at play. Thus, findings from this study will help to provide theoretical and practical implications. The researcher took a step further in the theoretical expansion of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model in order to demonstrate intervention and policy for partner violence in South Asian context in Hong Kong at the four levels by merging the person, family, community and society for an effective system of intervention and prevention. Therefore, it looks for solution to the problem from realms, the person and her ecology. It works out a balance approach to find solution from the individual and the larger society for prevention and intervention in a comprehensive way.

Most of all, this qualitative in-depth study is one of the first to explore the experiences of domestic violence within South Asian population in Hong Kong context. This highlights the significance of the present study, which provides a platform for the women's voices to be heard, and thereby contributes to our understanding of domestic violence in South Asian community living in Hong Kong.

8.3. Theoretical contributions

Although Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model has been applied by various scholars in their study of domestic violence, and it has been conceptualised in numerous ways, most of these studies have used the ecological model to help understand the causes, prevalence and consequences of domestic violence (examples, Heise, 1998; Laisser et al., 2011; Han et al., 2010a; Heise and Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Little and Kantor, 2002), whereas this study expands the ecological model by looking at it from another dimension from which to target policy and practice implications by bridging individual, family, community and the larger society to combat the issue of domestic violence among the South Asian community in Hong Kong. Since family, community and society can exert a powerful influence on an individual's beliefs, attitudes and actions when experiencing abuse, it is imperative to formulate policy and practice implications by integrating the person and her ecology. The researcher operationalised Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model to illustrate in working out a holistic policy, intervention and prevention programme for South Asian women from a cultural perspective, thereby enhancing the awareness and importance of taking into account the various factors that intertwine in the issue of domestic violence.

The findings of this study reveal that women's perceptions of domestic violence are influenced by how they explain and interpret their husbands' behaviour and attitudes towards them. In line with previous studies (Abraham, 2000a; Bhuyan et al., 2005), the women in this study also identified physical, psychological and financial abuse as

domestic violence. In this study, the women drew upon their current contextual experiences to explain their understanding of domestic violence. This understanding of how they perceive domestic violence can be seen as changed from how they had viewed it in their home country. For instance, many women reported that the abuses began when they learned of their husband's extra marital affairs. These women conveyed that if they were in their home-country this 'thing' (the extra marital affair) would not have happened, as the family members would intervene and talk to the husband. On the other hand, the women also drew upon their cultural context to endure domestic violence. For instance, the women reported that 'it is not in my culture to divorce', or 'divorce is not good in my culture...'. According to Burr (2003), people's understanding and the meanings they attach to events change according to situations. Due to the fear of being looked down upon by their community, and the fear of being ostracised, along with their traditional beliefs and the values placed upon the concept of marriage and family, the majority of women in this study have endure and remain in their abusive relationships.

Additionally, women's decisions regarding whether or not to seek help may be influenced by the availability of support from family, community and larger society. As observed from the findings of this study, most of the women tend to first approach members of their natal family or relatives and friends when experiencing abuse. However, for those participants whose families have not supported them in leaving the abusive relationship, but have been told to tolerate and maintain the marriage, these women rarely seek divorce and usually remain in the abusive relationship. This indicates

that the culture-specific context at the family and community level has influenced their help seeking process. The participating women along with the helping professionals, also revealed that many (South Asian) women hesitate to speak out about their experiences of domestic violence or to seek help from outside their family due to their traditional beliefs and values, and for fear of ‘what the community will say’. Since the family is still central in most South Asian communities, the women did not want to bring shame and dishonour to their family. This indicates that domestic violence within the (South Asian) community is still unacknowledged at the community level and is more likely considered to be a private family matter rather than acknowledged as a social issue. Additionally, the study findings have also revealed that the lack of specific ethnic support services related to domestic violence also hinders them from approaching formal support. Thus, at the societal level, the lack of specific ethnic services for domestic violence indicates that domestic violence within the South Asian community in Hong Kong is still an unexplored issue.

8.4. Implications for policy

Domestic violence against women is a major social phenomenon with negative consequences for women regardless of whether it is in the form of physical or psychological abuse (Smith et al., 2002). It has also been acknowledged as one of the leading causes of injuries in women (Griffin and Koss, 2002). Given that this constitutes a significant social and health issue and that it impacts a large numbers of women, addressing this problem and increasing the understanding of this concern is imperative,

especially with the dearth of information about the issue of domestic violence among the South Asian community in the context of Hong Kong.

The findings of this study also highlight that domestic violence in an intimate relationship cannot be separated from the personal, situational, and sociocultural factors, and as such, the ecological framework is utilised to target policy and practice implications for domestic violence within intimate relationships. The ecological framework takes into account the dynamic interactions involved between person and environment, since such implications, awareness and prevention programs are targeted at the individual, family, community and societal levels.

At the individual level, this study discusses the importance of empowering women. It is important to bring awareness of the impact of abuse on women and children at the family and community level, as the family and community have a great influence on the individual through conformity to norms, values, beliefs and social behaviour. At the societal level it focuses on the need to formulate policy, and inclusive services, and to develop cultural sensitivity among helping professionals in addressing partner violence. An understanding of South Asian cultural traditions underlies the importance of providing culturally appropriate and accessible support services for South Asian women experiencing domestic abuse.

8.4.1. Individual level: Empowering women through education

The findings of this study reveal that even though the women perceive their husband's behaviours and actions as abusive, due to the cultural, social and contextual factors this issue within the community still remains largely an unexplored area. Moreover, the women also hesitate to share about the abuse due to various reasons, such as individual shame, fear of recrimination from the community, sociocultural barriers including taboos associated with partner abuse, and the availability of informal and formal support systems. Therefore, at the individual level it is suggested that women need to be made aware of the negative consequences of abuse, and that partner abuse is a serious crime and should not be tolerated. Additionally women should also be made aware of the negative consequences of domestic abuse on their children. It is also imperative to make the women aware that while they think they are tolerating the abuse for the sake of maintaining an intact family for their children, the children's health, development and well-being might in fact be jeopardised by their accommodation. When the women understand that the cost of domestic violence to their mental and physical health can be high for both the women and children they will better understand that seeking help is not about disclosing a family secret, but rather that they are indeed saving lives. Previous studies have also highlighted that while women are less likely to make active effort to protect themselves, but when they understand that even witnessing abuse can have a negative impact on children they are likely to be motivated to take action (Latta and Goodman, 2005). When women are properly prepared they are enabled to make well-informed decisions when abuse occurs. Knowledge can empower women, and educating

women on the various physical and psychological impacts of domestic abuse on both herself and her children can play a crucial role in helping to reduce male violence against women.

The means to educate women on the issue of intimate partner violence can be multifaceted, such as, through educational materials, pamphlets and media (for example, through ethnic television program, radio and newspaper). Pamphlets with information about domestic violence can be distributed at locations where women are more likely to congregate and where they can be confidentially obtained. Some of the participants in this study mentioned that women gather at the neighbourhood local park with their children most evenings. Therefore, these educational materials can be distributed at such local parks around the neighbourhood, at ethnic beauty salons, and at social service centres. These educational materials and pamphlets need to be written in the South Asian languages in order to overcome the language barrier. Women who do not experience domestic violence can also become ambassadors and help to pass the pamphlets to their neighbours, friends and relatives. Additionally, these educational materials should also address those obstacles that may prevent women from seeking help such as the cultural stigma of divorce, the deeply embedded notion of shame, failure and of bringing dishonour to their family if the marriage breaks down. Many women may also feel ashamed to share about the abuse thinking that if she had been a good wife the abuse would not have happened, and that she might be blamed for failing to maintain the marriage. Therefore, the educational material should also include a

proper definition of domestic violence and the health consequences of the abuse.

Since the family and friends are usually the first contact the women approach when they decide to seek help, there is also a need to raise awareness among the family and community about the issue of domestic violence and the negative health consequences of the abuse.

8.4.2. Family and community level: Promoting domestic violence awareness

Besides raising awareness at the individual level through educating women, it is also imperative to raise awareness within the family and community. Previous studies have also observed that there is a higher incidence of domestic violence in families and communities with stronger patriarchal beliefs systems (example, Ahmad et al., 2004). Most often, the women will turn to the family when they experience abuse. In the present study, the majority of the participants also reported that they first shared to their family about their experiences of abuse. However, as observed from the findings of this study, not all the women received the support from their family. Some of the women were advised to try and make the marriage work, not to leave the marriage, or to keep silent. Such lack of support from family guarantees inflexible decisions (Dasgupta, 2007), and without their family support it is difficult for most women to leave or survive emotionally and financially, especially in a foreign land. In many South Asian groups, the concept of self includes a familial aspect and an individual's behaviour affects not only that person but also their whole family (Bhuyan, 2008). Therefore, without family

support, women will be further hindered to take action against their husbands' abuses. Furthermore, the expectation of the family and the need to conform to community expectations such as the need to maintain the family honour, the fear of shaming the family, the stigmatisation of divorce, and adherence to cultural norms and gender behaviour, might be reinforced further through emotional and material pressures, which further influence women's decision making in the face of domestic violence (Anitha and Gill, 2009; Gill, 2004).

8.4.2.1. Acknowledging the violence

Since the family and community exert a strong influence on the individual through conformity to cultural and traditional norms, values, beliefs and social behaviours, it is therefore imperative that prevention and intervention strategies need to involve the family and community. For change to occur, enormous effort is required at the family and community levels as domestic violence in an intimate relationship is still viewed by a majority as a private matter to be endured. As a first step, it is essential that women's documentation and experiences of abuse be named as 'violence', and be defined as unacceptable, and recognised as a social problem within the community.

8.4.2.2. Involving the community in combating domestic violence

Although intervening at the individual level is important, engaging the community regarding group norms that support violence is equally as critical. Changing the way communities think about and intervene in the issue of marital violence can serve as a

powerful deterrent to violence. As the influence of community is massive, intervention programs can target the mobilisation of the community to not condone any acts of domestic violence against women, and to provide support and protection in the face of partner violence.

Community approval, through silence or action, can help to prevent, maintain, or perpetuate partner violence. The community can play a contributing or maintaining role through their accepted norms, or they may choose to ignore and deny that any problem exists, and to be reluctant or unwilling to assume any responsibility for addressing the problems of domestic violence. For instance, in a collectivist culture such as the South Asian culture, there is a strong sense of family and community cohesion. By building upon this strength, South Asian communities have the potential to engage more fully around the issues of domestic violence and work towards ways of preventing domestic violence.

8.4.2.3. Educating families and community on the impact of partner violence

Community education and discussion is essential to increasing awareness of the ill-effects of domestic violence. It is therefore recommended that educational workshops and programs should be provided to help them understand the importance of taking steps to end violence and extend support to abused women. These educational programs and workshops can also help in sensitising them to the realities of the impact of abuse on women and children. To eliminate the language barriers, and to effectively deliver

services, such educational programs and workshop should be delivered in the South Asian languages.

There is also urgent need for changes in attitudes directed toward changing behaviours. While it is important to increase awareness through community education and discussion on the negative impact of partner violence on women and children's psychological, emotional, and cognitive development, public awareness campaigns should also target attitudinal change, and address zero tolerance for partner abuse, holding the abuser accountable for his behaviour.

In order to reach the community, it will be essential for service providers and helping professionals to first build rapport as an initial step towards engaging with the community. Building rapport and engaging with the community is essential as a first step before any programs or activities can be implemented successfully.

8.4.2.4. Organising community based support groups

Organising community-based support groups similar to other South Asian women support groups in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, as noted in chapter 2, is another important aspect of dealing with domestic violence and providing support to abused women. Such community-based support groups can provide peer counselling, legal information and links to other organisations. Creating community-based services within the community would be a form of self-reliance,

which is also important and can begin with concerned community members who provide support for women experiencing abuse.

8.4.3. Societal Level: Promoting inclusive ethnic support services for domestic violence

Although there are a number of mainstream support services for domestic violence that are also open to ethnic minority clients, however, due to the language barrier (most of these support service centers are targeted at Chinese speaking clients), many ethnic minority women may be unable to access these services, or may not even be aware of available resources and support services. Some of the participants in this study also conveyed that they were unaware of any domestic violence programs or support services. This indicates that mainstream domestic violence services may not be well integrated into the South Asian communities. The helping professionals interviewed in the present study also stated that the social service agencies that are provided for ethnic minorities are not equipped to handle domestic violence cases, as these social services are mainly targeted at social integration and social harmony programs and activities and not for issues related for domestic violence.

Based on the findings of this study, it is suggested that provision be made for specific ethnic domestic violence support services that have multilingual and multicultural staffs. The need for specific ethnic support services for domestic violence has also been emphasised in previous studies among immigrant ethnic minority groups (example,

Merchant, 2000; Dasgupta, 2000b), McLeod and Shin, 1990. The availability of specific ethnic services can help to promote a culturally conducive environment to accommodate the culturally and religiously specific needs of ethnic minority women. Moreover, women may feel more secure and comfortable to disclose or share about domestic abuse to staff members from similar or common cultural backgrounds or to someone who at least understands the women's cultural backgrounds. With an understanding of the women's cultural backgrounds it is more likely that helping professionals and service providers will have a better understanding of the issues and circumstances behind the abuse experienced by these women. Moreover, having multilingual and multicultural support services and service providers can also help to extent emotional support and make the woman feel safe, which is so vital to a woman experiencing domestic violence.

However, it has also been discussed that women may seek support from mainstream service providers in order to maintain privacy from members of their own ethnic community (Preisser, 1999). Merchant (2000) argued that ethnic specific support service centres are influenced by the unique cultural needs and traditions of the people they serve, and as such, behaviours that may not be understood easily by mainstream agencies are greeted with more understanding and acceptance. Furthermore, Dasgupta (2000b) observed that while many mainstream community agencies in the United States have reported difficulties in attracting South Asian clients, South Asian domestic violence services have still reported an increase in the number of women they assist. This increase may indicate that abused South Asian women feel more comfortable to

disclose or share their experiences of abuse with members of their own ethnic community (Dasgupta, 2000b). Based on interviews with South Asian service providers (in the United States) Agnew (1998) highlighted the need for South Asian domestic violence programs, mainly because, cultural and language barriers may prevent mainstream services to efficiently support South Asian women, and at worst, explicit discrimination occurs in mainstream agencies. Past studies have also reported that ethnic minority women are more inclined to seek support from ethnic specific support services, as they are more likely to feel understood by them (Abraham, 2000a). Previous studies have also noted that a lack of ethnically-sensitive or culturally-sensitive counselling also attributes for the low utilisation of social services and counselling services by immigrants (Bent-Goodley, 2005). Furthermore, previous studies have also reported that ethnic minority women prefer to talk with helping professionals from similar backgrounds, so as to eliminate the fear of being misunderstood or having to be cautious about explaining or defending cultural beliefs about family, gender roles and identities (example, Abraham, 2000a; Ranjeet and Purkayastha, 2007).

Accordingly, compared to mainstream domestic violence agencies, South Asian services are unique in that they understand the cultural, psychological and social factors that south Asian women face. Intervention for abused women can be successful only when the service provision is based on the principles by which all the factors that affect the abused women can be understood. South Asian domestic violence services are necessary whereby a woman can feel safe and understood in her own ethnic cultural environment.

In this study, some of the women who had stayed at shelter homes also reported language barriers and lack of halal food. The helping professionals interviewed in the present research also reported that South Asian women were hesitant to stay in mainstream shelter home partly due to the language barrier and partly due to the different food. For instance, some of the women explained that while they understand that the shelter homes have their own regulations, they have found them to be rather inflexible with timing for preparation of food especially when they have their children needs to attend to as well (examples, regulations in terms of specific timings for food preparation). This is especially harder for Muslims since there is no provision of *halal* food (Islamic law forbids the consumption of non halal meat) and thus they have to prepare their own food. The helping professionals further stated that although there are many mainstream families and counselling services for domestic violence, South Asian women are reluctant to utilise these services due to the language and cultural barriers.

Thus, the need for inclusive domestic violence services for South Asians is imperative, as specific services would enable the cultural and religious needs of women to be more adequately met, and offer the kind of emotional support that is vital to a woman experiencing domestic violence. Additionally, it is also pertinent to have a telephone hotline service in South Asian languages to provide confidential crisis intervention where abused women can call to enquire or express their concern about issues related to domestic violence. Thus, this highlights the importance of culturally appropriate services, and of assuring clients of confidentiality (Rhee, 1997).

8.5. Implications for practice

8.5.1. Assisting women to name their oppression

This exploratory study provides a preliminary finding on the issue of domestic violence among South Asian communities in Hong Kong. From this study it can be observed that women's experiences of abuse operate along a continuum shaped by cultural values, beliefs, and structural factors. Therefore, it is important for helping professionals, service providers and counsellors working with women in abusive relationships to address women's experiences of abuse in the context of a variety of other experiences and factors. While many of these experiences and factors may be influenced by women's belief systems, it is important for helping professionals to assist them in naming their oppressions. Previous studies have also highlighted the importance of enabling the women to name their issues, to have their voices heard, and to address their needs to voice (Pyles and Postmus, 2004), and it is vital for professional helping intervention to facilitate the process of voicing and naming of the trauma/abuse (Bernard, 2002). Understanding that patriarchy is a universal social norm which expresses itself differently across different cultures may help the women to make choices about which aspects of their culture they wish to continue practicing and those they find oppressive. It is also important to let the women know that they do not have to reject their culture or identity to resist patriarchal belief systems.

In working with ethnic minority women it is also important for helping professionals to promote women's readiness to seek help, and to understand that women have a

multitude of needs which must be taken into consideration in order for women to be ready to make changes. In other words, the women's own ability for self-determination should not be undermined.

8.5.2. Promoting community education on healthy relationships

As observed from the findings of this study, the gender roles and expectations that girls and women absorb from their family and society also contribute to their beliefs about relationships, self-worth, submissiveness and expectations. Thus, from the point of view of practice implications, it will also be important for helping professionals to promote community education about healthy relationship, setting limits on inappropriate behaviour and communicating concerns to others. To effectively promote community education that respects the community values and practices it is also important for service providers to consult with community members and organisations.

8.5.3. Understanding the nature of partner abuse within the South Asian cultural context

The findings of this study have also revealed that a number of factors are involved in women's experiences of domestic violence, such as their traditional values and beliefs concerning marriage and family, and other contextual factors which have an impact on their experiences and reactions to domestic abuse. It is therefore important that helping professionals and counsellors working with South Asian women be aware of these various social, cultural and structural factors. Understanding the nature of domestic

violence within this context can enable helping professionals to recognise and link these multiple factors involved in women's experiences of abuse and to provide a more flexible, accommodative, and inclusive system of services and programs to meet the needs of these women. A lack of such understanding, betrays a lack of insight into the complexity of women's experiences of domestic violence.

It is also important for service providers and helping professionals to understand the clients' cultural practices and values so that they can use this information to understand the clients' perspectives and to be able to engage them in a more effective way. For example, separation or divorce is generally not the outcome that many women would consider, since there is a stigma attached to divorce. It will also be important for helping professionals to refrain from judging women who may refuse to seek divorce, but rather to try to understand the women's decisions from within the women's own perspectives. It is imperative to understand domestic violence from the lived experiences of the women themselves. This understanding of the meaning of these experiences can help to develop or enhance services and intervention for the women.

8.5.4. Cultural sensitivity practices of helping professionals

In order to provide effective, domestic violence intervention, service providers must maintain a balance of providing assistance to abused woman while maintaining respect for her customs, culture and values (Latta and Goodman, 2005) dealing with issues of domestic violence among ethnic minority women, it is also imperative for helping

professionals to develop cultural competency for an effective intervention, to adopt culturally sensitive practices and to provide counselling with an understanding of the client's culture and migration related issues which are interlinked with the women's experiences of domestic violence. This is because without a culturally competent approach, practitioners often create misinformed assessments, ineffective intervention, and faulty evaluations (Bent-Goodley, 2005).

Cultural competence is a process that involves practitioners and systems responding to their clients in ways that recognise, value and respect client culture, language, class, race, ethnic background, religion and other areas of diversity (Rothman, 2008). Additionally, as Lynch and Hanson (1993) specified, cultural competence is the "ability to think, feel and act in ways that acknowledge, respect and build upon ethnic sociocultural and linguistic diversity" (p.50). Therefore, any system which seeks to address intimate partner violence needs to commit to culturally competent practice (Dasgupta, 2006; Kanuha, 1996). Thus, cultural competence is not only determined by the extent of one's awareness of the client's culture, but is also determined by the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with the issues clients face in order to serve and address their needs and is an important aspect of an effective intervention.

The use of 'self' begins with integrating professional and personal in practice (Dewane, 2006). This integration, according to Dewane (2006), is a hallmark of skilled practice, as self-awareness is the key to facilitate effective communication with client. It is also

equally important for helping professionals working with ethnic minority women to have self-awareness, and to engage in self-examination, as this deeper understanding of 'self' can enhance a better understanding of the experiences of individuals from different social and cultural groups, taking into account an individual's cultural beliefs, values, norms, circumstances, background and environmental factors. This self-examination can also help to expose stereotypes and biases, which may limit one's ability to understand and empathise with members of different social and cultural groups. This professional underpinning is fundamentally connected to one's worldview and attitudes. For it is our worldview that shapes our understanding of an issue which in turn influence how we respond to clients facing that issue.

Diversity and sensitivity require on-going awareness and action. It is also important that helping professionals working with or providing services to ethnic minority immigrant women are knowledgeable about the cultural values, community attitudes and social experiences which might influence abused women's reactions and responses to domestic violence. This knowledge and understanding can also help to dispel myths and stereotypes about domestic violence in the South Asian community.

8.6. Limitations

When conducting research on sensitive issues or taboo topics such as domestic violence, one limitation is the recruitment of participants (Lee, 1993; Straus et al., 1981). For instance, individuals may hesitate to disclose information about such incidents, which makes it difficult to identify a large pool of participants for studies of such nature. Given

that the present study is an exploratory study on the issue of domestic violence among South Asians in Hong Kong, which is also a sensitive and taboo issue among the community, it was not viable to identify a large pool of participants.

Moreover, the researcher has also encountered reluctance from social service agencies and shelter (refuge) homes when contacting them. The researcher had contacted four existing mainstream shelter homes to solicit their assistance in the recruitment of potential participants, but all four shelter homes were unable to assist (see chapter four, section 4.6.1). Additionally, the researcher had also contacted eight social service agencies to solicit their assistance in referring potential participants. Only four of the eight agencies responded positively, and assisted by referring five of the participants in the present study.

In order to reach out to women who may not utilise social service agencies, the researcher also contacted various community and religious organisations. The researcher also contacted community members who were known to her to act as gatekeepers and to help identify women experiencing domestic violence to participate in the research. However, a majority of these gatekeepers met with resistance from other members in the community. One of the gatekeepers shared that when she tried to recruit participants from within her community, she was told by her community members “not come into the community to break up family”. This conveys the need to maintain secrecy around domestic violence. Such cultural forces appear to partly shield domestic violence within

these groups. South Asian women in Hong Kong who are experiencing abuse are a hard to access population because of the sensitivities and cultural issues involved. However, it is encouraging to learn that women have begun to speak out in spite of the many obstacles, and the fear they have faced, for examples by participating in this study and sharing their stories with a wider audience.

Despite the limitations in terms of recruitment and number of participants, this study has contributed to our understanding of domestic violence among South Asian women living in Hong Kong. To the best knowledge of the researcher this study is also the first exploratory qualitative study to do an in-depth interview with South Asian immigrant women on the subject of intimate partner violence, which is a great strength of this study. The current study adds to the body of knowledge with regard to the experience of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong, which can be useful to the academic community, policy makers and practitioners who are interested in the issues of domestic violence among South Asian communities in Hong Kong.

8.7. Future research direction

Base on the findings of this study, coupled with the dearth of information about the issue of domestic violence among the South Asian community in the context of Hong Kong, suggestions for future research are highlighted.

First, although no standardised mental health measures were utilised in this study, some

anecdotal findings suggest that the mental health impact of abuse on these women needs further research. Findings from the interview data gathered from the participating women reveal that some of these women report experiencing symptoms of depression, feeling depressed and having suicidal thoughts as a consequence of the abuse they suffer from their husbands. Since it was beyond the scope and focus of the present study, the impact of domestic violence on their psychological health and well-being was not investigated. At the time of conducting this research, some women were still under medication for depressive symptoms. Some of the women participants in this study shared that the infidelity of their husbands and the withholding of love were the most painful aspects of the abuse. Do these abusive tactics also have deleterious effects on their mental health? It is worth exploring this aspect in future research. Findings from such studies can help provide a better understanding of the relationship between experiences of abuse and mental health and assist service providers to help identify urgent mental health needs among this community. Additionally, the findings can also be utilised to guide in developing culturally effective mental health intervention and services.

Second, from this study as well as in findings from past studies, the issue of gender inequality among the South Asian cultures has been highlighted. Past studies have also revealed that strict gender norms and patriarchal belief systems have an impact on the women's attitudes towards domestic violence (Ahmad et al., 2004). Understanding women's attitudes towards patriarchal belief systems and gender norms is worth

exploring further in order to better understand how this might impact the women's attitudes and reactions to domestic violence within their families. The present study, has not explored the extent to which gender roles which reinforce patriarchal norms might have impacted their lives, how the women feel about this, or the extent to which this might have affected their decision making.

Third, although only fourteen women were interviewed in the present study, all of these women had experienced domestic violence from their husband/partner. Some of the participants also revealed that they know a number of women in their respective communities who are experiencing domestic violence from their husband, but have not sought help, as they were afraid their husband would become more abusive if it became known that she had attempted to seek help. This indicates that the incidence of domestic violence may be quite prevalent in the community. Future research can focus on investigating the prevalence of domestic violence in intimate relationships within the South Asian community in Hong Kong.

It is also recommended for future research to focus on the effectiveness of service provision provided by mainstream domestic violence services and shelter homes, and the cultural competency of staff in serving the needs of ethnic minority women. Findings from such evaluation studies can help to provide a better understanding of the provision of appropriate services for ethnic minority women experiencing domestic violence.

Undertaking research in these future research directions can also help to provide more information around which to form the base for the development of policies that might impact social change. More research on this issue could also help to further enhance the level of professional training and understanding in developing more adaptive and responsive services for South Asian women experiencing domestic violence.

8.8. Overall conclusion

Based on qualitative in-depth interviews with fourteen South Asian immigrant women in Hong Kong, this study has explored and examined the issue of domestic violence, the women's perceptions of what constitutes domestic abuse, and their help seeking practices. This study has outlined and recognised that women's perceptions, experience and responses in the face of partner abuse are influenced and determined by a multitude of factors, such as traditional beliefs and values, social structure and the larger sociocultural environment. Additionally, interviews with six helping professionals from four social service agencies which provide services for ethnic minorities has also highlighted the gap in services for ethnic minority women experiencing domestic violence. Clearly, there is a need to expand the mainstream programs and services on domestic violence to make them more accommodating to South Asian immigrant women and other ethnic minority women. A collective response towards combating domestic violence is greatly needed.

Clearly, the existing social services and programs for ethnic minorities are unable to

provide support and services to women experiencing domestic violence, as they mainly target the social integration and social harmony of the ethnic groups in Hong Kong. This indicates the need to expand programs and policy to cater to ethnic minorities who are experiencing domestic violence. The study findings also point to the need for a collective response in combating domestic violence among various concern groups such as researchers, service providers and helping professionals; and suggest the establishment of government initiatives to develop inclusive policies and services.

Although domestic violence manifests itself at the individual level, there are various contextual factors in the women's lives which further maintain or perpetuate the violence. Therefore, in order to understand domestic violence within South Asian communities, it is necessary to consider the contextual factors in order to create effective means of intervention and prevention. Utilising South Asian respect for elders should be of great potential, when confronting partner abuse. If religious leaders and family members had a deeper understanding of the issue of domestic violence, they could play a more influential role in providing support and holding the abusers accountable. Therefore, programs and intervention can utilise and build on the strength of tight knit families, on a strong sense of community, religious and beliefs, can support women in abusive situations, and can hold abusers accountable while at the same time working to change the beliefs that maintain violence. Therefore it is vital to include community/religious leaders and families in intervention and prevention. This can open the line of communication between South Asian communities and service providers in issues related to domestic violence.

Although this study was conducted among fourteen South Asian women and the results are by no means conclusive or generalizable to the whole South Asian population in Hong Kong, this exploratory study helps to provide some insight into the issue of domestic violence in the lives of South Asian women within the context of Hong Kong. The findings of the study can also help to promote programs and intervention policies to address domestic violence, taking into account the socio-cultural and structural factors of women experiencing domestic violence.

Today there is considerable scholarship concerning domestic violence, and activism combined with research has also resulted in programmes and policies established to help women who have been abused. However, it has been disturbing to discover that the issue of domestic violence among South Asian in Hong Kong still remains unexplored. Arguably, the lack of services/ policy and research/data on ethnic minority groups underlines a lack of acknowledgement of the problem and that South Asian women who experience domestic abuse are still underserved in the context of Hong Kong. This may point to the existence of systematic and legislative issues that maintain prejudice and discrimination against ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong (Ashencaen Crabtree and Wong, 2012). Ku (2006), had also observed that the social practices in Hong Kong were insensitive to cultural diversity.

In summary, this exploratory in-depth qualitative study is the first to examine the experiences of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong. Although

this study helps to fill the gap in the literature on domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong, and provides important implications for practice and policy, there is a concerted need for researchers, academicians, helping professionals, service providers and conscientious community members to collectively work to address the issue of domestic violence among South Asian community in Hong Kong at both the micro and macro levels, and to provide assistance, and lobby for community action, social services and government funding to initiate specific programs and services for South Asian women experiencing domestic violence.

By providing a forum through which the women's voices can be heard, it is hoped that this research can help to pave the way for breaking the silence on domestic violence, at least for the women in this study through inclusive services and policy directed at domestic violence. Despite the various cultural and structural barriers these women encounter, it is encouraging to know that women have begun speaking out about their experiences of partner abuse by participating in this study and sharing their stories. By bringing out issues that are a collective social problem into the public arena and allowing for on-going discussions, the taboo and shame surrounding domestic violence can be drawn out and eliminated.

References

- Abraham, M., 1995. Ethnicity, gender, and marital violence: South Asian women's organization in the United States. *Gender and Society*, 9, pp.450-468.
- Abraham, M., 1998. Speaking the unspeakable: Marital violence against South Asian immigrant women in the United States. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 5, pp.215-241.
- Abraham, M., 1999. Sexual abuse in South Asian immigrant marriages. *Violence Against Women*, 5, pp.591-618.
- Abraham, M., 2000a. *Speaking the unspeakable: Marital violence among South Asian immigrants in the United States*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Abraham, M., 2000b. Isolation as a form of marital violence: The South Asian immigrant experience. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 9(3), pp.221-236.
- Adam, N. M. 2000. *Domestic violence against women immigrant Indian and Pakistani communities in the United States*. University of Illinois.
- Adam, N. M. and Schewe, P. A., 2007. A multilevel framework exploring domestic violence against immigrant Indian and Pakistani women in the United States. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, 2, pp.5-20.
- Adames, S. B. and Campbell, R., 2005. Immigrant Latina's conceptualizations of intimate partner violence. *Violence Against Women*, 11(10), pp.1341-1364.
- Agnew, V., 1998. Tensions in providing service to South Asian victims of wife abuse in Toronto. *Violence Against Women*, 4(2), pp.153-179.
- Ahmad, F., Riaz, S., Barata, P. and Stewart, D. E., 2004. Patriarchal beliefs and perceptions of abuse among South Asian immigrant women. *Violence Against Women*, 10, pp.262-282.
- Alaggia, R., Regehr, C. and Rishchynski, G., 2009. Intimate partner violence and immigration laws in Canada: How far have we come? *International Journal of*

- Law and Psychiatry*, 32(6), pp.335-341.
- Alcock, P., 2008. *Social Policy in Britain*. England: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Allmark, P., 2002. The ethics of research with children. *Nurse Researcher*, 10, pp.7-19.
- Almeida, R. V.and Dolan-Delvecchio., 1999. Addressing culture in batterers intervention: The Asian Indian community as an illustrative example. *Violence Against Women*, 5(6), pp.654-683.
- Alvesson, M.and Skoldberg, K., 2000. *Reflexive methodology: New vistas for qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Amanor-Boadu, Y., Messing, J. T., Stith, S. M., Anderson, J. R., O'Sullivan, C. S.and Campbell, J. C., 2012. Immigrant and nonimmigrant women: Factors that predict leaving an abusive relationship. *Violence Against Women*, 18(5), pp.611-633.
- Anitha, S., 2008. Neither safety nor justice: the UK government response to domestic violence against immigrant women. *Journal of Social Welfare & Family Law*, 30(3), pp.189-202.
- Anitha, S.and Gill, A., 2009. Coercion, consent and the forced marriage debate in the UK. *Feminist Legal studies*, 17(2), pp.165-184.
- Annells, M. 1997. Grounded theory method, part 1: Within the five moments of qualitative research. *Nursing Inquiry*, 4, pp.120-129.
- Arat, Y., 1989. *Patriarchal paradox: Women politicians in Turkey*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
- Archer, J., 2000. Sex differences in aggression between heterosexual partners: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126, pp.651-680.
- Arias, I.and Corso, P., 2005. Average cost per person victimized by an intimate partner of the opposite gender: A comparison of men and women. *Violence and Victims*, 20, pp.379-391.
- Arditti,J.A., Joest, K.S., Lambert-Shute, J. and Walker, L. 2010. The role of emotions in fieldwork: A self-study of family research in a correction setting. *The Qualitative Report Volumn*, 15(6), pp.1387-1414.
- Ashencaen Crabtree, S.and Wong, H, 2010. Barriers militating against the social

- inclusion of low-income Pakistani minority groups in Hong Kong. *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work & Development*, 20(2), pp.63-75.
- Ashencaen Crabtree, S. and Wong, H., 2012. 'Ah Cha!' The racial discrimination of Pakistani minority communities in Hong Kong: An analysis of multiple, intersecting oppressions. *British Journal of Social Work*, First published online April 2, 2012,
- Assanand, S., Dias, M., Richardson, E. and Waxler-Morrison, N., 2005. The South Asians. In: Nancy, W.-M., Anderson, J. M. & Richardson, E. (eds.) *Cross-cultural caring: A handbook for health professionals*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, pp. 197-246.
- Atherton, C. R., 1993. Empiricists versus social constructionists: Time for a cease fire. *Families in Society*, 74(10), pp.617-624.
- Auerbach, C. F. and Silverstein, L. B., 2003. *Qualitative data: An introduction to coding and analysis*. New York: New York University Press.
- Avramidis, E. and Smith, B., 1999. An introduction to othe major research paradigms and their methodological implications for special needs research. *Emotional & behavioural difficulties*, 4(3), pp.27-36.
- Ayyub, R., 2000. Domestic violence in the South Asain immigrant population in the United States. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 9(3), pp.237-248.
- Baker, P. L., 1997. And I went back: Battered women's negotiations of choice. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 26(1), pp.55-174.
- Ballard, C., 1978. Arranged marriages in teh British context. *New Community*, 6, pp.181-195.
- Barn, R and Sidhu, K., 2002. Dealing with Difference: Professional Conceptualisations of Health and social Care Needs of Bangladeshi women in London. *Journal of Social Work Research and Evaluation*, 3(2) 145-158.
- Barn, R. and Sidhu, K., 2004. Understanding the interconnections between ethnicity, gender, social class and health: Expreinces of minority ethnic women in Britian. *The Haworth Social Work Practice*, 39(2), pp.11-27.

- Barn, R. 2008. Ethnicity, gender and mental health: Social worker Perspective.
International Journal of Social Psychiatry DOI:10.1177/0020764007082528
- Barrett, M., 1980. *Women's oppression today: Problems in Marxist feminist analysis*.
Thetford, Great Britain: Thetford Press.
- Bauer, H. M., Rodriguez, M. A., Quiroga, S. S. and Flores-Ortiz, Y. G., 2000. Barriers to health care for abused Latina and Asian immigrant women. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Undeserved*, 11(1), pp.33-44.
- Bayne-Smith, M., 1996. *Race, Gender and Health*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bent-Goodley, T. B., 2005. Culture and domestic violence: Transforming knowledge development. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20, pp.195-203.
- Berg, B. L. (ed.) 2004. *Qualitative research methods*, Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bernard, C. 2002. Giving voice to experiences: Parental maltreatment of black children in the context of societal racism. *Child & Family Social Work*, 7(4), pp.239-251
- Berger, P. L. and Luckmann, T., 1966. *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday.
- Bersani, C. A. and Chen, H., 1988. Sociological perspectives on family violence. In: Hasselt, V. B., Morrison, R. L., Bellack, A. S. & Hersen, M. (eds.) *Handbook of family violence*. New York: Plenum, pp. 57-86.
- Bertaux, D., 1981. From the life-history approach to the transformation of sociological practice. In: Bertaux, D. (ed.) *Biography and society: The life history approach in the social sciences*. London: Sage, pp. 29-45.
- Bhuyan, R., 2008. The production of the 'battered immigrant' in public policy and domestic advocacy. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 23(2), pp.153-170.
- Bhuyan, R., Mell, M., Senturia, K., Sullivan, M. and Shiu-Thornton. 2005. Women must endure according to their karma: Cambodian immigrant women talk about domestic violence. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Undeserved*, 11, pp.33-44.
- Bloor, M., Fincham, B. and Sampson, H. 2010. Unprepared for the worst: Risks of harm for qualitative researchers. *Methodological Innovation Online*, 5(1), pp. 45-55.

- Blumer, H., 1971. Social problems as collective behavior. *Social Problems*, 18, pp.298-306.
- Bogdan, R. C. and Biklen, S. K., 1992. *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and method*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bonnilla-Santiago, G., 2002. Latina battered women: Barriers to service delivery and cultural considerations. In: Roberts, A. R. (ed.) *Handbook of domestic violence intervention strategies: Policies, programs, and legal remedies*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 464-471.
- Bowen, G. A., 2006. Grounded theory and sensitizing concepts. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(3), pp.1-9.
- Brislin, R. W., 1970. Back-translation for crosscultural research. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 1(3), pp.185-216.
- Bronfenbrenner, U., 1979. The ecology of human development. In: Bronfenbrenner, U. (ed.) *Basic concepts*. Cambridge, CA: Harvard University Press., pp. 3-15.
- Brown, J., 2006. Reflexivity in the research process: psychoanalytic observation. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 9, pp.181-197.
- Brown, J. B., 1999. The use of focus groups in clinical research. In: Crabtree, B. F. & Miller, W., L (eds.) *Doing qualitative research*. 2 ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 109-124.
- Bui, H. N. and Morash, M., 1999. Domestic violence in the Vietnamese immigrant community: An exploratory study. *Violence against Women*, 5(7), pp.769-795.
- Bulmer, M., 1982. The merits and demerits of covert participant observation. In: Bulmer, M. (ed.) *Social research etjocs*. London: Macmillan, pp. 217-251.
- Burke, S., C., Oomen-Early, J., S. and Rager, R., C. 2009. Latina women's experiences with intimate partner violence: A grounded theory approach. *Family Violence Prevention & Health Practice* [e-journal], 1.(8) Available: <http://futureswithoutviolence.org/health/ejournal/category/issue-8/> [Accessed 10 March, 2011].
- Burman, E. and Chantler, K., 2005. Domestic violence and minoritisation: Legal and

- policy barriers facing minoritized women leaving violent relationships. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 28, pp.59-74.
- Burr, V., 2003. *An introduction to social constructionism*. London: Routledge.
- Busch, N. B. and Wolfer, T. A., 2002. Battered women speak out: Welfare reform and their decisions to disclose. *Violence Against Women*, 8, pp.566-584.
- Caplan, P. and Gans, M., 1991. Is there empirical justification for the category of 'self-defeating personality disorder'? *Feminism and Psychology*, 1(2), pp.263-278.
- Carlson, B. E., 1984. Causes and maintenance of domestic violence: An ecological analysis. *Social Service Review*, 58(4), pp.569-578.
- Census and Statistics Department 2007. 2006 Population by- Census: Thematic Report - Ethnic minorities. Hong Kong: Census and Statistics Department.
- Census and Statistics Department 2012. 2011 Population census: Thematic report-ethnic minorities. Hong Kong: Census and Statistics Department.
- Chan, K. L., 2005a. *Study on child abuse and spouse battering: Report on findings of household survey*. Hong Kong: Department of Social Work and Social Administration, the University of Hong Kong.
- Chan, K. L. 2005b. Mid-term evaluation of the report services provided by Sunrise Court, Po Leung Kuk. Hong Kong: Po Leung Kuk.
- Chan, K. L., Chiu, M. C. and Chiu, L. S., 2005. *Peace at home: Report on the review of the social and legal measures in the prevention of domestic violence in Hong Kong*. [A consultancy study commissioned by the SWD of the HKSAR], Hong Kong: Department of Social Work & Social Administration, the University of Hong Kong.
- Chantler, K., Burman, E., Batsleer, J. and Bashir, C., 2001. *Attempted suicide and self-harm (South Asian Women)*. The Manchester Metropolitan University.: Women's Studies Research Centre.
- Charmaz, K., 2000. Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In: Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 509-535.

- Charmaz, K., 2003. Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In: Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *Strategies for qualitative inquiry*. 2 ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 249-291.
- Charmaz, K., 2006. *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative*. London: Sage.
- Charmaz, K., 2009. Shifting the Grounds: Grounded theory in the 21st century. In: Morse, J., Stern, P., Corbin, J., Bowers, B., Charmaz, K. & Clarke, A. (eds.) *Developing Grounded Theory: The second generation* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, pp. 125-140.
- Chronister, K.M., Wetterson, K.B. and Brown, C. 2004. Vocational research for the liberation of battered women. *The Counselling Psychologist*, 32(3), pp. 900-922.
- Choice, P. and Lamke, L. K., 1997. A conceptual approach to understanding abused women's stay/leave decisions. *Journal of Family Issues*, 18, pp.290-314.
- Chow, W., 2009. *An overview of domestic violence ordinance in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hampton Winter & Glynn.
- Christians, C. G., 2005. Ethics and politics in qualitative research. In: Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *The sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 139-164.
- Coker, D., 2000. Shifting power for battered women: Law, material resources, and poor women of color. *University of California Davis Law Review*, 33, pp.1009-1055.
- Collins, H. M., 1983. *An empirical relativist programme in the sociology of power and symbolism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Collins, R., 1984. Statistics versus words. *Sociological Theory*, 2, pp.329-362.
- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. L., 2008. *Basic of qualitative research (3 ed)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Coutinho, T., 1991. Culture. In: Rafiq, F. (ed.) *Towards equal access: A handbook for service providers working with immigrant woman survivors of wife assault*. Toronto: Immigrant and Visible Minority Women Against Abuse, pp.
- Crandall, M., Senturia, K., Sullivan, M. and Shui-Thornton, S., 2005. "No way out":

- Russian-speaking women's experiences with domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20, pp.941-958.
- Crawford, E., Liebling-Kalifani, H. and Hill, V., 2009. Women's understanding of the effects of domestic abuse: The impact on their identity, sense of self and resilience. A grounded theory approach. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 1(2), pp.63-82.
- Creswell, J., 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dasgupta, S. D., 1998a. Women's realities: Defining violence against women by immigration, race and class. In: Bergen, R. K. (ed.) *Issues in intimate violence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 209-219.
- Dasgupta, S. D., 1998b. Gender roles and cultural continuity in the Asian Indian immigrant community in the U.S. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 38(11-12), pp.953-971.
- Dasgupta, S. D., 2000a. *Body evidence: Intimate violence against South Asian women in America*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Dasgupta, S. D., 2000b. Charting the course: An overview of domestic violence in the South Asian community in the United States. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 9, pp.173-185.
- Dasgupta, S. D., 2006. Women's realities: Defining violence against women by immigration, race and class. In: Sokoloff, N. J. (ed.) *Domestic violence at the margins*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, pp. 56-70.
- Dasgupta, S. D., 2007. Introduction. In: Dasgupta, S. D. (ed.) *Body evidence: Intimate violence against South Asian women in America*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, pp. 1-10.
- Dasgupta, S. D. and Dasgupta, S., 1993. Journeys: Reclaiming South Asian feminism. In: The Women of South Asian Descent Collective (ed.) *Our feet walk the sky: Women of South Asian diaspora*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute, pp. 123-130.
- Dasgupta, S. D. and Rudra, U. 2009. Transnational abandonment of South Asian

- women: A new face of violence against women. New Brunswick, New Jersey.
- Dasgupta, S. D. and Warrier, S., 1996. In the footsteps of "Arundhati": Asian Indian women's experience of domestic violence in the United States. *Violence Against Women*, 2, pp.238-259.
- Davila, Y. R. and Brackley, M. H., 1999. Mexican and Mexican American women in a battered women's shelter: Barriers to condom negotiation for HIV/AIDS prevention. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 20, pp.333-344.
- Dekeseredy, W. S. and Dragiewicz, M., 2009. Shifting public policy direction: Gender-focused versus bidirectional intimate partner violence. Report prepared for the Ontario Women's Directorate. Ontario: Ontario Women's Directorate.
- Denzin, N. K., 1970. *The research act in sociology*. California: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S., 2000. *Handbook of qualitative research*. California: Sage.
- DePanfilis, D., 1998. Intervening with families when children are neglected. In: Dubowitz, H. (ed.) *Neglected children: Research, practice and policy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 211-236.
- Dewane, C., 2006. Use of self: A primer revisited *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 34, pp.543-558.
- Dey, I., 1999. *Grounding Grounded theory: Guidelines for Qualitative Inquiry*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Dion, K. K. and Dion, K. L., 2001. Gender and cultural adaptation in immigrant families. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(3), pp.511-521.
- Dickson-Swift, V., James, E.L., Kippen, S. and Liamputtong, P., 2007. Doing sensitive research: What challenges do qualitative researchers face? *Qualitative Research*, 7(3), pp. 327-353.
- Dobash, R. E. and Dobash, R., 1979. *Violence against wives: A case against the patriarchy*. New York: The Free Press.
- Dobash, R. E. and Dobash, R. P., 1991. *Women, violence, and social change*. London: Routledge.

- Dobash, R. E. and Dobash, R. P., 1992. *Women, violence and social change*. London: Routledge.
- Dugan, M. and Hock, R., 2000. *Its my life now: Starting over after an abusive relationship or domestic violence*. New York: Routledge.
- Dutton, D. G., 2006. *Rethinking domestic violence*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Dutton, M. A., 1992. *Empowering and healing the battered woman*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Dutton, M. A., Orloff, L. and Hass, G., 2000. Characteristic of help-seeking behaviours, resources, and service needs of battered immigrant Latinas: Legal and policy implications. *Georgetown Journal on Poverty, Law and Policy*, 7(2), pp.245-305.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Lowe, A., 2002. *Management research: An introduction*. London: Sage.
- Edleson, J. L. and Tolman, R. M., 1992. *Intervention for men who batter: An ecological approach*. California: Sage.
- Edmunds, H., 1999. *The focus group research handbook*. Lincolnwood, Ill: NTC Business Books.
- Eisikovits, Z. and Peled, E., 1990. Qualitative research on spouse abuse. In: Besharov, D. J. (ed.) *Family violence: Research and public policy*. Washington D.C.: The AEI press, pp.
- Ellsberg, M. and Heise, L., 2002. Bearing witness: Ethics in domestic violence research. *The Lancet*, 359(4), pp.1599-1604.
- Engel, R. J. and Schutt, R. K., 2005. *The practice of research in social work*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Erez, E., 2000. Immigration, culture conflict and domestic violence/woman battering. *Crime Prevention and Community Safety: An International Journal*, 22(1), pp.61-74.
- Erez, E. and Harteley, C. C., 2003. Battered immigrant women and the legal system: A therapeutic jurisprudence perspective. *Western Criminology Review*, 4(2), pp.1-6.

- Espinosa, L. and Osborne, K., 2002. Intimate partner violence during pregnancy: Implications for practices. *Midwifery & Women's Health*, 47, pp.305-315.
- FEONA. 1999. *Final report of empowering women in the 21st century*. Hong Kong: Far East Overseas Nepalese Association.
- FEONA. 2000. *Equality for all races and sexes*. Hong Kong: Far East Overseas Nepalese Association.
- Fitzpatrick, D. and Halliday, C., 1992. *Not the way to love*. Amherst, NS: Cumberland County Transition House Association.
- Flick, U., 2009. *An introduction to qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Follingstad, D. R., Rutledge, L. L., Berg, B. J., Hause, E. S. and Polek, D. S., 1990. The role of emotional abuse in physically abusive relationships. *Journal of Family Violence*, 5(2), pp.107-120.
- Freeman, M. (ed.) 2008. *Domestic violence*, Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate.
- Frost, S., 2004. Building Hong Kong: Nepalese labour in the construction section. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 34(3), pp.364-376.
- Friedman, K. 2003. Theory construction in design research: Criteria, approaches and methods. *Design Studies*, 24, pp. 507-522.
- Gelles, R. J., 1976. Abused wives: Why do they stay? *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 38 (November), pp.659-668.
- Gelles, R. J. and Harrop, J. W., 1989. Violence, battering, and psychological distress among women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 4, pp.400-420.
- Gelles, R. J. and Straus, M., 1988. *Intimate violence*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- George, M. S. and Rahangdale, L., 1999. Domestic violence and South Asian women. *North Carolina Medical Journal*, 60, pp.157-159.
- Gergen, K. J. and Davis, K. E., 1985. *The social construction of the person*. New York: Springer.
- Giles-Sims, J., 1983. *Wife battering: A Systems theory approach*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Gill, A., 2004. Voicing the silent fear: South Asian women's experiences of domestic

- violence. *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 43(5), pp.465-483.
- Gill, H. and Ellen, M., 1993. *Domestic violence: Action for change*. Cheltenham, Gloucester: New Clarion press.
- Glaser, B. G., 1978. *Theoretical sensitivity*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G., 1992. *Basics of grounded theory analysis: Emergence versus forcing*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G., 1998. *Doing grounded theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G. and Holton, J. 2004. Remodeling grounded theory. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* [e-journal], 5.(2) Available: <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/607/1315> [Accessed August 10, 2011].
- Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L., 1967. *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Goodkind, J. R., Sullivan, C. M. and Bybee, D. L., 2004. A contextual analysis of battered women's safety planning. *Journal of Social Work*, 10(5), pp.514-533.
- Gordon, M., 2008. Definitional issues in violence against women: Surveillance and research from a violence research perspective. In: Michael, F. (ed.) *Domestic violence*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, pp. 3-40.
- Green, J. and Hart, L., 1999. The impact of context on data. In: Barbour, R. S. & Kitzinger, J. (eds.) *Developing focus group research: Politics, theory and practice*. London: Sage, pp. 21-35.
- Griffin, M. P. and Koss, M. P., 2002. Clinical screening and intervention in cases of partner violence. *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, 7(1), pp.1-11.
- Grinnell, R. and Unrau, Y., 2005. *Social work research evaluation: Quantitative and Qualitative approaches*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y. S., 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In: Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A. and Johnson, L., 2006. How many interviews are enough? An

- experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), pp.59-82.
- Gupta, G., 1976. Love, Arranged Marriage and the Indian Social Structure. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 7, pp.75-85.
- Gupta, J., Upadhyay, U. D. and Gupta, N., 2005. Domestic violence in the South Asian American community. In: Nguyen, T. D. (ed.) *Domestic violence in Asian American communities*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, pp. 89-102.
- Hagan, J. M., 1998. Social networks, gender, and immigrant incorporation: Resources and constraints. *American Sociological Review*, 63(55-67), pp.55.
- Hague, G. and Mullender, A., 2006. Who listens? The voices of domestic violence survivors in service provision in the UK. *Violence Against Women*, 12(6), pp.568-587.
- Hague, G., Mullender, A. and Aries, A., 2003. *Is anyone listening? Accountability and women survivors of domestic violence*. London: Routledge.
- Hague, G., Thiara, R. and Mullender, A., 2011. Disabled women, domestic violence and social care: The risk of isolation, vulnerability and neglect. *British Journal of Social Work*, 41, pp.148-165.
- Haj-Yahia, M. M., 1998. A patriarchal perspective of beliefs about wife beating among Palestinian men from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. *Journal of Family Issues*, 19, pp.595-621.
- Hamby, S. 2008. A holistic approach to understanding the coping strategies of victims. *13th International Conference on Violence, Abuse, & Trauma*. San Diego, CA.
- Hammami, R., 2006. Deniz Kandiyoti. *Development and Change*, 37(6), pp.1347-1354.
- Hammersley, M., 1989. *The dilemma of qualitative method*. New York: Routledge.
- Hampton, R. L. 2004. Violence in the Black family: What we know, where do we go? *Hartman Child and Family Scholars*. Mystic, CT.
- Han, A. D., Kim, E. J. and Tyson, S. Y., 2010a. Partner violence against Korean immigrant women. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 21(4), pp.370-376.
- Han, A. D., Kim, E. J. and Tyson, S. Y. 2010b. Partner violence against Korean immigrant women. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 21(4), pp.370-376.

- Harding, S., 1987. *Feminism and methodology: Social science issues*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Harmony House 2005. Local charity Harmony House initiated the first harmony movement in the world. *Press Release*. [Press Release] 25 November 2005. Available at:
http://www.harmonyhousehk.org/chi/pressimage/doc/2005/25_11_2005eng.htm
 [Accessed 20 June 2012].
- Hattery, A. J., 2009. *Intimate partner violence*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Hegde, R. S., 1999. Making bodies, reproducing violence. *Violence Against Women*, 5(5), pp.507-524.
- Heise, L., 1998. Violence against women: An integrated ecological framework. *Violence Against Women*, 4(3), pp.262-290.
- Heise, L., Alanagh, R., Watts, C. H. and SZwi, A. B., 1994. Violence against women: A neglected public health issue in less developed countries. *Social Science and Medicine*, 39, pp.1165-1179.
- Heise, L., Ellsberg, M. and Gottmoeller, M. 1999. *Ending violence against women* (Population Reports, Series L, No. 11). Baltimore: John Hopkins University School of Public Health, Population Information Program.
- Heise, L. and Garcia-Moreno, C., 2002. Violence by intimate partners. In: Krug, E., Dahlberg, L. L., Mercy, J. A. & et al (eds.) *World report on violence and health*. Geneva (Switzerland): World Health Organization, pp. 87-121.
- Hennink, M., Hutter, I. and Bailey, A., 2011. *Qualitative Research Methods*. London: Sage.
- Henwood, K. and Pidgeon, N., 1995. Remaking the link: Qualitative research and feminist standpoint theory. *Feminism and Psychology*, 5, pp.7-30.
- Herzog, H. and Yahia-Younis, T., 2007. Men's bargaining with patriarchy: The case of primaries within Hamulas in Palestinian Arab communities in Israel. *Gender & Society*, 21(4), pp.579-602.

- Ho, C. K., 1990. An analysis of domestic violence in Asian American communities: A multicultural approach to counseling. *Women & Therapy*, 9(1-2), pp.129-150.
- Ho, P. Y. A., Wong, F. N. N., Chan, S. L. K. and Lee, P. F. M. (eds.) 2007. *Health care access for Pakistani women and children in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: Centre for Social Policy Studies, Department of Applied Social Sciences, Hong Kong Polytechnic University ; S.K.H. Lady MacLehose Centre.
- Hogg, M. A., Abrams, D. and Patel, Y., 1987. Ethnic identity, self-esteem, and occupational aspirations of Indian and Anglo-Saxon British adolescents. *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs*, 113, pp.487-508.
- Hong Kong Council of Social Service. 2008 *Handling domestic violence case in ethnic minority groups*. Hong Kong: The Author.
- Hong Kong Council of Social Service. 2012. *Family & community services in Hong Kong*. [Online]. Hong Kong: Author. Available: http://www.hkcss.org.hk/download/folder/fc/fc_eng.htm [Accessed January 15 2013].
- Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor. 1999. *Survey results on racial discrimination in Hong Kong* [Online]. Hong Kong. Available: <http://www.hkhrm.org.hk/english/reports/survey.html> [Accessed April 20 2009].
- Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor et al. 2009. Joint submission from Hong Kong Organisations to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the report by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Hong Kong.
- Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Hong Kong Christian Service 2007. A research report on the social situations of ethnic minority women in Hong Kong. Hong Kong: Dept of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.
- Hughes, H., 1988. Psychological and behavioural correlates of family violence in child witnesses and victims. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 58, pp.77-90.
- Huisman, K. A., 1996. Wife battering in Asian American communities: Identifying the service needs of an overlooked segment of the U.S. population. *Violence Against*

- Women*, 2, pp.260-283.
- Hunnicut, G., 2009. Varieties of patriarchy and violence against women: Resurrecting "Patriarchy" as a theoretical tool. *Violence Against Women*, 15(5), pp.553-573.
- Hutchinson, S. A., 1993. Grounded theory: The method. In: Munhall, P. L. & Boyd, C. O. (eds.) *Nursing research: A qualitative perspective*. New York: National League for Nursing, pp. 180-212.
- Hutson, A. S., 2001. Women, men, and patriarchal bargaining in an Islamic Sufi order: The Tijaniyya in Kano, Nigeria, 1937 to the present. *Gender & Society*, 15, pp.734-753.
- Jang, D., Lee, D. and Morello-Frosch, R., 1991. Domestic violence in the immigrant and refugee community: Responding to the needs of immigrant women. *Response to the Victimization of Women and Children*, 13, pp.2-7.
- Johnson, P. and Duberly, J., 2000. *Understanding Management Research*. London: Sage.
- Johnson, P. S. and Johnson, J. A., 2001. The oppression of women in India. *Violence Against Women*, 7, pp.1051-1068.
- Jones, S., R., Torres, V. and Arminio, J., 2006. *Negotiating the complexities of qualitative research in higher education: Fundamental elements and issues*. New York: Routledge.
- Kairuz, T., Crump, K. and O'Brien, A., 2007. An overview of qualitative research. *The Pharmaceutical Journal*, 277, pp.312-314.
- Kandiyoti, D., 1988. Bargaining with patriarchy. *Gender and Society*, 2(3), pp.274-290.
- Kandiyoti, D., 1998. Gender, power and contestation: 'Rethinking bargaining with patriarchy'. In: Jackson, C. & Pearson, R. (eds.) *Feminist visions of development: Gender analysis & policy*. London: Routledge, pp. 135-154.
- Kang, T. S. and Kang, G. E., 1983. Adjustment patterns of the Korean-American elderly: Case studies of ideal types. *Journal of Minority Aging*, 8, pp.47-55.
- Kanuha, V., 1987. Sexual assault in Southeast and Asian communities: Issues in intervention. *Response*, 10(3), pp.4-6.
- Kanuha, V., 1996. Domestic violence, racism and the battered women's movement in the

- United States. In: Edelson, J. L. & Eisikovits, Z. C. (eds.) *Future interventions with battered women and their families*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 34-50.
- Kasturirangan, A., Krishnan, S. and Riger, S., 2004. The impact of culture and minority status on women's experiences of domestic violence. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 5(4), pp.318-332.
- Kearney, M. H., 2001. Enduring love: A grounded formal theory of women's experience of domestic violence. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 24, pp.270-282.
- Keller, E. M. and Brennan, P. K., 2007. Cultural consideration and challenges to service delivery for Sudanese victims of domestic violence: Insights from service providers and actors in the criminal justice system. *International Review of Victimology*, 14, pp.115-141.
- Kelly, J. B., 2000. Children's Adjustment in conflicted marriages and divorce: A decade review of research. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 15, pp.963-973.
- Kelly, J. B. and Johnson, M. P., 2008. Differentiation among types of intimate partner violence: Research update and implications for interventions. *Family Court Review*, 46(3), pp.476-499.
- Kelly, L., 1988. How women define their experiences of violence. In: Yllo, K. & Bograd, M. (eds.) *Feminist perspectives of wife abuse*. London: Sage, pp. 114-132.
- Kelly, U., 2009. I'm a mother first: The influence of mothering in the decision making processes of battered immigrant Latino women. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 32, pp.286-297.
- Kennedy, L. W. and Dutton, D. G., 1989. The incidence of wife assault in Alberta. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science*, 21, pp.40-54.
- Kibria, N., 1994. Household structure and family ideologies: The dynamics of immigrant economic adaptation among Vietnamese refugees. *Social Problems*, 41, pp.81-96.
- Kim, I. J., Lau, A. S. and Chang, D. F., 2007. Family violence among Asian Americans. In: Leong, F., Inman, A. G., Ebero, A., Yang, L., Kinoshita, L. M. & Fu, M. (eds.)

- Handbook of Asian American psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 363-378.
- Kim, J. Y. and Sung, K., 2000. Conjugal violence in Korean American families: A residue of the cultural tradition. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15, pp.331-345.
- Kirkwood, C., 1993. *Leaving abusive partners: From the scars of survival to the wisdom of change*. Newsbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kitzinger, J. and Barbour, R. S., 1999. Introduction: The challenge and promise of focus groups. In: Barbour, R. S. & Kitzinger, J. (eds.) *Developing focus group research: Politics, theory and practice*. London: Sage, pp. 1-20.
- Klevens, J., 2007. An overview of intimate partner violence among Latinos. *Violence Against Women*, 13, pp.111-122.
- Kofman, E., Phizacklea, A., Raghuram, P. and Sales, R., 2000. *Gender and international migration in Europe: Employment, welfare and politics*. London: Routledge.
- Koss, M. P., Goodman, L. A., Browne, A., Fitzgerald, L. F., Keita, G. P. and Russon, N. F., 1994. *No safe haven: Male violence against women at home, at work, and in the community*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Kozu, J., 1999. Domestic violence in Japan. *American Psychologist*, 54, pp.50-54.
- Krishnan, S. P., Malahat, B.-A., Gilbert, L., El-Bassel, N. and Waters, A., 1998. Lifting the view of secrecy: Domestic violence against South Asian women in the United States. In: Dasgupta, S. D. (ed.) *A patchwork shawl: Chronicles of south Asian women in America*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, pp.
- Krueger, R. A. (ed.) 1994. *Focus group: A practical guide for applied research*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Krueger, R. A., 1998. *Moderating focus groups: Focus group Kit 4*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Krug, E. G., Mercy, J. A., Dahlberg, L. L. and Zwi, A. B. 2002. World report on violence and health. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- Ku, H. B., 2006. body, dress and cultural exclusion: experiences of Pakistani women in global Hong Kong. *Asian Ethnicity*, 7(3), pp.285-303.

- Ku, H. B., Chan, K. M., Chan, W. L. and Lee, W. Y. 2003. A Research report on the life experiences of Pakistani in HongKong. Hong Kong: Centre for Social Policy Studies, Dept of Applied Social sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic Univeristy: S.K.H Lady MacLehose Centre.
- Ku, H. B., Chan, K. W. and Sandhu, K. K., 2005. *A research report on the education of South Asian ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong. Research report series* Hong Kong: Centre for Social Policy Studies, Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. .
- Kulwicki, A. D. and Miller, J., 1999. Domestic violence in the Arab American population: Transforming environmental conditions through community education. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 20, pp.199-215.
- Kumar, U., 1991. Life stages in the development of the Hindu woman in India. In: Adler, L. L. (ed.) *Women in cross-cultural perspective*. Westport, CT: Praeger, pp.
- Kvale, S., 1996. *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kwok, S. T. and Narain, K., 2003. *Co-prosperity in cross-culturalism: Indians in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press.
- Laisser, R. M., Nystrom, L., Lugina, H. and Emmelin, M., 2011. Community perception of intimate partner violence- a qualitative study from urban Tanzania. *BMC Women's Health*, 11(13), pp.1472-68-74.
- Lambert, L. C. and Firestone, J. M., 2000. Economic context and multiple abuse techniques. *Violence Against Women*, 6, pp.49-67.
- Latta, R. E. and Goodman, L. A., 2005. Considering the interplay of cultural context and service provision in intimate partner violence: The case of Haitian immigrant women. *Violence Against Women*, 11(11), pp.1441-1464.
- LaViolette, A. D. and Barnett, O. W., 2000. *It could happen to anyone: Why battered women stay*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lee, M. Y. 2002. Asian battered women. In: Roberts, R. (ed.) *Handbook of domestic violence intervention strategies: Policies, programs, and legal remedies*. New

- York: Oxford University Press.
- Lee, R., 1993. *Doing research on sensitive topics*. London: Sage Publication.
- Lee, R. M., 1999. *Doing research on sensitive topics*. London: Sage.
- Lee, V. 2008. Strategies and measures in tackling domestic violence in selected places. Hong Kong: Research and Library Services Division, Legislative Council Secretariat.
- Levinson, D., 1989. *Family violence in cross-cultural perspectives*. Newsbury Park, CA: Sage Publication.
- Levy, B., 2008. *Women and Violence*. Berkeley, California: Seal Press.
- Lim, I.-S., 1997. Korean immigrant women's challenge to gender inequality at home: The interplay of economic resources, gender, and family. *Gender & Society*, 11(1), pp.31-51.
- Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G., 1985. *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Little, L. and Kantor, K. G., 2002. Using ecological theory to understand intimate partner violence and child maltreatment. *Journal of Community Health Nursing*, 19(3), pp.133-145.
- Liu, A., 1999. *Family law for the Hong Kong SAR*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Loper, K., 2001. *Cultivating a multicultural society and combating racial discrimination in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Civic Exchange.
- Loper, K. 2004. Race and equality: A study of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong's education system- project report and analysis. Hong Kong: Centre for Comparative and Public Law, the University of Hong Kong.
- Lovell, M. L., Tran, T. and Nguyen, C. D., 1987. Refugee women: Lives in transition. *International Social Work*, 30, pp.317-325.
- Lundgren, E. 2004. The process of normalizing violence. Sweden: National Organization of Battered Women's Shelters in Sweden.
- Lykes, M. B. and Stewart, A. L., 1986. Evaluating the feminist challenge to research in personality and social psychology: 1963-1983. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*,

10, pp.393-412.

- Lynch, E. W. and Hanson, M. J., 1993. Changing demographics: implications for training in early intervention. *Infants and Young Children*, 6(1), pp.50-55.
- Mackay, J. L. and Lo, G., 1985. Wife beating in Hong Kong. *Journal of Hong Kong Medical Association*, 37(1), pp.23-26.
- Mahlstedt, D. and Keeny, L., 1993. Female survivors of dating violence and their social networks. *Feminism and Psychology*, 3, pp.319-333.
- Malley-Morrison, K., 2004. *International Perspective on Family Violence and Abuse*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B., 1999. *Designing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Marshall, M. N., 1996a. Sampling for qualitative research. *Family Practice*, 13(6), pp.522-525.
- McCue, M. L., 2008. *Domestic violence: A reference handbook* (2 ed.). Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO.
- McGhee, C., Marland, G.R. and Atkinson, J., 2007. Grounded theory research: Literature reviewing and reflexivity. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 60(3), pp. 334-342.
- Mehotra, M., 1999. The social construction of wife abuse: Experiences of Asian Indian women in the United States. *Violence Against Women*, 5, pp.619-640.
- Melhotra, M., 1999. The social construction of wife abuse: Experiences of Asian Indian women in the United States. *Violence against Women*, 5(6), pp.619-640.
- Menjívar, C., 2000. *Fragmented ties: Salvadoran immigrant networks in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Menjívar, C. and Salcido, O., 2002. Immigrant women and domestic violence: Common experiences in different countries. *Gender & Society*, 16(6), pp.898-920.
- Merchant, M., 2000. A comparative study of agencies assisting domestic violence victims: Does the South Asian community have special needs. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 9, pp.249-259.
- Midlarsky, E., Venkatapamani-Kothari, A. and Plante, M., 2006. Domestic violence in

- the Chinese and South Asian communities. *Annals of New York Academy of Science*, 1087, pp.279-300.
- Millett, K., 1969. *Sexual politics*. New York: Avon.
- Morash, M., Bui, H., Zhang, Y. and Holtfreter, K., 2007. Risk factors for abusive relationships: A study of Vietnamese American immigrant women. *Violence Against Women*, 13(7), pp.653-675.
- Milner IV, H.R. 2007. Race, culture and researcher personality: Working through dangers seen, unseen and unforeseen. *Educational Researcher Journal*, 36(7), pp.388-400.
- Morash, M., Bui, H. N. and Santiago, A., 2000. Gender specific ideology of domestic violence in Mexican origin families. *International Review of Victimology*, 1, pp.67-91.
- Morgan, D. L. (ed.) 1997. *Focus groups as qualitative research* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Morse, J. M., 1995. The significance of saturation. *Qualitative Health Research*, 5, pp.147-149.
- Morton, S., 1997. *Violence on the edge: Exploring the needs of minority ethnic women at risk of domestic violence in Northern Ireland*. Belfast, Northern Ireland: Women's Aid Federation.
- Nankani, S., 2000. *Breaking the silence: Domestic violence in the South Asian-American Community*. Philadelphia: Xlibris.
- Narayan, U., 1995. Mail-order brides: Immigrant women, domestic violence, and immigration law. *Hypatia*, 10, pp.104-119.
- Natarajan, M., 2002. Domestic violence among immigrants from India: what we need to know- and what we should do. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 26(2), pp.301-321.
- Nelson, T., 1996. Violence against women. *World Watch*, 9(4), pp.33-38.
- Neuman, W. L., 1994. *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Toronto: Allyn and Bacon.

- Neuman, W. L., 2006. *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Sydney: Ally & Bacon.
- Nguyen, T. D., 2007. *Domestic violence in Asian-American communities : a cultural overview*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books.
- Nibler, R. and Harris, K. L., 2003. The effects of culture and cohesiveness in intragroup conflict and effectiveness. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 143(5), pp.613-631.
- Nicolson, P., 1997. Feminist social psychology: A review. *Feminism and Psychology*, 7, pp.248-254.
- Ohbuchi, K., Fukushima, O. and Tedeschi, J. T., 1999. Cultural values in conflict management: Goal orientation, goal attainment, and tactical decision. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 30(1), pp.51-71.
- Okamura, A., Heras, P. and Wong-Kerber, L., 1995. Asian, Pacific Island, and Filipino Americans and sexual child abuse. In: Fontes, L. A. (ed.) *Sexual abuse in nine North American cultures: Treatment and prevention*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 67-96.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J. and Leech, N. L., 2005. *The role of sampling in qualitative research* [Online]. Available: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3325/is_3_9/ai_n29219699/ [Accessed 11 January, 2011].
- Parmar, A., Sampson, A. and Diamond, A., 2005. *Tackling Domestic Violence: Providing advocacy and support*. Home Office Development and Practice Report , Number 35, UK.
- Pathirage, C. P., Amaratunga, R. D. G. and Haigh, R. P., 2008. The role of philosophical context in the development of theory: Towards methodological pluralism. *The Built & Human Environment Review*, 1, pp.1-10.
- Patton, M. Q., 1990. *Qualitative evaluation methods*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Pence, E. and Paymar, M., 1985. *Criminal justice response to domestic assault cases: A guide for policy development*. Duluth, MN: Minnesota Program Development, Inc.

- Perilla, J. L., 1999. Domestic violence as a human rights issue: The case of immigrant Latinos. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 21, pp.107-133.
- Perilla, J. L., 2000. Domestic violence as a human rights issue: the case of immigrant latinos. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioural Sciences*, 21(2), pp.107-133.
- Pinnewala, P., 2009. Good women, martyrs, and survivors: A theoretical framework for South Asian women's responses to partner violence. *Violence Against Women*, 15(1), pp.81-105.
- Pizzey, E., 1974. *Scream quietly or the neighbors will hear*. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books.
- Pluss, C., 2000. Transnational identities: Hong Kong Indians. *The International Scope Review*, 2(4 Winter), pp.1-19.
- Polit, D. F., Beck, C. T. and Hungler, B. P., 2001. *Essential of nursing research: Methods, Appraisal and Utilization*. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Prasad, S., 1999. Medicolegal response to violence against women in India. *Violence Against Women*, 5, pp.478-506.
- Preisser, A. B., 1999. Domestic violence in South Asian communities in America: Advocacy and intervention. *Violence Against Women*, 5(6), pp.684-699.
- Probst, B. and Berenson, L. 2013. The double arrow: How qualitative social work researchers use reflexivity. *Qualitative Social Work*, DOI: 1177/1473325013506248.
- Ptacek, J., 1988. Why do men batter their wives? In: Yllö, K. & Bograd, M. (eds.) *Feminist perspectives on wife abuse*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp.
- Pyles, L. and Postmus, J., 2004. Addressing the problem of domestic violence: How far have we come? *Affilia*, 19(4), pp.376-388.
- Race Relations Units. 2006. *Programmes and services: Support service centres for ethnic minorities* [Online]. Available: http://www.had.gov.hk/rru/english/programmes/programmes_comm_sscem.html [Accessed January 10 2013].
- Race Relations Units. n.d. *Programmes and services*. [Online]. Available:

<http://www.had.gov.hk/rru/english/programmes/programmes.html> [Accessed January 10 2013].

- Raj, A. and Silverman, J., 2002a. Violence against immigrant women: The roles of culture, context, and the legal immigrant status on intimate partner violence. *Violence Against Women*, 8(3), pp.367-398.
- Raj, A. and Silverman, J., 2002b. Intimate partner violence against South Asian women in Greater Boston. *Journal of American Medical Women's Association*, 57(2), pp.111-114.
- Ramisetty-Mikler, S., 1993. Asian Indian immigrants in American and sociocultural issues in counselling. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 21, pp.36-49.
- Ramistty-Mikler, S., 1993. Asian Indian immigrants in American and socio cultural issues in counseling. *The Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 21, pp.36-49.
- Ranjeet, B. and Purkayastha, B., 2007. Minority within a minority: Reflecting on marital violence in the Nepali American community. In: Dasgupta, S. D. (ed.) *Body evidence: Intimate violence against South Asian women in America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, pp.
- Razack, S., 1998. What is to be gained by looking White people in the eye? Race in sexual violence cases. In: Razack, S. (ed.) *Looking White people in the eye: Gender, race, and culture in courtroom and classrooms*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, pp. 56-87.
- Reinharz, S., 1992. *Feminist methods in social research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rennie, D., 2007. Reflexivity and its radical form: Implications for the practice of humanistic psychotherapies. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 37, pp.53-58.
- Rennie, D. L., 2000. Aspects of the client's conscious control of the psychotherapeutic process. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, 10, pp.151-167.

- Rhee, S., 1997. Domestic violence in the Korean immigrant family. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 24, pp.63-77.
- Rianon, N. J. and Shelton, A. J., 2003. Perception of spousal abuse expressed by married Bangladeshi immigrant women in Houston, Texas, U.S.A. *Journal of Immigrant Health*, 5(1), pp.37-44.
- Richards, L., 2005. *Handling qualitative data: A practical guide*. London: Sage.
- Richardson, J., Coid, J., Petrukevitch, A., Chung, W. S., Moorey, S. and Feder, G., 2002. Identifying domestic violence: A cross sectional study in primary care. *British Medical Journal*, 324, pp.274-277.
- Rothman, J. C., 2008. *Cultural competence in process and practice*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Rubin, A. and Babbie, E. R., 2008. *Research methods for social work (6 ed.)*. Belmont, CA: Thomson.
- Sassetti, M. R., 1993. Domestic violence. *Primary Care*, 20(2), pp.289-304.
- Sato, R. A. and Heiby, E. M., 1992. Correlates of depressive symptoms among battered women. *Journal of Family Violence*, 7, pp.229-245.
- Schneider, E. M., 2000. *Battered women & feminist lawmaking*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Schreiber, R. S., 2001. The 'How to' of grounded theory: Avoiding the pitfalls. In: Schreiber, R. S. & Stern, P. N. (eds.) *Using grounded theory in nursing*. New York: Springer Publishing, pp. 56-84.
- Schwandt, T., 2000. Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry. In: Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*. 2 ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 198-213.
- Scully-Hill, A., 2011. Domestic violence in Hong Kong. In: Hewitt, P. (ed.) *Family law & practice in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Sweet & Maxwell Asia, pp.
- Segal, U. A., 1991. Cultural variables in Asian Indian families. *Families in Society*, 72(4), pp.233-242.
- Seibold, C., 2002. The place of theory and the development of a theoretical framework

- in a qualitative study. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 2, pp.3-15.
- Sexton, M. 2004. PhD Workshop: Axiological purposes, ontological cages and epistemological keys. *Postgraduate research workshop, November 2004*. UK: University of Salford.
- Shalansky, C., Erikson, J. and Henderson, A., 1999. Abused women and child custody: The ongoing exposure to abusive ex-partners. *Journal of Advance Nursing*, 29, pp.416-426.
- Sharma, A., 2001. Healing the wounds of domestic violence: Improving the effectiveness of feminist therapeutic interventions with immigrant and racially visible women who have been abused. *Violence Against Women*, 7(12), pp.1405-1428.
- Sheehan, H. E., Javier, R. A. and Thanjan, T., 2000. Introduction to the special issue on domestic violence and the South Asian community. *Journal of Social Issues*, 9(3), pp.167-171.
- Sherif, C. W., 1992. Bias in psychology. In: Bohan, J. S. (ed.) *Seldom seen, rarely heard: Women's place in psychology*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 107-146.
- Shipway, L., 2004. *Domestic violence: A handbook for health professionals*. London: Routledge.
- Shirwadkar, S., 2004. Canadian domestic violence policy and Indian immigrant women. *Violence Against Women*, 10, pp.860-879.
- Short, L. M., McMahan, P. M., Chervin, D. D., Shelley, G. A., Lezin, N., Sloop, K. S. and Dawkins, N., 2000. Survivors' identification of protective factors and early warning signs for intimate partner violence. *Violence Against Women*, 6(3), pp.272-285.
- Siddiqui, H., 2013. True Honour: Domestic violence, Forced Marriage and Honour Crimes in the UK. In: Rehman, Y., Kelly, L. & Siddiqui, H. (eds.) *Moving in the shadows: Violence in the lives of minority women and children*. Farnham, England: Ashgate, pp. 169-184.
- Siddiqui, N., Ismail, S. and Allen, M. 2008. Safe to return? Pakistani women, domestic

- violence and access to refugee protection - A report of a transnational research project conducted in the UK and Pakistan. UK: South Manchester Law Centre.
- Smith, M. D., 1990. Patriarchal ideology and wife beatings: Test of a feminist hypothesis. *Violence and Victims*, 5(4), pp.257-273.
- Smith, P. H., Thornton, G. E., DeVellis, R., Earp, J. and Coker, A. L., 2002. A population-based study of the prevalence and distinctiveness of battering, physical assault and sexual assault in intimate relationships. *Violence Against Women*, 8, pp.1208-1232.
- Snyder, D. K. and Fruchtman, L. A., 1981. Differential patterns of wife abuse: A database typology. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 49, pp.878-885.
- Soble, A. 1978. Deception in social science research: Is informed consent possible? *Hastings Center Report*
- Social Welfare Department 2000. Guidelines on handling battered spouse cases. Hong Kong: Family and Child Welfare Branch, Social Welfare Department.
- Social Welfare Department. 2003. *Social Welfare Department: Support to victims of child abuse, spouse/cohabitant battering and sexual violence*. [Online]. Available: http://www.swd.gov.hk/vs/text_en/welfare.html [Accessed January 10 2013].
- Society for Community Organization. 2004. *A study of the Nepalese community in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Movement Against Discrimination.
- Sokoloff, N. J. and Dupont, I., 2005. Domestic violence at the intersections of race, class, and gender: Challenges and contributions to understanding violence against marginalized women in diverse communities. *Violence Against Women*, 11(1), pp.38-64.
- Song, Y. I., 1996. *Battered women in Korean immigrant families: The silent scream*. New York: Garland.
- Sorenson, S., 1996. Violence against women: Examining ethnic differences and commonalities. *Evaluation Review*, 20, pp.123-145.
- Stanko, B., Marian, L., Crisp, D., Manning, R., Smith, J. and Cowan, S. 1998. *Taking*

- stock: What do we know about violence?* Middlesex, United Kingdom: NCJRS-National Criminal Justice Reference Service.
- Straus, A. and Gelles, R. J., 1986. Societal change and change in family violence rates from 1975 to 1985 as revealed by two national surveys. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48, pp.465-479.
- Straus, M., Gelles, R. and Steinmetz, S. K., 1981. *Behind closed doors: Violence in the American family*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Straus, M. and Hotaling, G. T., 1980. *The social causes of husband-wife violence*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Strauss, A. L. and Corbin, J., 1990. *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Strauss, A. L. and Corbin, J., 1998. *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Strube, M. J., 1988. The decision to leave an abusive relationship: Empirical evidence and theoretical issues. *Psychological Bulletin*, 104(2), pp.236-250.
- Strube, M. J. and Barbour, L. S., 1983. The decision to leave an abusive relationship: Economic dependence and psychological commitment. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 45 (November), pp.785-793.
- Sullivan, C. M. and Rumpitz, M. H., 1994. Adjustment and needs of African-American women who utilized a domestic violence shelter. *Violence & Victims*, 9(3), pp.275-286.
- Sullivan, M., Senturia, K., Negash, T., Shiu-Thornton, S. and Giday, B., 2005. "For us it is like living in the dark": Ethiopian women's experiences with domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20, pp.922-940.
- Supriya, K. E., 2002. *Shame and Recovery: Mapping identity in an Asian women's Shelter*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Takhar, S., 2013. Sexuality and South Asian women: a taboo? In: Rehman, Y., Kelly, L. & Siddiqui, H. (eds.) *Moving in the shadows: Violence in the lives of minority women and children*. Farnham, England: Ashgate, pp. 77-86.

- Tang, C. S.-K., 1997. Psychological impact of wife abuse: Experiences of Chinese women and their children. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 12(3), pp.466.
- Tang, C. S.-K., 1999. Wife abuse in Hong Kong Chinese families: A community survey. *Journal of Family Violence*, 14(2), pp.173-191.
- Tang, C. S.-K., Wong, D. and Cheung, F. M.-C., 2002. Social construction of women as legitimate victims of violence in Chinese societies. *Violence Against Women*, 8(8), pp.968-996.
- Tang, K. L., Lam, C. M., Lam, M. C. and Ngai, S. Y., 2006. *Racial discrimination in Hong Kong: Prevalence and impact*. Hong Kong: Department of Social work, Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Taylor, S. J. and Bogdan, R. C., 1984. *Introduction to qualitative research methods: The search for meanings*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Taylor, W. K., Magnussen, L. and Amundson, M. J., 2001. The lived experience of battered women. *Violence Against Women*, 7(5), pp.563-585.
- Thapa-Oli, S., Dulal, H. B. and Baba, Y., 2009. A preliminary study of intimate partner violence among Nepali women in the United States. *Violence Against Women*, 15(2), pp.206-223.
- Thiara, R. and Gill, A., 2012. Domestic violence, child contact and post-separation violence: Issues for South Asian and African-Caribbean women and children: a report of findings. London: NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children).
- Thiara, R. K. and Gill, A., 2010. Understanding violence against South Asian women: What it means for practice. In: Thiara, R. K. & Gill, A. K. (eds.) *Violence against women in South Asian communities: Issues for policy and practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley, pp. 29-54.
- Ting-Toomey, S., 1998. Intercultural conflict styles: A face negotiation theory. In: Kim, Y. & Gudykunst, W. (eds.) *Theories in intercultural communication*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp.
- Thomas, G. and James, D., 2006. Re-inventing grounded theory: Some questions about

- theory, ground and discovery. *British Educational Research Journal*, 32(6), pp. 767-795.
- Thomas, G. 2007. *Education and theory: Strangers in paradigms*. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.
- Tjaden, P. and Thoennes, N. 2000. Extent, nature and consequences of intimate partner violence: Findings from the national violence against women survey. Washington D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Tjosvold, D. and Sun, H. F., 2002. Understanding conflict avoidance: Relationship, motivations, actions and consequences. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 13(2), pp.142-164.
- Toth, K. and Kemmelmeier, M., 2009. Divorce attitudes around the world: Distinguishing the impact of culture on evaluations and attitude structure. *Cross-Cultural Research*, 43(3), pp.280-297.
- Tonsing, J.C. 2010. A Study of domestic violence among South Asian in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Science*, 5(1), pp. 367-376
- Tran, C. G. 1997. Qualitative analyses of domestic violence in Vietnamese refugee women. Unpublished manuscript.
- Tran, C. G. and Des Jardins, K., 2000. Domestic violence in Vietnamese refugee and Korean immigrant communities. In: Chin, J. L. (ed.) *Relationships among Asian American women*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, pp. 71-96.
- Tuerkheimer, D., 2004. Recognizing and remedying the harm of battering: A call to criminalize domestic violence. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 22(6), pp.9-15.
- Unger, R. K., 1996. Using the master's tools: Epistemology and empiricism. In: Wilkinson, S. (ed.) *Feminist social psychologies: International perspectives*. Buckingham: Open University Press, pp. 165-181.
- United Nations 1996. The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. *Fourth*

- World Conference on Women*. Beijing, China: New York: United Nations.
- Vaid, K. N., 1972. *The overseas Indian community in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, The University of Hong Kong.
- Val, B., Gina, H. and Judy, N., 1985. *Private Violence and Public Policy: The need of battered women and the response of the public services*. London: Rutledge & Kegan Paul PLC.
- Valiante, W. 1993. Domestic violence in the South Asian families: Treatment and research issues. *South Asian Symposium 1992: A reader in South Asian Studies*. Toronto: The Centre for South Asian Studies Graduate Union.
- Venis, S. and Horton, R., 2002. Violence against women: A global burden. *Lancet*, 357, pp.1172.
- Walker, A., 1995. Theory and methodology in premenstrual syndrome research. *Social Science Medicine*, 41(6), pp.793-800.
- Walker, L. E., 1979. *The battered woman*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Walker, L. E., 1984. *The battered women syndrome*. New York: Springer.
- Warrier, S., 2000. *(Un)Heard voices: Domestic violence in the Asian American community*. San Francisco: Family Violence Prevention Fund.
- Weis, L. and Fine, M., 2000. *Speed bumps: A student-friendly guide to qualitative research*. New York: Teacher's College Press.
- Weitzman, S., 2001. *Not to people like us: Hidden abuse in upscale marriage*. New York: Basic Books.
- White, B. S., 1994. *Turbans and traders: Hong Kong's Indian communities*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- Willig, C., 2008. *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: Adventures in theory and method*. New York: Open University Press.
- Wilson, A., 1979. *Finding a voice: Asian women in Britain*. London: Virago.
- Wilson, A., 2006. *Dreams, questions, struggles: South Asian women in Britain*. London: Pluto Press.
- Winter, K. A. and Young, M. Y., 1998. Biopsychological consideration in refugee mental

- health. In: S.Kazarian & D.Evans (eds.) *Cultural clinical psychology: Theory, research and practice*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp.
- Wolfe, D. A., Crooks, C. V., Lee, V. and Jaffe, P., 2003. The effects of children's exposure to domestic violence-a meta-analysis and critique. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 6, pp.171-187.
- Women's Commission 2006. The Women's Commission Report. Women's safety in Hong Kong: Eliminating domestic violence. Hong Kong: Women's Commission.
- Women Commission 2006. Women's safety in Hong Kong: Eliminating domestic violence. Hong Kong: Author.
- Women Commission 2009a. Women's safety in Hong Kong: Eliminating domestic violence. Hong Kong: Author.
- Working Group on Combating Violence 2004. Procedural guidelines for handling battered spouse cases. Hong Kong: Social Welfare Department.
- World Health Organisation. 2004. *Handbook for the documentation of interpersonal violence prevention programme*. Geneva: World Health Organization [Online]. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- World Health Organization. 2002b. *Intimate partner violence*. [Online]. Available: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/ipvfacts.pdf [Accessed December 20 2009].
- Yang Memorial Methodist social Service 2002. A study on the outlets of the South Asian ethnic minority youth in Hong Kong. Hong Kong: Author
- Yick, A. G., 2001. Feminist Theory and Status Inconsistency Theory. *Violence Against Women*, 7(5), pp.545-562
- Yick, A. G. and Agbayani, P. S., 1997. Perceptions of physical spousal/intimate violence in Chinese American Families. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15(3), pp.249-267.
- Yllo, K., 1993. Through a feminist lens: Gender, power, and violence. In: Gelles, R. & D.R.Loseke (eds.) *Current controversies on family violence*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp.47-62

- Yllo, K. and Straus, M. A., 1984. Patriarchy and violence against wives: The impact of structural and normative factors. *Journal of International and Comparative Social Welfare*, 1, pp.1-13.
- Yllo, K. and Straus, M. A., 1990. Patriarchy and violence against wives; the impact of structural and normative factors. In: Straus, M. A. & Gelles, R. J. (eds.) *Physical violence in American families: risk factors and adaptation to violence in 8145 families*. New Jersey: Transaction Publisher, pp.383-399
- York, M. R., 2011. *Gender Attitudes and Violence against women*. El Paso: LFB Scholarly Publishing.
- Yoshihama, M., 1999. Domestic violence against women of Japanese descent in Los Angeles: Two methods of estimating prevalence. *Violence Against Women*, 5, pp.869-897.
- Yoshihama, M., 2001. Immigrants-in-context framework: Understanding the interactive influence of socio-cultural contexts. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 24, pp.307-318.
- Yoshioka, M. R. and Chio, D. Y., 2003. Culture and interpersonal violence research. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20, pp.513-519.
- Yoshioka, M. R., DiNoia, J. and Ullah, K., 2001. Attitudes toward marital violence: An examination of four Asian communities. *Violence Against Women*, 7(8), pp.900-926.
- Yuval-Davis, N., 1997. *Gender and nation*. London: Sage.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical Approval

Application no: 10/2010

ROYAL HOLLOWAY
University of London

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Result of Application to the Committee


Name of Applicant: Jenny Chingkhannem Tonsing

Department: Department of Social Work

Title of Project: A Study of Domestic Violence among South Asian Women in Hong Kong

This is to notify you that your research project:

✓	Has been approved by the Committee
	Has been approved under Chair's Action, this decision to be reported to the Committee at its next meeting


.....
Professor Geoff Ward
Chair, Ethics Committee

.....
23/8/11
.....
Date

Appendix 2A: Information sheet (for the women)

A study of domestic violence among South Asian Women in Hong Kong

This study is to examine the issue of domestic violence within a husband/partner- wife relationship among South Asian women in Hong Kong (include Indian, Nepalese and Pakistani).

You are invited to participate in this research and to share about your stories/experiences with domestic violence. By sharing your stories/experiences you will help us to learn about your situation of domestic violence and to increase awareness and better understanding of your experiences. The information you provide will make a meaningful contribution to research, and you and the society as a whole may be enrich by helping to bring awareness about domestic violence situation and bring about a social change.

Your participation will involve a one-to-one interview which will take about 60 to 90 minutes and will consist of questions about your life, your family and your experiences and perception of domestic violence. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you can terminate the interview at any time without negative consequences. If any of the questions asked during the interview may cause discomfort to you, you may stop the interview at any time. Any information that you share will be treated in confidence, and your identity will not be revealed in any reports or publication resulting from this research.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Jenny Chingkhannem Tonsing
PhD Candidate
Centre for Criminology and Sociology
Royal Holloway, University of London
Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX

Appendix 2B: Consent Form (for the women)

I ----- (name of participant) have read and understand the information sheet which describe about this study and its purpose. I hereby consent to participate in this study.

My consent allows Jenny Chingkhannem Tonsing:

- a) to tape record this meeting/interview
- b) to use information given by me in this meeting for the purpose of her research.

I further understand that:

- a) My participation in this research is voluntary
- b) I can refuse to participate in this research at any time
- c) All information given by me will be treated in confidence
- d) Any papers or reports either published or unpublished, that result from this research will preserve codes of confidentiality and anonymity.

If you have any questions or concern about the research or wish to know more about the research do not hesitate to contact Miss Jenny Tonsing at: + 44- 077097459542, +852-54926691, or pujd016@live.rhul.ac.uk or her Supervisors Professor Ravinder Barn at: +44-1784 443678, email R.Barn@rhul.ac.uk and Dr.Vicki Harman at: +44-1784443682, email V.Harman@rhul.ac.uk

Participant's signature: -----

Date: -----

Appendix 3A: Information sheet (for the women) in Hindi

जानकारी पत्र

एक अध्ययन हांगकांग में दक्षिण एशियाई महिलाओं के बीच घरेलू हिंसा के बारे में ये अध्ययन हांगकांग में रहने वाली दक्षिण एशियाई महिलाओं के पति/साथी पत्नी के रिश्ते के बीच में होने वाली घरेलू हिंसा के मुद्दे की जांच करने के लिए है (जिसमें भारतीय, नेपाली और पाकिस्तानी शामिल हैं)

इस खोज में भाग लेने के लिए और घरेलू हिंसा के बारे में अपनी कहानी/अनुभव को बताने के लिए आपको आमंत्रित किया जाता है.आपकी स्थिति को बेहतर समझने में और जागरूकता बढ़ाने में आप अपनी कहानी बता कर हमारी मदद करेंगे. आपके द्वारा दी गयी जानकारी एक महत्वपूर्ण योगदान होगी अनुसंधान के लिए, और आप और ये समाज पूर्ण रूप से शिक्षित हों सकते हैं आपकी मदद से, घरेलू हिंसा की स्थिति के बारे में जागरूकता बढ़ाये और समाज में बदलाव लाये.

इस अनुसंधान में आपका योगदान एक बातचीत (इंटरव्यू) की तरह होगा जिसमें 60 से 90 मिनट लग सकते हैं. सवाल आपकी जिंदगी, आपके परिवार और आपके अनुभव के बारे में होंगे और बातचीत के दौरान आप घरेलू हिंसा के बारे में किया सोचती हैं ये भी पूछा जा सकता. इस अनुसंधान में हिस्सेदारी बिलकुल स्वैच्छिक (अपनी इच्छा से करें) और किसी भी समय आप ये इंटरव्यू बिना किसी नकारात्मक परिणाम के बंद कर सकते हैं. यदि आप इंटरव्यू के दौरान पूछे गए किसी भी सवाल से असुविधा महसूस करती हैं, सो आप किसी भी समय इंटरव्यू रोक सकती हैं. आपके द्वारा दी गयी कोई भी जानकारी राज़ में रखी जायेगी और अनुसंधान के किसी भी हिस्से में आपकी पहचान का खुलासा नहीं किया जाएगा.

इस अध्ययन में आपके योगदान का धन्यवाद.

Jenny Chingkhannem Tonsing
PhD Candidate
Centre for Criminology and Sociology
Royal Holloway, University of London
Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX

Appendix 3B: Consent Form (for the women) in Hindi

सहमती फॉर्म

मैंने..... (भागीदार का नाम) जानकारी पत्र को पढ़ा और समझा है जिसमें इस अध्ययन और इसके मकसद के बारे में लिखा है. मैं इस अध्ययन में योगदान देने की सहमती देती हूँ.

मैं अनुमति देती हूँ Jenny Chinkhannem:

- इस बातचीत/इंटरव्यू को टेप रिकॉर्ड करने की
- इस इंटरव्यू में मेरी द्वारा दी गई जानकारी को अपने अनुसंधान में इस्तेमाल करने की

मैं आगे ये भी समझती हूँ की:

- इस अनुसंधान में मेरी हिस्सेदारी बिलकुल स्वैच्छिक है
- मैं इस अनुसंधान में हिस्सा लेने से किसी भी समय मना कर सकती हूँ.
- मेरे द्वारा दी गयी हर जानकारी राज़ होगी.
- कोई भी कागज़ या रिपोर्ट जो की इस अनुसंधान का नतीजा होगा वो प्रकाशित हो या ना हो पर वो राजदारी और गुमनामी का खयाल रखेगा.

इस अनुसंधान के बारे में अगर आप कोई सवाल करना चाहते हों या और जाना चाहते हैं तो बिना हिचकिचाहट संपर्क करें Miss Jenny Chingkhannem at: + 44- 077097459542, +852-54926691, or puid016@live.rhul.ac.uk or her Supervisors Professor Ravinder Barn at: +44-1784 443678, email R.Barn@rhul.ac.uk and Dr.Vicki Harman at: +44-1784443682, email V.Harman@rhul.ac.uk

Participant's signature: -----

Date: -----

Appendix 4A: Information sheet (for the women) in Urdu

معلوماتی شیٹ

ہانگ کانگ میں رہنے والی جنوبی ایشیا کی عورتوں پر گھریلو تشدد کا مطالعہ

یہ ہانگ کانگ میں رہنے والی جنوبی ایشیا کی عورتوں پر گھریلو تشدد کا مطالعہ ہے۔ اس مطالعہ کا مقصد جنوبی ایشیا کے لوگوں کے گھریلو تشدد کے متعلق تجربوں کا مطالعہ کرنا ہے۔

آپ کو اس تحقیق میں شرکت کی اور اپنے گھریلو تشدد کے متعلق تجربے فراہم کرنے کی دعوت دی جاتی ہے۔ اپنے تجربے فراہم کرنے کے ذریعے اپنے گھریلو تشدد کی صورت حال کے بارے میں ہمیں سیکھنے اور اپنے تجربوں کی آگاہی اور بہتر تفہیم میں اضافے کے لئے آپ ہماری مدد کرسکیں گی۔ آپ کی فراہم کی ہوئی معلومات سے تحقیق میں اہم اضافہ ہوگا اور گھریلو تشدد کی صورت حال کی آگاہی کے باعث سماجی تبدیلی آسکے گی جس سے آپ کو اور معاشرے کو فائدہ ہوگا۔

آپ کی شرکت ایک انٹرویو کی صورت میں ہوگی جو 60 سے 90 منٹ کا ہوگا جس میں آپ سے آپکی زندگی، خاندان اور گھریلو تشدد کے متعلق تجربے اور خیال کے بارے میں سوال کیئے جائیں گے۔ انٹرویو میں شرکت مکمل طور پر رضاکارانہ ہے اور آپ کسی وقت کسی منفی نتائج کے بغیر انٹرویو ختم کرسکتے ہیں۔ اگر انٹرویو کے درمیان کوئی سوال وجہ تکلیف بنے، تو آپ کسی وقت انٹرویو ختم کرسکتے ہیں۔ آپ اس تحقیق کے متعلق رپورٹوں اور کی فراہم کی ہوئی معلومات خفیہ طریقے سے استعمال کی جائی گی، اور مطبوعات میں آپ کی شناخت کا انکشاف نہیں کیا جائے گا۔

اس مطالعے میں شرکت لینے کا شکریہ۔

Jenny Chingkhannem

جینی چنگھانم ٹونسنگ

پی ایچ ڈی امیدوار

سینٹر فور کرمولوجی اینڈ سوشولوجی

رائل ہال وے، یونیورسٹی آف لندن

اگھام، TW20

Appendix 4B: Consent form (for the women) in Urdu

رضامندی فارم

میں----- (شریک کا نام) نے اس معلوماتی شیٹ کی معلومات پڑھی اور سمجھی ہے جس میں اس مطالعے کا اور اس کے مقصد کا بیان کیا گیا ہے۔ اس طرح سے میں اس مطالعے میں حصہ لینے کے لیے رضامندی کا اظہار کرتا ہوں۔

میری رضامندی جینی چنگھانم ٹونسنگ کو اجازت دیتی ہے کہ وہ:

(ا) اس انٹرویو کو ٹیپ ریکارڈ کیا جائے کر لے
(ب) میری فراہم کی ہوئی معلومات اپنی تحقیق کے مقصد کے لیے استعمال کر لے۔

میں مزید یہ سمجھتی/سمجھتا ہوں :

(ا) اس تحقیق میں میری شرکت رضاکارانہ ہے
(ب) میں اس تحقیق میں حصہ لینے سے کسی وقت انکار کر سکتا/کر سکتی ہوں۔
(ت) میری فراہم کی ہوئی ساری معلومات خفیہ طریقے سے استعمال کی جائی گی۔
(ج) اس تحقیق کے نتیجے میں شائع یا اپرکاشت رپورٹیں اور کاغذات میں رازداری اور اپنا نام ظاہر نہ کرنے کے کوڈ کو محفوظ رکھا جائے گا۔

اگر اس تحقیق کے بارے میں آپ کو کوئی سوال یا تشویش ہے یا تحقیق کے بارے میں مزید جاننا چاہتے ہیں تو مندرجہ ذیل لوگوں سے رابطہ کرنے نہیں بچکچائے :

(ا) مس جینی ٹونسنگ: +44- 077097459542، +852- 54926691

Pujd016@live.rhul.ac.uk

(ب) مس جینی ٹونسنگ کا سوپروائزر پروفیسر ریوندر بارن: +44- 1784 443678،

R.Barn@rhul.ac.uk

(ت) اور ڈاکٹر وکی ہارمن: +44 - 1784 443678،

V.Harman@rhul.ac.uk

شریک دستخط:-----

تاریخ:-----

Appendix 5A: Information sheet (for the women) in Nepali

जानकारी पत्र

हङ्कङ्गमा दक्षिण एशियाली महिलाहरु बीच घरायसी हिंसा सम्बन्धी एक अध्ययन

यो अध्ययनद्वारा हङ्कङ्गमा दक्षिण एशियाली महिलाहरु (भारतीय, नेपाली एवं पाकिस्तानी लगायत) माभक्त पति/जोडी- पत्नीका बीचमा हुने घरायसी हिंसालाई परीक्षण गर्नु हो ।

यस अध्ययनमा सहभागी भई घरायसी हिंसा सम्बन्धी आफ्ना कथा/अनुभवहरु आदान प्रदान गर्न तपाईंहरुलाई स्वागत गरिन्छ । आफ्ना घटना (कथा) हरु आदान प्रदान गरेर तपाईंले घरेलु हिंसामा तपाईंको अवस्थाको बारेमा तथा तपाईंको अनुभव एवं जागरणको निमित्त हामीलाई बुझ्न मद्दत पुर्याउनु हुनेछ । तपाईंले उपलब्ध गराउनु हुने जानकारीले अनुसन्धानमा अर्थपूर्ण योगदान पुर्याउने एवं घरेलु हिंसाको स्थितिको बारेमा सामाजिक परिवर्तनको लागि तपाईं सहित पूरै समाजलाई सिकाउन मद्दत पुर्याउन सक्नेछ ।

यो अनुसन्धानमा तपाईंको सहभागिता भनेको ६० देखि ९० मिनेट लाग्ने एक अन्तर्वार्तामा सामेल हुने हो जसमा अनुसन्धानकर्ताले तपाईंको जिवन, तपाईंको पारिवारिक जिवन एवं घरेलु हिंसामा तपाईंको अनुभव र तपाईंको भाव (स्थिति) सम्बन्धी प्रश्न सोध्नेछन् । यो अनुसन्धानमा सहभागिता पूर्ण रुपमा ऐच्छिक हुनेछ र तपाईंले कुनै पनि समयमा कुनै नकरात्मक प्रभाव बिना नै अन्तर्वार्ता समाप्त गर्न सक्नुहुनेछ । यदि अन्तर्वार्ताको क्रममा सोधिएका कुनै प्रश्नहरुले तपाईंलाई असहज भएमा, तपाईंले कुनै पनि समयमा अन्तर्वार्ता स्थगित गर्न सक्नुहुनेछ । तपाईंले आदान प्रदान गर्नुहुने जानकारीहरुलाई गोप्य राखिनेछ, एवं यो अनुसन्धानको परिणाम स्वरुप प्रकाशित हुने कुनै प्रकाशनहरुमा तपाईंको परिचय खुलाइने छैन ।

यस अध्ययनमा तपाईंको सहभागिताको लागि धन्यवाद ।

Jenny Chingkhannem Tonsing

PhD Candidate

Centre for Criminology and Sociology

Royal Holloway, University of London

Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX

Appendix 5B: Consent form (for the women) in Nepali

मंजुरी फारम

म (सहभागीको नाम) ले यो अध्ययन र यसको उद्देश्यको बारेमा जानकारी दिने जानकारी पत्र पढें र बुझें। म निम्न बमोजिम यस अध्ययनमा सहभागी हुनको लागि मंजुर भएको छु।

जेनी चिंखान्नेम टोन्सीङ्गलाई म मंजुरी दिन्छु कि:

- क) यो छलफल/अन्तर्वार्तालाई रेकर्ड गर्न
- ख) यस बैठकमा मबाट दिइएका जानकारीहरु उहाँको अनुसन्धानको उद्देश्यको लागि प्रयोग गर्न।

मैले यो पनि बुझेकी छु की :

- क) यो अनुसन्धानमा मेरो सहभागिता स्वेच्छिक हो,
- ख) यो अनुसन्धानमा कुनै पनि बेला मैले सहभागी हुन अस्वीकृत गर्न सक्नेछु,
- ग) मद्धारा दिइएका सबै जानकारीहरु गोप्य रुपमा प्रयोग गरिनेछ,
- घ) यो अनुसन्धानको परिणामबाट प्रकाशित वा अप्रकाशित कुनै लिखतहरु वा प्रतिवेदनहरुमा गोपनियता पूर्वक एवं कसैको नाम उल्लेख नगरिकनै (बेनामी) सुरक्षित रुपमा प्रयोग गरिनेछ।

यदि यस अनुसन्धानको बारेमा तपाईंका कुनै प्रश्न भएमा वा अनुसन्धानको बारेमा थप जानकारी चाहिएमा बिना संकोच निम्न ठेगानामा सम्पर्क गर्न सक्नुहुनेछ -

Miss Jenny Tonsing at: + 44- 077097459542, +852- 54926691, or pujd016@live.rhul.ac.uk or her Supervisors Professor Ravinder Barn at: +44-1784 443678, email R.Barn@rhul.ac.uk and Dr. Vicki Harman at: +44-1784443682, email V.Harman@rhul.ac.uk

Participant's signature (सहभागीको हस्ताक्षर): -----

Date (मिति): -----

Appendix 6: Background information sheet (for the women)

1. Name: -----
2. Age: -----
3. Country of origin: -----
4. Marital status:
 Married Divorced/Separated
 Living together Others----- (please specify)
5. How long have you been married? ----- (years)
6. Number of children: -----
7. Are your children living at home? Yes No
8. Age of your children -----
9. Educational level:
 No schooling Primary High school
 some college University
 Others (please specify) -----
10. When did you arrive in Hong Kong? ----- (month/year)
11. What is your residency status in Hong Kong:
 Dependent visa Permanent Resident status
12. Religion: Christian Muslim Hindu Sikh
 Buddhist others
13. Are you currently working? Yes No

-----Thank you-----

Appendix 7: Interview guide (for the women)

1. What is your ethnic/religious background (to determine the person's sense of identification)
 - Do you live with your husband/partner?
 - Do you live with other family members (e.g. her own family or in-laws, if not living together in the same household, then the questions will asked whether they live nearby)
 -
 - **Can you tell me something about your marriage**
 - How long have you been married?
 - Who makes the decision in the family?
 - Who is responsible for household duties?
 - Do you need to seek permission or check with your husband/family/in-laws for going out with your friends, social plans?
 - Do you have to account for the money you spend?

I would like to ask you some questions about domestic violence. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or if any questions distress you, and you wish to terminate the interview, please do not hesitate to let me know.

2. What is your understanding of 'domestic violence'? (This is to establish how domestic violence is perceived)
3. Tell me about the kind of abuse you experienced with your husband/partner?
 - What kinds of domestic violence have you suffered?
 - Does it involve verbal abuse?
 - Does it involve physical abuse?
 - Was there any sexual violence?

- How often does the abuse occur?
- Are drugs or alcohol involved? (this is to determine whether the husband/partner consume alcohol/drugs)

When did the violence begin?

When did it first start?

- How often does it occur?

On what part of your body are you hit?

Are objects ever involved?

Have you ever tried to defend yourself? How? What Happened?

- Have you ever tried to seek for help? If so, from whom?
 - Did you ever seek help from your family?
 - Did you ever go to community/religious leaders/social service agencies to share about the abuse?
 - If you have sought help previously, under what circumstances did you seek for help?
What motivated you to seek for help?
 - What was the response from the people that you sought for help?
 - What would you say to women who are still in an abusive relationship?
 -
4. At what point in the relationship would you say it became abusive?
- Have you ever tried to leave your husband/partner?
 - Have you gone to the police? Under what circumstances did you report to the police?
(this question will be asked only if police have been contacted)

Reactions/actions

1. Can you tell me what was your first reaction or action in response to your husband/partner's abusive behaviour?
- If you have shared to your family/friends/community/religious leaders, what was their response?

2. How did you feel about yourself and the relationship now?

Possible closing questions

1. How would you describe your situation/life now?
2. What is your major concern at present?
3. Is there anything that I should have asked or known about but have not covered in today's interview?
4. Would you like to give me some feedback about today's interview (this can help the researcher to improve for the next interview)?
5. Do you know of any other woman who have had experience like to yours whom you think may be willing to talk to me?

Appendix 8A: Information sheet (for Helping Professional)

A study of domestic violence among South Asian Women in Hong Kong

This is a study of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong. The purpose of this study is to explore and gain an understanding of the experiences of domestic violence among South Asian women in Hong Kong.

You are invited to participate in this research and to share about your overview or general idea about the issue of domestic violence among South Asian communities in Hong Kong. The information you provide will make a meaningful contribution to research, may help to bring societal awareness about domestic violence situation and bring about social change.

Your participation will involve a one-to-one interview which will take about 45-60 minutes. You will be asked to share about the services provided by your agency, your experience of working with ethnic minorities, and your general view about domestic violence situation among South Asian community in Hong Kong. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you may stop the interview at any time without negative consequences. All information that you share will be treated in confidence and your identity will not be revealed in any reports or publication resulting from this research.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Jenny Chingkhannem Tonsing
PhD Candidate
Centre for Criminology and Sociology
Royal Holloway, University of London
Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX

Appendix 8B: Consent form (for Helping Professional)

I ----- (name of participant) have read and understand the information sheet which describe about this study and its purpose. I hereby consent to participate in this study.

My consent allows Jenny Chingkhannem Tonsing:

- c) to tape record this meeting/interview
- d) to use information given by me in this meeting for the purpose of her research.

I further understand that:

- e) My participation in this research is voluntary
- f) I can refuse to participate in this research at any time
- g) All information given by me will be treated in confidence
- h) Any papers or reports either published or unpublished, that result from this research will preserve codes of confidentiality and anonymity.

If you have any questions or concern about the research or wish to know more about the research do not hesitate to contact Miss Jenny Tonsing at: + 44- 077097459542, +852-54926691, or pujd016@live.rhul.ac.uk or her Supervisors Professor Ravinder Barn at: +44-1784 443678, email R.Barn@rhul.ac.uk and Dr.Vicki Harman at: +44-1784443682, email V.Harman@rhul.ac.uk

Participant's signature: -----

Date: -----

Appendix 9: Interview guide (for Helping Professional)

Possible warm up questions:

- Can you tell me something about the nature of the services provided by your agency (**prompts:** types of clients served, ethnic groups, services, etc)
- From where does your agency receive financial support for the services it provides
- What are the challenges of sustaining such financial support?
- What is the nature of your job? Role and responsibility (prompts: case work, interviews, group work, etc)
- In your line of work have you provided or handled cases of domestic violence? (If yes, numbers of cases of domestic violence handled by the agency)

Possible focus question:

- Can you tell me something about the situation of domestic violence among the South Asian community in Hong Kong?
- What factors do you see contributing to domestic violence in the local South Asian community?
- In your observation, how do women respond to their abuse and what do they usually do?
- Which South Asian communities in particular come to the attention of your agency?

Support/resource/service used

- What is usually the initial reason for the request for help?
- What kind of support or resources do you think they (women) might need when dealing with domestic violence issue?

Possible closing questions

In your opinion:

- What do you think is needed to help abused South Asian women to cope with domestic violence, within the family and the community?
- What need to be change to prevent domestic violence in the community?
- What kind of message should be conveyed to increase community awareness or understanding about domestic abuse?

- Is there anything else about the issue of domestic violence among South Asian community that I should know about?
- Would you like to give me some feedback about today interview?

Appendix 10: Demographic profile of Helping Professionals

Background information

	Pseudonyms of HPs	Age	Education level	Nos. of years in EM services	Position	Country of origin
1	HP-Manager 1	35	Master	1.5	Manager / CI (RSW)	Hong Kong
2	HP-Manager 2	32	Master	5	Manager / CI (RSW)	Hong Kong
3	HP-SW	24	Bachelor	1	Social worker (RSW)	Hong Kong
4	HP-PW1	28	College degree	4	Program worker/ community worker	Pakistan
5	HP-PW2	30	College degree	5	Program worker/ community worker	Nepal
6	HP-PW3	22	Some College	5	Program Worker/ community worker	India

Note: HP = Helping Professional; SW = Social Worker; PW = Program Worker (similar to Community Worker); CI = Centre-in-charge; RSW = Registered Social Worker