

EXPERIENCES OF INDIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE UNITED  
STATES: EMPOWERMENT, INEQUALITY AND INTERSECTIONS  
OF RACE, ETHNICITY, CLASS, AND GENDER

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

BY

SHILPASHRI KARBHARI M.A.

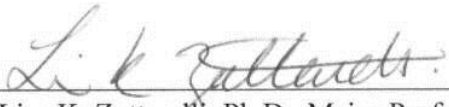
DENTON, TEXAS

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY  
DENTON, TEXAS

July 17, 2012

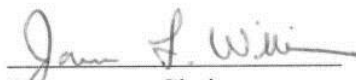
To the Dean of the Graduate School:

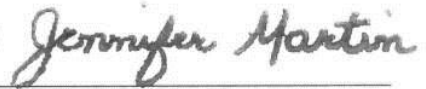
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Shilpashri Karbhari entitled "Experiences of Indian Immigrant Women in the United States: Empowerment, Inequality And Intersections of Race, Ethnicity, Class, and Gender." I have examined this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Sociology.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa K. Zottarelli, Ph.D., Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Chair

Accepted:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of the Graduate School

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Shaila and Vitthal Karbhari, who have instilled in me a love of learning and education and strong belief in the motto, “never say die.”

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the many individuals who have contributed to this dissertation. I would like to thank my committee members Dr. Lisa K. Zottarelli, Dr. James L. Williams and Dr. Philip Q. Yang for their continued support, patience and guidance. Special thanks to Dr. Mahmoud Sadri, Dr. Erma Jean Lawson, Dr. Gayle Sulik, Dr. Abigail Tilton, Dr. Nora White, Dr. Erika Derkas, and Dr. Jessica Gullion. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of my peers, friends, colleagues in the Department of Sociology and Social Work at TWU and the University of North Texas (UNT). I am also indebted to my family for their patience, support, and generosity. Many thanks to my relatives and friends in Mumbai and the US for their steadfast love and support.

## ABSTRACT

SHILPASHRI KARBHARI

### EXPERIENCES OF INDIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES: EMPOWERMENT, INEQUALITY AND INTERSECTIONS OF RACE, ETHNICITY, CLASS, AND GENDER

AUGUST 2012

This study explores the narratives of first-generation Indian immigrant women working and residing in Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas. With a focus on gender in the context of immigration, this study asks three questions: In what ways do Indian immigrant working women perceive a sense of empowerment before and after migration? How do race, ethnicity, class, and gender intersect with their experiences in the workplace and the family? How do Indian immigrant women negotiate structural inequalities in the US? To arrive at a nuanced understanding of their experiences, 17 interviews of female immigrant workers in the DFW area were conducted. Participants in this study were recruited via purposive and snowball sampling techniques. After transcribing their interviews, the data was analyzed using NVivo qualitative software. Central to this study, were themes such as Dimensions of Empowerment, Indian Immigrant Women: Issues of Race, Ethnicity, Class, and Gender, and Forms of New Inequality. Findings reveal that for immigrant women, migration is a complex process and that empowerment is not linear. Issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and class appear to overlap with each other in society. With regard to forms of new inequality, working women share certain commonalities including structural constraints and conditions within the labor market. In

conclusion, this study highlights the need for future research on issues of gender and immigration in the context of women belonging to the South Asian Indian community.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	v
LIST OF TABLES .....	x
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
The Research Problem .....	2
Significance of Study .....	5
Overview .....	6
II. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	8
Part I Historical Context .....	8
An Overview of Women in Immigration .....	8
Immigrant Women and Work .....	9
Transnationalism, Globalization, and Immigration .....	10
Part II Literature Review .....	11
Empowerment .....	11
Role of Gender in Immigration .....	12
Immigrants in the American Workplace .....	13
Race, Class, and Gender in the Workplace .....	16
Ascriptive Inequality .....	17
Conclusion .....	19
Part III Theoretical Framework .....	20
Integrating Theory .....	20

The Theory of Race, Class, and Gender .....	21
Theoretical Approaches to Immigration .....	24
Conclusion .....	29
III. METHODS .....	30
Introduction.....	30
Institutional review Board.....	30
Design And Recruitment.....	31
Sampling .....	31
Sample Population .....	32
Instruments.....	33
Interview Schedule.....	33
Procedures .....	34
Data Analysis .....	35
Limitations .....	37
Conclusion .....	38
IV. DIMENSIONS OF EMPOWERMENT .....	40
Analysis of Theme I.....	40
Happy.....	42
India and US .....	42
Independent.....	48
Work And Life In The US .....	53
Conclusion .....	61
V. INDIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN: ISSUES OF RACE, ETHNICITY, CLASS, AND GENDER.....	66
Analysis of Theme II .....	67
Race.....	67
Ethnicity .....	72
Gender.....	76
Class.....	82
Conclusion .....	85



VI. FORMS OF NEW INEQUALITY .....	88
Analysis of Theme III .....	88
Work Experience .....	89
Premigration Context .....	90
Fourth Migrant .....	94
Postmigration Context .....	95
Conclusion .....	104
 VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .....	 107
 Dimensions of Empowerment.....	 107
Indian Immigrant Women: Issues of Race, Ethnicity, Class, And Gender.....	111
Forms of New Inequality .....	113
Limitations .....	115
Implications of this Study .....	116
Future Research .....	118
 REFERENCES .....	 119
APPENDICES	
 A. Recruitment Flyer .....	 127
B. Invitation Card.....	129
C. Demographic Questionnaire.....	131
D. Interview Schedule.....	134
E. Consent Form .....	139
F Counseling Referrals .....	143

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1.Themes and Concepts .....	109

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This dissertation explores the narratives of first-generation Indian immigrant women in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, referred to as DFW, a gateway immigrant center in the New South (Bankston 2002). It focuses on the experiences of professional and nonprofessional workers in the US. Indian immigrants are part of the South-Asian immigrant population. In explicating the concentration of South Asians, the literature discusses the role of immigration legislation in facilitating the arrival of immigrants from Latin America and Asia and their contribution to transforming the US landscape. Few studies reflect on the important developments including passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and the Immigration Control and Reform Act (IRCA) of 1986 to explain the entry and concentration of South Asians in the populous cities of the US (Rangaswamy 2000, Kitano and Daniels 1995).

Indian immigrants are also referred to as South-Asians. Through history, the Indian immigrant is referred to as an economic migrant. In fact, research underscores that migrant workers from the Indian sub-continent were relegated to positions in several capacities including “slave, indentured worker, coolie, contract worker, semi-skilled worker, skilled worker, undocumented worker, and guest worker” (Koshy and Radhakrishnan 2008:3). The literature on Asian Americans points to the significant

differences between the post-1965 immigrants admitted under the family or relative preference category and subsequent groups comprising of arrivals in the 1980 and 1990 classified under the “occupational preferences” category (Rangaswamy 2000, Leonard 2007). Later waves of immigrants held low levels of education and jobs in grocery stores, department stores, and factories carrying out assembly line work (Rangaswamy 2000:63). Also explained in the literature were differences between initial groups of Indian immigrants in professional sectors versus the “newer Indians” who occupied the “small business sector [s],” (Rangaswamy 2000:63). The presence of “nonprofessionals” and their contribution within the service sector or culture-specific jobs is significant because of their ties with the Indian community (Rangaswamy 2000:65). In addition to diversity were certain linguistic, educational, occupational and regional differences, and high poverty levels within early and later groups of Indian immigrants (Leonard (2007:461).

#### THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Contemporary scholars debate the relationship between gender and immigration. The experiences of migrant women have been overlooked in the literature (Phizacklea 1983, Morokvasic 1984, De Laet 1999). The need to approach gender as an analytical variable in the context of immigration is essential. In addition to previous studies that explain the concentration of immigrants in geographic locations in the US, there is a need to focus on the experiences of immigrants in the United States. Although the term South Asian Americans signifies all persons from South Asia (Rudrappa 2004:17) for the purpose of this study, I draw on experiences of Indian immigrant women. More

specifically, I stress the need to make inclusive the narratives of first-generation Indian immigrant women in the context of immigration.

In the sociological discussion of gender and immigration, the issue of empowerment has received scant attention. More specifically, this dissertation examines empowerment experienced by first generation working women from India in the DFW metroplex. In addition to how Indian immigrants perceive empowerment, I address the intersection of race, ethnicity, class, and gender in the workplace and the issue of structural inequality.

Relative to the research on empowerment in the field of development few sociological studies have explored the concept in the context of gender and immigration. At the start of the twenty-first century, Segura and Zavella (2007) emphasize that research and scholarship must acknowledge the role of gender in the context of immigration. In one compelling study, Zentgraf (2002) illustrates how Salvadoran female immigrants were able to identify with their ability to achieve “independence,” autonomy, and “confidence” in the US, and sense of “self” as a result of their efforts to negotiate “traditional gender roles” in the new land (p. 625). Zentgraf deconstructs previous explanations about traditional and modern, to show how Salvadoran women are capable of identifying with latent and or psychological processes of empowerment (2002:638). In her study she discusses how women were able to achieve more independence and freedom with regard to decision-making and becoming self-assertive in the new land (Zentgraf 2002:638). In this dissertation, I revisit previous definitions to show how

immigrant workers perceive empowerment before and after migration. Simply stated, questions need to be asked as to how Indian immigrant women as they acquire independence, autonomy, and confidence in the new land, which can be considered as an outcome of their premigration circumstances. I draw on their experience as immigrants and in the work-family nexus.

I address how race, ethnicity, class, and gender intersect with their experience in the workplace and the family. In the context of Indian women immigrants, a discussion of the socially constructed categories of race, ethnicity, class deserves consideration because these are “primary organizing principles of a society which locate and position groups within that society’s opportunity structures” (Zinn and Dill 1996:322-323). In addition to comprehending the trends in the labor market incorporation and settlement patterns of Indian immigrant women it is necessary to study how first-generation Indian immigrant working women experience these structures of race, ethnicity, class, and gender in their daily lives. More specifically this study will examine the simultaneity of these issues in shaping women’s experience.

This study also examines inequality that is embedded in the social structures. Furthermore, I show how forms of inequality manifest in the social structure. Simply stated, the costs and tensions that accrue to first-generation Indian women need to be examined as these women try to surmount the barriers to equality in the work place and acquire more bargaining power at home. Contemporary studies underscore issues of inequality-whether ascriptive, gender, or race-related in society to differentiate between

members of the majority group including men and members of the minority group (Lorber 2001, McCall 2001, and Purcell 2007). The following questions deserve consideration in this study: In what ways do Indian immigrant working women perceive a sense of empowerment before and after migration? How do race, ethnicity, class, and gender intersect with their experiences in the workplace and the family? How do Indian immigrant women negotiate structural inequalities in the US?

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This qualitative study will further the emerging research on gender and immigration by developing a conceptual framework of the latent processes that result from empowerment. The study will facilitate research on key and timely issues that affect new comers in the DFW metroplex. This dissertation provides valuable insight into future qualitative and quantitative studies that focus on Indian immigrant women, work, and issues of ascriptive inequality that are embedded in the larger society. Well-known researchers claim that “research on immigration, race, and ethnicity inevitably calls forth the image of a stratified society” (Pedraza 1994:2). This study contributes to the large body of research on issues of race, class, and gender that intersect with each other in the US to impact immigrant women workers in several ways. This study offers numerous possibilities to researchers on issues of feminization of work and ascriptive inequality. More specifically this study is important because it contributes to a gendered understanding of the social processes involved in migration.

## OVERVIEW

Chapter I offers an introduction to this study of first-generation Indian immigrant women working and residing in the DFW area.

Chapter II is divided into two parts. Part I presents a discussion of the historical context of immigrant women, previous and current studies on immigrant women and their efforts to secure waged work or access to employment in the informal and formal sector, issues of gender, women in the workplace, gender roles, perceptions of empowerment in respect of women of Indian origin in the US, and issues of empowerment, race, class, gender, and ascriptive inequality. Part II includes a discussion of the theory of race, class, and gender advocated by Anderson and Collins. This is followed by a discussion of recent theoretical frameworks that capture facets of Asian immigration.

Chapter III includes a discussion of the methodology including in-depth interviews that are deemed appropriate to this qualitative study of first-generation Indian immigrant women in the DFW area.

Chapter IV presents a discussion of my initial key theme: Dimensions of Empowerment. This chapter includes a detailed discussion of the concepts that were relevant to the issue of empowerment.

Chapter V presents a discussion of my second theme: issues of race, ethnicity, class, gender in the context of first-generation Indian immigrant women in the DFW area.

Chapter VI presents a discussion of my third theme: forms of new inequality. This chapter includes a conceptual discussion of work and the premigration and post



migration contexts to show how inequalities or forms of new inequality manifest at multiple levels in their daily encounters.

Chapter VII offers a summary, conclusion, and suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been a considerable growth in the literature on women, immigration and work. Some studies by contemporary scholars have focused on Asian Americans and women from India in particular, identified as recent immigrants to the US. This review is divided into three parts. Part I provides an overview of the historical context of immigrant women and their efforts to secure waged work or access to employment in various sectors; themes of gender, women in the workplace, gender roles, perceptions of empowerment in respect of women of Indian origin in the US. Part II reviews the literature on issues of empowerment, race, class, gender, and ascriptive inequality. Part III is a review of the theoretical approaches to immigration.

#### PART I HISTORICAL CONTEXT

##### *An Overview of Women in Immigration*

Among the few early writings on female immigration, Diner (1983) and Jackson (1984) discussed the experiences of early Irish female immigrants to the US. Following the potato famine, single women were known to migrate in large numbers in the nineteenth century. A significant number of single Irish women were known to have settled in urban areas in the US and contributed to the formation of networks. These women found jobs as domestics, servants, and housemaids. One of the reasons that underlie the cause of female-dominated flows from Ireland were the limited opportunities

that were available to women including “few realistic chances for marriage and employment” (1991:312). Following the arrival of female members of Irish families many others, especially kin and friends followed. Diner and Jackson render valuable insights into the issue of chain immigration by Irish women in the US.

### *Immigrant Women and Work*

Foner (2005) notes “today’s immigrant women enter a society that has undergone remarkable changes since the last great immigrant influx at the turn of the twentieth century” (p. 89). Foner (2005) acknowledges a “virtual revolution” is taking place with regard to entry of women “in the labor force”(p.89). Scholars note the changes in the contemporary work force especially the entry of women with families (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002, Foner 2005).

Widely acknowledged in the research on migrant women and work and in a historical context is the issue of labor migration or migration for work as a motivating factor in immigration (Agrawal 2006:26). Global trends indicate the increase in concentration of immigrant women in the labor force and motivations behind their efforts to secure work whether as professionals, day-care workers, domestic workers, retail and service sectors (Agrawal 2006, Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002). The idea of paid work is central to the experiences of immigrant women.

Mohanty (1997) raises an interesting point especially one that centers on workers in the capitalist world (p.3). Mahler and Pessar (2006) further the discussion of labor

markets and induced migration to indicate that the growth and spread of capitalism is another reason underlying the increase in female migration (p.46). In *Race, Gender And Work*, Mohanty calls attention to how “wage labor” contributes to a “hegemonic form of organizing productions and reproduction” and of “class relations” that are problematic for women (Mohanty 1997:5). Attention must be paid to the “ideological construction of jobs and tasks in terms of notions of appropriate femininity, domesticity, (hetero) sexuality, and racial and cultural stereotypes” (Mohanty 1997:6). This study reveals the linkages between issues of women’s work and gender in the family and work realm (Mohanty 1997:6). Underlying Mohanty’s feminist discourse is the effort to make inclusive the voices of women workers and their struggles within a race, class, and gender paradigm; and surrounding social structures that are exploitative in nature (1997:7).

Parallel to this discussion of gender, Mahler and Pessar (2006) add that female workers occupy “different employment niches,” in response to the growing demands of the labor market (p.46). Interestingly this observation of demand-driven migration contradicts the previous views of migrants wanting to migrate for a better life (Mahler and Pessar 2006:47). Other explanations for why people migrate include circumstantial or intervening conditions or what Mahler and Pessar refer to as “enticements made to people with no intention of migrating” (2006:47).

The introduction of this manifest aspect of migration is an area that merits consideration in the present dissertation.

### *Transnationalism, Globalization, and Immigration*

Globalization theorists, social scientists, and feminist writers universally acknowledge the twenty-first century is an era of global reconfiguration, and an age where massive migrations are taking place. The past couple of decades have witnessed a considerable amount of research and shifts with regard to the issue of ethnicity, race, and globalization. In order to comprehend the effects of the US economy and the social process of immigration it is important to study the transnational movements of migrants from the South to the North (Lechner and Boli 2008). Transnational migrants bring a unique approach to study of immigration. Their experiences provide an insight into “women’s work and family experiences as well as women’s identities and cultural expressions” (Foner 2007:7) as illustrated in studies of Mexican female immigrants.

## Part II LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Empowerment*

Few scholars draw on the idea of empowerment in the context of immigration. Migration yields different outcomes for people including few losses and few gains (Foner 2005:90). There appears to be a shift in definitions of empowerment that lead to female emancipation (Foner 2005:90). Zentgraf (2002) furthers the discussion of women’s empowerment by reporting on the liberating outcomes experienced by Salvadoran women in Los Angeles. Empowerment is addressed in the context of work especially when Zentgraf (2002) focuses on the personal experiences of women including

“individual self-assertion,” and the “psychological experiences of feeling more self-confident and autonomous,” in the “larger social context” (p.629).

To understand empowerment, the latent and manifest aspects that flow as an outcome of empowerment deserve consideration. In addition, elements of autonomy, agency, and subjective well-being, and self –confidence deserve concrete expression in order to capture the micro-interactionist processes following empowerment evident in the experiences of individual actors (Zentgraf 2002). According recognition to subjective elements as experienced by first generation Indian immigrant women workers in the US lends credibility to their perceptions of empowerment, and from a sociological standpoint we must take into account the social location of individuals in the US. Dill argues that the “social location” of groups matters because it has profound implications for certain individuals and for family life in our society (1994:166). Labor arrangements are central to race and gender inequalities and as Zinn and Dill describe “Social location in the labor market,” influences individuals according to their race, gender, class ((1994:5).

### *Role of Gender in Immigration*

The literature on immigration hardly focuses on gender, or the “gendered nature” of the immigration process (Pedraza 1991; Zentgraf 2002). Few attempts have been made to address the social consequences of gender (Pedraza 1991). In *Birds of Passage* Morokvasic argues that marriage and economic concerns were reasons that propelled women to migrate (1984:896). Research shows that women undertook migration for the purpose of earning independent income and other “autonomous reasons” (Morokvasic

1984:897). In a subsequent study, Das (2006) concludes that Indian immigrants were economically motivated to find work outside the Bay area in San-Francisco. As women step into paid work the underlying theme of empowerment is also explored in the narratives of women. The element of migrant agency is underscored in respect of Indian immigrant women (Das 2006:82). For instance, Das's findings suggest that as women began to acquire more resources and secured employment, they were able to make decisions regarding their independence (Das 2006:82). Contemporary research underscores how gender is interwoven with the everyday lives of immigrant women, and "political and economic institutional structures" (Das 2006; Hondagenu-Sotelo 1999). Mahler and Pessar remark that "gender not only matters to migration," it contributes "added value to the analysis and comprehension of [a] complex phenomenon" and that acknowledging gender its rightful place in research and scholarship on migration is to acknowledge its true potential and "explanatory power" (2006:51).

#### *Immigrants in the American workplace*

There is plenty of research on issues of gender and immigrant women. Yet, only a handful of studies address sociologically relevant concepts of gendered labor demand and social reproduction. With the arrival of later waves of Asian and Latina immigrant women, research shows a number of occupations are relying on the labor of Latina and Asian immigrant women. Occupations where immigrant women are concentrated include the service industry and domestic work (Chang 2000). The literature highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding of the movement of immigrant labor from the

developing countries in the South to the developed countries in the North. Often explanations of socioeconomic mobility indicate the need for contemporary social scientists to incorporate the impact of political, social, economic, and legal factors that explain the process of immigration.

South-Asian Indian writers have elaborated the narratives of female immigrant women of Indian origin to the U.S. and their journeys into the world of waged work. For instance, George discusses the significance of critical issues of assimilation and upward mobility for members of the Keralite community in the US (2005:xi). Few studies, however, articulate the experiences of women as they negotiate the different spheres including work, home, and community as they step into the labor market. Writers call attention to issues of patriarchy that are often associated with the Indian community (George 2005). Feminists are challenging these generalizations to show that Indian immigrants from Kerala, a state located in southern India, have made efforts to grapple with the established traditional homemaker roles. More specifically the efforts of Indian nurses to achieve “economic” independence and gain popularity as “primary breadwinners” suggests the shift in roles as women immigrants arrive in the US (George 2005:20).

Vital to the dissertation is the examination of how gender roles of female immigrant workers are transformed in the new land. What remains to be studied is the extent to which women become active agents in the process, and are able to identify with empowering outcomes of autonomy, agency, and independence in the new land. In



addition the emerging contribution by South-Asian Indian writers suggests their efforts to address the experience of working-class immigrants and those that migrated under the occupational preference quota in the 1970s (George 2005:21).

Some studies discuss the impact of the social structure on gender roles of immigrant women. Also woven into these studies are critical issues of gender, class, race, and community. Furthermore, research underscores the importance of issues of inequality and accompanying gender and racial divisions of labor in society that manifest in the social structure. Elliott and Smith (2004) support the importance of the impact of race, gender, and the intractable presence of workplace power and contend that “men and women of various races and ethnicities experience increasing inequality in workplace power, relative to white men, but they experience it to different degrees and via different mechanisms” (p.384).

Although Dallas-Fort Worth is a growing metropolitan area, some suggest a comprehensive discussion of structural and other mediating factors that contribute to an in-depth understanding of the participation of low numbers of female immigrants in the informal sector is imminent (Singer et al. 2008:69). The literature pertaining to the settlement patterns of the Indian community indicates more qualitative studies are needed to explore the experiences of women in blue-collar occupations in the DFW metroplex and other locations in the US.

Commenting on the vulnerable position that constrains the choices of members of the immigrant community especially with reference to the issue of a racialized labor

market (Manohar 2009) suggests the limited opportunities available to Indian immigrants. The concept of a racialized labor market is discussed by drawing on the definition of racialization. Stephen Small (quoted in Torres, Miron, and Inda 1999) defines racialization as “a historically specific ideological process, and the structures that accompanied this process” (p.49). Analogous to the discussion of racialization and the racialized labor market in the literature is the presence of certain “racialized barriers,” and “hostility (including structures, images, and ideologies)” that had constrained the choices of African-Americans in society (Torres, Miron, and Inda 1999:49-50). In the meanwhile, Phizacklea (1983) too has noted how forms of racial discrimination and/or legal controls in the labour market have posed a concern for migrant women (p.2). Previous and current studies specify how conditions including the lack of a work permit, language deficiencies, commensurate or equivalent qualifications that are necessary in the labor market have posed concern and remain problematic in present times (Phizacklea 1983, Torres, Miron, and Inda 1999).

#### *Race, Class, and Gender in the Workplace*

Data collected from a project on “New Immigrants in the Dallas Fort-Worth Metropolitan Area” for Indian females shows 12.2 percent were employed in the managerial capacity, 31.7 percent were employed as professionals, and only 2.4 percent were employed in the service sector and sales and related occupations (Singer et al. 2008:71). In *Newcomers In The Workplace*, Lamphere, Stepick and Grenier (1994) state that the US immigration law in 1965 resulted in the creation of jobs for immigrants from

Asia and Latin America in certain sectors including manufacturing, retail and service employment (p.4). The American workplace or local economy occupies a prominent place in the discussion of newcomers (Lamphere, Stepick, and Grenier 1994:6).

Few refer to the issues of inequality in “work organizations” to show that racial disparities are plausible explanations to the prevailing forms of “racial discrimination and disadvantage” (Acker 2006:442). Some argue how certain dynamics of race and gender are at play in the workplace. In a study of hotel workers, Adib and Guerrier (2003) describe particular events in the workplace where minority women workers were allocated to certain positions or as receptionists (p.420), and the likelihood of minority women being concentrated in jobs that “are nearly invisible to the customer” (Adib and Guerrier 2003:425). One is able to glean the gendered nature of organizations in the realm of hotel work that results in the differential treatment of workers. The explanation of the overlapping role of race, class, and gender in the context of organizations deserve consideration in the literature on inequality in work organizations.

### *Ascriptive Inequality*

Recently studies on inequality regimes at the workplace have emerged (Acker 2006:443). Inequality regimes within organizations are “defined as loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions and meanings,” which contribute to certain class, gender, and race-related inequalities in organizations (Acker 2006:443).

Studies show that members occupying higher positions in certain capacities including managerial, executive, leadership, and as departmental heads are likely to earn

more and acquire power compared to secretaries, production workers, students, or even professors (Acker 2006:443).

In another study of the differential access to workplace power among women and minorities, Elliott and Smith (2004) describe how inequality accrues to group members, and how African-American women were likely to face discrimination (p. 365). This study draws attention to the glass ceiling effect which is described as “barriers women often face as they climb corporate ladders” (Elliott and Smith 2004:366). The authors offer explanations to explain the barriers faced by professional workers including women and minorities (Elliott and Smith 2004:383). They describe the association of “human capital, and observable, interpersonal mechanisms that differentiate” between members of the majority group versus those belonging to the minority group (Elliott and Smith 2004:383). Their findings offer plausible explanations as to why certain members of diverse racial and ethnic groups face “increasing inequalities” at the workplace (Elliott and Smith 2004:384).

Elliott and Smith found that “homosocial reproduction” was a reason that explained why members of certain dominant groups were likely to identify with their own and “[occupy] power positions they oversee with ascriptively similar others” (2004:384). Their illustration of inequalities at the workplace and the larger social structure are concepts that are relevant to the present study.

In sum, the path ways to equality for women immigrants and minorities is an uneven and complex process. In their quest for empowerment, immigrant women remain

exploited and are regarded as “vulnerable workers” (Morokvasic 1984:891). The literature underscores issues concerning their “status,” (Morokvasic 1984) and in some cases the inadequacy of their educational skills commensurate with the American system of education increases their vulnerability in the new land (Morokvasic 1984:891).

## CONCLUSION

The review shows that we cannot overlook the structural inequalities in our society. In particular race-related hierarchies, gender-related and class-related hierarchies continue to persist in our society (Amott and Matthaei 1996:4). South-Asian Indian writers argue the presence of racialized structures and ascriptive inequality in the US. The emphasis on gender in the process of immigration is under-researched. More importantly, gender as a circumscribing category in context of work and immigration needs to be adequately studied. The division of labor or selective work on the basis of one’s sex and ethnicity continues to remain problematic for immigrant women.

The review suggests that in-depth analyses and interpretations of growth and settlement patterns of immigrants in new locations are essential. Careful consideration should be paid to forms of new inequality in the context of emerging locations and changes in the economy. Also relevant to issues of race, class, gender, and ethnicity are issues of immigration. In the work and family realm, the latent and manifest aspects of empowerment in the process of immigration deserve consideration especially for first-generation Indian immigrant women.

### PART III THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Emerging studies of first-generation Indian immigrant women workers in the in the DFW area that focus on issues of empowerment and the intersection of issues of race, class, and gender, and structural inequalities highlight the need for a comprehensive theoretical framework. What follows is a brief discussion of the theory of race, class, and gender advocated by Anderson and Collins (1995). This is followed by a discussion of recent theoretical frameworks that capture facets of Asian immigration. Recently Yang (2010) has argued for a synthetic framework that links the macro, meso, and micro level multi-level processes that accompany the experience of immigration.

#### INTEGRATING THEORY

This study employs the use of a preexisting theory for example, the race, class, and gender framework that proved helpful in delineating themes that were useful to this study. Berg (2009) interprets theory as consisting of “a general and more or less comprehensive set of statements or propositions, [premises] that describe different aspects of some phenomenon” (p. 21). Few note the strengths of preexisting theory including its ability to extend previous frameworks and determine additional “theoretical expansion” (Burowoy 1998: 21-22). The use of existing theoretical frameworks and reflexive methods of re-envisioning an integrated framework of race, class, gender, and immigration is the best approach to this study because it sheds light on the “context and situation,” and minimizes the “effects of power-domination, silencing, objectification, and normalization” (Burowoy 1998:30).

Continuing efforts to deconstruct the race, class, and gender framework and its points of connection to sociological theory are envisioned. This chapter demonstrates the need to address how the concept of immigration, as conceptualized in the Asian immigration theory (Yang 2010) needs to become integrated in the existing framework of race, class, and gender. The overlap of the concept of immigration with the issue of gender, race, and class presents a useful framework to arrive at a nuanced discussion of the experiences of working women from India that arrived in the 1980s and thereafter.

The concentration of workers in a professional and nonprofessional capacity necessitates the need for theory that facilitates specifics of immigration in addition to the existing theoretical framework of race, class, and gender (Yang 2010, Anderson and Collins 1995). This discussion is one such attempt to understand the usefulness of the concept of immigration and its inflection at various points in the existing theory of race, class, gender to explain the experiences of newcomers in the US. The complex experiences detailed in the findings of this study highlight that voices of Indian women need to become validated as knowledge, and be integrated into the understanding of these theories to inform them further.

#### *The Theory of Race, Class, and Gender*

The race, class, and gender framework posits the impact of social structures on minority groups. Schaefer (2013) defines a minority group as a “subordinate group whose members have significantly less control or power over their lives than do the members of a dominant or majority group” (p.5). With reference to their framework of race, class, and

gender, Anderson and Collins (1995) draw linkages between existing social structures and individuals in society. In explicating macro-micro linkages they argue how categories of race, class, and gender overlap each other. For instance in *Race, Class, and Gender*, at the very outset the authors determine the interrelationship of race, class, and gender; and their influence on individuals in society by virtue of their social location in US society (Anderson and Collins 1995:xi).

Their second premise describes race, class, and gender as “interlocking categories of experience” (Anderson and Collins 1995:xi), which are construed as pivotal axes that crosscut with the experiences of individuals, and each other in society. Third, with the help of a conceptual model known as the matrix of domination, the authors examine the linkages between social structures, institutions, and marginalized groups (Anderson and Collins 1995, Collins 2000). Their conceptual model makes clear the “structural pattern[s],” that impact “individual consciousness,” contribute to “group interaction, and group access to institutional power and privileges” in society. The race, class, and gender framework explains the combined effect of race, class, and gender relations in society (Anderson and Collins 1995:xi).

The theoretical framework of race, class, and gender also shows how structural level explanations bear upon interactions of individuals at a micro-level. In addition the framework of race, class, and gender illuminates the dynamics of majority and minority group relations in the US (Anderson and Collins 1995:xii). One of the strengths of the model of race, class, and gender is that from a sociological standpoint, it illustrates how



certain ideologies, institutionalized outcomes and policies, individual behaviors, and policies are framed in US society.

The framework is significant because it uncovers themes of difference between groups, and highlights the impact of social structures within which individuals are located (Anderson and Collins 1995:xii). The race, class, and gender framework has replaced the previous additive model to explain how issues of race, ethnicity, class, and gender in society overlap each other in society. Furthermore, the concept of the matrix of domination provides a lens with which to construe interactions between individual in a racial and ethnic landscape and examine the social, the structural, and spatial contexts that encircle individuals in the US (Anderson and Collins 1995). Collins conceptualizes the matrix of domination as a term that refers to “how intersecting oppressions are actually organized” in society (2000:18).

The race, class, and gender framework seeks to provide an explanation with which one can construe the location of minority groups from the Indian sub-continent in the US. In conformity with Omi and Winant’s compelling views of race, ethnicity, class, and nation in the US, the frame work of race, class, gender paves the way for a progressive discussion that offers linkages to forms of oppression, including age, minority status, racial identity, ethnicity (Anderson and Collins 1995). The race, class, and gender framework is relevant to this study as it affords a plausible explanation that highlight the role of social structures and micro-interactions which underlie the present findings.

This framework provides a unique opportunity to consider the existing concepts of age, physical ability, geographies, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation (Anderson and Collins 1995:5). In addition to race, class, and gender, the concept of immigration deserves consideration because it will shed light on the experiences of professional and nonprofessional Indian immigrant working women in the DFW area. Therefore the race, class, gender framework provides a useful starting point to consider how immigration overlaps with socially constructed issues of race, ethnicity, class, and gender. The following sections explain the theoretical significance of newer approaches in the context of immigration that are relevant to the Anderson and Collins frame work.

#### *Theoretical Approaches to Immigration*

The concept of immigration deserves as much consideration in the race, class, gender framework. In the context of newer groups from Asia, Yang (2010) put forward his synthetic theory to describe the phenomenon of Asian immigration to the United States. The concept of immigration in Yang's theory is centered on a distinct type of human movement particularly Asian immigration. With a focus on this pivotal context, Yang explains the causes and conditions that determine the Asian immigration experience.

The synthetic framework offers insights into the structural factors, intervening conditions, micro level conditions that revolve around individuals, and mediating units of family, social networks, social organizations, social institutions that are relevant to the discussion of the Asian experience in the US. Yang (2010) draws on the following

factors: inter-country disparities, multilevel connections, and migration policies in his explanation of Asian immigration (p.15).

Several lacunae were found in the existing theories of international migration. For instance, the classical push-pull theory which explains why people migrate from one destination to another suffers from limitations including its failure to address cross-national connections, migrants' social networks, individual reasons for migration, and migration policy at the meso and micro level (Yang 2010:3).

Therefore in explaining the phenomenon of Asian immigration, Yang (2010) astutely points out that all aspects of the immigration process including the role of initiating and sustaining conditions that highlight all aspects of the processes are essential (Yang 2010:15). According to Yang (2010) a framework that offers a historical and comparative perspective on Asian immigration is crucial.

The synthetic framework of Asian immigration is premised on the idea that people migrate to improve their life chances as a result of disparities in the homeland and host country (Yang 2010:16). Factors including economic, political, social, and environmental and even demographic termed as push and pull factors explain why immigrants choose to migrate. Further Yang (2010) elaborates that disparities at the macro level become transformed at the micro or individual level (p.18). In addition to explaining intercountry disparities, Yang (2010) accounts for a host of issues that accompany immigration at an individual and family level (p.18). This explanation

integrates the role of structural factors, social, economic, political, demographic, and environmental factors, individual factors in international migration.

In addition to intercountry disparities that “potentially” explain migration, Yang (2010) explains how immigration is initiated and sustained in the destination and the receiving country. This explanation illustrates how immigration occurs in a world marked by increasing “geographic mobility,” and rapidly increasing “interregional” activity (Waters, Ueda, and Marrow 2007:16). Contemporary theorists illustrate examples of how the involvement of the US in Asian countries at the economic, cultural, military, political has contributed to the settlement patterns and concentration of immigrants in the labor force (Yang 2010:19).

In addition to meso level factors that underlie this synthetic theory, at the micro level is the marked increase in research on the issue of transnationalism and the role of social networks in the process of immigration (Waters, Ueda, and Marrow 2007:17). Even Rudrappa (2009) makes a compelling observation about the process of social change as experienced by racial minorities in the US (p.137) . The need to address intercountry connections that exacerbate migration and of informal support networks that sustain migration indicates yet another dimension of Asian immigration. The synthetic theory makes apparent the multilevel processes that take place in both the destination and receiving countries in the course of international migration (Yang 2010:23).

In examining the role of immigration policy, researchers explain that “immigration policy has been politically controversial” (Schaefer 2013:121). Prior to

1965, US immigration legislation had been designed to control the entry of Asians and for a limited extent. In contrast to the national origin system that sought to control immigration from Southern Europe and Asian immigrants, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 sought to reunify family members and protect the American labor market (Massey 2008, Schaefer 2013:128). In addition, Waters, Ueda, and Marrow (2007) state that this change in the immigration policy contributed to the increase in immigration, in a historical context, to describe it as “a long-term process,” “marked by patterns of discontinuity and continuity with the past” (p.14). In addition factors of race, ethnicity, class and immigrant status still continue to play a decisive role in the labor market opportunities and treatment of immigrants in the US (Yang 2010, Zolberg 2007).

Of relevance to Asian immigration is the cumulative effect of intercountry disparities, multilevel connections, and migration policies “operate at various levels, to shape Asian immigration” (Yang 2010:25). The growing dependency of the US and its emergence as a super power, in the latter part of the nineteenth century conferred certain benefits to the US. Gradually the US turned to the developing world to extract cheap labor for its own vested interests. Contemporary theorists eloquently refer to this interference as forms of “servitude and displacement of peoples” (Koshy and Radhakrishnan 2008:7). The famous push and pull factors that were an outcome of intercountry disparities also explain the motivations for prospective immigrants that were drawn to regions in the US that needed cheap labor (Yang 2010:26). The US open-door immigration policy also enabled the settlement process (Yang 2010:26). In addition the

already established networks provided resources to the new arrivals only to reinforce the idea of migration as a sustaining process (Yang 2010:26). In sum, Yang's (2010) framework highlights the specificities of Asian immigration to prompt a discussion of the situations and circumstances of the newer groups of immigrants that comprise the South Asian diaspora.

In comprehending the formation and growth of the South Asian diaspora consisting of Asian Indians especially members that arrived after the 1980s, I assert that immigration needs to be made inclusive in the framework of race, class, and gender. The inclusion of immigration will serve as a starting point for generating an equally challenging discussion of gender. Even Curran, Shafer, Donato, and Garip (2006) argue for uncovering the joint relationship of the process of migration with the social construction of gender (Curran et al. 2006:201). Furthermore, they acknowledge that appropriating a gender lens demands that attention ought to be paid to all aspects of the immigration process including interactions, actors, institutions, networks and gatekeeping policies.

Within the synthetic framework Yang (2010) calls attention to consideration of the micro-level processes which are particularly useful. Yang (2010) seeks to bridge the macro theories and the micro theories of migration in order to capture the specifics of Asian immigration (p.15). The inclusion of the concept of immigration with issues of race, ethnicity, class, will make explicit trends in female immigrant flows, interactions and processes that include their experiences in the society at large.

Included within the social structures are mediating units of family and the workplace in both the sending and host countries that shape and define women's lives made evident in this research study of professional and non-professional Indian immigrant women in the DFW area. A more pronounced discussion of the overlap between immigration and race, ethnicity, class, and gender is essential to legitimize the experiences of first-generation Indian immigrant women in the US.

## CONCLUSION

The inclusion of the issue of immigration will offer a space for consideration of the individual interactions at a microlevel undertaken by immigrant women. Central to this study are work experiences of immigrants in India and the US to yield a discussion of issues of empowerment, issues of race, class, gender, and forms of new inequality. In acknowledging the concept of immigration and its overlap with concepts of race, class, and gender the complexities of the experiences of immigrant women from the South Asian diaspora and issues of work will become clearer.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### INTRODUCTION

This qualitative study adopts one of the prominent methods of data collection: in-depth open-ended interviews that inquire into the experiences of first-generation Indian immigrant women working and residing in the Dallas Fort-Worth metroplex, hereinafter referred to as DFW. This study explores issues of empowerment, race, ethnicity, class, and gender in the workplace, family, and structural inequalities in the US. This study aims to “give voice to women respondents,” and allows them “to participate in” the research (DeVault 1999:33). Participants in this study were recruited via purposive and snowball sampling techniques. In all 17 participants were interviewed utilizing a semi-structured interview guide that consisted of questions designed by taking into consideration realms of family and work in the pre-migration and post-migration contexts. After transcribing all 17 interviews, data were analyzed using NVivo 9 qualitative software.

#### *Institutional Review Board*

In order to conduct this research study an application was filed before the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Texas Woman’s University. A full review application was the best approach for this study because it involved conducting interviews of first-generation Indian immigrant women residing and working in the DFW



area. After receiving approval from the IRB, I proceeded with the recruitment and data collection phase of the study.

## DESIGN AND RECRUITMENT

### *Sampling*

For the purpose of this study, a non-probability sample of 17 first-generation Indian women residing in the DFW metroplex was recruited. For the purpose of recruiting a purposive sample of my participants, I resorted to “labor-intensive outreach strategies” (Fonow and Cook 1991:110) including the preparation of 3 x 5 index (business/invitation) cards and recruitment flyers or posters with contact information (See Appendix A and B for Recruitment Flyer and Invitation Card).

I contacted organizations, such as the Dallas Fort-Worth Marathi Mandal (DFWMM) via email and phone to provide them with information about my study. My main purpose was to distribute information and recruit participants (Fonow and Cook 1991:110). I contacted a few establishments such as Indian restaurants and ethnic grocery stores, in and around Irving and the DFW metroplex, and distributed business/invitation cards and posted flyers to recruit as many participants for my study.

As a researcher, I intended to become familiar with the South-Asian Indian community, and gain entry into the field. I identified and contacted persons and proceeded to distribute invitation/business cards with the sole intention of obtaining volunteers for my study. The outreach methods of posting flyers and distribution of business/invitation cards helped me recruit volunteers. Berg (2009) adds “snowballing is

sometimes the best way to locate subjects,” because it sets in motion the idea of “a chain of subjects driven by the referral of one respondent of another” (p. 51). The techniques of recruitment, category of sampling, and snowball techniques were suited to this study and facilitated its progress.

I restricted my sample to 17 first-generation Indian immigrant women which was contingent upon the time, finances, and other resources. A number of studies using qualitative techniques have used sample sizes ranging from 10 to 21 (Salt 2010, Bolyai, Knafl, Tamborlane, and Grey 2004).

Recent studies on Indian immigrants and work have employed in-depth interviews. For instance, a South-Asian Indian researcher in her published ethnographic study has investigated the issue of identity among second-generation women belonging to the South-Asian Indian diaspora in the US (Badruddoja 2007). In her ethnographic study she interviewed 25 professional women over a period of eight months to underscore issues of nationalism that play out in the frameworks of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and South-Asian American femininities in the US (Badruddoja 2007:iii).

### *Sample Population*

The sample consisted of 17 participants residing and working in the DFW area. All the women belonged to the South Asian diaspora. Of the 17 participants, majority were born in India, with the exception of two who were born in East Africa and the UK. Women in my study were married and had migrated to the US in the past couple of decades. Six of the participants had arrived in the US for higher education. One of the participants came

to the US while she was in grade school. In their interviews participants discussed their occupations in various fields such as engineering, technology, academia, national grocery stores, self-employment (teaching of music), teaching, transportation industry, medicine, public health, research, and business. Three of the 17 respondents indicated that they did not have any work experience in India. Fourteen indicated that they had engaged in paid employment in their home countries.

## INSTRUMENTS

### *Interview Schedule*

Prior to the interview, my participants completed a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C). The questionnaire served as a screening process that provided information about the demographics of my participants. I conducted open-ended, semi-structured interviews. Creswell (2007) states that interviews are appropriate because they consist of certain open-ended questions and probes that elicit responses from the participants. I relied on the use of a semi-structured interview protocol. The interview guide consisted of a set of open-ended questions that were intended to generate as much data as possible. The open-ended questions helped to create a relaxed atmosphere between my participants and myself. I allowed women to speak about their life experiences or histories, including their pre-migration contexts, circumstances of their migration in the host country.

The interview schedule included items pertaining to the sphere of work and family, and those designed to delve deeper into comprehending how Indian immigrant

women were able to negotiate the barriers of inequality in the workplace. To this end, questions were created to cover key topics including the sphere of work, family, work environment, barriers at work, and issues of inequality (see Appendix D for Interview Schedule). At all times the key to the interview process was to elicit as much information as possible. Typically, the questions were a means by which my participants could narrate their experiences.

## PROCEDURES

I coordinated with the volunteers via telephone to schedule interviews at a location of their choice. I traveled to sites scheduled for interviews including coffee houses, business centers, grocery stores, and restaurants in the DFW metroplex. I recorded the interviews on a digital voice recorder and ensured that the real name of the participant was not used in order to maintain confidentiality. I replaced the actual names of interviewees with pseudonyms selected by the participants. The duration of interviews lasted between 35 minutes to 2 hours. Before proceeding with the interviews, participants were informed that in the event of discomfort or wanting to withdraw from the study they were free to do so. Participants were informed that if they had questions or were seeking clarification they could contact me. I kept a memo log to facilitate the taking of notes in the setting and interview process. I maintained a log book for my field notes and research journal to facilitate the entry of key decisions, reflections, emergent ideas and hunches or what is sometimes referred to as a “conceptual launch pad” (Kikooma 2010:48). At all

times, before proceeding with the interviews I had the participants read through the consent form (see Appendix E). I also offered to answer any questions.

On a number of occasions I conducted multiple interviews over the weekend. During each interview, I would jot down notes in my log book. The note taking process was useful because it helped “pace the interview by providing non-verbal cues about what [was] important,” and even “providing feedback to the interviewee about what kinds of things are noteworthy-literally” (Patton 2002:382). Upon completion of the interviews, I provided the women with contact information and a list of referrals for counseling.

I ran into some challenges during the research project. There were occasions when volunteers did not show up for the interviews. At times the interviews could not be scheduled. Such moments resulted in researcher anxiety and I would wonder about reaching the desired number of participants in order to proceed with the study.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Contemporary studies underscore this stage or phase as being crucial in the research project. After interviewing the participants, I downloaded the data from the audio-recorded interviews and saved it onto a USB flash drive. All of the 17 interviews were transcribed and coded by the researcher in NVivo qualitative software. The process of listening and re-listening to the data allowed me to become immersed in the research process.

To facilitate coding and analysis, I relied on use of NVivo 9. The software included terms like nodes that allowed for organization of the text in order of importance. Prior to coding I verified the transcriptions by listening to the recorded interviews multiple times. I would go over the transcriptions to obtain a sense of the data. In the initial data analysis phase, a number of codes were formulated and saved in NVivo.

Familiarity with the software and my data resulted in running of text search queries and frequency searches to highlight prominent codes. The second read through in NVivo 9 resulted in narrowing of concepts that were relevant to the research questions. At all times I had the research questions highlighted in bold on index cards. The emergent concepts that bear relevance to this study are happy, independent, work and life in the US, forms of inequality, immigrant women and work, race, ethnicity, class, and gender, work in India, work in the US.

During the subsequent read-through of the data, I also used the process of verification by going back and forth between the concepts and the text. According to Patton (2002), the qualitative researcher is a “bricoleur or maker of quilts” that relies on the use of his or her tools, techniques, “methods or empirical materials” at hand as well as create whatever is needed for “creative data collection” (p.401). I took care to remain non-biased during the coding and data analysis phase. The coding phase entailed the use of multiple strategies including search for “manifest,” or “latent” or hidden meanings that jumped out from the data (Berg 2009:344). This phase allowed the researcher to merge the concepts under core findings. The following concepts appeared significant happy,

independent, work and life in the US. The concepts were gradually integrated into the initial key theme: dimensions of empowerment. Simultaneously I began to conceptually map the concepts by relying on the use of *shapes* in Microsoft word. This process resulted in the formulation of two more key findings forms of new inequality; Indian immigrant women: issues of race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Central to this dissertation are three emergent themes namely dimensions of empowerment, forms of new inequality and Indian immigrant women: issues of race, ethnicity, class, and gender. The themes are conceptualized from the existing literature review that orients this research study. This phase is crucial, in that it allows the researcher to closely examine the linkages between the findings and research questions. Gradually, I began to write up the discussion which ran into numerous or multiple drafts that required a keen eye and mental coordination. During the write up of the discussion section, I ensured that the participants' identities were protected by the use of pseudonyms and all other information had been de-identified.

#### LIMITATIONS

This study suffered from several limitations. First, it was limited to first-generation Indian Immigrant women in the DFW area. Second, out of the 17 respondents only two participants were employed in national grocery stores. Additionally, participants who volunteered for this belonged to middle-class backgrounds. As a result women with low-levels of income were not included in this study.

As an Indian immigrant although I gained entry into the community in the DFW area, during the data analysis phase I had to exercise caution and remain objective. I engaged in the process of listening to the participants and allowed them to articulate their views and ideas about issues of work, race, ethnicity, class, and gender. In this manner I was able to accommodate and listen to their contributions that proved helpful in narrativising their experiences. As Patton (2002) mentions the inquirer [researcher] must strive to “understand the real world,” and remain “open to whatever emerges from the data, a discovery or inductive approach” (p.67).

## CONCLUSION

This chapter outlines the methods of data collection and analysis procedures for this research study that centers on the experiences of first-generation Indian immigrant working women in the DFW area. Massey notes (2008) the shift in the “geography of the new immigration” especially the subsequent arrivals became concentrated in the “states of New York, California, Texas, Florida, and Illinois,” recently identified as “gateway” metropolitan areas of New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Miami, and Chicago (Hirschman and Massey 2008:3).

Patton (2002) describes one of the strengths of classifying and coding of the rich data is that it provides a “framework” for systematic organization of the rich data generated in the research process (p.437-465). In addition, the three key themes helped generate a discussion of the salient issues of empowerment in the pre-migration and post-migration contexts; intersection of race, ethnicity, class, and gender in the workplace and



family; and structural inequality in the US. More importantly this research will contribute a sociological lens to study how first-generation Indian women navigate through the social process of immigration.

## CHAPTER IV

### DIMENSIONS OF EMPOWERMENT

#### ANALYSIS OF THEME I

Over the past two decades there has been a steady growth in the literature on immigration. Few sociological discussions on the issue of empowerment and immigrant women are available. This chapter explores how immigrant women identify with empowerment. Of increasing salience in sociology and in recent feminist methodologies (Sprague 2005) is bridging of the structural or macro-level interpretations with the micro level discussions. Hence, there is a need to offer a nuanced understanding of empowerment. In addition to the existing interpretations of empowerment, sociological discussions that examine the manifest and latent processes of empowerment deserve consideration.

In describing the impact of the immigrant experience on Salvadoran women in Los Angeles, Zentgraf (2002) asks the important question: how women perceive self-empowerment in the new land? In formulating her response, Zentgraf (2002) shows how realms of “work,” “family,” “the larger social, cultural, and spatial environments” (p.626) are of significance in contemporary studies of immigration and gender. In explicating the concept of empowerment, Zentgraf (2002) states that, “wage labor was not a new experience,” for Salvadoran women and that woman were able to find work in the new land (p.632). Underlying the concept of empowerment, or what Zentgraf (2002) calls “the

psychological experiences,” (p.629) are the latent processes or dimensions of empowerment. For instance, the women in Zentgraf’s study identified with positive outcomes in the process of becoming empowered. Many identified with certain aspects of “autonomy,” “independence,” and “confidence,” and “stronger sense of self” (Zentgraf 2002:626). Salvadoran women also experienced an “overall change in self-image,” and “sense of personal power” (Zentgraf 2002:632). The components contribute to individual well-being (Grabe 2012) and the process of empowerment. Underlying these explanations is the idea that the objective and subjective elements need to be explored in the present discussion on empowerment.

Relevant to the nuanced discussion of the immigrant experience, Grabe’s (2012) study of women’s empowerment is useful. Advocating a hypothetical model, Grabe (2012) highlights three important aspects that are relevant to the process of empowerment including structural inequities, agency, and outcomes of well-being (p.234). Analogous to Grabe, this study examines similar processes that emanate in the process of empowerment. With the numerical increase of Indian immigrants especially women in the US work force, it is pertinent to comprehend how immigrant women experience the process of migration.

Migration is held to impact immigrant women in multiple ways. For instance, women were constrained in their choices or the cultural context became reinforced to lead to stress (Agrawal 2006:7). Therefore, empowerment is not just the manifest outcomes that result from economic decisions; it entails even the latent outcomes that

result from the process of empowerment. For example in this study many participants referred to positive outcomes such as feeling happy and independent. The following sections include a discussion of the concepts such as Happy, Independent, and Work and Life in the US construed as positive outcomes experienced by women in the process of empowerment.

## HAPPY

### *India and US*

Even though Zentgraf offers a thought-provoking discussion on issues of immigration and women's empowerment, her discussion fails to adequately explain the concepts, and clarify the psycho-social processes as experienced by immigrant women. In addition to Zentgraf (2002), Grabe (2012) also refers to concepts of agency and well-being in her framework. In identifying with the perceptions of empowerment, some of the participants in this study recounted their work experience in India. Many indicated that as a result of becoming empowered they had experienced positive outcomes that contributed to their well-being. Participants in the study repeatedly referred to the concept happy. For example, Ani, graduated with a degree in Medicine from India, described her experience:

When they appreciate you feel happy about it...  
Yeah they're like, when you do some service, they're happy, they treat you like a  
god

Ani's statement emphasizes her response to the acknowledgement from her community. The statement reveals a sense of well-being that is generated within the individual as an outcome of the response from society. Her expression "they're happy" indicates her

personal effort to render service to the Indian community. As a result of becoming empowered, the statement emphasizes the participants ability to achieve recognition within her community. The participant continues her story:

Oh yeah. Sundays, I used to go for the Ramakrishna Math volunteer service. So, I was the only one lady doctor that was the best. But to me the difference between there and here, here, is like more commercial. There is more service. But I don't know how it is now? When I did it the service, you enjoy looking at the patient, how happy they feel, and they enjoy how you treat them.

Clearly Ani's story explains the positive outcome of her work as a volunteer doctor. Underlying the statement is the theme of individual agency that is enacted by her in her home country. She is able to make sense of the positive impact of her work in the Indian community. Being able to work was of essence to Ani. The statement reveals Ani's commitment to her work and community. Ani continues to describe her work experience.

This is a pediatric office; I get to see different kids. I love it my son is 20. So, I am really looking for small kids, as long as they're not mine ... So, I really enjoy that like and the other thing is that I am happy that I am back to my medical field and which makes me feel happy ....sometimes it's there in the corner you're not working as doctor you know.

After describing her work experience in India, Ani explains how she perceives empowerment in the US. As a result of becoming incorporated in the US labor market immigrant women such as Ani identified with positive outcomes of agency and a stronger sense of self in the new land. Although immigrants face structural barriers including a racialized labor market, Ani has secured work as a medical assistant in the DFW area. The statement reveals the linkages between positive outcomes of self-confidence,

autonomy, and agency and the process of empowerment. The statement emphasizes the effort made by the immigrant women with families to step into the US labor market and contribute to the family income. Glimpses into individual struggles including suitable job opportunities suited to one's qualifications in the US market show how the participant appears to acclimate to her present situation as a medical assistant. The participant's inner thoughts reflect a kind of duality such as positive outcomes of "feel[ing] happy" and disappointment. This illustration conveys how empowerment is not just the manifest outcomes but even the latent outcomes of the process need to be construed.

In addition to the structural and more visible experience of being able to work or experiencing rewarding outcomes, the micro-interactionist processes that flow from the process such as labor-market incorporation, a sense of agency, had a sense of personal satisfaction deserve as much attention in the literature on empowerment. Underlying Ani's story is the effort made by immigrant women to achieve empowerment. Empowerment also calls for "a redistribution of hegemony so that more people have power than previously" (p.7). As Weissberg (1999) demonstrates in his compelling study of empowerment, that we need to move beyond simplistic definitions of "mobilizing people" to achieve control and also pay attention to "components of psychological transformations and modifying material circumstances" (p.26). Weissberg (1999) furthers the discussion of empowerment to pinpoint certain constraints faced by minorities for example their struggle to achieve self-determination in the US (p.27).

Ani's reference to "happy" in multiple ways reveals a growing sense of confidence and individual agency that flowed from the process of becoming empowered. Underlying her explanation is the spatial context that explicates her intent to achieve mobility. Kk's story is distinct. Similar to Ani, who arrived on a dependant visa, even Kk had arrived in the US as a dependant. Kk had a background in Indian classical music. Since her arrival in the US, she has made a name for herself in the field of Indian classical music. Contrary to the conventional style of operating from a studio or business center, Kk operated from home, where she continues to teach classical music and the *veena* (a string instrument) to interested students. Her students consist of members from the Indian community, particularly second-generation Indian-American children, stay-at-home moms, and members of the majority group.

At the end of the day, I am so happy that I am doing something for myself. Not just uhh you know going through the routine of life, you know raising kids, taking care of the home. Not just that I am also doing what I really want to do. There's something this inner satisfaction I have in myself at the end of the day. Especially for myself on a Sunday of course at the end of the day. I am tired, exhausted. But there is a satisfaction in that exhaustion, I don't complain of it, I feel very happy about it and I am looking to see how I can expand it even more. So, that I can cater to even more students who would be interested in joining. And also maybe now most of my students are at the beginners' level and the *veena* is where I have three, who are at the advanced level.

Kk's story articulates her effort to become self-employed. In explicating the positive outcome of finding work in the DFW area, here is a unique example. Kk arrived in the US with no prior work experience from her home country of India. It is evident that Kk has been able to successfully utilize her skills in music in a lucrative manner. The issue of women being able to exercise autonomy and agency is portrayed in Kk's example. By

recounting her work experience, she conveys a growing sense of confidence within her and the positive impact of becoming empowered in the US. A growing sense of well-being is illustrated through Kk's narrative. The story reveals the independent effort by the participant to further her goals in the US. Furthermore, Kk's story illustrates how the women with families are trying "to do it all," that is, taking care of their families and having a career. Ani and Kk's stories provide a snapshot of the internal processes that are experienced and articulated by immigrant professional and nonprofessional women as an outcome of the process of empowerment. In addition to Kk, NP, who had briefly worked as an English teacher in a local college and was interested in pursuing her PhD in India, narrated her experience:

Yeah, outside yes, I was teaching you know the Senior and the Junior kids. You know I was teaching English. Basically one year I worked there and I continued my Higher Studies in Etraj College you know where I was studying there and a vacancy came. Professor suggested to me to take the job so I took the job and then I was working there and I applied for my PhD, in preparing for my PhD and you know I was going around for my research work, and this one and that one, and I had a family a very comfortable family, financially very comfortable and we had no worries you know. So, I just enjoyed my life. I took my money and enjoyed shopping and everything (laughs).

Furthermore, in discussing her work experience, the participant, NP when asked:

My family, my mom, my aunts, everybody was working. So, I saw them free and happy and you don't get stuck inside the house. So, I never thought of my life without a job. I always wanted to work

This narrative emphasizes the participant's experience in India. From NP's quote I perceive her desire to have a career and further her goals in India. In narrating her experience, the participant discloses reasons that prompted women in her family to work.



She reveals the influence of role models in motivating her when she was growing up. We can glean the impact of socialization within the primary group. Also revealed were the positive outcomes of work for women including NP.

I am happy about my career, lot of learning because I don't feel that I am wasting my time. I can take care of my family. Without losing my family I can make some money myself and my future. So in that way I am very happy [...]  
Half of it yes. Yeah I wanted to be a writer I wanted to do a doctorate in the literature field. But though I couldn't do all those things, that part is taken care in the business field because I do content development. I do English, in my business is really what a PhD person does. I will be doing as a doctorate person, as a business person here. So, my writing is fulfilled there and those things. I am very happy my field whatever I do, I do it in my business.

The statements show how NP is deriving inner satisfaction from her present career as an entrepreneur in the US. Her story reveals her independent effort to realize her dreams and juggle the everyday demands of work and family. For professional women, "managing both domestic and professional responsibilities is a difficult task" (Guendouzi 2006:907). NP appeared to have found a way through her business to make money and balance her responsibilities.

The quotations illustrate the underlying theme of individual agency enacted by the participant at different points in time. In addition, the quote reflects the participants' ability to contribute to the family income and secure her future in the US. This example shows how immigrant women including NP identify and emphasize the positive outcomes of empowerment. NP's narrative also reveals that in spite of not being able to pursue a doctoral degree in English she appears to grapple with the present situation. At the same time she finds her present position as a business woman extremely satisfying.

This illustration shows how the participant identifies with the latent process of achieving personal satisfaction in the process of becoming empowered. In addition to the initial concept happy as expressed by the participants in this study, the concept of independence appears significant.

#### INDEPENDENT

Participants in the study made frequent references to the concept of independence. It is important to convey the literal meaning of the concept in the context of immigrant women. Especially when participants identified with forms of personal freedom and individual agency which were relevant to the initial theme: Dimensions of Empowerment. The data shows that the concept of independence frequently emerged in the stories told by participants in the contexts of family and work in the US. For example, in the family realm, participants recalled how parents instilled in them the value of work and independence. SC recalls her experience growing up in India. Although she led a very sheltered life in suburban Calcutta (located on the east coast of India), and had been previously married at a very young age, SC recalled the parental influence in her life. Referring to the influence of her mother SC stated

She raised me so that I grow up to be an independent thinking woman

Underlying this statement is the express intent by a parent to instill in her daughter the need to become self-sufficient in society. This message from a mother to a daughter conveys certain realities including the need for women to achieve autonomy and become motivated to undertake key economic decisions or otherwise. The interpretation of

independence bears relevance to empowerment because it explicates the need for women to assert themselves in society. Both women acknowledge the need for women's empowerment. The articulation of the concept suggests that people are capable of self-reflection in society and prompted to enact certain choices that lead to their empowerment. The statement uncovers the linkages between work and independence that were instilled in SC as she was growing up. Influence of the family and inculcation of values within individuals are revealed in this value-laden single statement. The participant described in her interview:

She was very supportive of that. But she kind of liked that fact that I had the security of a husband. I think she felt like because she had never been independent, and been on her own, so she couldn't fathom the fact that women now do that all the time. It's not a big deal at all. It's not really a big deal at all.

From the narrative, we glean how values of marriage, financial security, independence, are enmeshed into one for women including SC's mother. The statement offers a glimpse into the transition of gender roles from one generation to another. SC's mother had led a very sheltered life as a Bengali housewife. She had never worked outside the home and it was evident that she held traditional values about marriage. Therefore SC's mother wanted her daughter to have the security of a husband before allowing her daughter to step out into the world on her own. The idea of women as homemakers and men as breadwinners of the family is made evident.

In contrast to her mother, this statement highlights the participant as a young, capable and independent-minded individual who constantly assessed her life and

undertook decisions. This statement offers SC's perspective as an insider in the family. The narrative reveals the varied perceptions of the concept by two women in one family.

Furthermore, the quote offers an insight into a traditional family unit where the mother, a housewife, intended for her daughter to have financial security. Along the continuum of gender roles, the example uncovers the shift in gender roles. Especially when she stated:

I'll have this wonderful life and that wasn't my idea at all. It was like: oh I would get to study, to be an independent working woman. I mean, I had never lost sight of that ever. Yeah, so I had already started looking up courses that I could take. How I could transfer my credits? It was more of that and [...] oh I am going to go for higher studies now, the sky is the limit for me, this is the mindset, I had at the time.

The participant emphasizes her struggle to be self-sufficient and enact agency in the new land. The participant discloses the conflict she faces with herself and family during adulthood. The story reveals SC's intention of being able to make an economic contribution and have a career. Another participant SK, a Maharashtrian, who arrived in the US on a dependent visa, shares her experience growing up in a middle-class family in Solapur, a city in located along the west coast in India. For example, SK shares that her father had always emphasized:

Do that and uhh he was big time you know, be independent. Don't depend on anybody be independent [...] and he would encourage us to get the, you know other general knowledge.

Analogous to SC's story, SK recounts the influence of family values in her life. In SK's case, her father played a predominant role. The concept of independence is linked with

the idea of women being able to achieve autonomy and have control over their lives without depending on another. This statement illustrates the links between empowerment, individual power, and well-being of the individual.

In describing her work experience in the US, SK explains:  
Yes, I like this environment because it's more of independent. Nobody is if I need help I can go to my Managers and Senior Managers they will help me. But more of I am expected to work independently. I am supposed to you know come up with scenarios make sure that you know

The use of the concept "independent" reflects the views of the participant with respect to her work environment. We are introduced to the participants' work setting where she articulates her need to work on her own without any interference from anyone. The quotation illustrates the process of becoming empowered in more than many ways in the new land. The example also emphasizes the favorable work conditions that enable her to work without any interference. This narrative reveals the theme of individual agency that is realized by the participant in her work place.

Varied interpretations of the concept emerged from the data. In describing her work experience in the US, PR, a professor working at a prominent college, shared with me the importance of being economically self-sufficient. She described:

I was an adjunct so, adjunct instructor with [university...], with [university...]. And I was also doing consulting. Because it was important for me to work. And be economically independent. Yeah, not that my husband ever asked me to do that, but that's just me

The above statement reveals the autonomous decision undertaken by PR, a professional to have a career and earn her living in the US. In detailing her work experience, PR indicates that she received support from her husband. Underlying this statement is the

idea that family support is essential in order for women to work more efficiently. The example illustrates how PR is capable of exercising autonomy and agency in the US. PR's statement reveals that a certain level of well-being including access to resources or previous work experience, autonomy to make certain economic decisions contributed to her empowerment. In addition to the stories shared by PR, SK, and SC, Ani, another respondent tells:

See, I am capable of doing things especially myself, that gives you independence in thinking that anything happens in life, you can manage yourself. See, when I was working for my husband I didn't feel that because he was with me to support and do everything right. After I started working for the doctor and make my own money, I really felt more comfortable you know like, I can do myself

Ani's story discloses the links between independence and for women to have control over their lives. Although the participant acknowledges the support she receives from her husband, she articulates her need to become independent and earn a living for herself. The narrative reveals the benefits that accrue to women in the process of empowerment. Another participant named Ann who worked in national grocery store referred to the concept in the family context. In the present study, Ann is referred to as a "*fourth migrant*" because she belongs to a community of East African Gujaratis who migrated from India to Africa to Britain and finally settled in the US. Subsequent to her marriage and settlement in the US, Ann held several jobs including her participation in the family business, which consisted of running a franchise for Mrs Fields' cookies in the DFW area a few years ago. Since the family business had run into difficulties, Ann shared:

Right now, we used to have our own business yeah so we closed it. We did that for eight years so. That's why two years I've been here now. So, all this time I've

been pretty much independent. After I had worked at E funds, we had our own business.

The statement furnishes details about Ann's family business in the US. Ann explains the inner struggles of an immigrant family in the US. An outcome of the family business being closed, Ann explains the various jobs that she held. In describing her work experience, Ann reveals how she enacted agency in various ways. However underlying her story is the need for immigrant women to work and contribute to the family income. The narratives above explain how the concept of independence is critical for working women.

#### WORK AND LIFE IN THE US

Relevant to the issue of empowerment, participants were asked to describe their careers and work in the DFW area. In understanding how first-generation Indian immigrant women achieve a sense of empowerment, participants' stories offered insights into their gender-segregated work environments, and conflict with gender roles. For instance, Varsha, a Maharashtrian, now employed as a fourth grade inclusion teacher reported:

DFW metroplex okay! I like working in the US just because there is no age limit. That is the first thing. I really liked it because no age limit like in India, 35 and up you cannot get a government job which was really bothering me. Here, I have seen many ladies who are retired and re-hired teachers. So, they work until you know whatever time they want to work and I think they are more independent in decision-making at times. As I said it is stressful here to work, because you have to cook and go and Indian cooking takes a little time. But other than that I like working, situations here because ...

This example illustrates the opportunities that were available to the participant in the US. In narrating her story, she emphasizes the fact that in India, government jobs were modeled to constrain the employment of women in certain jobs on the basis of age. Varsha's experience highlights the inequalities associated with certain sex-segregated occupations in the Indian work-place. The conflict and stress faced by Indian women such as Varsha in finding a suitable job indicates a plausible "push" factor that underlies her immigration to the US. In many ways the Indian experience contributed to her success in the field of higher education in the US, and ultimately paved the way for a successful career as a fourth grade inclusion teacher in the US.

The story unravels how the participant is trying to make sense of her present career and life in the US. In doing so, she describes the structural factors that impeded her mobility in India. In the US, the participant emphasizes that although she likes working in the US, she faces stress on account of her domestic responsibilities. In explaining her work experience, she draws a comparison with American women, to explain how Western women were more likely to exercise autonomy and independence. Underlying Varsha's observations about working women in the US is the theme of difference that demonstrates how women are at the epicenter of an increasingly global world. Varsha's journey as an immigrant student is one of the many routes that immigrant students take. Eventually for the sake of her family she has pursued her choice to have a career in the US.



Writing about the juxtaposition of immigrant women between two worlds, Aparicio (2006) brilliantly captures Gloria Anzaldua's idea of "borderlands" to expound upon the "two geopolitical regions" that immigrant women such as Varsha find themselves in (p.19). In addition, the participant also mentions how she experiences empowerment through her every day experience at work and home. By drawing on her present experience as an Indian immigrant professional "betwixt and between two or more nation-states" India and the US, Varsha is trying to comprehend her experience by making sense of her reality and her role as a professional. The participant illustrates her ability to exercise autonomy, by stepping into the work force. Varsha is able to identify with the expectations from society to keep up with her responsibilities as a housewife and mother. The conflict experienced by Varsha explains the limited autonomy and barriers faced by working women in their home country. The statement conveys how immigrant women including Varsha perceive work in the DFW area. Also illustrated is the fact that empowerment is not a linear process and for women, especially Varsha, we question the impact of the social structure and challenges faced by women in the process of migration. More specifically, we can see how gender intersects with migration to result in the engendering of immigrants such as Varsha.

Yet another example is that of TC, a young professional who arrived in the US for the purpose of higher education, and is presently employed in an academic institution in the US. She stated:

The academia is obviously, it might be laid back. But it's also like for immigrant

women, you always have to go the extra mile to validate your work. You know so it's not easy, definitely not easy, given that I was teaching and I had this PhD, the first year. I could say it took a toll also on my job somewhat [...] so, as I mentioned you know that it's somewhat of an adjustment [...] and but life in the US is full of challenges and no matter what we think that we like the comfort, the standard of living everything. But at the end of the day it's not an easy life but it's probably, that's, you know, what defines you're life. That very up and down you know, being able to face impediments, address impediments [...] just think no matter where you are, and I am grateful for my life here. I am also grateful for the new opportunities that I hear people take on back home [...] the fact that there are great jobs, more money, more affluence, more affordability even back home [...] that sense of security, that sense of self-fulfillment, accomplishment and securing a foundation for yourself, being able to negotiate a place for yourself in your larger social milieu you know domestic setting I think is very important for women. I think we've come a long way and all of us need to work more towards it.

The quotation uncovers the details of the participant's work experience. The statement emphasizes TC's struggle as a student and professional. TC assesses her experience in the US as very positive. TC's reference to the challenges faced by professional women indicates her experience as a minority. In furthering the discussion of minority women, Manrique and Manrique (quoted in DeLaet1999) explain that "women in general receive very confusing signals in the workplace" (p.107). The quotation above illustrates how TC is aware of her position as a minority in academia.

In describing the contemporary economic changes in India, the participant is very nostalgic about issues concerning women. Further showing how women try "to negotiate a place" for themselves in society indicates the participants concern for women's issues and their status in society. TC's story illustrates how themes of individual agency manifest for professional women in the US. Empowerment is clearly not a linear process. Neena, another respondent shared her thoughts about career and work in the DFW area:

I think considering how the markets are in India I would not have a problem working in India today again. And I love working here and I think the same expectations are there everywhere now. I don't think the previous subtle sexism that I felt are valid today anymore I am also older and maybe today that also wouldn't happen and better equipped to deal with it now. And do I wish I had done different things in India I could work everywhere and I think it would be a fabulous experience anywhere I could take what I learned there in India made me a much better to work in the US[...]

The illustration describes how Neena enjoys working in the US. In summarizing her work experience, Neena emphasizes the issue of gender-inequality when she refers to a form of sexism in society. The reference to sexism in the workplace indicates the barriers that prevented many women from achieving upward mobility. Neena's story shows how gender stereotypes marginalize women in society. In the face of such challenges, Neena has been able to carve a niche for herself in the US. The participant demonstrates that as a result of her experience in the new land she is able to exercise agency through acts of resistance against emergent forms of discrimination against women.

The statement reveals how immigrant women relate their previous experience, reflect on it, and act in multiple ways to derive benefit from the new experience. In describing what empowerment means to her Neena described:

I think for me a lot of empowerment comes from self-worth [...] I just like to take the positive influences and go with that because you always if you want to find the negative influences you can find them [...] So, for me empowerment is what I make of my own life, yeah.

Neena interprets empowerment as a process that comes from the internal experience of acquiring self-worth. She identifies with the manifest outcomes of self-worth that emanate from the process of empowerment. In the context of immigration, the many

ways that women are becoming motivated to enact agency and undertake strategic decisions or become transformed is part of the experience. Empowerment is associated with the process of growing power within individuals to equip them with resources in the long run. In addition to Neena, Kk, a dependent housewife, presently self-employed with two children, has been teaching music and the *veena* (a stringed musical instrument) to Indian-American children in the DFW area. She describes:

To understand about my experience...all that I would share with anyone else is that journey in life is never simple irrespective of whether you're going out to work or stay at home there will always be challenges, all that I want to share with society is don't get stressed out of life you know give the time you know you need for yourself also because at the end of the day also that is what matters you know it is not always running after kids, running after the family. It is doing what you need to do for the house but try to get some time off you know have some time off and have a stress relief, have a balanced life, peaceful life, and be happy at the end of the day and be happy with what you're doing

As a music teacher, this statement emphasizes the growing sense of power and confidence within the participant in the US. The complexities involved in the process of empowerment are illustrated in this example. She articulates how her interest in teaching music has contributed to her well-being. The example sheds light on Kk's life where she had to juggle the multiple roles of a homemaker and as a music teacher. In envisioning her dreams, Kk appears motivated to overcome the challenges in her life and send a message to other women as well. Her reference to "be happy at the end of the day," and "be happy with what you're doing" is an expression that is linked to the subjective element of well-being and empowerment in the US.

The example illustrates how certain changes might had taken place in Kk's life

as well as her experience with migration. The example illustrates how participants including Kk are capable of making strategic decisions, particularly the ability to enter the labor market and make a significant contribution to the family income. Perhaps in a way the participant makes sense of the process of migration by becoming empowered. The example shows how the participants especially first-generation Indian immigrant women are strategically enacting decisions to enhance their position in society. Supriya, a Bengali housewife, who works as a volunteer in the DFW area relates:

I think overall it's been a good experience. There have been ups and downs. There has been times when I have been very down.

Interestingly for Supriya, volunteer work is a guise for her contribution to the US work force. In her interview she described the gradual efforts to step into paid work. The participant revealed the challenges she faced as a result of not being able to secure a work permit in the US. For example, she indicated that that she received a personal check for her contribution to an IT consulting company for her contribution as a volunteer doing clerical work. In describing her experience she shared the anxiety she faced as a result of her status in the US. As a minority woman carrying out volunteer work her work is deemed invisible in society. In addressing the issue of empowerment Supriya foretells the struggles faced by minority women. Supriya's story underscores her effort to exert individual agency and prevailing structural inequality in the US. Further when prompted, she stated:

Little things, I am frustrated I can't do the grocery on my own, I can't drive, I've done all these things back home in India. But initially when you get here all this is

very alien and new so it can be very frustrating at times. So there have been periods when I've been low [...] yes to some extent it does act on to your feeling frustrated.

The statement conveys the difficulties faced by the participant as a dependent in the US. The reference to the word "alien" is used by the participant in the context of her status as a foreigner in the US. In addition to her present position as a volunteer and the difficulties she faces in her everyday life on account of her minority status, she appears to be in a very vulnerable position in the US. In addition to Kk's story, Supriya's story illustrates the theme of social isolation. Supriya's story offers a glimpse into the complexities of the immigrant experience.

When participants were asked questions about work and life in the US, many referred to the barriers or structural constraints that they had to overcome in the US. Few women, including Ani, illustrated how they exercised autonomy in the US. Ani's example illustrates her effort to explore her options in the new land and render a significant contribution to the family income.

My own decision yes, further education was my own decision. Just that you know I couldn't find a way, I wanted to study but I didn't know where to start, so I think somebody told me about this community college and then I started I registered myself and then I would decide I wanted to take this next course and you know I would look up at the time, no I wanted to go, so it was my own decision. So, all that my husband was doing was helping me financially. But he never forced me he just gave me one direction that if you start in one direction but then once I started it was my own decision.

The statement emphasizes how immigrant women make sense of their experience in the US. Ani demonstrates agency by enacting agency and autonomy in the US. For instance, she describes her efforts to pursue a career in the US. The statement explains

that although she received financial support from her husband, it was her choice to go to a community college and explore opportunities as a Medical Assistant. In Ani's case the issue of empowerment is demonstrated by taking into consideration how participants are able to access resources that contribute to their careers in the US. The statement reveals that family support played a role in contributing to Ani's effort to pursue a career. The example reveals the opportunities that were available to Ani as an outcome of the process of migration.

The role of gender in the context of immigration is made explicit when the participant uncovers her effort to exercise autonomy. The quotation shows the links between various aspects of empowerment that are essential in construing the spatial and social contexts within which immigrants, including Ani, are situated. The example illustrates how migration enables individual agency to result in subjective well-being and the option of entering the US work force, and in making a contribution to the family income, or to realize individual goals and aspirations that are demonstrated in the illustration.

## CONCLUSION

Grouped together, the following concepts that emerged from the data point to the fact that migration is a complex process for the participants. The theme dimensions of empowerment appears relevant in addressing how first-generation Indian Immigrant women perceive empowerment. Many of the participants indicated experiencing positive outcomes in the process of empowerment. In narrating their work experience, participants

referred to the concept of happy, to indicate the feeling of well-being that is generated in the process.

In this study the concept of happy, emerged as a powerful indicator of subjective well-being. When identifying with the concept of happy, immigrant women were able to indicate that work was integral to their experience in their home countries. In describing their perceptions of empowerment in the work realm, their stories illuminate how mediating units of the social structure, the family, education, the community are linked together. The concept of happy is linked with the theme of individual agency in the process of empowerment.

In the US, participants shared their experience of finding and being able to secure work. Their stories highlight the diverse and complex ways in which women perceive empowerment. In that the examples illustrate the challenges faced by women as a consequence of their migration to the US. In describing the positive outcomes of becoming empowered, few of the participants shared in their stories their struggle with finding jobs that were commensurate with their human capital skills or in juggling the demands of their family.

With reference to the concept of independent, multiple meanings were deciphered from the participants' statements. In one statement, the participant referred to being independent, to illustrate that women ought to have more control over their lives, especially in the realm of work. Some of the participants also indicated that by exploring possible work opportunities, they could have more control over their lives. In



demonstrating the theme of autonomy, these women indicated their need to become less dependent on their husbands. More specifically I refer to Ann's story to elucidate how migration is a family strategy that helps certain communities sustain themselves in the US. In case of Ann, a "*fourth migrant*," being independent was extremely important. Although Ann belonged to a traditional Gujarati community and had acquired minimum qualifications in the UK, she was always motivated to work. Even in the US she held several jobs. From her story we discern that in spite of difficulties including closure of the family business, the ability to work and make an economic contribution was extremely important to Ann.

In addition, among the participants' stories, including Varsha's, her reasons for pursuing a degree in higher education underscores her ability to enact strategic decisions not for her own benefit, but on behalf of her family. Pedraza (1991) notes that "families make migration part of their survival strategies and use it during stages of the life cycle [...]" (p.308). In Ann's case, a possible explanation of her effort to secure a steady job was to make a contribution to the family income and her personal choice to be independent.

Furthermore, where participants indicated their need to be "independent" or "economically independent," their testimonies indicate their need to achieve autonomy. Ani, SK, SC, PR, and Ann's stories show that for women it was important to achieve autonomy and a stronger sense of self in the US. In describing their experiences and the

conflicts and tensions that were experienced by women in the family realm or the US, their testimonies reveal how women individually experienced migration. Therefore “independent,” as a concept, is relevant to the discussion on dimension of empowerment.

In examining its linkages with the issue of empowerment, many of the participants appeared to have experienced a sense of autonomy, more self-confidence, and individual agency. Women also indicated that they wanted to have more control over their lives (Bookman and Morgen 1988). In addition, these examples indicate the need to bring the experiences of immigrant women to the fore. In that the dimensions of empowerment seek to make the invisible outcomes of well-being or agency more visible.

The concept of independent enabled women to make certain strategic decisions as housewives, as students, as workers in the retail or as professionals in the academe in the new land. The concept of independent is extremely relevant to explore how immigrant women perceive a sense of empowerment before and after migration.

In addition the concepts happy, independent, work and life in the US shed light on the subjective explanations of the process of empowerment. In describing empowerment, participants shared their experience in overcoming a number of challenges in India and the US. In sum, the details furnished by immigrant women showed that empowerment, including the personal experiences of acquiring autonomy, more control over their lives, and a sense of confidence is not as Zentgraf explains “individual isolated processes but as processes that take place in relationship with family, community, and the larger social context” (2002:629).

Furthermore, in describing the new opportunities that were available to women, some reflected on the new challenges they faced in the post-migration context, and their ability to adapt and adjust to the change (Zentgraf 2002:632). With regard to the issue of survival, one of the participants described the challenges she faced in being able to adjust to the new land which contributed to feelings of alienation. Yet, in interpreting her experience in the DFW area, one is able to gauge her ability to overcome the challenges by finding work and in deriving support from her community (Zentgraf 2002).

Assembled together the evidence shows that empowerment includes several dimensions including psychological, social, economic, and cognitive components (Mosedale 2005:248). In explaining the cognitive, Mosedale explains that it is when women can determine the causes of their subordination (2005:248), and therefore become self-actualized to enact agency or make choices for themselves. In conclusion, this discussion on the dimensions of empowerment brings together the diverse experiences of women to shed light on their perceptions of empowerment. More importantly I believe that empowerment is not a linear process. In case of immigrant women it takes “twists and turns,” (Bookman and Morgen 1988:4) and often includes the process of accommodation, adjustment, discontent, power, autonomy, individual agency, and self-confidence.

## CHAPTER V

### INDIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN: ISSUES OF RACE, ETHNICITY, CLASS, AND GENDER

#### ANALYSIS OF THEME II

In the past few decades there has been a tremendous growth in the literature on perspectives of race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Many acknowledge the independent and multiplicative effects of the categories of race, ethnicity, class, and gender. To arrive at a more informed discussion of the centrality of these issues among others, this chapter entails a discussion of the issues of race, ethnicity, class, and gender in the context of first-generation Indian immigrant women in the DFW area. The following sections include a discussion of the concepts: race, ethnicity, class, and gender that were relevant to this key theme.

#### RACE

Race is often conceptualized in a framework of concepts including racial identity, racial classification. Omi and Winant (quoted in Rothenberg 2010) that race is a “pre-eminently sociohistorical” concept and that “racial categories and the meaning of race are given concrete expression by the specific social relations and historical context in which they are embedded (p.15). We need to acknowledge the social construction of race. The issue of race is often discussed in the conjunction with concepts of racial ideology and racial identity. Rothenberg (2010) discusses how “natural” and “common sense” qualities

manifest in a society divided along lines of race to contribute to conflict and tensions and a form of racial categorizing (p.16).

Participants in this study were asked to describe their experience with race in the US. Ani, working as a Medical Assistant in DFW shared:

I think it's in Oklahoma. Some small town we stopped at the rest area and we thought we'll go and buy something from the convenience store to eat. We were in the line and there was a white guy he was also the other side of the line. So, I just went there I was just standing there for no reason he said just get out [...] I don't know we just felt why should we create problem you know. We feel bad if you are in your own country nobody can do it. But when we are here we have to put up with that

The statement highlights the feeling of difference that Ani experiences when she encounters an instance of hostility from a white man in a public place. Underlying Ani's explanation are instances of hostility that arise as a result of stereotypes held by members of the majority group against the minority group in society. The experience impacts Ani to an extent that she recalls her homeland which indicates her need to feel secure and even claim allegiance with her country of origin. In contrast to her negative experience, Ani describes her experience in the DFW area.

Everybody says it is here, honestly, I never experienced this [...] and they're aware of our culture now you know my neighbors here all white people they are very nice very friendly. I see my patients you know when you do simple thing compared to our Indian people they are very appreciative our Indian people [...] not these people they are very appreciative.

The statement describes yet another positive experience for Ani as a member of the immigrant community in the DFW area. Underlying Ani's statement is the

acknowledgement she receives from mainstream society in the DFW area. The statement highlights how race is perceived by the participant to explain her interaction with a member of the majority group in society. Ani is able to identify with the role that diversity and culture play in society and grasp the shifting contours of race relations in the twenty-first century. This illustration highlights how race can appear problematic for certain individuals. This illustration offers a glimpse into how participants interpret the categories of race and immigration which are contested in the US. Shiva, another participant describes how she interprets race in her everyday life.

Yeah I can tell very clearly that I've been very underpaid all along in my career when it comes to immigrants and especially minorities, women are a lot more underpaid with the same amount of experience when you compare with men.

This statement emphasizes how the participant perceives race in her daily life. This example illustrates how racial minorities interpret their position in the US. By using race as a lens, Shiva shares her experience about the differential treatment accorded to minority women in the work place. In gauging the tension that women face, Shiva explains her personal struggle in the US. Shiva's statement elucidates the complexity of "inequality" (Gold 2004:954) in a stratified society. In addition to race, the participant describes:

Appearance wise Yeah, they do. I mean they do expect us to dress professionally and if you wear lot of Indian clothes and all. I mean this is my own personal opinion, the more you kind of act you are a stranger, the more they are reminded that you are a stranger and their attitude and the way they treat everything differs. So it's better for me to kind of dress up and mingle along. Make myself not to be[...] That's it for me, the whole time I experienced it

The example highlights how components of race and racial identity overlap with each other in Shiva's case. Especially when Shiva emphasizes her conformity with the normative dress code in her work place. Shiva's statement offers a glimpse into how she negotiates her professional and racial identity in the US. Shiva's example sheds light on the theme of race and of the social construction of race enacted through the daily social practices. Omi and Winant astutely note that race "is defined and contested throughout society, in both collective action and personal practice" (Rothenberg 2010:16). SK, another participant describes:

Racism, no I haven't felt anything [...] I would say yes I have seen less Indian women as a Manager or a Director than anybody else[...] I think people still have some reservations among you know like for Indians or like everybody else now it's becoming more of cosmopolitan, like a lot of other races Chinese, Indian, and Mexican and all [...] but I will still say its US. It's White and Black dominated kind of a country and they accepted Blacks now but I think they're still not ready to accept Indians

In her statement SK discloses her viewpoint of racial minorities in a changing multicultural environment in the US. Bridging the reality of her lived experience as a minority, SK interprets race by referring to her identity as an Indian, in a racially stratified society. In doing so, she refers to how she interprets the previous racial boundaries between white and black in society. In addition, she mentions that she has not experienced any form of racism in society. Yet, in her statement she refers to the prevailing racial dichotomies that permeate the existing social structures to ultimately inform the individual viewpoint of race in society (Tuan 998:29). This example

underscores the phenomenon of race. Varsha describes her experience with the prevailing forms of race-related inequality in the US:

Inequality? forms of inequality, yes! Sometimes you feel at time okay maybe because of your accent or maybe because of your totally different look, uhh because we are brown skinned, so it is not either white or black, it is in-between and we are not Hispanic. When we speak maybe three four sentences we know they know we are not Hispanics so we are not Chinese, we are, they are not South Korean, this and that. I mean they know we are from India. They know that you are educated. So they got to understand that. And they are understanding that we are smart enough to communicate and things like, so, that they kind of okay! I am dealing with, you know lady who knows what she is doing. So, then they are more respectful to you. And but I have seen that sometimes they don't consider your opinion that much. That has also happened. Maybe especially with me in my job because I was life skills teacher. I was adaptive life skills teacher. So, I came from the very bottom up here for all these seven eight years. So, they might be thinking, okay, I handled all these mentally challenged kids, so what does she know? [...]

The statement emphasizes that existing forms of “racial classification” (Gold 2004:952) become manifest in society to inform the individual standpoint of race. The statement reveals that relevant to the discourse on race is the reference to skin color or racial classification in its impact on members of the minority group. This example illuminates Varsha’s awareness of the influence of race and the certain stereotypes of Asians in the realm of work. Her statement highlights her new experience in the US.

Varsha’s experience reveals how race, class, ethnicity, and gender overlap with each other. As she reflects on this experience, she relays her struggle to achieve mobility in the US. In many ways this example illustrates how minority women including Varsha seek visibility in the workplace. The statement highlights the invisibility of minority women. Well-known scholars including Gold (2004) assert that a comprehensive



discussion of race and I add concepts of gender, ethnicity, and class is made possible by paying careful attention to “details of the local context” (p.964). TC, a professional describes her experience.

No, not actually because I am pretty much paid equally like you know [...] like the other faculty who are still finishing their PhD. So if you're talking about any form of overt discrimination, no I haven't faced any overt discrimination. [...] but between the lines you know again as I said it is an uphill task to establish credibility of a classroom because if you're you know some people if I am really on the face sometimes its assumed to be cultural or personality attribute, people know where it comes from [...] then of course with the economy and the way things are, we all have a lot of stereotypes about each other.

Often discussed in the writings on race issues of discrimination and prejudice. Numerous scholars such as Yang (2000) are resigned to the idea that “a significant problem in America today, is that of [racial] discrimination (p.131). In advancing a discussion of the theories associated with [racial] discrimination, Yang defines the issue as “actions taken by members of the dominant group that have negative effects on members of minority groups” (p.131).

Yang (2000) provides yet another definition of the term “as unequal or unfair treatment of individuals on the basis of their ethnic group membership” (p.132). Related to the discussion are components of discrimination including overt and covert types of discrimination (Yang 2000:134).

In the above statement, TC refers to the forms of discrimination that she has experienced in her workplace. Her statement highlights the barriers faced by minority professionals in academe, especially women, who are trying to establish their

professional identities. The reference to the word “uphill task to establish credibility” sheds light on the structural and gender-related constraints that impede minority professional women from achieving upward mobility. The concept of “minority group” is associated with individuals or members of ethnic groups occupying a subordinate position in society (Yang 2000:62). Also emphasized is TC’s ability to overcome these barriers in making an individual effort to overcome her struggles. Ann, another participant explains:

Yeah that’s the thing you know I told you I am not too happy over here with what I am doing and I would like to find something else but they don’t work with you simply cause they don’t like me or because I am a minority you know I can’t figure that out so I am like “wow I got all this experience you know [...]

Ann emphasizes that she does not enjoy her duties related with her position [in national grocery store]. She explains the difficulties in obtaining a preferable position of her choice [in national grocery store]. The participant is aware of her “social position and therefore she ponders the idea of being situated in a racially stratified society. Grouped together the participants’ testimonies elucidate their varied interpretation of race and race-related concepts in the US. The next section includes a discussion of ethnicity, class and gender.

## ETHNICITY

There has been a substantial growth in the literature on ethnicity. Ethnicity is a broad term and highlights the concepts of kinship, group solidarity, and common

culture (Hutchinson and Smith 1996:3). The participant, SK elaborates upon aspects of her ethnicity.

Well maybe I am lucky I do wear *Salwar-Kameez* (A tunic worn over loose pants and worn by Indian women) at work. I absolutely don't mind. Actually in the IT, I am not supposed to. We're supposed to wear the business casuals and there is a dress code and we're supposed to wear a business casual. Only on Fridays we can wear jeans. But then I started wearing, I saw a couple of people wearing *Salwaar-Kameez*, yeah it's comfortable. But honestly nobody ever said that what is this? In fact I got lot of compliments. They liked the Indian attire or I never heard anything bad about you know being an Indian that sometimes it does happen you can't speak or communicate. Or your communication is little weak, yeah [...] there is a miscommunication yeah sometimes people won't understand calls get little irritating. The other side is a little American and they are looking for information and you can't convey that message it gets little irritated it never happened to me. But the other group

SK identifies with her Indian-ness or ethnicity by recounting her preference for ethnic apparel. She also appears to claim her ethnic affiliation in a society dominated by majority groups. In addition to her views on race, she emphasizes her effort to exert individual agency by wearing ethnic apparel to work. In recalling this experience, SK conveys how she accommodates and resists the organizational norms. This example indicates her endeavor to establish her identity more firmly. Her statement underscores the growing visibility of minority women in the work place.

In addition to being accommodated in the workplace, SK hints at instances of distorted communication between members of the majority and minority group in the US. SK's example highlights the cultural context made apparent in the conversations between two groups to result in treating the other as an outsider. This example highlights

how SK interprets aspects of ethnicity in her daily life. The illustration uncovers how issues of race, ethnicity are embedded in the structure and experienced by SK at an individual level and in the realm of work. Ani, working as a Medical Assistant in DFW, shared her view of ethnicity:

See, since I work for an Indian doctor and also the doctor that talks my same language, I don't have that issue because I never worked for anybody else. I worked for my husband, I was the boss and I worked for the doctor who is my best friend so I haven't experienced at work but I experienced outside.

Ani's statement emphasizes the role of ethnicity in the context of her work. This example highlights how commonality of language generates feelings of camaraderie between members of an ethnic group. This statement highlights how ethnicity allows for individuals to become affiliated by sharing a common language and statehood. One can discern how certain frames of reference including language, the cultural context become magnified to highlight certain interactions in society especially between members of the Indian community and generate closeness between members of an ethnic group.

Scholars, including Yang (2000), determine ethnicity as an outcome of an individual's "subjective perceptions based on some objective characteristics such as physical attributes, presumed ancestry, culture, or national origin" (p.40). Yang (2000) explicates the association between ethnic affiliation and ethnicity to show that ethnicity is "partly ascribed," and determined on the basis of "ancestry or presumed ancestry that normally carries certain physical or cultural characteristics and national or territorial origins" (p.48).

Rudrappa (2004) in her well-known study refers to ethnicity in the context of the

South Asian community in Devon Avenue, Chicago. Drawing on a range of aspects that underlie ethnicity, she refers to food and items such as *masalas* (Indian spices which are ground together) and used in the preparation of Indian food, and vegetables which frequent the Indian fare such as *bhindi* (okra), *mulee* (radish), and *baingan* (brinjal or eggplant) to reinforce the symbolic meaning of food and culture in the context of ethnicity (Rudrappa 2004:2). Analogous with Rudrappa's description of Indian foods, was that of Neena who had arrived in the US to obtain a degree in higher education. She belonged to a traditional South Indian Tamil family. Her father was an IIT engineer in Madras. When describing her experience in the DFW area she mentioned:

Oh yeah making pancakes for *Dosas* its small things you know but I remember in grad. school too I had to make those adjustments now it's much easier now for I remember when I was leaving India Star TV and all that [...]Indian food [...] and also the fact that we adjust to the foods and I think being able to adjust to foods makes a lot of difference in your how willing are you [...] and I still remember the Aunties talking about making *yoghurt chutneys* with sour cream and *dosas* with pancake mix because you didn't get those good blenders then. So you wanted *dosas* you find what you have. I remember my father saying that they would only make *upma upma upma* that's the only thing the guys knew to make under the familiar foods and I think now gosh you can make, you can get frozen *idlis* and frozen *dosas* and frozen everything. It makes it so easy for people to get the taste of home.

This statement emphasizes the role of ethnicity in the lives of Indian women settled in the US. Neena recalled how she had encountered conversations by Indian women about finding ethnic grocery stores that cater to the Indian community. Reflecting upon the diversity and growth in the DFW area she shared the availability of ethnic food choices, including frozen foods. The example shows how ethnic ties with one's country

of origin continue to impact women, and for women such as Neena they have acclimated to their situation over time. She appears to send out a dual message, one of becoming incorporated into the US and the other of selectively retaining aspects of her ethnicity in order to identify with her homeland (Rudrappa 2004:167). The next section includes a discussion of the concept of gender.

## GENDER

Discussions of race, class, ethnicity would be inadequate in the absence of gender (Rothenberg 2010:1). Many posit that gender, race, and class are socially constructed; and argue that these issues are indeed more complex today (Yang 2000). In this section I attempt to show how gender permeates the social structures and its recognition as being “socially imposed,” to differentiate between individuals in society (Rothenberg 2010:9). Another participant named SK describes:

I would say, yes, I have seen less Indian women as a Manager or a Director than anybody else

In a single sentence the participant illustrates issues faced by minority women and women in positions of authority in the workplace. This example reveals how gender and race are intertwined (Lorber 2001:148) in the workplace to impact minority women. This statement illustrates the phenomenon of a glass ceiling that hampers the mobility of minority women; and their advancement in “top positions” (Schaefer 2011:80). The example illustrates how SK interprets gender. The example reveals how gender is construed “as a social institution,” and what Lorber explains as “a process of creating distinguishable social statuses for the assignment of rights and responsibilities” (Ore

2009:115). Few elaborate how gender is situated in a stratified society, to differentiate between individuals along lines of gender, race, religion, occupation, class, country of origin (Ore 2009:117). Another participant, named PR shares her story:

And then there is the other kind of Indian woman who comes because she gets married to a man who is over here. Okay so she comes as an H1 4 or H1 B whatever it is. After some time she cannot work right away if she is been working in India because of the visa restrictions. Some of them go to a community college or something like that. Some of them stay at home become mothers, raise their children. They may or may not work after that [...] Uhh also sometimes I feel that they defer to their husbands a lot more. Does that even make sense whereas the woman who comes here on her own steam as opposed to on her husband's coat tails she tends to be her own person much more. Now this is generality and there are exceptions to the rule on both sides.

This statement presents a perspectival view of immigrant women in the US. Specifically PR makes it a point to refer to the “contemporary temporary labour programme, the H-1B Program which imports a large number of male, Indian high-tech workers to the US” (Koshy and Radhkrishnan 2008:291). The statement reveals how Indian women are constrained as a result of their dependent status and have limited options in the US. The statement highlights how PR calls attention to gendered or engendered identities that emerge as a result of their dependent status. However, PR also goes on to shed light on how immigrant women contest the process of immigration and become social agents as they carve a niche for themselves. The statement emphasizes how PR makes sense of her own trajectory as an immigrant in the US. This statement illustrates PR’s response to immigration and what some may describe as the social consequences of gender in the context of immigration (Pedraza 1991).

Furthermore, PR's statement highlights the engendering process of immigration. Early theoretical models of the settlement process of labor migration were one-sided; and advanced from the perspective "of male migrants" (Glenn 1986:14). The experiences of women were overlooked and women were considered "as a marginal category" (Glenn 1986:14) or as dependents of men (Phizacklea 1983, Morokvasic 1984, Glenn 1986, De Laet 1999). PR's statement reveals how women become engendered in the process of immigration. This example illustrates PR's reaction and response to the process of immigration. In addition to PR, SC tells a story of her response to the process of immigration. Currently she is employed as a Revenue Management and Pricing Analyst in a domestic airline company:

And it was an interesting you know, shift for me because it was all people my age and they were very young, I was and I am. I still am, the only Indian in the department it's a pretty big department. Very few girls, it's a very highly analytical mathematical department. I am not saying that's why there are not many girls it's just that there aren't many girls [...] there aren't many women in the department [...] and yes I am fine with that and I feel like because I didn't think I was any different I was never treated any differently. Obviously there were you know one of ignorant comments from you know people who were not really my colleagues [...] office assistants and yeah not but never mean or never hurtful or anything. Just like "oh lady, you haven't travelled much, have you that kind of a, you know just that [...] I mean it's not like I have tried to change myself but at the same time I haven't tried to be very you know obviously in your face, "I am," "look at me, I am so different" A lot of women I have noticed that are women of ethnic origin at work who, not in my department but in other departments[...]

The statement reveals the role of gender in her daily life. The illustration highlights the issue of women in employment, and their underrepresentation in organizations. The example illustrates the role of ethnicity especially when Sweta refers to being the only Indian employee. Furthermore, she appears to make sense of her identity as an Indian woman by trying to accommodate herself. When SC refers to



“I haven’t tried to be very, you know obviously in your face,” she explains that she tries to fit in with mainstream society. Interestingly SC’s example illustrates her ability to grapple with “difference”. The statement reveals how gender overlaps with ethnicity in SC’s case. The example illustrates how gender and ethnicity are perceived by first-generation Indian immigrant professional women in the US. From SC’s experience we can glean how she makes sense of her position as an Indian professional in the US and her effort to secure a place in a racially stratified society.

In addition this example illustrates how immigration is reconfigured in SC’s experience. For SC who arrived as a young bride in the US, many changes have taken place. She had obtained an education and a career in the face of adversity including a divorce. From her story we can see that her success is an outcome of her human capital skills that she has recently acquired in the host country. This explanation might be a plausible one that allows us to understand SC’s effort to assimilate in the new land as seamlessly as possible (Glenn 1986:12). Underlying this illustration is the presence of pull factors that illustrate her pattern of settlement or more specifically her mode of incorporation as a minority woman in the US.

Nimmi, an entrepreneur in the US is now committed to Public Dental Health, where she caters to needs of children belonging to low-income groups in the US. Before taking on her current project, Nimmi had worked at a private dental practice:

It was all women and in my personal opinion any first all-woman environment [...] I think being an all-woman’s enterprise sometimes can be a little bit challenging because I hate to say this but being a woman, women can get carried. We try and maintain our professionalism. We can. You can quote me on this, we tend to be bitchy. I think we behave better when there is a man around [...] Except one time totally funny this was at [private dental practice], I was working on an older gentleman he was around [...]unfortunately the gentleman I was working on his son-in-law had gotten laid off because his company had gotten

downsized [...] So he was very upset with me he was irritated with me that I would not only just take his son-in-laws job away which I did not know I had done and then I would come here and work on him [...] he was very clear about it and he was not shy and he started off with this and I did ask him if you would like somebody else to take care of him he said : I don't have the time. So fine it might as well be just you and whatever so he sat in my chair and by the end of one hour he and I were really good friends.

Nimmi's example illuminates the challenges she faces as an Indian immigrant woman in the DFW area. The example offers a first-hand account of the challenges she faces when she works in a female-dominated enterprise. Interestingly she discusses how the presence of a man can serve as a buffer in the work-place. Furthermore when Nimmi explains her perception of male presence in the workplace, her revelation of the interaction with an older white gentleman, sheds light on the biases held by a few against members of minority groups or new immigrants in the US.

The example reveals how gender overlaps with race and class in the work place. The example illustrates how gender and immigration conflict with each other on a daily basis for women to reinforce ideas and biases that serve to differentiate between members of different racial groups in the US (Glenn 1992). Furthermore, the example shows how Nimmi negotiates with her identity as a professional Indian immigrant woman by showing deference to her male patient to address his apparent anxiety.

Furthermore, in the context of her family Nimmi described:

No, as a woman you are just supposed to do it all. I don't think people understand that when you sleep four hours a day for two to three years and come in sleep deprived putting on your make-up and work clothes and you're ready to perform, it takes a lot of a heck more effort, I don't think men are able to do that on a consistent basis. I slept four hours a night two, three, four years. And I still went to work with a great attitude and nobody could tell that I was sleep deprived.

This statement illuminates how women negotiate their roles in the family and work realm. By maintaining her demeanor, Nimmi explains how she gets through her day. Women in similar situations appear to face similar struggles on the work front. The example renders invisible the duties and responsibilities that Nimmi undertakes on the home front. Nimmi discusses how gender is embedded in the daily social practices for women in the work and family realm. Nimmi's story reveals how she perceives differences between men and women and makes it a point to expressly indicate that women are constrained by a lot more responsibility than men.

This story highlights that for Nimmi in particular she is constrained with the task of housekeeping and working. I agree with Arrighi (2007) where she states differences between the sexes are reinforced by images "of what men and women should be," in the process of "doing gender" (p.252). The statement also emphasizes that in addition to race, gender is socially constructed in society. By disclosing that women "are supposed to do it all" Nimmi offers a glimpse into how gender permeates the primary group to designate ideas of masculine appropriate and feminine appropriate behaviors (Arrighi 2007:252).

Kk describes her perspective on gender by referring to how gender and class intersect with each other:

Most of my friends, whom I know really well are, you know either stay-at-home Moms or going out and working[...]But still when I talk to my other friends they too have to talk about the challenges they meet at work too. So once I hear those, I feel like maybe it wouldn't really make a difference whether you're being an Indian or if you are in India or and you're immigrant in the US because the challenges you face in life is the same, anywhere be it back in India or anywhere you know in the US [...]That is the opinion I have, that is what I have seen and that's what I experience also so living in an already developed country, the challenges you have to face here may be we feel they are slightly lesser than

back in India [...]I feel it's pretty much the same, you know what you'd have back in India or you know back here it's all the persons outlook you know. What they are looking for and what they can also give to the society. It's not just what can society give me all the time? You have to give something to society too. So, I feel it's the challenges anywhere. So you have to meet it

The statement offers another interpretation of gender. Kk seeks to interpret gender by locating it within a global context. In her story Kk unfolds the challenges faced by working women.

In describing her experience Kk uncovers the numerous expectations from women in society. Kk's story conveys yet another message especially her effort to negotiate with society.

Kk's story is distinct. The participant did not have any previous work experience in India. She arrived as a dependent. Her ability to make economic decisions and enact individual agency highlights how immigration has been a positive experience for her. She also describes the challenges faced by women in society. By doing so she interprets the additional demands faced by women within "the confines of their family and community life" (Zinn and Dill 1994:165). The participant appears to essentialize the experiences of women; and call attention to prevailing gender roles in society.

The participants' observation on women in society underscores that women share a number of similarities even though they are classified in society as American or Indian "but connected in systematic ways" (Zinn and Dill 1994:10). Seema, PR, SC, Nimmi, and Kk's stories tell of their varied experiences in society. The stories posit how race, ethnicity, and gender overlap with each other in the US.

## CLASS

I now draw on a few examples of how the issue of class intersects with issues of

race, ethnicity, and gender. As Arrighi (2007) notes “social class intersects with race[,] ethnicity and gender and does not stand alone” (p.9). The next section uncovers the concept of social class in the context of first-generation Indian Immigrant women in the US. Ore (2009) elaborates upon the definition of social class to interpret it within the interpersonal context and I explicate it as part of the daily encounters and practices of individuals. I now provide a few examples of how immigrant women interpret social class. Rini, a member of the South-Asian diaspora was born and raised in the UK. Rini describes her background briefly to state that her father had immigrated to the UK to for higher education. She indicated that she had an undergraduate degree in Economics from a school in Bristol and a postgraduate degree in Political Economy in East Asia and Mandarin from a school in Leeds. She was employed as a Medical Examinations Officer at a university in London. After getting married she had moved to the US. Since, she had obtained her certification in teaching and had 8 years of work experience in the DFW area. As she described her work experience she mentioned:

Greiner Middle School it's in Oak Cliff. But it's a very positive environment and most of the kids are pretty good, like their talent. They have a very good, talented, gifted program, and they also have[...] It's an academy so we have very talented kids, very smart kids. So you're not just dealing with neighborhood kids. So it was very positive. Like, I said it was easy for me because I've had a support system. But I know some of my co-workers single mothers having to drop off their kids at day care at seven 'o' clock and they don't pick up their kids till five you know they have to do everything by themselves [...] So, for me you know I can crib about balance work life. But then I can't imagine what it was like for them? But at least you know I had a husband who paid for a nanny, who paid for a housekeeper, (giggles) you know I didn't have to worry about anything, you know, me I really can't complain ( laughs)

Here the participant draws a comparison with her working-class colleagues to highlight their struggles on a daily basis. The example illustrates how Rini, who belongs to a

very affluent family interprets social class. The role of social class is evident in shaping individuals like Rini who is aware of her privileged position in society (Arrighi 2007:9). The example illustrates that social class is constructed as an outcome of institutional and interpersonal contexts (Ore 2011:10-11), especially when the participant attaches meanings (Ore 2011) to the prevailing social structures including her work place in the DFW area. TC another participant discusses the role of social class in her experience as a professional:

Quality of living, I guess being used to the air-conditioning and car. You know when you go to the grocery or little things in life [...] it's like you know getting something...pays your bills, right much more easier [...] and the whole standardization of a comfortable way of living, you know whether you are making \$30,000 or \$60,000 I like that fact everybody is entitled to basic comforts

TC shares the positive aspects of her experience as an immigrant professional in academia. In relaying her struggles initially as a working-class student and subsequently as a faculty member, her statement reveals the benefits that accrue to her by virtue of her present position in the US. Yet, the reference she makes to “the whole standardization of a comfortable way of living” prompts a discussion of “the ramifications of joining the middle class” in the US (Arrighi 2007:10).

The statement emphasizes how TC interprets the concept of social class. Another participant SC also from a very affluent family in Calcutta, India tells of her experience as a professional in the US.

And this was six months before the actual restructuring I got the promotion [...] I was really really enjoying myself [...] I didn't have more than five good friends traveling a lot on weekends or visiting abroad you know pick a city and just go for the night and I have traveling benefits due to my work and did

a lot of that and things started getting really good at work and promotion and everything the restructure and that happened and they started they ended up giving me the most challenging market set [...] yeah when I say market set I am at the headquarters in Dallas but I am managing that region of the airlines network [...] because I was obviously the best candidate [...] I know the salary range that is offered to the Analysts in the department and I know that I am at the top bracket [...] definitely maybe I have my own accounts I have made investment decisions at to my 401 K having your 401 K in your IRA or having it in... decisions like that putting money away I am big fan of Suzie Ormond who keeps saying women shall have eight months of cash balance so that in case you lose a big job you should have money to sustain you I follow that too [...] And I have traveled abroad by myself and actually when I was married, I always traveled by myself and when I say traveled abroad it's not just to meet family. It's for fun just with friends and I travel a lot for fun

This statement reveals the positive benefits that became available to SC as she achieved upward mobility in the US. This statement reveals how social class is constructed in society to provide a foundation including monetary gains and material benefits for certain individuals (Ore 2009:11). Underlying her story is the theme of financial security that is of significance to her.

The statement highlights SC's attempt to secure her life by enacting strategic decisions. In many ways for SC it is important that she has financial security. This example illustrates how immigrant women are construed as "shapers of their own lives" (Zinn and Dill 1994:6). What emerges from this illustration is how gender, race, ethnicity, and class overlap each other and are multiplicative in effect as seen in the case of first-generation Indian immigrant working women.

## CONCLUSION

The narratives offer reflections on the socially constructed categories of race, ethnicity, class, and gender. The evidence shows that race, ethnicity, gender, and class

overlap each other in multiple ways for Indian immigrant working women. In order to facilitate a nuanced discussion of how they overlap each other it is important to consider the significance of each concept as an analytical category. The concepts uncover the importance of race, ethnicity, gender, and class to explain how they overlap with each other. The examples show how these issues shape women's lives (Amott and Matthaei 1996:28). In addition, the discussion sought to bridge the structural framework of race and ethnicity with individual or micro-level interpretations of race and ethnicity. Furthermore, the individual level interpretations by first-generation immigrant women workers provide a nuanced discussion of race and ethnicity and of their attempt to resist, accommodate, and grapple with race, ethnicity, class and gender.

The examples shed light on the experiences of newcomers in the US. Possible layers of commonalities and variations can be discerned by taking into consideration the experience of professional and nonprofessional first-generation Indian immigrant women workers in the DFW area. Given the shifting contours of race and ethnic relations in the twenty-first century, the examples illustrate how gender intersects with the process of immigration in society.

The descriptions contribute to an understanding of gender by illustrating on how gender relations undergird the workplace, the society, and members of the majority and minority group. The concepts of race and ethnicity show how these issues impact women in the workplace and their life chances. The testimonies reveal the diversity of experiences that were discerned from the arrival of newcomers in the US.



In response to my research question: How do race, ethnicity, class, and gender intersect with their experiences in the workplace and the family? I believe that this theme is relevant. The concepts shed light on the position of women in the labor market and their varied experiences to illustrate the complexities of their lives in a society stratified by race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Their testimonies highlight how issues vary for each individual. In addition the concepts and the immigrant stories throw open for our consideration alternate ways of thinking about the DFW area as an emerging market for migrant labor especially for first-generation Indian immigrant working women. Furthermore, their stories highlight the growing significance of “work of women” and of its distinct position as an outcome of a labor market that is shaped by issues of race, ethnicity, class and more importantly even gender.

## CHAPTER VI

### FORMS OF NEW INEQUALITY

#### ANALYSIS OF THEME III

The issue of inequality is associated with the idea of one group having access to resources, position and authority over others in society (Arrighi 2007:5). In addition to the existing themes of power, access to resources, social scientists often discuss forms of new inequality arising out of the hierarchical arrangement of groups in society.

One of the common threads identified in the literature on inequality points to the contentious issue of gender and racial inequality in the workplace. In explicating upon gender inequality, Lorber (2001) notes that “it is usually women who are disadvantaged relative to similarly situated men” (p.5). For instance, women receive less pay for “the same or comparable work,” and face limited opportunities for upward mobility (Lorber 2001:5). The literature also describes the issue of discrimination and “job-level segregation by sex and race” Devey (1993). McCall (2001) advanced a discussion of the concept of complex inequality. Integrating the spatial and social analyses, McCall (2001) explained the concepts of “new inequality” and “forms of new inequality” (p.6). McCall (2001) explained that new inequality is comprised of old inequality and emergent “configurations of inequality in which race, gender, and class, intersect [with each other] in a variety of ways depending on underlying conditions in local economies” (p.6).

McCall (2001) argues the challenge lies in formulating a comprehensive explanation of inequality “as an outcome of both economic restructuring and gender and racial divisions of labor” (p.8).

A growing body of work concentrates on the inclusion of gender in the research on inequality . Gender is understood as a fluid and situational category that is embedded in the social structure and the workplace. Shifts in the study of gender are underway. In contrast to previous studies, contemporary studies include both the structural and the micro level interpretations of gender. Arrighi (2007) lauds Judith Butler’s efforts to deconstruct gender in society (p.11). In her interpretation of gender, Arrighi (2007) draws on Judith Lorber to show that “becoming women and men in Western society has more to do with ideology and power than physical characteristics” (p.11).

With a focus on forms of new inequality this chapter includes a conceptual discussion of the work. To explore the linkages between immigrants, gender, and work, I discuss my third key finding: forms of new inequality. This finding integrates a discussion of the concept of work experience. To illuminate the concept, I draw on the narratives of first-generation Indian immigrant women. I focus on their pre-migration and post-migration contexts to show how inequalities or forms of new inequality manifest at multiple levels in their daily encounters.

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

The data clustered around the concept of work experience. Work experience is conceptualized by considering within a comparative or dual framework experiences of women in India or home country and the US. In the study of inequality and stratification,

and the immediate context of immigrant women a closer look at the social processes, aspects of human culture, and social institutions that impact them were of relevance. Participants were asked to describe their previous work experience. Participants indicated experiencing various forms of inequality such as sex-biased stereotypes, structural and systemic barriers of longer or irregular work hours, low pay, low-end jobs, and gender-segregated work environments. Work experience was also not a new experience for first-generation Indian immigrant women. I now relay their stories about their work experience in a dual comparative framework including the premigration and post migration context.

#### PREMIGRATION CONTEXT

The first account provides an example of how a participant makes sense of her work experience in India. SK belonged to a middle-class Maharashtrian family. The participant was raised in Solapur, located in the state of Maharashtra. The participant had a bachelor's degree in Science. The participant was the only one among the other siblings in her family who had some work experience. In her story she related that her father had always motivated her to work. The participant shared details of her first job at a coaching class where she did not enjoy the work.

Because I wasn't getting chance to actually go and teach kids so I was doing all the background work which I didn't like. Here, I was my own boss. I could tell kids whatever time I want to be and then I was in full control of kids here. I could teach them what I wanted and then it was my full responsibility. So obviously instead of working under somebody and working by yourself it makes a difference.

SK's statement reveals the reality behind her first job in the coaching institute where she was relegated to background work instead of the more visible work of teaching. In addition to receiving less pay, SK appeared to have limited choices in the coaching institute. Therefore SK preferred the second option as a private tutor. Further SK indicated that when she began to coach students on her own without interference a coaching class, she strove to overcome the challenges of being situated in a low-end job and continue with job-related tasks that were not desirable to her. The theme of invisibility underlies this example where certain jobs offer limited mobility to women (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002:74). The challenges faced by SK indicated her subsequent effort to privately tutor students without any outside interference and her belief that she would have more freedom related with her work. Furthermore, when SK mentioned assuming "full responsibility" the participant enacts agency by exercising her option to carry out more fulfilling work.

Another participant named Varsha, a resident of Mumbai, when asked to describe her work experience in India provided details about her educational background, as well as facts about living in a joint family after marriage.

I have lot of gaps in my education. My first bachelor's was in 1980, which was in business and then I worked in business field, for (pause) until I got married. So, that was in 1982, so, about three years I worked and then again after my son's birth, I worked in business field for another seven years. So, like my experience in the business field is almost ten years. And then I got after 1980 because I was doing my CPA, like a Chartered Public Accountant. I pursued that, I thought I might finish it. But with all the responsibilities in the house, you know I could'nt do all that. So, finally in 1995, I got my another bachelors in Special Education which was a gap of 1980-1995, which was a gap of fifteen years. I got my bachelor's in special ed and I worked in the special education field for just a

semester. Because the, because I was 35 years and up, that was not like a, that was not like a permanent job, or I could, or it could not be turned into a permanent job in the public education field back home because I was older for that job. And but I was...and I had the certification and everything. But I could'nt get a job and because there was a big queue and I was 35 plus so that was very disappointing to me.

This story reveals the challenges faced by Varsha in her home country. Her story foretells the struggles of a working woman juggling multiple roles at the same time. Although equipped with educational qualifications, Varsha was unable to obtain a permanent position in the field of her choice due to certain age-based limitations. Underlying the narrative is the fact that although participants explore the local labor market, women face sex-based or even structural impediments that hinders their ability to have a career or contribute to the family income. The narrative revealed how working women with families respond to certain structural impediments at different points in their life. In addition to Varsha's story, TC described her work experience in India. TC indicated that she had a degree in Communications and held several jobs in different capacities as a Journalist, Public Relations Officer, and freelance work. Although she was professionally qualified and trained in the field of Communications she reported:

It's just that it seemed like there was a lot more to do for very little money. And unless you moved out of Calcutta, the pay structure wasn't going to buttress your growth [...] Again, as I said, I didn't care about working that much in India in Calcutta just because of the pay structure but you know. If I had stuck with my work as long as I did you know. Given the work scenario right now [if] I go back to Calcutta what I see now, then, you know things would have been different. Because things have changed so much.

This statement illustrates the structural constraints that continued to impact the respondent. Although TC was a qualified professional and had work experience, she

recalled her dissatisfaction with the pay structure and the organizational demands of working long hours for less pay. Underlying TC's story is the conflict or tensions that she experienced as a professional in Calcutta. She clearly described the limited opportunities that were available to her in India which ultimately enabled her to explore more rewarding options. TC's story illustrates how push factors prompted her to pursue viable options of higher education in the US. Contrary to existing explanations of women migrants as dependents, women immigrants appear to have enacted strategic decisions on their own in order to enhance their options in life. TC's observations allows us to appreciate the migration and settlement patterns of professional Indian women in the twenty-first century.

Another participant named Shiva who had a background in Electrical Engineering from one of the well-known colleges in South India indicated that she always wanted to work and have a career in contrast to other siblings in her family. The participant described the role of her father in motivating and guiding her after she obtained her Bachelor's degree. Shiva also indicated that her father encouraged her to undertake training in software which was a very popular and lucrative option for Shiva who led a sheltered life. Recalling her work experience in India, Shiva described:

My first job was doing some Design work, flow through and [...] after that I worked in a company where there were you know only three females from my class who joined, the rest of them were all male [...] But we did see some partiality right there [...] Partiality towards women. And the guys always used to you know, gang up little upon our Design work and question, things like that. At that time I didn't think. I wasn't very mature and all that enough to understand it. Look back sometimes I wonder, how did I work there in that environment? Like, gosh you know I did go through it, how did I go through it? But I think it's just that we don't know that. So, we go through all the things you know we were there

for a while and the company was laying you know cutting down it was a start-up kind of thing so

This is an example of a gender-segregated work environment where Shiva worked in an organization dominated by men. She recalled undue interference in her work by men. As well as conflict between male and female employees. Reflecting upon her work experience she describes that when women were allocated certain job-related duties this led to conflict with male employees. Shiva's story illustrated the dynamics that underlie a male-dominated work place and display of "masculine ethic" in organizations (Acker 1990:143). Evident is the embeddedness of male power within organizations to contribute to female subordination (Acker 1990:155).

These narratives illustrate the problems faced by professional working women in their home countries. Embedded in their narratives are glimpses of the challenges faced by working women in the pre-migration contexts. Although participants held jobs in different capacities, their statements reveal forms of inequality such as differential treatment, inadequate pay, inability to secure a permanent position because of age-based criterion. In addition to SK, Varsha, TC, and Shiva, the next section covers Ann's story.

#### *'Fourth Migrant'*

As a member of the South Asian diaspora, Ann is referred to as a "fourth migrant" because she belongs to the Gujarati community that migrated from India to Africa and then to the United Kingdom (UK) and subsequently the US. Ann was born in Tanzania raised in the UK, and presently settled in the US. She recalled her story.



Okay, I worked for a catalog company and that was my first full-time job. So, after I finished school. There were for .....it was called [...] catalog company ... it was a real good company to work. I started off as a filing clerk and got promoted upto a senior clerk. It was really good a good place to work

Ann, revealed that she liked working for a catalog company in Leicester, UK. She stated that she enjoyed working in a clerical capacity. Ann had also mentioned that she took up a job immediately after finishing school. Underlying Ann's story is a certain ambiguity about her life in the UK especially whether immigrant women such as Ann were not allowed to obtain a college education or the presence of structural or cultural barriers that hindered the options that were available to immigrant women in the UK. We can discern from Ann's story that she directed her effort to securing work in a clerical capacity. Also revealed are job opportunities that were available to immigrant women. Ann's story reveals clues that help in mapping the trajectories of "fourth migrant[s]," and members belonging to the South Asian diaspora. Bhachu Parminder (1985) describes the Africanization policies toward public services as a cause of the Asian exodus from East Africa to the UK. Categories of employees that suffered included "clerks, typists, middle and junior –level administrators and technicians," and "those who were sacked from the civil services had little scope to find jobs elsewhere in East Africa" (Parminder 1985:28).

These circumstances help explain the dispersal and migration patterns of members belonging to the South Asian diaspora to various destinations.

#### POSTMIGRATION CONTEXT

I employ the concept of work to interpret the experience of Indian immigrants in the DFW area. When participants were describing their experience in the

post-migration contexts, their statements pointed to the emergent new inequalities that manifested before them in their daily lives. To arrive at a better understanding of new inequality, I draw examples from the data. When asked about her present work experience, SK, a professional described:

At my workplace I have always seen White or a Black sitting at the top position I have always seen Indians doing the technical job, but not as a Manager. Very few managers than American or Black Managers.

This statement comes from a first-generation Indian immigrant professional who has five years of work experience in the DFW area. SK is aware of a form of “racial-ethnic typing” (Amott and Matthaiei 1996:24) or preferential treatment at work. SK’s statement suggests a certain racial and gender politics is woven into the organizational culture, with members of the majority group occupying a higher position and members of the minority group occupying technical positions.

In addition to SK, Shah had arrived as a student from India to obtain a degree in higher education in the US. In her interview she indicated that she had obtained a graduate degree from one of the Ivy League schools in the US and since then she had settled in the US. Shah shared details about the first job.

And not many foreigners I think in that office I mean Applied Materials as such is a global company it has a lot of Diversity, it’s just that office didn’t have as much [...] So there were probably I don’t know, couple of people who were not American[...] Not really! I mean I guess when you do engineering you’re already in the minority so you’re used to being the minority. There is another woman in my group she sits next to me. So we talk about other things, kids and stuff, but I think, I heard the other day that when people do surveys that women say they cannot talk to men. It’s not that they can’t have a conversation with the man; it’s just that they can’t. Conversations are about football, sports, and there is nothing to talk about. So, when I sit at lunch with the... because I sit mostly with the guys.

Because that's mostly where there is, their conversation is mostly about sports which we have no clue or what they are talking about.

This statement reveals certain facts about her workplace, in that it was dominated by members from mainstream society. Shah discloses how certain professions especially engineering are male-dominated. Furthermore, she shares details of the micro level interactions that take place in a gender-segregated work environment. The statement reveals how gender is enacted through daily conversations to differentiate between men and women. From her story we can tell how race and gender are embedded in the structure of society. Also revealed are the levels of interactions in a homogeneous group- the idea that men interact with other men to the exclusion of female employees. Acker (1990) delineates the phenomenon of social exclusion in a hierarchically stratified organization with men having more power over women. Another participant named Varsha also shared commonalities with Shah. Varsha had arrived as a student to pursue her graduate degree in the field of Special Education and soon become employed in a school in the DFW area.

Varsha described in her interview that she undertook a decision to pursue graduate school in the US for a number of reasons, namely for her family. Later when asked about her work experience in the US, Varsha recounted:

No no they but they at the same time they know we are smart enough to keep the job that we are not goofing around and we are not messing up with the other stuff like violating any laws of the school district or violating any other professional ethics then they know we are smart enough. Then they don't interfere in my teaching or in my decisions so much. We might not, I, especially at times am not real assertive in certain things in emphasizing this should be done like that or you know things like that. I am not enough assertive at times in my work and that is maybe just because sometimes you think you are like a second citizen okay are

you a second citizen of US that is at times it is true because you don't have anything in your hand and at this age you don't want to be hanging in between, not in India like, not in the US. You got to settle somewhere so at times sometimes if you don't agree with the decisions they are taking somewhere in the fourth grade, I just step back. I just don't say anything but that bothers me at times. I don't take too much stress out of that because I can go with the flow. You know go with the flow because at times that might be and it is a totally different culture. After ten years I am still understanding the cultural part of it

Varsha's comments emphasized her inability to assert herself on occasion. Relevant to this discussion of inequality, work and the immigrant experience, is Varsha's struggle as an outsider and a person of "minority" status. Varsha shared how she grappled with her reality as a minority and the new cultural context. The concept of culture is used in the context of distinguishing between the East and the West. Clearly Varsha experiences conflict as a second citizen in the post migration context. Both Shah and Varsha's statements disclose how status, minority position, and gender crosscut with each other in their work experience. Their statements reveal how professional women negotiate with their realities in the new land. For instance, Shah's statement offers an explanation for her indifference and accommodation to male-centered conversations during lunchtime. She and her female colleagues appear to have their own conversation instead. Varsha's story emphasizes her ongoing effort to deal with the organizational culture and establish her professional identity. In addition to Varsha, SK, and Shah, PR, a Tamil professional with a successful career in Management in India and presently employed as an academician, when asked to describe her US work experience, described:

It's been fun. I tell you that I've learned a few things from Florida State experience. So, when I came here, I directly knew that I had to make connections outside my department. Also, you're not battling an Old Boys Network maybe an Old Girls Network so that's easier to battle than an Old Boys Network.

The participant emphasizes the organizational structure of the workplace. PR discloses the politics that underlie gender-segregated academic institutions. Her reference to the Old Boys Network suggests her awareness of the external and internal mechanisms that are in place in institutions such as the academia. Her narrative reveals her intent to point out the exclusionary tendencies of members who hold authorial power. There appears to be an emphasis on inequality. Relevant to the discussion of inequality in the workplace, Purcell (2007) discusses the issue of ascriptive inequality to explain the power held by white men in certain positions of authority.

Relevant to the issue of ascriptive inequality, Elliott and Smith (2004) explain how work-related networks (p.368) are resources that are exploited by employees to their advantage. In addition to discussions of social and professional networks in organizations, Purcell (2007) draws on forms of cultural capital in organizations. Purcell draws on Pierre Bourdieu and other theorists to interpret cultural capital by arguing that it “refers to the role that cultural knowledge, tastes, practices, dispositions, attitudes, and goods play in the reproduction of social class and inequality” (2007:17). Therefore disclosed in PR’s emphasis on the Old Boys Network and Old Girls Network is her conscious attempt to utilize the Old Girls Network in order to establish her professional identity in academia. In the context of work and immigration, PR evaluates her experience in a positive light. Although PR does not overtly make a reference to

inequality, her comments about the Old Boys Network and Old Girls Network in two Southern academic institutions hint at the underlying issue of ascriptive inequality.

In furthering the discussion on inequality, Supriya, born in Guwahati, tells a somewhat unusual story. This is the story of a new arrival who entered the US on a dependent visa. and works as a volunteer. She described:

It's an IT consulting Company so I help out in the HR functions and the Accounts function[...] Since I did not have any experience working here, they said: I could come and do basic things like filing and certain help that they require in terms of doing excel spreadsheets and all that [...] Yeah, very casually. As in I want to do something further. Maybe I can explore studying further too. Enhance my skills, so I can get a regular job. And they are pretty encouraging about that

This statement presents a grim picture of the initial struggles immigrant on a dependent visa. She is trying to explore her options of volunteer work with the hope that it will lead to a regular job. She recounts her work as a volunteer in an IT firm.

Yeah they pay me in terms of a personal check [...] Yeah, I would like to sort of, for this position to change into a regular job. And yeah they have been saying that like my work. But maybe in due course they haven't promised anything as yet. I have a word with them and they have said in future this might turn into a full-time position.

Supriya's position is precarious. Doing volunteer work is a means by which she is able to contribute to the family income and enter the work force. She continues to work for this IT consulting company as a volunteer. In continuation of the work experience of non-professionals including Supriya, I illustrate another example. Sunita arrived with her parents from Navsari, Gujarat, while she was in grade school.

(national retail store) it's a clothing company. Now they closed, the company is closed. So, I worked for them for nine years[...] uhh they trained you at work what you had to do it was a pretty nice experience so every day I learned something new from them so

When asked about the challenges she faced,

No they were like I said in the past I had no problems. All the managers were pretty good and all the people that I worked with were pretty nice too so. I went with (national grocery store) since [January] 2007 December 2007 (national retail store) closed so, the company let us go so [...] After that I worked in (national retail store) for almost a year (national retail store) for six months. I was just not I guess not happy or satisfied with the job. So finally they called me for a job at (grocery store) I came for interview and I got it and I have been working here for three years now (national grocery store) I can move up if I want to but because of my availability, I won't go further, I can [...] it's like if I have to open my[...] I have to be available to close till eleven which I cannot do that. Leaving that, I can be manager

Sunita tells a story of an immigrant working different jobs to earn her living and contribute to the family income. The participant discloses the reason behind occupying her present position as a cashier in a national grocery store. Underlying Sunita's statement is the fact that the participant is employed in a "lower-level position" (Acker 1990:149). Highlighted are facts about irregular work hours that are expected of minority women. In Sunita's case, her statement reveals the hierarchy associated with certain positions in organizations.

Acker (1990) discusses the organizational logic that underlies certain jobs and hierarchies (p.149). Acker (1990) explains that jobs and hierarchies are "abstract categories that have no occupants, no human bodies, no gender" (p.149). Therefore, when a worker is employed in a position, he/she is referred to as a "disembodied worker who exists only for the work" and that the worker cannot have "too many obligations outside

the boundaries of the job” and is “unsuited for the position” (Acker 1990:149).

Clearly Sunita is aware of the responsibilities that are associated with a managerial position, and for personal reasons she acquiesces to organizational power. This statement emphasizes the role of gender in organizations and the inner conflict experienced by minority workers. The story explains the concentration of minority women in positions that have limited scope for promotion.

A follow-up to Ann’s story (“*fourth migrant*”) is her work experience in the US.

Ann recounted:

I work in the bakery. (Interviewer observes her expression) I don’t really like it I am looking for something else you know. Really the work that I am doing is very hard. Its very physical, and you know, you’ve got to lift boxes. Go in the freezer and stuff like that. Its not a job, I really like. I thought it would be different. I am looking for something else [...] I mean the people are friendly you know! But the only thing I don’t like is the bakery. Because they just keep putting more and more stuff on you. They want you to do a lot of stuff in eight hours which is impossible. Yeah, like for myself you know, I don’t like to work in that department cause it’s the freezer. I don’t weigh much. I weigh ninety-five pounds. So, if you have to lift a box that’s forty-five pounds, you know its kind a half your weight. So you know that I don’t like and you know they should really get a guy to do this kind of work and they don’t listen to us. So we’re stuck doing that kind of work, hard work so.

Ann’s story uncovers the details of her job including the nature of work, the long hours at work, and the fact that she does not like working at (national grocery store) anymore. The participant discloses the difficulty she faces in having to open the freezer, and lift heavy boxes. Ann and Sunita’s statements show that immigrants are often situated in jobs where there is little room for upward mobility. Parallel to the relocation of Indians in the DFW area, referred to as a “global city,” (Sassen 2002) contemporary research needs to address



why immigrants are constrained in jobs with limited opportunities for advancement. The present study demands an in-depth look into comprehending the transformations in the new economy, especially at the micro level. Many argue the need to explore the multi-layered process of immigration. Ann shared the circumstances that led to her employment in a national grocery store including the closing down of the family business.

Although Ann has worked previously, her story reveals that she has to remain in a difficult job, to earn a living and make a contribution to the family income. Ann's story highlights the difficulties faced by immigrant families who run their own businesses and their subsequent effort to sustain themselves. As Gujaratis, both Sunita and Ann share commonalities of language and Indian heritage. In narrating her story, Sunita disclosed that her family had migrated to the US for the purpose of higher education. Ann, a "*fourth migrant*" mentioned that her family re-located from Tanzania to the UK, and that upon her marriage she had moved to the US. As nonprofessionals, their stories re-echo their struggles as economic migrants and facets of their experience as immigrants including their views about family obligation, tradition, and ethnicity. Interestingly Supriya, Ann, and Sunita shared with me their views on college education and the importance of career choices. Sunita, Ann, and Supriya's stories exemplify aspects of new inequality. Their narratives about their work experience in prominent grocery stores and volunteer work suggests their entry into the US labor-market in low-end jobs and limited options for upward mobility. Parallel to the relocation of Indians in the DFW area, referred to as a "global city," (Sassen 2002) contemporary research needs to address

why immigrants are constrained in jobs with limited opportunities for advancement. The present study demands an in-depth look into comprehending the transformations in the new economy, especially at the micro level.

## CONCLUSION

Relevant to their experience as members of the South Asian diaspora, the testimonies derived from the participants in this study reveal the location of women in organizations or work environments that are stratified along lines of gender and race (Koshy and Radhakrishnan 2008). This discussion undercores the ubiquity of inequality. The data showed that working women share certain commonalities including structural constraints, conditions of the labor market, and other factors that are relevant to the economy whether local, regional or international. The findings point to the complex ways in which women grappled with forms of structural inequalities and continued to work even in their home countries. Work remained central to their lives in their home countries.

Subsequent to their arrival in the US and contrary to forms of new inequality that have emerged in the US, the stories show that Indian immigrant women are grappling with the structural inequalities in the US and striving to become incorporated in the US labor market.

Contrary to the traditional ideologies of wifhood, family obligations, Varsha indicated that she always wanted to have a career. In her narrative she tells of her efforts to negotiate multiple roles of career and family. Her example illustrates how certain inequalities manifested for her and that she was unable to pursue a career in her desired

field. TC's story conveys the structural constraints that impact working women in regional economies. In an effort to grapple with the structural inequalities in Calcutta, TC's example offers an illustration of how women undertake decisions to seek viable options including higher education in the US.

Ann, tells a different story about working in the UK. Underlying Ann's story is the explanation that immigrant women are often concentrated in clerical jobs with limited options for promotion or well-paid positions. Ann's story revealed the constraints faced by her in the UK. SK, Varsha, TC, and Shiva's examples illustrate how gender crosscuts with inequality to result in the production of gendered identities. Their experiences are distinct even though they share commonalities of work and Indian culture. The examples show in multiple ways how immigrant women grappled with the inequalities in their home countries.

Furthermore in the post-migration contexts, participants' stories yielded insights into specificities about the immigrant experience. PR's story uncovered the realities behind networks, immigrant professionals, and forms of inequality. Implicit in the reference to the "Old Boys" Network is the idea that white men are in control of certain organizations. Networks are sustained to reinforce certain hierarchies in organizations. In that members belonging to one group are likely to privilege similar others in organizations. Thus in deconstructing the myth of a gender-neutral organization, Acker (2006) explains how inequalities manifest in organizations.

PR's statement revealed how she comprehended the working of the internal mechanisms in academia, in that knowledge of previous networks affiliated to another

academic institution provides her resources and knowledge of new networks. For PR, an immigrant professional, the need to become part of the “Old Girls” Network is essential. The need for minority professionals to establish their identities is being disclosed. Through a seamless yet strategic move PR seeks to establish her professional identity in an academic institution run by women. In addition, to the issue of ascriptive inequality that is associated with an “Old Boys” Network, this narrative exposes how organizations are segregated along lines of gender and race.

To explain the concept of work and elaborate upon the work experience of Indian immigrant women in the US, Shah’s narrative prompted a discussion of cultural capital and inequality. Shah described the display of masculine behavior and male dominated talks during lunchtime. Her revelation disclosed how forms of cultural capital were evoked by men to exclude others including Shah. Shah’s example illustrates how immigrant women working in male dominated occupations have to negotiate everyday social practices to further their own goals. This is an example of how gendered identities are reproduced in organizations through exclusion and forms of organizational logic.

In sum the stories speak of the diverse experience of immigrants. What comes forth is that where previous discussions of inequality included macro level explanations of the structure and a stratified society discussions at the micro or individual level need to be integrated in the context of immigrants.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter begins with a visual example illustrated in Table 1 that highlights the key themes in individual rows from left to right: dimensions of empowerment, issues of race, class, gender, and forms of new inequality. Indicated under each key theme are relevant concepts associated with each concept that emerged in this study of first-generation Indian immigrant professionals and nonprofessionals in the DFW area.

Table 1: Themes and concepts

<b>Theme I: Dimensions of Empowerment</b>	<b>Theme II: Issues of Race, Class and Gender</b>	<b>Theme III: Forms of New Inequality</b>
HAPPY	RACE	WORK EXPERIENCE
INDEPENDENT	ETHNICITY	Premigration Context
WORK AND LIFE IN THE US	CLASS	Postmigration Context
	GENDER	

#### DIMENSIONS OF EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment was conceptualized by exploring the work experiences of women in India and the US. To facilitate an understanding of empowerment the study focused on the manifest and latent aspects that resulted from the process of empowerment. For example when women described their experiences, the emergent concepts happy, independent, work and life in the US appeared relevant as Dimensions of Empowerment. The concepts pinpointed that working women were able to enact agency at different points in their lives. The idea of work was central to their experience in India and the US.

The concept of happy that emerged from the experiences of working women indicated that participants were college educated and were motivated to work in India. Out of the 17 respondents, three indicated they had no prior work experience in their home countries. The remaining had previous work experience. Interestingly as they narrated their work experience they recalled a stronger sense of self, ability to take control over their lives, and self-confidence in the context of their work. Their stories highlighted the efforts by professional women to enact strategic decisions such as work and pursue a career. For example, in India, Ani had worked as a doctor. The participant reported feeling happy when she received acknowledgement for her service as a doctor. Working women such as Ani and NP identified how being able to work and have a career contributed to their subjective well-being.

Underlying their stories are themes of agency and autonomy. The concept happy is a latent aspect that flows from the process of becoming empowered . When women undertook key strategic decisions including work they indicated a stronger sense of self and personal satisfaction in having more control over their lives. Reflecting on their stories we can glean how participants such as Ani have managed to grapple with traditional ideas common to certain Indian families in South India where women were not allowed to work. In spite of such hurdles, Ani relentlessly pursued her ambition to become a doctor. The participant also relayed her work experience in the US, where she referred to being “happy” in the context of her work as a Medical Assistant. Ani’s example illustrates her intent to carve a niche for herself and make a

significant economic contribution to the family income. In addition, her example reveals the struggles faced by immigrant women in the US. Ani's story provides insight into the structural constraints related with a racialized labor market that impede working women from realizing their dreams.

A careful study of the concepts showed that empowerment entails both the external factors of becoming incorporated in the labor market, securing work, as well as the internal processes that women experience in the process of empowerment. As mentioned before, sociological discussions that shed light on the macro level processes that enable immigrant women to work and the micro level processes associated with a growing sense of power, ability to assert one-self in society and enact agency, deserve consideration in the research and scholarship on gender and migration.

Participants NP and Kk also reflected on their ability to enact agency and undertake strategic decisions that contributed to their well-being. Reflecting on the concept of independence, the stories illustrated how women were able to enact agency, autonomy, and self-confidence in the work realm. Independent was another very relevant concept in the discussion of the key findings. What can be gleaned from the concept are the diverse meanings that underlie the concept of independence such as the need for becoming self-sufficient and autonomous agents in society. Several themes including agency and autonomy were associated with the concept when working women emphasized details about their work and their ability to enact economic decisions that was of importance to them as autonomous agents in society.

The concept Work and Life in the US reveals the trajectories of immigrant

women both professional and nonprofessional in the US. The testimonies of participants indicated that to become empowered women had to overcome barriers or structural constraints. In addition to themes of agency, autonomy, and a growing self-confidence as described by the participants, immigrant women appeared to negotiate the forms of inequality that accompanied their experiences. The participants' stories revealed the new opportunities and the changes that were taking place in the new land.

The three concepts happy, independence, and work and life in the US were relevant in the discussion Dimensions of Empowerment. The integrative approach of immigration, race, ethnicity, class, and gender allows us to understand the dynamics that underlie the labor market incorporation of first-generation Indian professionals and nonprofessionals especially in terms of the issue of empowerment. The integrated framework is useful in that it gives voice to Indian immigrant women to identify with dimensions of empowerment. A consequence of the overlapping categories of immigration, race, ethnicity, class, and gender highlight the analytical role that gender plays in the context of immigration. The integrated framework of immigration, race, class, gender will help comprehend how immigrant women respond to immigration, and What are the reasons for their migration? The framework will contribute to the understanding that women experience the process of immigration differently. The subtle nuances of the daily interactions of immigrant women will deserve consideration in sociological studies. Additionally the stories of women indicated that empowerment is not always a linear process.

Additionally the discussion of empowerment indicates the impact of immigration



on the labor force participation of women in various ways. The testimonies of participants revealed that immigrant women viewed their experiences in the US favorably. Consequent to their incorporation into the US labor market the participants dealt with the challenges and barriers they faced as a result of being situated in a racialized labor market in the process of becoming empowered which in many ways contributed to their survival as social actors and as workers in the new land. The concept of immigration will make visible the nuances of the multiple experiences of women in the process of empowerment. Thus, migration appears to be a complex process.

The integrative framework of gender and work in India and the US highlights the linkages between macro, meso, and micro levels of analyses in the context of first-generation Indian immigrant women in the DFW area. More importantly the integrative framework will highlight how the issue of immigration “profoundly impacts the public and private lives of women-their labor force participation, their occupational concentration,” and even contribute to their “autonomy and self-esteem” and help them identify with transformative changes including a redefinition of their lives in a “satisfying manner” than prior to migration (Pedraza 1991:322).

#### INDIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN: ISSUES OF RACE, ETHNICITY, CLASS, AND GENDER

Participants stories revealed how issues of race, ethnicity, class, and gender played out for first-generation Indian immigrant professional and non-professional women in the US. Although these issues are conceptualized differently in the literature on race, the simultaneity of race, class, gender in the lives of the participants conveyed the impossibility of glossing over them. Participants shared multiple accounts of how these

issues impacted them or were experienced by them in their daily lives. Women recounted stories where they shared disturbing incidents that reflected hostility or forms of displeasure directed towards them in the new land.

Their stories reflected their experiences with members of mainstream society and their lived experiences in a racially stratified society. The narratives underscored the diverse ways that immigrant women grappled with issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and social class in the new land. As Collins (2000) notes “race is far from being the only significant marker of group difference” even “class, gender” matter in our society (p. 23). In describing her experience with race, Shiva relayed the differential treatment accorded to minority women in terms of receiving less pay when compared to men. Shiva’s example prompted a discussion of the grim realities that underlie the labor market and other difficulties faced by immigrant women in the US.

Participants shared stories that highlighted the role of ethnicity in society. In their stories participants explained how they grappled with issues of ethnic identity in order to become accommodated in society. The narratives of participants highlight the overlap between issues of race, ethnicity. Underlying their stories was the reference to women, and the issue of “Indian-ness” that was amplified by illustrating examples of Indian food, wearing ethnic apparel such as salwaars, and speaking in native languages (Rudrappa 2004:141). Participants disclosed how they negotiated their Indian culture in the US by acquiescing to the norms of Western clothing at the workplace.

One of the limitations of the race, class, and gender theory is that it overlooked the role of ethnicity. Scholars have addressed this shortcoming by presenting discussions

of race, and ethnicity in the research to highlight the relevance of ethnicity in the context of immigrant groups from Asia. The concept of ethnicity is conceptualized by illustrating the concept of ethnic identity in the context of particular groups, including newcomers from the Indian sub-continent in the US.

Although race and ethnicity are different issues, the stories of the participants indicate the simultaneity of issues of race and ethnicity in the context of new arrivals including women in professional and non-professional occupations.

#### FORMS OF NEW INEQUALITY

In describing their experience of inequality women shared details of job-level segregation by sex (Devey 1993:3). Inequality was determined by examining the references made by participants of the advantage that members of the majority group especially white men have over others including minorities (Devey 1993:3). Evident from stories shared by women were realities of being placed in dead-end jobs with limited scope for upward mobility, less pay, and longer hours of work. This is relevant to what Devey (1993) discussed in his study of issues of gender and racial inequality at work that “jobs that are only or primarily populated by women or minorities tend to have low wages, given their required skills” (p.7). For example participants SK, TC, and Varsha described their struggles in trying to overcome the forms of inequality in the workplace.

Varsha referred to certain age-biased limitations, while TC and SK referred to limited opportunities in their fields and limited upward mobility. Scholars have questioned issues of “status closure” in their conceptualization of inequality (Devey 1993:7). A careful consideration of SK’s story and her struggle with having a career in

India highlights the constraints faced by professional women in working for enterprises or small businesses that “tend to [place] women” in jobs with less “task complexity, autonomy, supervisory authority, and opportunities for promotion” (Devey 1993:7).

The stories of participants indicated the struggles faced by first-generation Indian immigrant women in professional and non-professional occupations in the US to carve a niche for themselves. Although many participants were professionally qualified and had extensive work experience immigrant women still appear to face limitations in the form of wage-based inequality and race-based inequalities that manifested before them in multiple ways.

In addition to exploring the forms of new inequality that emerge in the context of new comers, participants shared stories of accommodation or resistance or even ambivalence to forms of structural inequality. The multiple accounts by women highlighted their individual efforts to grapple with forms of inequality and carry on with their daily lives. The stories reflected the fluidity of gender and that race, class, and gender although different they are “interrelated axes of social structure” and that these issues manifest before immigrant women in multiple ways (Anderson and Collins 1995:xi). This theme explicated how issues of race and gender circumscribe the labor market to impact the “material conditions, identities, and consciousnesses of all women” (Glenn 1992:3).

The themes shed light on the multiple and complex experiences of first-generation Indian immigrant women in the US and their experiences as they relate to circumstances of their labor market incorporation. The study highlights the importance of

construing the role that gender plays in the context of immigration. More importantly what is explicated in the discussion is the location of first-generation Indian immigrant women in the a society where the gender, immigration, race, ethnicity, and class appear to intersect with each other. The themes facilitate a discussion of the macro to micro linkages that are necessary to address issues of empowerment and intersection of race, class, gender, ethnicity, and immigration and structural inequalities in the US.

#### LIMITATIONS

I explore the limitations in this section. Although this study focused on the experiences of 17 first-generation Indian immigrant women working and residing in the DFW area, I was able to interview only a couple of immigrant women working in the service sector. To generate a more guided discussion on the experiences of nonprofessional working women concentrated in jobs with low-levels of occupational mobility, I would like to interview additional respondents employed in national grocery retail stores and similar industries.

Present studies would benefit more from the appropriation of qualitative techniques of participant observation in professional settings such as IT corporations, and even national grocery stores to capture the nuances of the daily lives and experiences of professional and nonprofessional workers in the US. A combination of qualitative techniques including participant observation and in-depth interviews may prove helpful in gathering data that generates a rich description of the everyday micro-level interactions between individuals.

Majority of the participants in this study belonged to middle-class families. To

overcome this limitation, I would like to focus on recruiting participants with low-levels of income in order to derive a comparative framework that would benefit studies of this nature and contribute to a nuanced understanding of professional and nonprofessional immigrant women from the Indian sub-continent.

Finally out of the 17 respondents, one respondent indicated that she was on maternity leave and was unsure of going back to work after her delivery. Compared to the the respondents, this participant did not view her experience in the US favorably. In fact she yielded information that underscored her lack of interest in pursuing a career and in envisioning a future in the US.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

While there is a growing body of research that contributes to engaging discussions of empowerment few sociological discussions that address the issue of empowerment among first-generation Indian immigrant working women in the DFW area especially newcomers are available. This study offers a starting point for future studies that seek to provide macro micro linkages between gender and immigration. The integrated framework of race, class, gender, and immigration offers a unique contribution to study the experiences of immigrant women and work particularly from the Indian sub-continent in the US.

The envisioned theoretical framework will prove useful to sociologists to further existing research on the issue of work and inequality in the context of Asian Indians in the United States. The framework will generate future sociological discussions of the issue of empowerment and insights into the latent and manifest aspects that flow as an

outcome of empowerment. Additionally consideration of premigration and postmigration contexts that leverage the understanding of issues of empowerment, intersection of race, class, and gender and inequality will contribute to the existing literature on immigration and gender.

More importantly the critical role of gender in the context of immigration is made visible as gleaned from the data and narratives derived from this study. This study will further extant research on issues of work and inequality in the context of members of the South Asian diaspora in the US and other international locations such as the UK.

This study will shed light on the multiplicities of the experiences of first-generation Indian immigrant women professionals in the US related with the issue of work, empowerment, and inequality and provide insight and new points of discussion to social scientists, demographers, and researchers interested in discussions of settlement patterns of immigrant women and men.

Finally, I provide the following recommendations. This study will offer hints to policy-makers to consider the diversity within later groups of Indian immigrant women professionals in the US and delineate the impact of a racialized labor market and issues of inequality that remain problematic.

In the service sector especially in national grocery stores, retail stores, as well as professional organizations that employ a large number of Asian Indians, can undertake efforts to recognize diversity.

Training programs that facilitate interactions between workers belonging to both minority and majority groups ought to be encouraged as this will minimize the conflicts and

tensions that arise as a result of intergroup dynamics in our society.

#### FUTURE RESEARCH

What this study does is that it highlights the need for construing the complex experiences of first-generation Indian immigrant women in a new light especially as social actors in the US. This study seeks to give voice to first-generation Indian immigrant women in non-professional occupations and professional occupations and therefore encourages research on members from the South Asian diaspora including men and women. This study prompts a discussion of additional theoretical frameworks of the concepts of immigration, race, class, and gender that will prove useful to sociological discussions that appropriate the use of intersectionality to highlight the role of gender in the context of immigration. This study will further extant research on issues of work and inequality in the context of members of the South Asian diaspora in the US and other international locations such as the UK.

Given the limited research on the issue of empowerment in the context of first-generation Indian immigrant women professionals and nonprofessionals in the US, this study will provide alternate points of discussion to social scientists, demographers, and researchers interested in the issue of empowerment among members of the South Asian diaspora.



## REFERENCES

- Acker, Joan. "Inequality Regimes Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations." *Gender & Society* 20 (4): 441-464.
- Adib, Amel and Yvonne Guerrier. 2003. "The Interlocking of Gender with Nationality, Race, Ethnicity and Class: the Narratives of Women in Hotel Work." *Gender, Work and Organization* 10 (4): 413-432.
- Adler, Leonore Loeb and Uwe P.Gielen, eds. 2003. *Migration Immigration and Emigration in International Perspective*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Agrawal, Anuja ed., 2006. *Migrant women and work*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Amott, Teresa and Julie Matthaei. 1996. *Race Gender And Work: A Multicultural Economic History of Women in the United States*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Anderson, Margaret L. and Patricia Hill Collins. 2007. *Race, Class, & Gender An Anthology*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. United States: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Anderson, Margaret L. and Patricia Hill Collins. 1995. *Race, Class, and Gender An Anthology*. Second Edition. Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Aparicio, Ana. 2006. *Dominican-Americans and the Politics of Empowerment New World Diasporas*. FL: University Press of Florida.
- Arrighi, Barbara A. ed. 2007. *Understanding Inequality The Intersection of Race, Ethnicity, Class, and Gender*. Second Edition. Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC.
- Assar, Nandini Narain. 1999. "Immigration Policy, Cultural Norms, and Gender Relations Among Indian-American Motel Owners." Pp. (82-102) in *Gender and Immigration*, edited by Gregory A. Kelson and Debra L. DeLaet, NY: New York

UP.

- Badruddoja, Roksana. 2007. "The ABCD Conundrum: What Does It Mean To Be A South Asian American Woman?" PhD dissertation, Department of Sociology, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Jersey.
- Bankston, Carl L. 2002. "Immigrants In The New South: An Introduction." *Sociological Spectrum* 23: 123-128.
- Berg, Bruce L. 2009. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bookman, Ann., and Sandra Morgen eds., 1988. *Women And The Politics of Empowerment*. PA: Temple UP.
- Bolyai-Sullivan, Susan., Kathleen Knafl, William Tamborlane, and Margaret Grey. 2004. "Parents' Reflections on Managing Their Children's Diabetes With Insulin Pumps." *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 36(4): 316-323.
- Burowoy, Michael. 1998. The Extended Case Method. *Sociological Theory* 16 (1): 4-33.
- Chang, Grace. 2000. *Disposable Domestic: Immigrant Women Workers in the Global Economy*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Collins, Patricia H. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Creswell, John W. 2010. *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*. Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Curran, Sara R., Steven Shafer, Katharine M. Donato, and Filiz Garip. 2006. "Mapping Gender and Migration in Sociological Scholarship: Is it Segregation or Integration?" *IMR* 40(1):199-223.
- Das, Ashidhara. 2006. "Asian Indian Women in the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Area; Work, Home, and the Construction of the Self." Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of California -California.
- De Laet, Debra. 1999. *Gender and Immigration*. New York: New York University Press.

- Diner, Hasia. 1983. *Erin's daughters in America: Irish immigrant women in the nineteenth century*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- DeVault, Marjorie L. 1990. "Talking and listening from women's standpoint: Feminist Strategies for interviewing analysis." *Social Problems* 37:96-117.
- . 1996. "Talking Back to Sociology: Distinctive Contributions of Feminist Methodology." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22:29-50.
- . 1999. *Liberating Method: Feminism and Social Research*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple UP.
- Devey-Tomaskovic, Donald. 1993. *Gender & Racial Inequality at Work The Sources and Consequences of Job Segregation*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara and Arlie Russell Hochschild eds., 2003. *Global Woman Nannies, Maids, And Sex Workers In The New Economy*. NY: Metropolitan Books.
- Elliott, James R., and Ryan A. Smith. 2004. "Race, Gender, and Workplace Power." *American Sociological Review* 69(3): 365-386.
- Espiritu, Yen Le. 2010. *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities*.
- Fonow, Mary Margaret. and Judith A. Cook, eds. 1991. *Beyond Methodology*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Foner, Nancy. 2005. *In a new land: a comparative view of immigration*. NY: New York UP.
- Grabe, Shelley. 2012. "The Political Is Personal: Measurement and Application of Nation-Level Indicators of Gender Equity in Psychological Research." *Psychology of Women's Quarterly* 36(2): 131-144.
- George, Sheba. 2005. *When Women Come First Gender And Class In Transnational Migration*. Berkeley:University of California Press.
- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 1986. *Issei, Nisei, war bride: three generations of Japanese*

- American women in domestic service*. PA: Temple UP.
- Gold, Steven J. 2004. "From Jim Crow to racial hegemony: Evolving explanations of racial hierarchy." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27(6):951-968.
- Gozdziak, Elzbieta M. 2005. "New Immigrant Communities and Integration." Pp. (3-17) in *Beyond The Gateway Immigrants In A Changing America*, edited by Elzbieta M. Gozdziaak and Susan F. Martin.
- Guendouzi, Jackie. 2006. "The guilt Thing": Balancing Domestic and Professional Roles *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68: 901-909.
- Hutchinson, John and Anthony D. Smith. 1996. *Ethnicity*. Oxford, NY: Oxford UP.
- Hirschman, Charles and Douglas S. Massey. 2008. "Places and Peoples: The New American Mosaic." Pp. (1-21) in *New Faces In New Places The Changing Geography of American Immigration*, edited by Douglas S. Massey, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierette, ed. 1994. *Gendered transition: Mexican Experiences of Immigration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Jackson, Pauline. 1984. "Women in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Irish Emigration." *International Migration Review* 18 (4): 1004-1020.
- Kikooma, Julius. 2010. "Using Qualitative data Analysis Software in a Social Constructionist Study of Entrepreneurship." *Qualitative Research Journal* 10(1): 40-51.
- Kitano, Harry K. and Roger Daniels. 1988. *Asian Americans Emerging Minorities* Second Edition. NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Koshy, Susan and R. Radhakrishnan. 2008. *Transnational South Asians The Making Of*

- A Neo-Diaspora. NY: Oxford UP.
- Lamphere, Louise ed., 1992. *Structuring Diversity Ethnographic Perspectives on the New Immigraton*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Leonard, Karen Isaksen. 1997. *The South Asian Americans*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Lechner, Frank J. and John Boli ed 2008. *The Globalization Reader*. MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Lorber, Judith. 2001. *Gender Inequality Feminist Theories and Politics*. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company.
- Mahler, Sarah J., and Patricia R. Pessar. 2006. Gender Matters: Ethnographers Bring Gender from the Periphery toward the Core of Migration Studies. *IMR* 40(1): 27-63.
- Manohar, Namita. 2009. "Memoirs Of Bharitya Naris (Indian Women): Gender, Work And Family In Transnational Migration." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, United States-FL.
- Massey, Douglas S ed., 2008. *New faces in new places: the changing geography of American Immigration*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Mc Call, Leslie. 2001. *Complex Inequality*. New York: Routledge.
- Min, Pyong Gap. 2006. *Asian-Americans Contemporary Trends and Issues*. 2 nd ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Mohanty, Chandra. 2004. *Feminism Without Borders Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Morokvasic, Mirjana. 1984. "Birds of Passage are also Women." *International Migration Review* (4): 886-907.
- Mosedale, Sarah, 2005. "Assessing Women's empowerment : toward a conceptual framework." *Journal on International Development*. 17(2) : 243-275.

- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1986. *Racial Formation In The United States From the 1960s to the 1980s*. NY: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Ore, Tracy E. 2009. *The Social Construction of Difference & Inequality Race, Gender, and Sexuality*. Fifth Edition. NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Parminder, Bhachu. 1985. *Twice Migrants: East African Sikh settlers in Britain*. New York: Tavistock Publications.
- Patton, Michael Quinn. 2002. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. CA: Sage Publications.
- Phizacklea Annie ed., 1983. *One way ticket: migration and female labour*. Boston, MA: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Purcell, David. 2007. "Race, Gender, and Class at Work: Examining Cultural Capital and Inequality in a Corporate Workplace." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cincinnati, United States-OH.
- Pedraza, Silvia. 1991. "Women and Migration: The Social Consequences of Gender." *Annual Review of Sociology* 17: 303-325.
- . 1994. "Introduction from the Special Issue Editor: The Sociology of Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America." *Social Problems* 41(1): 1-8.
- Rangaswamy, Padma. 2000. *Namaste America: Indian Immigrants in an American Metropolis*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press.
- Rothenberg, Paula S. 2010. *Race, Class, And Gender In The United States*. Eighth Edition. NY: Worth Publishers.
- Rudrappa, Sharmila. 2004. *Ethnic Routes to Becoming American Indian Immigrants and The Cultures of Citizenship*. NJ: Rutgers UP.

- Salt, Rebekah J. 2010. "Exploring Women's Participation in a U.S. Microcredit Program." *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 42(3): 270-284.
- Schaefer, Richard. 2011. *Racial And Ethnic Groups Census Update*. Twelfth Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.,
- Schuler, Sidney Ruth, Farzana Islam, and Elisabeth Rottach. 2010. "Women's empowerment revisited: a case study from Bangladesh." *Development in Practice* 20 (7):840-854.
- Segura, Denise A. and Patricia Zavella eds., 2007. *Women and Migration in the U.S. – Mexico borderlands: a reader*. Durham: Duke UP.
- Singer, Audrey, Susan W. Hardwick, and Caroline B. Brettell. 2008. *Twenty-First Century Gateways Immigrant Incorporation in Suburban America*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Sinke, Susan. 2006. "Gender and Migration: Historical Perspectives." *IMR* 40(1):82-103.
- Takaki, Ronald. 1993. *A Different Mirror*. Boston: Little, Brown And Company.
- Torres, Roberto D, Louis F. Miron, and Jonathan Xavier Inda. 1999. *Race, Identity And Citizenship A Reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Tuan, Mia. 1998. *Forever foreigners or Honorary whites? The Asian Ethnic experience Today*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Waters, Mary C., Reed Ueda, and Walter Morrow eds., 2007. *New Americans: a guide to immigration since 1965*. MA: Harvard UP.
- Weissberg, Robert. 1999. *The Politics of Empowerment*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- West, Candace., and Sarah Fenstermaker. 1995." Doing Difference." *Gender and Society*. 9(1):8-37.
- Yang, Philip Q. 2010. "A Theory of Asian Immigration to the United States." *Journal of Asian American Studies* 13(1): 1-34.

---.2000. *Ethnic Studies Issues and Approaches*. NY: State University of New York Press.

Zolberg, Aristide. "Immigration control Policy: Law and Immigration." Pp. 721 in *New Americans: a guide to immigration since 1965*. MA: Harvard UP, edited by Waters, Mary C., Reed Ueda, and Walter Morrow.

Zentgraf, Kristine. M., 2002. "Immigration And Women's Empowerment Salvadorans in Los Angeles." *Gender & Society* 16(5): 625-646.

Zinn, Maxine Baca., and Bonnie Thornton Dill eds., 1996. *Women of Color in U.S. society*. PA:Temple UP.



APPENDIX A  
Recruitment Flyer

## **Recruitment Flyer**

### Call for Participants in Dissertation Research

My name is Shilpashri Karbhari and I am a Sociology graduate student at the Texas Woman's University. I am conducting interviews beginning March 2011 for my dissertation research and I am looking for female volunteers (women) from India working and residing in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex to participate in my study.

The purpose of this study is to discuss the experiences of professional and nonprofessional workers in the DFW metroplex. This study will explore the perceptions of empowerment among immigrant working women.

### **For further information please contact the principal researcher at:**

Shilpashri Karbhari

Via Phone: 817-403-1606

Office 940-898-2052

Via Email: [shilpashri@mail.twu.edu](mailto:shilpashri@mail.twu.edu)

There is a potential loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, and internet transactions.

APPENDIX B  
Invitation Card

## **Invitation Card**

### Call for Participants in Dissertation Research

My name is Shilpashri Karbhari and I am a Sociology graduate student at the Texas Woman's University. I am conducting interviews beginning March 2011 for my dissertation research and I am looking for female volunteers (women) from India working and residing in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex to participate in my study.

The purpose of this study is to discuss the experiences of professional and nonprofessional workers in the DFW metroplex. This study will explore the perceptions of empowerment among immigrant working women.

**For further information please contact the principal researcher at:**

Shilpashri Karbhari

Via Phone: 817-403-1606

Office 940-898-2052

Via Email: [shilpashri@mail.twu.edu](mailto:shilpashri@mail.twu.edu)

There is a potential loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, and internet transactions.

APPENDIX C  
Demographic Questionnaire

## Demographic Questionnaire

Date:

Time:

Read the questions carefully and provide the correct answer. Some of the questions include choices you are required to check any **one** that may apply.

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: Never Married Currently Married Widowed Divorced  
Separated

Religion: Hindu Muslim Christian Jain Sikh Parsee Other

Did your mother work outside the home in India? Yes No

Did you work in India? Yes No

Did your family approve of you as a working woman?  Yes No May be  Don't know

Year you migrated to the United States: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for migration to the US:  Higher Education  Employment  Dependant  Other

Number of years you have been residing in DFW metroplex: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years you have been working in DFW metroplex: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of work in DFW metroplex: \_\_\_\_\_

Present position/title/designation at work: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your family approve of you as a working woman in the US?  Yes  No  May be  
 Don't know

Membership or affiliation with any ethnic organization in DFW\*:  Yes  No

\*See Dhingra, Pawan. 2007. Appendix. *Managing Multicultural Lives*. Stanford University Press: Stanford, California.

APPENDIX D  
Interview Schedule



## Interview Schedule

Today, I want to talk to you about your work-family experiences in the United States. We will talk about your work-family experiences in India too. As we talk about the US we will talk about issues of identity and your expectations.

### **Before arriving in the US**

- Can you share some information about your family and your life before you came to the US
  - what did your parents do?
  - your living situation?
- What was your main reason for coming here?
  - did you come with family or husband?
- Now, that you've told me when you came to the US, could you talk about your experiences in India, about work
  - what was it like after finishing school?
  - did you get married immediately or work, or?
- Who helped you make the choice about work?
  - was it your family, your husband or just you?
- Now could you please share some information about
  - when and where did you work in India?
  - was it the first job or you had many?
- You've told me that you were working, could you describe some of the concerns you had at work, if any?
  - how did you handle them?
- How was it like for women in your family to work?
- What were your reasons for working?
  - what did you like about working, if at all?
  - what did you not like about working, if at all?
- Now, may I ask you if you remember any of the reactions of family members or husband if applicable to you when you first began working?
  - could tell me about their reactions/thoughts, both good and bad?
  - what happened thereafter?
- If you remember personally what were your thoughts about women working?

- about women making decisions such as opening a bank account ?
- You've talked about women working, so now could you tell me about how you were able to manage family/home life and work
  - could you elaborate upon this part of your life?
- Do you remember how was it for some other women or friends with families at work? Can you say more about it?
- Okay! From the time you were growing up until you began working,
  - did you notice any change of attitudes in people around you about the fact that more and more women with families were going to work, could you talk about that?
- Could you tell me if women were expected to do a lot more work than men? Why?
  - what are your thoughts about this?

#### **After moving to the US or after immigrating**

- Now, that you've told me about when you came to the US, and where you initially settled, could you tell me
  - what was your first impression about the US?
  - anything in particular about the people, working women?
  - the things you experienced as a newcomer?
  - any challenges...
- Could you tell me what made you decide to work?
  - how did you go about it and could you share that experience with me?
  - what did you feel about finding a job for the first time?
  - meanwhile how was it on the home and family front?
  - was your husband working too? If yes, what were some of the things you had in common if at all?
  - if not, do you recall what it was like?
- On the proforma, you indicate moving to Dallas-FortWorth in....and you have been here since.....
  - so how was it being in DFW?
  - what were some things you had on your list or planned after getting here?
  - how did you manage finding a job and even getting to work?
  - where did you work in DFW?
  - could you talk about the length of work?
  - did you work elsewhere or just in one place?

- Could you share some information about your work experience in DFW?
  - what kind of work have you been doing? Please share some of your thoughts/feelings about it?
  - any concerns as a career woman/worker and why?
  - were you treated badly could you talk about it?
  - could you describe if you ever recall any comments/observations/slights at work or in your daily life about your appearance?
  - how did you feel and could you talk about it?
- How has it been for you to work and make a life in the US? Could you describe
  - the plus points and the minus points?
  - or any decisions you have made with the help of family or husband or without them?
- In US history there is this talk about race and slavery and through US history between whites and blacks. Now scholars are talking not just about being black and white, but also about other groups in the US, so can you talk about any situations or your experiences in your life and at work, especially concerning
  - income, pay, promotion or job position, type of work, or any other you have come across?
  - how do you feel about these forms of inequality personally? Why?
  - what makes you say that?
  - is it because you are a woman and new around here or?
  - had you been born or lived here all your life describe how you would have dealt with these inequalities as a woman?
  - had you been born or lived here all your life describe how you would have dealt with these inequalities as a US born or having more rights like a permanent resident perhaps?
- Now, that you've told me you also worked in India, and then the US, what are your thoughts about a career/work in DFW?
  - about working and responsibilities at home which include child care, cooking, laundry?
  - please tell me how you manage and if family members or your husband are involved and how?
  - how does this make you feel?
- What is it like being an Indian working woman in the US?

- describe if you have made or undertaken any decisions for yourself such as opening a bank account or further education or travel?
- would it have been any different had you been living here all your life? Why and how, can you talk about it?
- Since your arrival in the US, how has your life changed?
  - how do you think the role or life of Indian women immigrants has changed?
- How do you feel talking about these things today?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with me or others to understand about your experience?

APPENDIX E

Consent Form

**CONSENT FORM**

TEXAS WOMAN’S UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title: EXPERIENCES OF INDIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES

Investigator: Shilpashri Karbhari .....[Shilpashri@twu.edu](mailto:Shilpashri@twu.edu) 817-403-1606

Advisor: Lisa K Zottarelli .....Lzottarelli@mail.twu.edu 940-898-2052

Explanation and Purpose of the Research

You are being asked to participate in a research study for Ms. Shilpashri Karbhari’s dissertation at Texas Woman’s University. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of working Indian immigrant women in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex (DFW). In particular, this study will discuss the experiences of professional and non-professional workers in the US. The study will address the perceptions of empowerment among immigrant working women.

Description of Procedures

The procedure in this study includes face-to-face interviews with female respondents, 18 years of age or older, and currently residing and working in the DFW area. As a participant, your total time commitment approximates two to four hours. The researcher will then go over the details and purpose of the study and you will be asked to complete and sign an informed consent form. The researcher will then have you complete a demographic questionnaire. The interview will be recorded with use of a digital voice recorder. The researcher will then ask you questions about your experiences of work and family in India and the United States. In order to maintain confidentiality, the researcher will ensure that your real names are not used. You and the researcher will decide on a code name for you to use during the interview. The interview will be audio recorded ad

verbatim and transcribed soon thereafter so that the researcher can be accurate when studying what you have said.

---

Participant Initials

Page 1 of 3

### Potential Risks

A possible risk in this study is the emotional discomfort that maybe caused due to the sensitive nature of the questions. In case you experience any fatigue during the interview you are free to withdraw from the study or may request to stop the interview.

In case of any psychological distress that you may experience due to the sensitive nature of the questions, the researcher will provide you with a list of referrals at the end of the interview. Another risk in this study is the loss of confidentiality. There is a potential loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, and internet transactions. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law. A code name, and not your real name, will be used during the interview. The interview will be held at a scheduled private location that you and the researcher have agreed upon. If you become tired or upset throughout the course of the interview which may possibly last for four hours you may take breaks as needed. No one but the researcher will know your real name. The audio-recorded interviews will be saved to the computer at TWU in a file format and to the digital voice recorder. The interview transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office. Only the researcher and her advisor will have access to the originally recorded interviews (ad verbatim) and the transcripts. The original interviews and any information saved to the TWU computer will be erased and/ or deleted after a period of one year upon completion of the study. All information will be de-identified. The results of the study will be reported in scientific magazines or journals, but your name or any other identifying information will not be included.

The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let the researchers know at once if there is a problem and they will help you. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Initials

Page 2 of 3

### Participation and Benefits

Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you would like to know the results of this study we will mail them to you.\*

### Questions Regarding the Study

You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form to keep. If you have any questions about the research study you should ask the researcher; her phone number is at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at [IRB@twu.edu](mailto:IRB@twu.edu).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*If you would like to know the results of this study tell us where you want them to be sent:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

or

Address:



APPENDIX F  
Counseling Referrals

## Counseling Referrals

**MHMR Crisis Hotline:** 1(800) 762-0157  
TTY 1(800) 269-6233

A 24-hour, 7 day per week hotline to address any mental health crisis. Free.

### Dallas/Fort-Worth Area:

**Counseling and Family Development Center- Texas Woman's University**  
Texas Woman's University, Human Development Building - Room 115  
(940) 898-2600 or (940) 898-2708

The TWU Counseling and Family Development Clinic is housed within the Department of Family Sciences, provides counseling for families, couples, groups and individuals, both adults and children. Works with people experiencing a wide variety of concerns and difficulties by offering different types of services, including family therapy, group counseling, individual counseling, play therapy and others. Individual, marital and family counseling for children, adolescents and adults who are experiencing personal or relationship difficulties. Fees: sliding scale based on gross family income but no one is refused service if unable to pay.

Monday-Thursday, 9am to 9pm  
Sliding scale (\$5.00-\$40.00 per session)

**Counseling and Human Development Center- UNT**  
University of North Texas, Stovall Hall 128  
(940) 565-2970

Counseling for North Texas residents. Offer individual, couples, marriage, family and play therapy for children. Counseling by appointment Monday through Friday a.m.  
Sliding fee scale.

**Psychology Clinic-University of North Texas**  
University of North Texas-Terrill Hall  
(940) 565-2631

Comprehensive psychological services are available to the community on a confidential basis on a reduced-cost sliding scale. Specific services include: Individual therapy for adults, adolescents and children. Marital, family and group therapy. Intellectual, vocational personality and neuropsychological evaluations. Community seminars, workshops and consultation. Behavioral medicine for stress-related illnesses, from symptom management to smoking cessation.

Call the clinic office at (940) 565-2631, or stop by the clinic to make an appointment. The scheduling office is open between 8am and 8pm, Monday- Thursday, and from 8am to 5pm on Friday. Clinic appointments can be scheduled between 10am and 8pm, Monday-Friday.

**Additional mental health and social service agencies in North Texas may be found at:**

<http://dentoncounty.com/socialservices.asp>

<http://www.unitedwaydenton.org/>

**Counseling Services**

Information and Referral Helpline 817-927-4000

1723 Hemphill-Fort Worth, Tx 76110

401 w. Sanford, suite 1200-Arlington, Tx 76011

**Community Service Clinic UTA**

817-272-2165 Main

817-272-5511 Fax

**Collin County:**

Collin County Mental health mental Retardation Center

2611 internet Boulevard

Frisco, Tx 75034

972-377-7289

**Tarrant County:**

**Women's Center of Tarrant County Inc.**

817-548-1663 Main

817-927-4000 Helpline

817-927-2737 Rape Crisis & Victim Services Hotline

817-548-9895 Fax

**Glick House Community Counseling Center**

817-531-4859 Main

817-531-4213 Fax