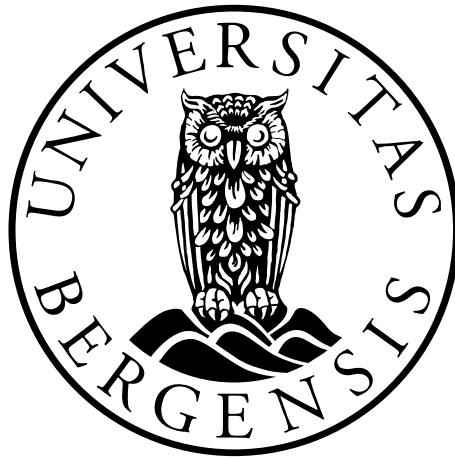


Employment Opportunity and Women's Empowerment

A Study with Special Reference to Immigrant Women in Bergen.

Tahmina Tanzim Hasan



Master of Philosophy in Gender and Development

Spring 2013

Faculty of Psychology
Department of Health Promotion and Development

Dedicated with love and respect to

My mother Rehana Begum

And

My mother-in-law Hasna Begum

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Tone Kristin Sissener for her continuous support in writing this thesis. Her patience, motivation, enthusiasm, immense knowledge and guidance helped me go through the whole process. I could not have imagined having a better advisor for my thesis.

Besides my advisor, I would like to thank Marit Tjomsland and Haldis Haukanes for their professional guidance in my way to finish this thesis. I am also thankful to all my teachers I had in the last two years for their efforts to disseminate knowledge.

My sincere thanks also go to Kristin Senneset for her administrative support.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the informants for their willingness, giving their valuable time and sharing their experiences with me in this context. My thanks also go to my friends Kamrul Islam, Tariq Ashkari, Mangali Meewalaarachchi and all my classmates who enriched me with their suggestions and inspired me all the way to achieve the goal. My special thanks to Anne Wangui Ngunjiri, Sumaira Saleem, Fatima Nejati, Natia Aroshidze and Addis Bezabih for lending me their friendly hands in thinking positive.

It is worth mentioning here that without the support of my husband, Md. Sadique Hasan, who gave both physical and moral support, it could not have been possible for me to come to the end of the process of writing the thesis. I am ever grateful for his sincere efforts and continuous support in achieving my goal.

Last but not the least; I would like to thank my mother, the family and relatives for their understanding and well wishes.

Tahmina Tanzim Hasan

Bergen, Norway

May 2013.

CONTENTS:

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Key words

List of Abbreviations

List of Tables

List of Appendixes

CHAPTERS:

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. The Context	1
1.2. The Theme – Women’s Empowerment	2
1.3. Research Question.....	3
1.4. The Structure of the Thesis	4
2. BACKGROUND.....	5
2.1. Reason for Selecting the Topic	5
2.2. Understanding the Target Group.....	6
2.3. Socio-cultural Aspects of the Target Group from Asia.....	7
2.4. Socio-cultural Aspects of the Target Group from Europe	9
2.5. Socio-cultural Aspects of the Norwegian society	10
2.6. Introducing the Informants.....	11
2.7. Contribution of the Study	12
3. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	14
3.1. Measuring Women’s Empowerment.....	14
3.2. Importance of the indicators chosen for the purpose of the study	22
4. CONCEPTUALISATION, THEORY AND APPROACH.....	23
4.1. Conceptualizing Empowerment	23
4.2. Conceptualizing Capability	25
4.3. Understanding Participation in Domestic Decision-making as an Indicator of Empowerment	30
4.4. Understanding Access to and Control over Resources as an Indicator of Empowerment	33
4.5. Understanding Mobility/Freedom of Movement as an Indicator of Empowerment.....	35
4.6. Culture, Gender Identity, Gender Role	37
4.7. Conceptualizing Bargaining.....	40
4.8. Conceptualizing Employment.....	46
5. METHODOLOGY.....	47
5.1. Selecting the Method of Study	47
5.2. Selecting the Target Group for the Study.....	48
5.3. Choosing the Dimensions of Women’s Empowerment for the Study	49
5.4. The Indicators.....	50
5.5. Data Collection.....	51

5.6. Challenges Met During the Field Work	54
5.7. Ethical Considerations.....	55
5.8. Data Analysis	58
6. WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN DOMESTIC DECISION-MAKING AND EMPLOYMENT	60
6.1. Introduction	60
6.2. Gendered impacts of migration	60
6.3. Findings on Participation in Domestic Decision-making from the Asian Informants..	63
6.3.1. Women and Household Work	64
6.3.2. Gender segregation in household work	68
6.3.3. Socio-Cultural norms and practices, and gender roles	70
6.3.4. Social class structure and the gender role	72
6.3.5. Findings from the European informants.....	74
6.4. Discussions and comments.....	74
7. WOMEN’S ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT	78
7.1. Introduction	78
7.2. Findings on access to and control over resources	79
7.2.1. Benevolent dictatorship, and access to and control over resources	79
7.2.2. Structures of constraints, and women’s access to and control over resources	82
7.2.3. Findings from the European informants.....	86
7.3. Discussions and comments.....	86
8. WOMEN’S MOBILITY/FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT	89
8.1. Introduction	89
8.2. Findings on mobility/freedom of movement.....	89
8.2.1. Gendered differences and women’s mobility/freedom of movement.....	90
8.2.2. Social Security and women’s freedom of movement.....	92
8.2.3. Socio-Cultural norms and practices, and women’s mobility/freedom of movement	94
8.2.4. Findings from the European informants.....	96
8.3. Discussions and comments.....	97
9. CONCLUDING REMARKS	100
REFERENCES.....	104
Table - 1: Demographic profile of the informants	114
Table - 2: Values used in Table - 1	115
Appendix-1: Interview guide	116

Abstract

Gender injustice towards women in societies is the basic reason for deprivation of women from expanding their abilities to make strategic life choices. Even today, we can find female oppression in many societies ranging from tacit male dominance in religion and philosophies to the brutal male oppression. This, gender injustice to woman, again restricts the achievement of development, peace and freedom resulting as a major contributor to global poverty – in both the economic and human definitions of the term. As a consequence gender equality and women's empowerment have been recognised as key not only to the health of nations, but also to social and economic development (Kishor and Gupta 2009).

Being inspired by the thoughts of gender equality and women's empowerment I selected to study the impact of employment on women's empowerment among some immigrant women in Bergen. The main objective of this thesis is to analyze when employment empowers women, when it does not, and in what ways.

In the process of getting answer to my research question I have taken in-depth interviews of thirteen women from seven different countries who migrated to Norway for different reasons. All of them are first-generation immigrants and employed in different sectors here in Bergen. They have educational background which makes them confident enough about getting at least a job of the same category or a better one in their country of origin.

The study compares the interview data in the light of household bargaining power by using qualitative analysis method. Their experiences give us a clue to understand the effect of employment on empowerment and the gender relations in intra-household bargaining power. Though the findings are from a very small sample compare to the total immigrant population in Bergen the study shows us a direction to understand the issue.

From the experience of the fieldwork this thesis ascertains that empowerment is a very complex phenomenon having multiple dimensions. The thesis illustrates a very few of those dimensions and tries to find the linkages between being employed and empowerment.

Empowerment can be seen as a source of light. To illuminate the room (an individual woman) with this light she needs windows and doors to be opened so that the light can come inside the

room through these. Employment can be seen as one of these windows. Obviously it can illuminate a part of the room subject to one has the opportunity to fully open that window. The opportunity to open this window again depends on many other factors as empowerment intersects personal, family, social, cultural, economic and political space at the same time. The outcome totally depends on the attitude of the environment the person is living in and the bargaining power of the individuals to attain the result.

Key words:

Empowerment, resource, agency, achievements, capabilities, domestic decision-making, access to and control over resources, immigrants, mobility/freedom of movement, patriarchy, bargaining, bargaining power, household, household bargaining model, culture, gender role, gender relation, gender Identity.

List of Abbreviations:

CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
ESC	Economic, social and cultural
GAD	Gender and Development
ICDP	International Conference on Population and Development
IMDi	The Directorate of Integration and Diversity
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
WID	Women In Development

List of Tables:

Table - 1: Demographic profile of the informants

Table - 2: Values used in Table - 1

List of Appendixes:

Appendix-1: Interview guide

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Context

“To call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man’s injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed is woman less brute than man. If by strength, is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man’s superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her man could not be. If nonviolence is the law of our being, the future is with women.

..... *Who can make a more effective appeal to the heart than woman?”* (Taken from: The Complete Site on Mahatma Gandhi 2012).

Gender injustice in the name of religion, philosophies to the male oppression, and socio-cultural values, norms and practices prevails in almost every society. This is the main reason behind deprivation of women and women subordination. Further, gender injustice to woman restricts the achievement of development goals, peace and freedom resulting as a major contributor to global poverty – in both the economic and human definitions of the term.

Being inspired by the thoughts of gender equality and women’s empowerment to achieve greater gender justice, I became interested to find out how more empowerment for women can be achieved. Consequently, I selected one of the sources, employment, which is supposed to empower women (Kabeer 1999a) for the purpose of my thesis. As such, the main objective of the study is to analyze the relationship between women’s empowerment and employment, with special reference to a number of immigrant women in Bergen. Thus the study will try to find out the linkages between women’s empowerment in the field of socio-economic status and social network achieved through employment opportunity.

In the year 2000, members of 189 states of the United Nations adopted the Millennium Declaration and decided on eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG), most of which are to be achieved by the year 2015. Particularly, the third Millennium Declaration aims to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment as basic human rights. The Declaration also maintains that giving women their fair share is the only way to effectively combat poverty, hunger and disease, and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable. It is important to notice that the coupling of the two concepts of “women’s empowerment” and

“gender equality” into one MDG implicitly recognizes that these two goals gender equality and women’s empowerment are interrelated and can be perceived as two sides of the same coin. It is also considered that employment is an important prerequisite for empowerment.

Like in other countries, gender equality and women’s empowerment have been explicitly acknowledged as key not only to the health of nations, but also to social and economic development here in Norway too over the past decades. There has been a lot of actions taken internationally as well as in Norway to emphasise the importance of gender equality and equal opportunities for all citizens, regardless of sex, race or ethnic background.

With this in mind, I was interested to delve deeper into the field of women’s empowerment. At the same time, I had to consider the time and resource constraints for the study. Accordingly, the study is mainly confined to the relationship between employment and women’s empowerment.

1.2. The Theme – Women’s Empowerment

Empowerment as defined by Naila Kabeer is “The expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them” (Kabeer 1999a, p. 437) is a good starting point for conceptualizing and measuring women’s empowerment as it focuses on choice. Women’s empowerment is not a question of taking over control on power relations previously held by men, but transforming the nature of power relations to equality.

Empowerment is a process of improving the capacity of individuals or groups through expansion of assets and capabilities. Being empowered individuals will have their freedom to choose these capabilities in pursuit of better influencing the course of their lives and the decisions which affect them. Empowerment encompasses all issues pertaining to the economic, social and cultural (ESC) in a society, and varies in respect of time, place and social affiliation. Thus women’s empowerment refers to the process of improving gender equality in ESC issues through developing awareness of women’s subordination and building their capacity to challenge the power relation. Women’s empowerment is also directly related to their productive and reproductive roles in the family and society. Zentgraf (2002) in her findings from a study about immigration and women’s empowerment of Salvadorans in Los

Angeles described that immigrant women's perception of self-empowerment results from their experiences and other factors such as work, family, and the larger social, cultural, and spatial environments that they negotiate on a daily basis which again can be true for any person in this regard (Zentgraf 2002).

As women's empowerment is subject to a fundamental shift in perceptions it should have its root from below. In other words, it should be claimed by the women who want to empower themselves. Considerations should be given to the inclusions and exclusions that characterize different ways of thinking. The result can lead us to find the factors worth thinking about and worth doing regarding "institutionalized nature of gender inequalities in the rules, resources, practice and power structures of different societies, and implication for ways of doing development" (Kabeer 1994: p. 303). Focus should be on the issues which are considered important to women's empowerment and main actors in the development process, and not be only on how the policy is formulated, designed, implemented and evaluated (Kabeer 1994). Long-term sustainability of women's empowerment depends on the power of women to challenge and reverse the priorities to be taken as strategies to empowering women. As such, "if women's self-empowerment is seen as a key route to gender equality, an important first step is the efficient provision of space, resources and time that will allow women to articulate their own interests rather than having them anticipated and met on their behalf" (Kabeer 1994: p. 303-304).

1.3. Research Question

The idea of this thesis is to study the impact of employment in improving women's ability to make strategic life choices to achieve the capabilities desired by themselves and for themselves, and which they were denied/could have been denied before. As work place can be seen also as a source of socialization it will focus on the impact of employment in family relations, family life, and relations with friends, colleagues and others, among other indicators, which make a difference to their perception of being empowered. Due to time and resource constraint this study only tries to find the answer for:

Does employment lead to expansion of women's empowerment, with special reference to a number of immigrant women in Bergen, in:

- Participation in domestic decision-making

- Access to and control over resources
- Mobility/Freedom of movement.

As such, the objective of the study is to answer the following questions: When does employment empower women, when it does not, and in what ways?

1.4. The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of nine chapters. After this introductory chapter a brief description of the background follows. This part presents the demography of the immigrant population in Bergen. In this way the second chapter thus provides an overview of the local context for the study.

Third chapter contains literature review around the problem under consideration. This chapter gives an overview of literature regarding the dimensions of measuring women's empowerment.

The fourth chapter covers the concepts, theories and approaches I used in analysing the data for this thesis. A brief introduction to different concepts like women's empowerment, capability, bargaining and other socio-cultural factors is given here. The relation between these concepts, theories and approaches in the context of gender equality and intra-household power relation in different societies is also described here. The importance of these concepts, theories and approaches and the indicator of measuring women's empowerment for the purpose of my study are also mentioned here.

Fifth chapter elaborates the research methodology: an account for factors related to the proximity and distance, theoretical perspective, research design and methodological choices and practices. Here the concepts such as validity and reliability is also discussed, and explains the issues related to research ethics and methods of analysing data.

Chapters from sixth to eighth present the empirical findings from the survey. The findings from the study will be discussed and analyzed in these chapters too.

My concluding remarks are presented in the ninth chapter.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Reason for Selecting the Topic

According to Wikigender (2008), “Norway was ranked first by the World Economic Forum in 2008 in its gender gap index and ranks highly in other measures of economic and political gender equality. Norway has been described as a ‘Haven for Gender equality’ by CEDAW” (The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) in 2003. Moreover, the argument that both social and work life should be inclusive for all ethnic groups has been put forward as a political ideal and a democratic right (Bergen Municipality 2007). Consequently, participation of women in labour market in Norway is the highest of all the European countries (Gender Norway 2010).

After coming to Bergen I came to know some immigrants through several sources. Many of them are close friends to me now. Most of them have higher education from their respective home countries or abroad, where by higher education I mean at least four years education after higher secondary school. Though almost all of them are employed, many of them are not employed according to their respective educational qualifications, which is frequently discussed and complained about. Moreover, the mismatches between the dual roles of women in production and reproduction, sharing the household work load with other members of the family and control over available resources are also subject of discontent among these women. I thus became interested in the relationship between employment and women’s empowerment, and to find out when employment is empowering and when it is not. The thesis tries to explore whether my target group observed any perceived changes in these areas of discontents by getting employed.

Employment is selected as the independent variable in my study as it is considered one of the most important sources of women’s empowerment (Agarwal 1997, Kabeer 1999 a). Kabeer (1999 a) cited findings from different studies in Bangladesh, India, Thailand, Zimbabwe and USA where it is claimed that employment have a positive relation to women’s empowerment by influencing different indicators of women’s empowerment such as, among others, mobility, lower child mortality and child welfare, female education access to information and women’s access to available resources and services. As such, it is argued from different evidences that access to employment acts positively towards women’s empowerment by

enhancing their ability to exercise agency - the process or the ability to define one's goals and act upon them (Kabeer 1999a).

The study deals with two key concepts "empowerment" and "immigrants". I have tried to explain empowerment in short in the introduction chapter. The second concept immigrants is explained below.

2.2. Understanding the Target Group

Immigrants to Norway consist of refugees from countries in war or civil unrest, migrant workers, to get an education in Norway and as family immigrants (Statistics Norway 2012). The immigrant population in Norway is often defined as those born with two foreign parents. This includes both those who have immigrated to Norway, called first-generation immigrants, and those born in Norway of two foreign parents, called second-generation immigrants or descendants. According to Statistics Norway (2001) comparatively many immigrant groups are more educated than the rest of the Norwegian population. Both immigrant groups and the countries they immigrated from have been documented as important factors for these differences in level of education, while descendants often have greater participation in education than their parents. Immigration to Norway has increased dramatically in recent decades (Statistics Norway 2004). In addition to this increase, immigration to Norway has also changed the pattern of immigration. Changes of the pattern of immigration in Norway reflects a global development, where migration is a result of both globalized trade and cooperation, but also of wars and conflicts that increasingly results in international involvement. These global trends provide guidance for national and local politics (Berg et al. 2011).

As the study focuses on some immigrant women in Bergen and its surroundings, some facts about immigrated population in Bergen follow to provide an overview of the local context for the study. Bergen is the second largest city of Norway with a population of 263.762 as per 01.01.2012, and the largest in the county of Hordaland. It is also the capital of Western Norway. Bergen is also the leading region for all significant Norwegian export industries. As of January 01 2012, there were 35.139 immigrants in Bergen (around 13,3 percent of the total population), where 30.183 are first generation immigrants and 4.956 second-generation immigrants; around 7 percent of these have immigrant background from non-western

countries (Bergen Municipality 2013). Statistically immigrant population in Bergen reflects the demographic pattern quite well with the immigrant population in Norway as a whole in different socio-economic aspects. As such, Bergen was considered as a good representative for a national trend and suitable for the fieldwork.

Women in my informant group have migrated to Norway from two different geographical regions, Asia and Eastern Europe, mainly for the purpose of family reunification. Selection of these two regions is purely due to my personal connections with some women from these areas, and there was no other purpose behind it in doing so. As such, it is important to note a few basic characteristics of the socio-economic and cultural aspects of gender relations in these two regions and Norway at the same time to understand the underlying causes for the answers I noted in my field study. Consequently, a short presentation of the characteristics of gender relations in these three regions follows.

It is important to note that the informants and their husbands are the first generation immigrants in Norway, bringing their gender identity from a different culture still follows the norms and values they were taught in their home countries, and are still bounded by those. Changing the patterns in their behaviour in the quest of coming out of these norms and values is quite difficult for them though remarkable advancements are noticed.

2.3. Socio-cultural Aspects of the Target Group from Asia

Most of my informants are from societies which can be defined as society of ‘classic patriarchy’¹ (Kandiyoti 1988, p. 278). These societies practice rigid gender segregation, and specific forms of family and kinship. They also possess powerful ideology linking family honour to female virtue. Men in these societies are considered as guardian of family honour which they practice through control over female members. Complex social arrangements support the behaviour of men in this context and thus support the dependence of women. These practices deny women access to social power and autonomy of their own lives. Women are subordinated within a rigid hierarchical system of gender relations. Different social norms and practices related to organisation of family, kinship, marriage, inheritance patterns help maintaining and reproducing control over women in these societies. Women in these societies

¹ I described the concept patriarchy later in this chapter.

quite often depend on male protection and patronage without that they might face the full range of social sanctions against women and threat of male violence (Modhadam 1994).

The word patriarchy meaning ‘the rule of the father’ is originated from the ancient Greek patriarches. Patriarches was a society where power was possessed by and passed down through the elder males. As such, in a patriarchal society the senior man in a family has the authority over younger men and women members of the family who are subject to distinct forms of control and subordination. Though literally patriarchy refers to rule of a father, but in practice it refers to a society dominated by men. Thus this is a form ruling a family or organization by the father or a suitable adult male (Gale 2008).

In modern literature this term is used where men hold the position of power as head of the family unit, leaders of social groups, boss in the workplace and heads of government. Opposite of patriarchy is matriarchy, where the mothers (women) rule (Napikoski 2013).

The smallest unit of a patriarchal society is the family which encourages its members to conform to the gender biased differentiated roles and maintains women’s inferior position. Patriarchy is manifested in the socio-cultural values, attitudes, customs and expectations. It is deep rooted in the institutions of a patriarchal society maintained through the process of socialization. As such, patriarchy constructs the socio-cultural values, attitudes, customs and expectations, and is a social construction. Physical, social, economic, and political power of men constitutes patriarchy where women and children are subject to control and subordination to men. This control and subordination also applies to any individuals with a nontraditional gender identity (Gale 2008).

Patriarchy exists in all societies with a varying degree. We can find discriminations against women in many contexts due to the patriarchal rules. Even today the vast majority of leaders in the world are men. In Norway, when half the workforce is women they fall far short of men in terms of pay, promotions, benefits, and other economic rewards. There are discriminations on the ground of pregnancy, gender segregated labour market and low proportion of female entrepreneurs (Gender Norway 2010). Women have to prove their worth while better than men to be successful economically, thus reproducing the masculine traits and characteristics that are associated with success.

2.4. Socio-cultural Aspects of the Target Group from Europe

Two of my informants are from East European countries having social norms, values and practices as of traditional society, a society characterized by an orientation to the past. For the sake of comparison I would like to introduce a few lines regarding the social norms and practices about gender roles in these societies – Poland and Russia.

Catholic Church having the most power in Polish society women's role here is expected to be according to the stereotypical dominant model of family life where women's professional career must be reconciled with her role in family life. Women are expected to meet the social expectations related to raising children and to caring for the elderly (Library of Congress 1992). In this regard, I find a positive relation concerning the social expectations in Polish society and the women's status in a patriarchal society in the Asian countries.

After the collapse of the communist era, which supported women's participation in working force at a state level, the situation has deteriorated as many Poles find the political transformation as an opportunity to bring women back full-time to the home. This again is supposed to be a consequence of the existing need of the male-dominated society to protect the power structure of male dominance by limiting the opportunities for the advancement of Polish women (Library of Congress 1992).

As a consequence of the norms and practices prevailing in the Polish society working women with families often have the equivalent of two full-time jobs because their husbands did not make major contributions to household work. Men, in general, not interested to take part in house work results from the traditional relations and social expectations ruling Polish families.

The other East European country is Russia from where I had one informant. Women's rights in this society also remain strongly as traditional society where the role of a Russian man is considered to be a provider, and a woman as a housewife and the mother of children. In spite of the constitutional right of women same as that of men (as per Soviet constitution of 1977) which guaranteed women equal access to education and training, employment, promotions, remuneration, and participation in social, cultural, and political activity Soviet women did not enjoy the same position as men in the society or within the family. They were subjected to

lower wages and very little opportunity to get a higher position in the job and other social organizations. Male domination at the familial level and domestic violence against women were also widely visible. In the post-Soviet era the situation remains the same. As a matter of fact these nominal legal protections for women failed to achieve the goals as a result of failing to address the existing conditions or have failed to supply adequate support. Having the family-raising responsibilities, in which Russian husbands have generally less participation, working women bear the double burden of a job and family-raising responsibilities (Library of Congress 1996).

2.5. Socio-cultural Aspects of the Norwegian society

Looking at the Norwegian society, we find that it developed very much during the 1960 - and 70's. Economic prosperity led to a surplus that was used to promote gender equality so that women's autonomy can be increased. It was easier for women to have education, kindergartens were built and the women were given the right to decide for themselves. Legal protection, the welfare schemes for parents and widely accepted values by the Norwegian people that no one should be discriminated because of their gender, provide a basis for real gender equality. This again led women to be independent and they were freed from the man's control. It is also interesting to note that women are becoming winner in education sector these days. Having equal opportunity in accessing the education systems girls even doing better in school than boys, and they are about to be in the majority in student cohorts on the right education (NSD 2013).

In today's Norwegian society, formally women have equal status with men. They have equal opportunity for education and employment. Women and men participate in the labour market on an equal footing and without any gender discrimination, though it is still observed that certain occupations are female occupations and these professions are related to with lower status and pay. In addition, there is also a tendency for women to prioritize caregiving and housework more than men even here in Norway (NSD 2013).

Norway is announced regularly internationally as one of the countries in the world's having highest gender equality. Years of political determination and ambition of gender equality has paid off. It is not uncommon in Norway for a father to take care of the children and do household works while the mother is at work outside home. The political will to see the

connections between work, family, welfare and gender equality, has been critical to get where Norway is today (Barne-, likestillings- og inkluderingsdepartementet 2011).

Inclusion in the workplace is seen in many contexts as a criterion for integration into Norwegian society (Bergen municipality 2007). Accordingly, the social and work life to be inclusive for all groups emerged as a common political ideal and democratic right in Norway. At the same time, immigration and multiculturalism is a subject area where the public debate is often characterized by emotional involvement, buoyant discussions and confrontational arguments (Berg et al. 2011). To ensure equal opportunities for all citizens, regardless of sex, race or ethnic background, Norway has adopted different acts like The Gender Equality Act from 1978, The Anti-Discrimination Act from 2006 among others. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal are established to monitor compliance with and help to implement these Acts. Moreover, Norway has one of the best social welfare systems in the world concerning possibility of adjusting family life with work life. These laws and regulations along with others suit with the expected combined role of women in the family and society as a whole, and give them the opportunity to combine the work life and private life simultaneously (Barne-, likestillings- og inkluderingsdepartementet 2011).

2.6. Introducing the Informants

For the purpose of my study I selected thirteen informants. These thirteen informants participated in my fieldwork are from seven different countries – Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Japan, Russia and Poland. As a matter of fact the informants represent both East and West as they are from Asia and Europe. They represent also developed and developing countries in the economic terms. These countries differ in their social norms, values and practices which influence the outcome of the women's empowerment differently. They also represent two different social systems - patriarchal and traditional – where access to any particular source of women's employment may have a different meaning. Table - 1 shows a brief demographic profile of the informants.

Eleven of my informants are from Asian countries and two of them are from Eastern Europe. Many of the socio-cultural norms and practices are quite common among the countries from the Asian region but differ from those of the Eastern European countries. Therefore, I

presented the findings from the European informants in separate sections and tried to compare the results with the Asian counterparts. I am going to explain some of the socio-cultural facts of my target groups to help understand the result of the study.

First, here in this chapter, I am presenting some statistical facts before going to qualitative analysis of these findings.

The findings of the study indicate that the informants are in age group between thirty four and fifty two years, eleven of them are married, two of them are divorced. All of them have two years of education or more at the University level including two with Ph.D. All of them have access to media in one or other form as for example TV, radio, newspaper and internet. Moreover, they are aware of socio-political issues.

The findings of the study show that the informants perceive that women are discriminated both in home and workplace. The findings also reveal that they are quite aware and concerned about gender equality and have a strong voice against violence against women. Many of them know personally others as victim of violence against women and tried to help them giving advice about how and where the victims can get help and protection.

The main reason they showed for being employed is to utilize their capacities. No one answered the reason as any pressure from the family. Only three answered the reason as economic.

Twelve of them said they would have worked in their respective countries of origin also. Eleven of the informants gave positive reply to a question whether they would have got a job at least of the same category or better in their respective countries of origin. Only two answered in the negative.

2.7. Contribution of the Study

The study went through different theoretical aspects of women's empowerment which will help further studies by introducing the basic knowledge and the interrelations between these theories. By comparing two different societies the thesis contributes in observing the impact of a particular source of women's empowerment in achieving the goal in different context. As such, the study shows the importance of context in women's empowerment.

The findings can also lead to a better understanding of the factors necessary to achieve the goal of gender equality and gender empowerment in terms of employment opportunity. As such, this thesis can provide some hints of the factors for improvement and try to uncover the ways of avoiding the bottlenecks. The finding of the linkages between women's empowerment and proper employment, according to their qualification and capacity, can help developing affirmative actions which can work to change those bottlenecks for gender equality and women's empowerment in employment sector.

As there is no direct study found regarding the impact of employment on women's empowerment among the immigrant population in Norway, all these findings can also give further motivation for a deeper analysis of the relation between employment and immigrant women's empowerment; which again might be equally applicable for empowerment of women as a whole. Such a study in future will certainly help policy makers in determining the appropriate policies in the field of integrating immigrant women in a new society.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains literature review concerning measuring women's empowerment. The chapter also provides an overview of literature regarding the dimensions and indicators of measuring women's empowerment.

3.1. Measuring Women's Empowerment

Measuring is defined as an act of assessing the importance, effect, or value of something (online Oxford Dictionaries). By the process of measuring we are able to observe and record the observations that are collected as part of a research effort. There are two types of measure – quantitative measure and qualitative measure. Quantitative measurement deals with measuring quantity/volumes in terms of numbers or figures whereas qualitative measurement deals with measuring the change in terms of certain standards. As empowerment is a process a more appropriate way to measure empowerment is through qualitative measurement. In this way we may find the perceived changes in the empowerment status and capabilities.

Qualitative measurements, as it is used to find the results in this thesis, are ways of gaining a deeper understanding of a topic by producing information through qualitative analysis of the data collected on the particular case studied.

Though empowering women is frequently cited in context of development interventions yet it is difficult to find an accepted method of measuring and tracking changes in levels of empowerment (Mosedale 2005). As such, before going to the theoretical part I am presenting here a few works on the field of measuring women's empowerment. These articles helped me understand possible ways of measuring empowerment for a study like this. Measurement of women's empowerment refers to variations of different indicators changing with the context under which women exercise their power. There has been taken various attempts to find out the key components of women's empowerment as options, choice, control, and power. These key components again refer to the ability to make strategic life choices for themselves and their families. Emphasis is given mostly on control over one's own life and over resources in conceptualizing women's empowerment. As empowerment is a dynamic process these components differ depending on the context of any research project.

In her article "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment" Kabeer (1999) tries to construct indicators of women's

empowerment in the context of three interrelated dimensions: resources, agency, and achievements. She focused mainly on the meanings given to these measures and values embedded within them. She mentioned resources as the pre-conditions which serve to enhance the ability to exercise choice, and include not only material resources as understood in the conventional economic sense but also other human and social resources. Resources thus are acquired through multiple social relationships in a society such as family, market, community through actual allocation, and future claims and allocation. She further argues that access to and control over these resources will thus be determined by the rules and norms of the society.

The second dimension of power mentioned by her in the article is agency – the process or the ability to define one's goals and act upon them. Agency here not only includes processes of decision-making but also other less measurable manifestations of agency such as negotiation, deception and manipulation though the form of agency relates to decision-making agency appears frequently in measurement efforts. Agency incorporates the meaning, motivation and purpose of their activity which she defined as 'the power within' (Kabeer 1999a, p. 438). She described agency having both positive and negative meaning. 'Power to' (Kabeer 1999a, p. 438) is a positive agency referring to people's capacity to define their own life choices and to follow their own goals even in the situations where they face opposition from others. 'Power over' (Kabeer 1999a, p. 438) on the other hand can be used in a negative sense. These are the capacities of other actor(s) to supersede the agency of others through for example violence, coercion and threat.

The third dimension according her is the achievements (well-being outcomes). Failure to achieve one's goal as a result of deep-seated constraints on the ability to choose can be taken as an expression of disempowerment. Thus Kabeer argues that the main issue in the concept of power is the ability to choose. In measuring ability to choose one should keep in mind the conditions of choice, consequences of choice and transformatory significance.

By citing Sen (1985) Kabeer says that resources and agency together constitute what Sen refers to capabilities. The concept of capability is discussed later in this chapter. According to the capability approach, the aims of the social policy should be increasing people's capabilities, but achievements depend on individuals.

Kabeer (1999) in this article has noted some methodological points of importance about the measurement of empowerment by analyzing a number of studies from the development studies literature. She argues that as these three dimensions of choice, qualified by referring to the conditions of choice, its content and consequences are linked together in determining the meaning of an indicator and thus is valid as a measure of empowerment. Finally, in this article she discussed the problems in measuring these dimensions of women's empowerment. She described the problems in conceptualization associated with capturing particular kinds of social change which tends to be least agreeable to measurement. Moreover, these indicators should take into consideration the ways in which context will shape processes of empowerment. Because new possibilities due to access to new resources may be realized differently in different contextual possibilities. "Unless indicators are sensitive to these contextual possibilities, they are likely to miss the significance of those transformations which *do* occur." (Kabeer 1999a, p. 460). Giving stress on the agency perspective Kabeer does not place much emphasis on political or legal aspects of empowerment nor on rights-based approaches.

By referring empowerment as a process of change with a specific kind of result it differs from agency which refers to a state of affairs in the form of one's degree of involvement in a course of action or to the scope of actions one could be involved in bringing about. Stressing solely on agency aspect of women's empowerment shall thus reduce the understanding of other important dimensions of human capabilities (Drydyk Jay 2008).

To make one empowered in such a way that this empowerment achieved can be retained Drydyk suggests the following:

- (1) they exercise enhanced decision-making and influence over strategic life-choices and barriers to agency and well-being freedom, and
- (2) their capacity for such decision-making and influence have also been enhanced, and
- (3) given (i) the capabilities they have and assets they control, individually or collectively, and (ii) the opportunity structure in which they act, they can make these gains prevail." (Drydyk 2008, p. 242).

As such, we find 'empowerment' is meant to make someone powerful by allowing her/him to expand freely his/hers ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to him/her. Thus the power relation is vital for anyone in attaining the range

of options a person wish to have in deciding what kind of life to lead. The importance of the concept of power relations and changes in these relations as a requirement of women's empowerment is thus vital in understanding the process of empowerment. Consequently, I would like to introduce another article "Towards a framework for assessing empowerment" written by Mosedale (2003). In this article she identifies four different aspects of empowerment. Firstly, one must be in a disempowered position at a starting point to be empowered in a process of evolutions. When it concerns women's disempowerment she emphasized the gendered nature of women's disempowerment in the ways in which they are disempowered as women. To measure empowerment one should focus on whether someone - in our case women - is empowered or disempowered relative to others - in our case men - and relative to themselves at a previous time. Secondly, no one can empower another person. It should be claimed by those who want to empower themselves. Creating new possibilities by giving access to new resources is not sufficient in itself. There should be willingness among women themselves to realize these possibilities. As I mentioned earlier, new possibilities may be realized differently in different contextual possibilities, as such, it can also be gendered disempowerment. Thirdly, empowerment by definition includes a sense of people making decisions on their strategic choices in their lives and is able to implement those. And finally, she asserts that empowerment is an on-going process and a relative phenomenon depending on time and space – the context.

By citing Kabeer (2000) Mosedale also recognizes that women's empowerment is constrained by the social norms, beliefs, customs and values in the way societies differentiate between women and men. She argues that the way power relations between sexes are constructed and maintained in a particular context should be analyzed to focus on the empowerment of women as a group. Mosedale differs from Kabeer in two important aspects: first, the gendered nature of women's disempowerment when their gendered identities themselves are the reason for disempowerment their public roles as well as within the home, and the second, the focus on redefining and extending the limits of what is possible in contrast to Kabeer focusing on individuals acquiring an ability to choose.

As such, Mosedale (2003) reviews evolvments of the concept of power by focusing on how the concept was debated and refined during the second half of the twentieth century. By noting how power relations are described and evaluated in a particular context she proposed a

conceptual framework within which empowerment can be assessed by taking into consideration factors of how power relations might be described and evaluated.

In her model of power she includes structural faultlines based on sex and class. She pinpoints the implications on the shape of the power structure due to membership of a particular group (women, peasants) within which an individual operates. She argues that a person's possibilities and boundaries in power structure which are socially constructed as a result of membership of a particular group can be changed. She also recognizes that structure of power is situation dependent. Her model of women's empowerment focusses on its function to radically change oppressive gender relations. As such, her model tries to assess whether or not such changes are being achieved in the effort which seeks to empower women.

Mosedale (2003) mentioned different models of power. Starting with 'power over' she argues power over is a zero-sum game in other words one's gain another's loss. Power as a zero-sum game implies that power will remain in the hands of the powerful unless they give it up. She also mentions three other forms of power: Power within such as self-esteem and self-confidence, power to such as learning to read, and power within referring to collective actions. In these types of power one person's gain is not necessarily another's loss.

Mosedale (2003), in this article, emphasized that the function of her model of women's empowerment is to change oppressive gender relations. As such, she recognizes that empowerment requires change in power relations and also depends upon power that can expand.

By taking into considerations how the empowerment of women has been discussed within development studies Mosedale (2003) suggests a conceptual framework for assessing empowerment. According to her it is necessary to include the following in developing a framework for assessing women's empowerment:

- identifying constraints to action
- identifying how women's agency has developed, and
- identifying how women's agency has changed constraints to action.

Thus by understanding the basic precondition of empowerment – power relations – it is of great importance to find out the socio-economic and cultural domains which are the roots of

these power structures. Only in doing so we can be able to identify the constraints preventing women's empowerment in those domains and find out the ways how these can be overcome. In this regard the article "Measuring Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development." by Malhotra, Schuler and Boender (2002) serves as good reference point. In this article they define methodological approaches to measure and analyze women's empowerment for development institutions by reviewing present theories and strategies regarding increasing women's empowerment. By citing Kabeer the article defines empowerment as the ability of people to make strategic choices in areas that affect their lives and identifies two factors in the process of empowerment; first, the control over resources as the conditions for empowerment, and secondly, agency as the ability to formulate choices. Malhotra et al. (2002) highlight the centrality of agency similar to Kabeer and at the same time recognize the multidimensionality of the process of empowerment. Women by having different roles will have different status of the power attached to a given role. All these power relations in different roles of women are interrelated to each other and affect the process of empowerment simultaneously.

Malhotra et al. (2002) in section two of the article then summarize the most commonly used dimensions of empowerment which are:

- Economic
- Socio-cultural
- Familial/interpersonal
- Legal
- Political, and
- Psychological.

The above mentioned dimensions of empowerment again contain different indicators for potential operationalization in the household, community, and broader arenas as suggested by Malhotra et al. (2002).

Malhotra et al. (2002) then claim that various attempts have been taken to break the process of women's empowerment down into key components and mentions that all these dimensions can have potential indicators across household, community and broader arenas. It also indicates the challenges one face to measure women's empowerment by pinpointing difficulties with context-specific empowerment indicators and difficulties in measuring the

process of empowerment. According to them measuring empowerment depends on the formulation of universal standards such as human rights, but also allowing context sensitive indicators at the same time. As such, according to them the best operational framework for measuring women's empowerment should be based on universal human rights.

By pointing the formulation of universal standards and its relation to human rights Malhotra et al. (2002) come closer to the concept of capability approach which provides a useful framework for understanding the intrinsic value of ESC rights and empowerment. The capability approach, as such, is described in the next chapter.

In section three of the article Malhotra et al. (2002) describe how these frameworks are used in different projects. Finally in section four they propose the need to develop a framework of domains or dimensions that can be used across settings; empowerment to be addressed at the meso/community level as well as at the macro level in the legal/political domain, and at micro level in the familial domain.

I find these three articles interrelated in addressing how and what indicators to choose to measure women's empowerment. These are of great importance in my conceptualization and understanding of measurement of women's empowerment, and its relationships with other variables of interest in the field of gender equality. At the same time these guided me on my understanding of the methodology that should be employed for intra-household relationship analysis and women's empowerment measurement. These articles reflect the nature of the power structure in gender relations prevailing at the societal and familial level which help to find out the underlying negotiation processes between men and women.

In this study, I tried to use the framework developed by Malhotra et al. (2002) in my quest to search whether my target group acquired the opportunity to achieve the 'capability' constituted of resources and agency; in this case access to waged employment, and attained the achievement of greater empowerment as a result.

The result of searching through internet, whether there has been any research work done before to find out the relation between employment and women's empowerment in Bergen, gave quite a few documents available on women's empowerment both in national and international level mentioning different indicators and ways of measuring these indicators to

find the women's perception of empowerment. But I found no particular document that refers directly to the problem area of immigrant women's empowerment, and in particular, relation between employment and women's empowerment in Bergen. Directorate of immigration and a few other organizations have tried to find the implication of integration policy and other non-discriminatory policies at different levels, but they did not go further to study the impact of these policies in empowering women in this target group.

A research report produced by the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) (2008) found that most immigrants feel that they are positively integrated in the Norwegian society, with most of them interested in working and with a strong bondage to their work.

By having waged employment women get the opportunity to contribute to the household economy which can lead to a greater intra-household bargaining power (Kabeer 1994). Moreover, women might view their status and power have increased in public- and domestic-sphere as a result of employment outside of the home in different contexts. Though it can be argued that there is a positive relation between waged work and women's empowerment, it is not that simple (Zentgraf 2002).

How far the findings mentioned above can be related to the women's empowerment and employment yet to be analyzed as women's empowerment is an outcome of not only waged employment but also the interactions between the persons, and family and socio-cultural environment that they negotiate on a daily basis. The question remains how far these women by achieving a greater bargaining power are able to challenge the social norms and practices to reconstruct the traditional gender relations by having waged employment.

An investigation to study the context when, why and how women's empowerment is enhanced through employment with special reference to immigrant women in Bergen will thus help us to increase the knowledge of the factors that have linkages between women's empowerment and employment. Hence, I tried to find out some of the areas where employment acts as a catalyst or enabling factor through which women's empowerment is likely to occur.

3.2. Importance of the indicators chosen for the purpose of the study

Through my studies regarding measuring women's empowerment I found the indicators participation in domestic decision-making from familial/interpersonal dimension, access to and control over resources from economic dimension and mobility/freedom of movement from socio-cultural dimension quite widely used for the purpose of measuring women's empowerment in development studies.

Among others The World Bank (2011, p. 150) in its report "World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development" in advocating promotion of women's agency mentioned the following:

- Control over resources
- Ability to move freely
- Decision making over family formation
- Freedom from risk of violence
- Ability to have a voice in society and influence policy.

The first two of the agencies, control over resources and ability to move freely, advocated by the World Bank are the same as I am going to explore. The third one, decision-making over family formation, though not directly the same as mine, participation in domestic decision-making, but falls in the same category having the aspects of well-being.

As such, I selected to focus on these indicators for my research purpose to measure women's empowerment. The findings are then analyzed through qualitative analysis to compare them in the light of household bargaining power having in mind the suggestions of Mosedale (2003) to identifying constraints to action, to identifying how women's agency has developed, and to identifying how women's agency has changed constraints to action.

I explained in brief the importance of these three indicators chosen in analysing women's empowerment for the study purpose in the next chapter.

4. CONCEPTUALISATION, THEORY AND APPROACH

4.1. Conceptualizing Empowerment

The term ‘empowerment’, having the idea of ‘power’ in its root, is used in many different contexts. We can understand empowerment by exploring the concepts of power and powerlessness. Rowlands (1997) by citing Steven Lukes describes that power is exercised not only in the observable areas of conflict or suppressed conflict but also in unobservable conflict. Rowlands further agrees with Steven Lukes argument that “the supreme effect of power is to prevent people from even thinking of having conflict” (Rowlands 1997, p. 10). As such, it can be of great interest to find the impact of the prevailing power structure in the familial and societal level on my target group. Understanding power over, power to, power with and power within are the key factors to understand the word power and thus empowerment. Empowerment can be in both individual and collective level that challenges unjust social norms, beliefs and values (Rowlands 1997).

We can find the origin of thinking of women’s empowerment in feminist theory in an approach developed in the later 1970s and 1980s known as Gender and Development (GAD). Before this Women In Development (WID) approach assumed that giving women access to economic opportunities will lead to enhancement of women’s efficiency and economic development at the end. But this fails to give attention to women’s reproductive process by giving priority only to women’s productive roles and integration into the economy as a means of advancing their status. The other aspects of women’s subordination were not taken into account properly in order to challenge the subordination and thus women’s disempowerment. GAD is concerned with the dynamics of gender relations i.e. the changes over time in gender relations. This approach demonstrated the power relations between men and women, and the condition of subordination that most women face in many societies. “The focus on empowerment has been strengthened by the distinction, useful for analysis and planning, between women’s practical and strategic gender interests.” (Rowlands 1997 p: 7). Thus by having focus on gender relations and a shift of focus from women as a group this approach gives emphasis on the socially determined relations between women and men, and gender equality.

Different theoretical approaches can be used to study the change of the degree of women’s empowerment due to employment of women with immigrant background. There is no doubt

that inclusion in employment is an important prerequisite for empowerment and successful integration in the society. As such, this study focuses mainly on the theories of women's empowerment and the relation to labour market.

Naila Kabeer (1999) defines women's empowerment as comprising three critical elements: agency (power within/to), operationalized in reference to resources (power to/over), and made visible in its resulting beneficial/valued achievements, and further in this conception of empowerment agency is exercised in opposition to a prior condition of subordination in important (strategic) arenas of life. From her arguments it can be asserted that resources are the preconditions, agency is the process and achievement is the outcome.

As women are constrained by the way women and men are differentiated in the societies through the norms, beliefs, customs and values (Kabeer 2000) the level of empowerment will vary according to other criteria such as her class or caste, ethnicity, relative wealth, age, family position etc. Analysis of gender relations, the way in which power relations between the sexes are constructed and maintained in a society, will also play an important role in the measurement of women's empowerment as gender relations vary both geographically and over time (Mosedale 2003) . Empowerment as such, is both a process and an end result. "Women's empowerment is about the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability." (Kabeer 1999a, p. 435). As a matter of fact, we can understand the process of empowerment as a result of the interactions between agency, and formal and informal rules and norms which prevail in the broader institutional, social and political structure.

Women's empowerment is a process and an outcome which occurs across a number of domains and dimensions involving choice and control. Empowerment challenges the assumptions about the way things are and can be. Thus to understand empowerment the focus should be on where it occurs and the dimension in which it occurs. These theories will give the insight into the underneath factors of women's empowerment and help finding whether the target group has achieved/increased the abilities to make strategic life choices according to their desire by getting employed, and consequently became empowered. Naila Kabeer's (2000) book "The power to choose: Bangladeshi women and labour market decisions in London and Dhaka" provides information on motivations of immigrated population in deciding forms of employment. The book takes into consideration the immigrant women from

Bangladesh to London, United Kingdom showing the intrinsic factors in determining to join the waged income. The book deals with women coming from the same region as most of my informants. Moreover, I find a lot common to the socio-cultural factors between United Kingdom and Norway where this study is conducted. As such, it can be helpful for my study purpose to understand whether the target group has selected the position according to their capacity or just accepted as necessity having no other alternative available; in other words context in which the decisions of getting employed are made, whether the power structures being challenged, and analyze the characteristics of the women or communities involved in the process.

As mentioned before Kabeer (1999) argues that two of the three interrelated dimensions of empowerment, resources and agency, together constitute capabilities – “the potential that people have for living the lives they want, of achieving valued ways of ‘being and doing’.” (Kabeer 1999a, p. 438). Taking this argument into consideration it is important to understand the concept of capabilities in relation to empowerment. Subsequently discussion about the concept of capabilities follows.

4.2. Conceptualizing Capability

Amartya Sen’s (2005) concept of ‘capability’, i.e. the opportunity to achieve valuable combinations of human functionings - what a person is able to do or be, can be helpful in understanding people's ability to make strategic life choices. This capability approach provides a useful framework for understanding the intrinsic value of economic, social and cultural rights and empowerment as Sen describes “The two concepts - human rights and capabilities - go well with each other, so long as we do not try to subsume either concept entirely within the territory of the other. There are many human rights that can be seen as rights to particular capabilities” (Sen 2005, p. 151). According to Sen, "the notion of capability is essentially one of freedom - the range of options a person has in deciding what kind of life to lead.” (Dreze and Sen 1998, p. 35-36), and this freedom is also the fundamental idea of human rights. Economic poverty and deprivation is related to curtailing the freedom of a person to lead a life that he/she values. Securing ESC rights increase the freedom of individuals by increasing their capabilities and thus their quality of life. Discrimination can constrain the capability and thus freedom of a person through denying him/her the human

rights which again includes ESC rights as well as civil and political rights (University of Minnesota 2000).

The focus of the capability approach is “not just on what a person actually ends up doing, but also on what she is in fact able to do, whether or not she chooses to make use of that opportunity.” (Sen 2009, p. 235). In other words it focuses on an individual’s ability to choose the realized functionings. It can be noted here that this ability to choose the realized functionings occurs within the structural constraints which are again created by human agency.

The basic difference between agency and the capability approach is that agency emphasizes on terms of achieving goals that people happen to value and not the functioning in ways that they have reason to value. Thus agency can be interpreted as a concept of autonomous personal involvement in activities which does not consider the consequences of those activities on a person’s life (Drydyk 2008).

The core concepts of the capability approach are functionings and capabilities. A person’s capability is the various combinations of functionings ‘beings and doings’ that a person can achieve. “A person’s functionings and her capability are closely related but distinct.” (Robeyns 2003b: p. 11). If we consider functionings as an achievement then capability will be the freedom to achieve. Functionings are the different aspects of living conditions whereas capabilities are the real opportunities – the notions of freedom - one possesses regarding the life one may lead (Robeyns 2003b).

The present trend in the development activities in response to gender equality shows a paradigm shift from just only economic growth to human development and social justice. It is obviously true that economic progress is a key element of human progress, but in most countries, this did not materialize, either because economic growth was inadequate or because the pattern of growth meant that the benefits were not widely shared. As observed the advances in political and legal rights were not matched by significant progress in the achievement of greater social justice (Fukuda-Parr 2003). The poverty level remaining persistent, even growing, and increase in income inequalities throughout the 1980s and 1990s in both developing and developed countries gave rise to the consolidation of a market-led development model and a greater emphasis on democracy and rights. Accordingly, focus have

shifted the attention to a development agenda for human development, not just economic growth, and for equity not just efficiency.

Consequently, Professor Amartya Sen's Capability Approach - a framework directly concerned with human capabilities and freedom - conceptually founded in 1980 as critiques of traditional welfare economics has emerged as the leading alternative to standard economic frameworks for thinking about poverty, inequality and human development in general (Clark 2005). Understanding gender inequality is possible by comparing the functionings and capabilities which intrinsically matters and not only the means to achieve them like resources. In measuring women's empowerment focus should be given on their capabilities - real freedoms that people have for leading a valuable life (Robeyns 2003a cites Sen). Because people are essentially different focus should be given on what someone is able to be and to do, and not on their consumption pattern nor on their income as "Resource-based theories do not acknowledge that people differ in their abilities to convert these resources into capabilities, due to personal, social or environmental factors, such as physical and mental handicaps, talents, traditions, social norms and customs, legal rules, a country's public infrastructure, public goods, climate, and so on" (Robeyns 2003a, p. 63). As such, it is important to take under consideration the need for gender equality not only in the market based transactions but also within the family and society for measuring women's empowerment.

The main components, to start with, in Sen's argument in assessing capability are:

- The importance of real freedoms in the assessment of a person's advantage
- Individual differences in the ability to transform resources into valuable activities
- The multi-variate nature of activities giving rise to happiness
- A balance of materialistic and non-materialistic factors in evaluating human welfare
- Concern for the distribution of opportunities within society.

Since then Sen has developed, refined and defended the framework of human capability and freedom, in collaboration with many others, to make the capabilities approach predominant as a paradigm for policy debate in human development.

Thus capability approach framework in measuring women's empowerment is in an advantageous position as first of all functionings and capabilities are properties of individuals

making this approach an ethically (or normatively) individualistic theory. Second, it is not limited to the market, but takes into considerations people's beings and doings in both market and nonmarket settings which are especially important for gender equality research. And third, the approach explicitly acknowledges human diversity race, age, ethnicity, gender etc. (Robeyns 2003a).

Capability approach can be traced back to Aristotle, Classical Political Economy and Marx and "deeply influenced" (Sen 1992, p. 8) by Rawls's Theory of Justice (1971). The capability framework, as described by Amartya Sen in economics and elaborated in philosophical terms by Nussbaum, identifies "the basic constitutional principles that should be respected and implemented by the governments of all nations, as a bare minimum of what respect for human dignity requires" (Nussbaum 2000, p. 5), and draws attention to what people are actually able to do and to be with the resources at their command. As such, both Sen and Nussbaum connect the capability approach closely to the idea of human rights though Nussbaum's version of the capability approach differs from Sen's in several respects (Clark 2005). As Sen describes it "The two concepts - human rights and capabilities - go well with each other, so long as we do not try to subsume either concept entirely within the territory of the other. There are many human rights that can be seen as rights to particular capabilities. However, human rights to important process freedoms cannot be adequately analyzed within the capability framework. Furthermore, both human rights and capabilities have to depend on the process of public reasoning." (Sen 2005, p. 151). Sen (2005) also argues that the domain of public reasoning should not be confined to a given society only because of the inescapably universalist nature of these rights. As such, he contradicts in having a pre-determined canonical list of capabilities without any general social discussion or public reasoning.

The most notable difference is that Nussbaum's development of a definite list of central human capabilities which she argues basically not changed much over the years. These capabilities, which she argues "are fundamental entitlements inherent in the very idea of minimum social justice, or a life worthy of human dignity" (Nussbaum 2011, p. 24-25), consists of: (1) Life; (2) Bodily health; (3) Bodily integrity; (4) Senses, imagination and thought; (5) Emotions; (6) Practical reason; (7) Affiliation; (8) Other species; (9) Play; and (10) Political and material control over one's environment. These human capabilities are argued to be of central importance in any human life, whatever else the person pursues or chooses. She further argues that these central elements are pre-political and should be

embodied in constitutional guarantees, human rights legislation and development policies (Clark 2005).

Sen advocates a more direct approach for eliciting relevant information about the formation of human values, which emphasises the constructive role of democracy and the importance of public participation and discussion. He disagrees with Nussbaum by stating that “The problem is not with listing important capabilities, but with insisting on one predetermined canonical list of capabilities, chosen by theorists without any general social discussion or public reasoning. To have such a fixed list, emanating entirely from pure theory, is to deny the possibility of fruitful public participation on what should be included and why... public discussion and reasoning can lead to a better understanding of the role, reach and significance of particular capabilities...” (Sen 2004, p. 77, 81). According to Sen the people who are directly involved in case of a conflict between values or traditions must have the opportunity to participate in deciding what should be chosen. Therefore, it is extremely important to understand the role of public reasoning in the formulation and vindication of human rights. If we try to translate this statement in terms of women’s empowerment we can find as Kabeer (1994) described about “efficient provision of space, resources and time that will allow women to articulate their own interests rather than having them anticipated and met on their behalf” (Kabeer 1994: p: 304) quite similar to each other. Both of them are advocating for an approach which is built from the grass-root experience.

In this way Sen has broadened the informational base of evaluation, refocusing on people as ends in themselves, recognising human heterogeneity and diversity, drawing attention to group disparities, embracing human agency and participation, and acknowledging that different people, cultures and societies may have different values and aspirations (Clark 2005).

Capability approach emphasises on human functionings (an achievement of a person: what she or he manages to do or be) and the capability (a person’s ability to achieve a given functioning) to achieve valuable functionings and not the resources (income, commodity, command) nor utility (happiness, desire-fulfilment or choice) (Clark 2005).

Ensuring human capabilities is a vital step toward economic development because when people are denied their rights, it often results in social instability. It is universally accepted

that violations of rights are a major determinant of global poverty. By establishing rights and responsibilities markets can function efficiently and precisely. The argumentation of pursuing poverty alleviation should be seen as only one dimension of a complex process of human, social, and institutional interactions. To take away institutional and legal abilities, or the power to use, control, and allocate is to condemn poor people to poverty. Development is no longer about the creation of separate enclaves of human betterment but each and every development activity must be part of a unified approach. The overriding objective, according to the capability approach, of development is the expansion of human capabilities rather than economic growth, and as such, implies to women's empowerment as well. By having the opportunity to achieve valuable combinations of human functionings called 'capability' - what a person is able to do or be, can certainly expand women's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them, and as a result the achievement will be a greater empowerment.

Moreover, it is possible to identify the possibility of variations of substantial opportunities two persons can have even when having exactly the same set of means, and thus both of them cannot be judged to be equally advantaged even with the same opportunities. Thus "The capability perspective allows us to take into account the parametric variability in the relation between the means, on the one hand, and the actual opportunities, on the other" (Sen 2005, p. 134). As a matter of fact these actual opportunities can be subject to structural constraints and the possibilities of achieving those can be different from women to women. This particular characteristic of the capability approach, of taking into account the parametric variability in the relation between the means and the actual opportunities, allows me to understand the variations among the informants from two different socio-economic and cultural regions in achieving empowerment as an individual.

4.3. Understanding Participation in Domestic Decision-making as an Indicator of Empowerment

Participation in domestic decision-making, and access to and control over resources are the two most frequently used indicators in the empirical literature to operationalize women's empowerment at the individual or household level as these two indicators merge by indicators on domestic decision-making focusing heavily on financial and resource allocation matters (Malhotra et al. 2002). The use of these indicators also reflects the emphasis on resources and

agency in the conceptual literature as well as relation of empowerment with choice, control and power. As it is noted before, women's empowerment is a process of improving the capacity of individuals or groups through expansion of assets and capabilities. Moreover, to be empowered, they should have their freedom to choose any of these capabilities in the pursuit of better influence the course of their lives and the decisions which affect them. Consequently, women should have the freedom to choose what she feels best for herself and her family at all levels of life – including the familial level which is the smallest unit of a society; a kinship; a country. The aggregated empowerment having its root from below at this micro level can play the vital role in empowering women at a higher macro level.

The following statement made at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICDP) held in Cairo in 1994 indicates also the importance of participate in domestic decision-making:

“Changes in both men's and women's knowledge, attitudes and behaviour are necessary conditions for achieving the harmonious partnership of men and women. Men play a key role in bringing about gender equality since, in most societies, men exercise preponderant power in nearly every sphere of life, ranging from personal decisions regarding the size of families to the policy and programme decisions taken at all levels of Government. It is essential to improve communication between men and women on issues of sexuality and reproductive health, and the understanding of their joint responsibilities, so that men and women are equal partners in public and private life” (United Nations Population Fund 2004: p. 28).

By citing the above statement we can assume that women's right to participate in domestic decision-making is just a prerequisite to such an equal partnership in public and private life.

Without having the equal right to participate in domestic decision-making, women are always deprived from their equal share of available economic, social and cultural resources due to the inequality in the control and allocation of resources within the household. As Kabeer (Kabeer 1994: p. 95) cited Moore “The control and allocation of resources within the household is a complex process which has to be seen in relation to web of rights and obligations. The management of labour, income and resources is something which is crucially bound up with household organization and the sexual division of labour (Moore 1998, p. 56)”. This statement confirms what I mentioned earlier in this section about the relation between indicators of measuring women's empowerment of participation in domestic decision-making,

having household organization and sexual division of labour as elements of the indicator, and financial and resource allocation matters.

Kabeer further argues that “if the distribution of decision-making power between household members is to be opened up to analysis, then the household welfare function, budget, labour supply and, above all, the decision-making unit itself will have to be disaggregated” (Kabeer 1994, p. 107). Thus Kabeer emphasizes on the process of domestic decision-making. By disintegrating and assessing these processes in the light of gender equality, and by challenging the unjust social norms, beliefs and values it will be possible to reconstruct them towards the empowerment of women having greater bargaining power.

It is argued in the neo-classical economic theory regarding household economics that the rational choice will lead to maximize individual utilities in the face of available scarce resources. In this context the neo-classical theory assumes that household as a single entity maximizing a joint welfare function subject to the household production function. But the rational choice of the allocator can totally be different than that of the welfare of the family as a whole in such a welfare maximization function even without having any sexual biasness. For example, a future bread earner can get a higher share of the resources. As such, it can be mentioned that “...household could only be portrayed as a welfare-maximizing unit if efficiency in production was matched by a distribution process which also maximized the welfare of its members” (Kabeer 1994, p. 99).

This problem with welfare maximization in household distribution, as argued by the neo-classical theory, was tried to solve with the proposal of altruism stating ‘benevolent dictatorship’ of the household head, generally a man, who will ensure the household welfare maximization. But even this altruism does not guarantee nonexistence of welfare differentials within the household for example situations can arise where those who produce more may have a greater claim on household consumption. The limitations lie in supporting household as an essentially altruistic collectivity. The limitations can also be found in respect to aggregating individual utilities into joint welfare function, individual income to common budget, individual family labour to an abstract pool of household labour and aggregating individual members into a single decision-making unit (Kabeer 1994).

At the same time, “Women’s greater decision-making roles in female segments of the production process will count for little if critical distributional decisions about workloads or the proceeds from production are associated with different and male-dominated segments of production” (Kabeer 1994, p. 118) as women’s perceived contribution to household is considered to be less important due to the invisibility of their contribution as a result of reproductive nature, unpaid and carried out at home.

It is documented that these problems with the intra-household distribution of available scarce resources result in excess female mortality, gender-related differentials in household health-seeking and nutritional behaviour (Kabeer 1994). Contrary, we can argue that positive results can be assumed regarding total household welfare when women are in a position to participate equally in domestic decision-making processes. It can be assumed that if women are not given the opportunity to participate on equal terms in the domestic decision-making “mothers’ preferences would not be reflected in household outcomes” (Kabeer 1994, p. 102).

4.4. Understanding Access to and Control over Resources as an Indicator of Empowerment

“Resources include not only material resources in the more conventional economic sense, but also the various human and social resources which serve to enhance the ability to exercise choice” (Kabeer 1999a, p. 437).

Thus both tangible and intangible resources acquired through a variety of social relationships have to be taken into consideration to find out the outcome of the access into choices and change reflecting the rules and norms by which distribution and exchange occur within different institutional contexts such as family, market, community, nation.

Access is the opportunity to make use of these resources to maximize utility reflecting the rules and norms by which distribution and exchange occur within different institutional contexts. Whereas, control is the ability to choose or define how and for what these resources will be used. This control is the power which can be positive or negative depending on the purpose. One’s access to resources may not give the same opportunity to all because people vary in their capability to be able to take advantage of the opportunity due to the social rules and norms.

Women's equal access to and control over resources is not only one of the most important factor towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment but also for equitable and sustainable economic growth and development. Long-standing inequalities due to discriminatory norms and practices in the gender distribution of economic and financial resources placed women in a disadvantageous position relative to men in utilizing their capability to participate in development processes (United Nations 2009).

Women's unequal access to productive resources like land, housing, property and access to technologies and services limit women's capability to increase household productivity, poverty reduction, education, health care and welfare of children having equal opportunity for both sons and daughters, maternal leisure time. Women's access to all human capital, social, and economic and financial resources and services is the key to take advantage of all economic opportunities like entrepreneurial and other livelihood activities (United Nations 2009).

As we have noted in the concept of 'capability' what a person is able to do or be to make strategic life choices is thus a function of access to and control over economic and financial resources.

As I mentioned before by having access to resources women get the opportunity to contribute to the household economy which can lead to a greater intra-household bargaining power (Kabeer 1994) and higher control over common household budget. As such, by having access to and control over resources women can ensure a better position in the family having greater household bargaining power. This greater bargaining power will not only lead to exercise greater decision-making power but also lead to exercise influence and bring about changes. They will be, in the same way, in a position to combat the evil of domestic violence, a cause of global poverty, by giving women a better fall-back position (United Nations 2009).

Having access to and control over resources lead to increase in women's household bargaining power because this is positively related to women's perceived contribution to household expenditure. This bargaining power can lead to different advantages, compare to for example altruistic model, by having diversity in decision-making behaviour, introducing

the idea of unequal power within the household leading to a structural analysis of patriarchal inequalities (Kabeer 1994) and thus achieving women's empowerment.

This access to and control over resources can also increase respect from families and communities by building self-esteem, and provide better fall-back position in respect to financial security at the old age, in the face of divorce, separation or the death of husband (United Nations 2009). Access to and control over resources thus can constitute the capability of economic freedom and increase women's empowerment.

4.5. Understanding Mobility/Freedom of Movement as an Indicator of Empowerment

Capability of mobility/freedom of movement is a part of the human rights and a prerequisite to achieve healthy nations, and provide positive contribution to social and economic development. As such, it is one of the most important indicators of women's empowerment.

The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on December 10, 1948 asserting in Article 1 the right to be free and Article 13 the right to freedom of movement as follows:

“Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.....

Article 13:

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.”

These articles recognize that all human beings irrespective of sex are born free and have the right to freedom of movement. These can be associated with both micro and macro environment. These rights are meant for all individuals irrespective of sex, religion, culture or any other social or biological differences. Understanding from the framework of capability approach we can assert that economic poverty and deprivation is related to curtailing the freedom of a person to lead a life that he/she values. Securing economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights - a broad category of human rights - increases the freedom of individuals by

increasing their capabilities and thus their quality of life. On the other hand discrimination can constrain the capability and thus freedom of a person through denying him/her the ESC rights. As such, denying women to move freely in the society is depriving them from their ESC rights and thus decreasing their capabilities.

Mobility is not only the geographical movement of an individual but also includes the potential for undertaking movements (mobility) as it is lived and experienced. Understanding mobility we have to understand the observable physical movement, the meaning of these movements are encoded with, experience of practicing these movement and potential for undertaking these movements (Cresswell and Uteng 2008).

Women's mobility/freedom to move depends upon how the family and community view women's rights and intrinsically dependent on the prevailing levels of violence against women in the household and the community. Gender-based violence affects one's health both physically and psychologically resulting among others limited mobility. Gender-based violence prevents women from participating fully in the family life and the community. It, consequently, preventing them as well as society from realizing their full potential. Thus the intangible costs is quite phenomenal in the societies relating to the quality of life, the suppression of human rights and the denial of women's potential to participate fully in their society due to the disability to move freely resulting from among others violence against women. To ensure gender equality and protect women from gender-based violence it is essential to have the right to judicial protection, which is the ultimate guarantor of rights. This judicial protection again depends on the possibility of reaching that by the women which is directly related to the mobility of women which again is also constrained by "the norms, beliefs, customs and values through which societies differentiate between women and men" (Kabeer 2000, p. 22).

Moreover, in many places sexual harassment outside home hinders women from enjoying freedom of movement. In many societies women cannot move freely due to the fear of sexual harassment combined with other social factors like purdah, the practice of seclusion and veiling of women, without an escort results in doubling the agony and economic loss.

Economic participation in paid work, entrepreneurship, and attaining credit programmes are hindered due to the controls on women's and girls' mobility in some parts of the world. Same applies to access to other financial and productive resources too.

In many countries women have to pay the cost of not earning a livelihood by outside employment to preserve the importance of preserving honour and social status when social norms prescribe female seclusion in the name of purdah (Kabeer 1998). Even many women, in these societies, who are not able to overcome these social norms choose to pay the economic cost by “starving invisibly at home or taking on badly paid work in other people's homes ‘where nobody would see’” (Kabeer 1998, p. 66).

Lack of freedom to move is also a great obstacle for women in political participation and social network building.

From the above discussion it can be argued that isolation and social exclusion have to be removed by improving women's mobility/freedom of movement to empower women and to eliminate poverty. Thus in empowering women virtuous circle of greater mobility/freedom of movement can play the instrumental role by stimulating women to participate in more socio-economic and political activities.

4.6. Culture, Gender Identity, Gender Role

The ‘structure of constraint’ (Folbre 1994), the norms and rules which define social relationship placing some in position of dominance over others and differentiate the choices available to them, gives men privileged access to resources leading to exercise authority over women within the family and beyond resulting women's subordination by reduced, and/or denial of women's decision-making power, and access to and control over resources. Even this dependency on men in these societies leads women to bargain away their own right leading to a vicious circle of gender inequality. Any degree of social power these women enjoy in these social relations also comes, among others, mainly through their husbands – the ultimate source of their power (Kabeer 1988).

From the discussions above we can assert that the structure of gender relations in different societies help to reinforce its logic to the devaluation and dependence of women. Men have

the control over material resources, capital and labour processes of women and children. Men also control women's mobility/freedom of movement due to the socially accepted values which again insists that the women should be at home for household activities and child care, where men are bread earner and thus will be working outside the home. The limitation of women's mobility/freedom of movement leads women to be absent "at the point at which the value of their labour power is realized means that their contribution remains socially invisible; control over the proceeds of their labour is transferred to male hands (Kabeer 1988, p. 102)". The focus on structural constraints and gender relations can illustrate the way the norms, values and practices influence the agency and can be a determining factor of women's empowerment.

The extreme asymmetry of the gender relationship in these patriarchal and traditional societies leads women to accept the only options prescribed by the system and thus accept the subordination (Kabeer 1988). As such, gender can be expressed as a form of social embodiment; culturally based expectations of the roles and behaviours of females and males when sex identifies the biological and physiological differences between women and men. Gender roles and behaviours can change historically even when aspects of these roles originated in the biological differences between the sexes (Connell 2002).

A person, an individual, is a human being, or an entity that has certain capacities or attributes associated with personhood. The body is the physical body of an individual and embodiment is role that the body plays in shaping the mind. Whereas, the self is an individual person as the object of his or her own reflective consciousness and seeks to describe essential qualities that constitute a person's uniqueness or essential being.

The existing concepts of the person and self are presented as gender neutral, assuming that the person and the self are ontologically prior to gender identity, that is, gendered self. But according to the ethnographic writings it seems to be that the person is an adult male (Moore 1994).

As Henrietta L. Moore puts it "Attributes of personhood, such as the continuity and coherence of the person through time, are socially and culturally established, they are not merely given in the physical fact of embodiment. Self-identity is thus something that has to be established socially through a set of discourses which are both discursive and practical. These discourses

establish the grounds for identity and the framework(s) within which identity becomes intelligible” (Moore 1994, p. 36, 37). At the same time, most cultures do not have a single model of gender rather a multiplicity of discourses on gender, and these discourses about gender categories bring about women and men as persons who are defined by difference.

Many recent ethnographic models show that the physical characteristics are the sign or effect of sexual differences rather than the cause of gender identity, proving it not to be considered as universally applicable that gender is in the body and that gender has an ontological (biological sex) status which defines the parameters within which personal identity becomes intelligible (Moore 1994).

Culture influences the way persons think and interact with others, and thus have a great influence on the choice of words, tone of voice, facial expressions, use of gestures and personal space, and reaction time. Cultures also have different norms for asking questions, responding to questions, and conversing with adults. Many often these cultural practices are the results of ethnic, racial, or religious influences.

One’s gender identity, femininity and masculinity, refers to the degree to which persons see themselves as masculine or feminine given what it means to be a man or woman in a society. Femininity and masculinity are rooted in one’s gender rather than one’s sex - while gender can be expressed as culturally based expectations of the roles and behaviours of females and males, and sex identifies the biological and physiological differences between women and men. Gender roles and behaviours can change historically even when aspects of these roles originated in the biological differences between the sexes.

These discourses about femininity and masculinity are consciously cultivated through ritual and other cultural means, showing that gender is indeed a cultural and historical product as well as the producer of history. Masculinity as a gender category intersects with other power relation systems as gender is not an isolated subject but one that is present in all aspects of society, and consequently all social practices are constructed, among other things such as race and ethnicity, through the prism of gender.

We can find clear evidences of the process of production and reproduction of these masculine discourses as noted by Paul Dover (2005) in his the article "Gender and Embodiment:

Expectations of Manliness in a Zambian Village," where he explains the ways in which masculinity is constructed relationally, in particular in the interactions between men and women. As we understand children usually identify their sex from age four to eleven leading the necessity of learning their gender roles and behaviours, and learn how to relate socially with others. While a boy develops a healthy masculine gender role most effectively when he can use his father or another significant male in his life as a role model, a girl develops a healthy feminine gender role most effectively when she can use her mother or another significant female in her life as a role model. These gender roles are very evident in the way we see ourselves as female or male. These gender roles are based on how we have been treated in the past and the actions in history we have taken toward gender equality. As Paul Dover puts it "The socialization into masculinity and femininity is accented and embodied through the social segregation of the sexes, gendered tasks and tools with which to accomplish them, and gendered use of space" (Dover 2005, p. 175, 176).

From the above discussions we can find that gender identity and gender role are consciously cultivated through ritual and other cultural means. This shows that gender is indeed a cultural and historical product as well as the producer of history. People bear these perceptions of gender identities and gender roles gathered through the learning process throughout their lives. The socio-cultural norms, values and practices learned through this process affects peoples' behaviour and the way they react in the societal context. As such, these factors balance the gendered power relations at the household level and beyond. And by analyzing this gendered power relations it can be possible to observe the gender components of empowerment.

4.7. Conceptualizing Bargaining

As we noted before the learning process and processes of disseminating knowledge from one generation to another involving of both women and men suggest that progress towards gender equality can only be accelerated starting at domestic level. As such, the capability to have household bargaining power for exercising equal right in all aspects of life is obviously a desired start.

Traditionally bargaining is defined in economic theory as negotiating conditions of a purchase or contract. Bargaining situations includes at least two parts, who may try to reach an

agreement. It is assumed that through bargaining on any of a range of transactions both of them will be left at least as well off as they could be if they reached no agreement. In family economics the bargaining process within a family plays an important role in the functioning and decision making of households affecting various members of the household. This bargaining process within a family known as intra-household bargaining thus refers to negotiations that occur between members of a household in order to arrive at decisions regarding the household unit. Intra-household bargaining process can have different dimensions depending on the socio-economic conditions in question (Wikipedia 2013). As most of my informants are coming from a patriarchal society I am going to emphasize particularly on this dimension to elaborate the concept.

Kandiyoti (1988) in her article “Bargaining with Patriarchy” argues that different forms of patriarchy can be identified through systematic comparative analysis of women’s strategies and coping mechanisms in dealing with them. She also argues that this will lead to a more culturally and temporally grounded understanding of patriarchal systems. As she mentions “Different forms of patriarchy present women with distinct “rules of the game” and call for different strategies to maximize security and optimize life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression” (Kandiyoti 1988, p. 274). Therefore, women strategize within a set of concrete constraints that reveal and define the patriarchal bargain of any society which varies depending on class, caste, and ethnicity. Moreover, patriarchal bargains are susceptible to historical transformations calling for renegotiation of relations between genders due to new areas of struggle (Kandiyoti 1988).

Kandiyoti reveals how patriarchy can be manifested in different ways by using examples from two different patriarchal systems. In the first type of patriarchy as found in sub-Saharan Africa, women are not seen as completely subservient to men. In fact they are given a certain amount of autonomy in the household, and their labor does not go unrecognized. At the same time men are also less responsible for their wives' welfare and protection in this type of patriarchal system. In such patriarchal system by becoming totally dependent on husbands women can gain very little but can lose a lot. Thus they resist projects that tilt the delicate balance they strive to maintain in the pursuit of safeguarding already existing spheres of autonomy (Kandiyoti 1988).

On the other hand, she observed that women are subordinate to men, and in need of their protection and material sustenance in the geographical area that includes North Africa, the Muslim Middle East (including Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran) and South and East Asia (specifically, India and China). She calls this 'classic patriarchy'. Under classic patriarchy generally girls, by being given away in marriage at a very young age, become member of households which are headed by their husband's father. In this process they become subordinate not only to all the men but also to more senior women, especially their mothers-in-law, and a break with their own kin group. Moreover, their labor within the household is not recognized and remunerated. But women are willing to remain that way without any protest under classic patriarchy because of the security and material welfare promised by the classic patriarchal order. Thus, these women's strategically hold on tight to their domestic roles and resist changes. They perceive any change unacceptable which can jeopardize the opportunity to retain their economic shelter, and lose the control and authority they will achieve over their daughters-in-laws when their sons get married at a later age as a more empowered member of the family. Thus they (women) will be able to manipulate their daughters-in-law the way their mothers-in-law did. Thus subordination to men is offset by the expectation of women of having control over younger women at an older age under classic patriarchy. Due to these cyclical fluctuations of their power position combined with status considerations leads to women's support in reproduction of their own subordination. "However, women have access to the only type of labor power they can control, and to old age security through their married sons. Since sons are a woman's most critical resource, ensuring their life-long loyalty is an enduring preoccupation." (Kandiyoti 1988, p. 279).

The discussion above about women's patriarchal bargains aiming at achieving more power opens for a wider discussion about the concept bargaining power in relation to the complex range of factors like gender roles, social norms and perceptions.

Consequently, I find it interesting to look how one of the sources of women's empowerment, employment, affects women's power in the household through intra-household bargaining model. "The organizing principle behind the model is that individuals live in households where one's input into resource allocation and distribution decisions depends both on one's alternatives to remaining in the household (exit) and one's right or ability to try and influence household decisions (voice or autonomy), including decisions about one's own strategic life choices." (Braunstein 2008, p. 4). According to this model, exit is the situation one shall

encounter if the cooperation breaks down i.e. one's fall-back position, and voice is the autonomy in decision-making. Voice is a socially-determined capability whose power ranges from zero where social norms completely prohibit women's participation, and one where single women is the head of the household (Braunstein 2008). For the purpose of the thesis I am going to discuss this concept through the article "Bargaining" and Gender Relations: Within and Beyond the Household' written by Agarwal (1997).

Agarwal (1997) in her article takes into consideration gender relations beyond the household by including the arenas of the market, the community and the state, and the links between extra-household and intra-household bargaining power in determining the outcomes of intra-household dynamics. Gender relations, as she mentions as relations of power between women and men, embody both the material and ideological has impact on economic outcomes in multiple ways. These gender relations are constituted and help constitute these practices and ideologies by intersecting with other structures of social hierarchy such as class, caste and race.

Agarwal (1997) advocates the bargaining model as a useful framework for analyzing gender relations and understanding how gender asymmetries are constructed and contested. In doing so she highlights the problems of unitary household model. Unitary household model treats household as a unit of altruistic decision making; and integrates both the production and consumption activities. This model assumes that utility maximization of each member of the family on the basis of a set of common preferences integrated in to the aggregate utility function, and a common budget constraint. Unitary model assumes that for the maximum welfare of the household, available resources are allocated between household members optimally by a benevolent dictator.

Later the formal critiques of the unitary model used a cooperative bargaining approach by following John Nash's formulation of cooperative "bargaining problems" within game theory adapting to a two-person household assuming that the outcome of the household members bargain over the use of the pooled income, depending on their bargaining power determined by their respective fall-back positions. Thus alternative household models through game-theory approach incorporated a more complex understanding of family decision-making in a situation of budget constraints and in control over resource use.

In general, economic models focus on the determinants and outcomes of intra-household power without taking into consideration how the processes of exercising intra-household power are themselves gendered. As such, these models fail to explain the persistence of gender inequalities by considering bargaining power depending alone on objective factors.

Agarwal argues that the complex range of factors like gender roles, social norms and perceptions, factors that affect gender differences in the exercise of self-interest play a vital role in determining bargaining power. Such factors should be taken into consideration in the theoretical formulations, empirical predictions and policy interventions. These must be recognized in framing hypotheses, data gathering and analyses.

She suggests that questions should be asked about “some critical aspects of intra-household gender dynamics, such as: What factors (especially qualitative ones) affect bargaining power? What is the role of social norms and social perceptions in the bargaining process and how might these factors themselves be bargained over? Are women less motivated than men by self-interest and might this affect bargaining outcomes? (Agarwal 1997, p. 1)”

According to the bargaining approach, interactions between the members of the household contain elements of cooperation and conflict. Cooperation among the household members depends on whether it makes them better-off than non-cooperation. Outcome of such cooperation and non-cooperation depends on the relative bargaining power of the household members. A member's bargaining power on the other hand depends on a range of factors especially on the strength of the person's fall-back position. The fall-back position is the outside options which determine how well-off she/he would be if cooperation failed which is also termed as the threat point. Any improvement in the person's fall-back position can lead to an improvement in the deal the person gets within the household resulting empowerment. One's ability to make contributions within the relationship is also influenced by the factors that determine a person's fall-back position. The achievement of exercising intra-household bargaining power - application of voice - depends on women's provisioning capacity - the set of individual constraints and priorities/needs - and terms of exit (fall-back position). Social norms, values and practices also influence bargaining power by setting a boundary of voice a person has within the household, and by inhibiting the possibility of exit.

Agarwal suggests some critical dimensions in bargaining outcomes from a gender perspective. She suggests to get the answer of the following questions in the search of dimensions of household bargaining (Agarwal 1997, p. 6):

- “- What determines intra-household bargaining power?
- Are there differences in the relative importance of factors which determine fall-back positions?
- What is the role of social norms in determining bargaining power and in setting the limits to what is bargained over?
- How are bargaining processes and outcomes affected by differences in individual perceptions (about needs, contributions, etc.) and pursuit of self-interest?
- What are the links between intra-household bargaining and bargaining outside the household (e.g. in the market, the community and the State)?
- And what determines extra-household bargaining power?”

In doing so Agarwal also mentions that social norms in particular contexts can affect bargaining in at least four ways (Agarwal 1997, p. 15): (1) by setting limits on what can be bargained about; (2) being a determinant of or constraint to bargaining power; (3) affecting how the process of bargaining is conducted: e.g. covertly or overtly; aggressively or quietly; and (4) social norms can themselves be subject to bargain over.

From the discussions above we can find the similarities between Kabeer (1999) and Agarwal (1997) in terms of measuring women’s empowerment i.e. to observe and record the observations regarding the women’s relative exercise of power within the gender system. The idea of constraints that shape women’s behaviour and exit are the pre-conditions according to Agarwal and are the resources according to Kabeer. And voice, the ability to exercise choice, is same as the agency.

As we have seen in our discussions that power is in the centre of bargaining. Bargaining is a process of tactical actions between two parties who are committed to attain a specific goal. The power relation will be determined by the alternatives each party has as an acceptable fall-back position or the other alternatives to gain the similar outcome. Moreover, bargaining is a subjective power which depends on the bargainers’ perception of it both within bargaining situation and relationship.

By understanding the importance of the household bargaining power in gender equality I have selected to analyze the data from my field study through the bargaining model to find out how the women in my target group position themselves after being employed under the umbrella of patriarchal subordination, their engagement in the patriarchal bargaining, and their negotiation strategies to balance the power relations – central to the idea of empowerment. The findings are also analyzed in the light of socio-cultural norms, rules and practices in the arena of gender identity and gender role to find out the reason for expecting such balances in the power relation.

4.8. Conceptualizing Employment

Employment is a contract where hours of work are exchanged for pay and follows a fixed schedule. This is a contract between two parts employer and employee. According to the agreement employee renders her/his service to facilitate some goals and missions. In return the employer pays wage to the employee in cash and/or kind.

We can name a few aspects of employment to understand its impact on women's empowerment. Employment makes one aware and knowledgeable. It makes one confident in mastering the job situation and increases competence, i.e. better skill in performing a given task or a number of tasks. It makes one independent because confidence, competence and awareness makes one to decide on one's judgment, and finally, it makes one critical, to ask and raise questions, able to make differences between what is right and what is not wrong.

Moreover, by being employed women shall have access to resources by earning money themselves to become economically independent. In this way, they will be able to contribute in the common household budget and thus they can gain intra-household bargaining power. As a result women can gain the capability of participating in domestic decision-making. Through employment one can also increase her mobility/freedom to move by disclosing themselves to the outside world. All these factors are supposed to enhance women's empowerment. As such, the thesis investigates how and/or whether employment influences the power relation in an intra-household bargaining situation in achieving women's empowerment among the target group.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1. Selecting the Method of Study

The main objective of my thesis - “Employment Opportunity and Women’s Empowerment: A Study with Special Reference to Immigrant Women in Bergen” - is to study the extent of achieving women’s empowerment through employment with special reference to immigrant women in Bergen. The aim is to find the linkages between women’s empowerment in the field of socio-economic status and social network, and employment opportunity.

In quest of finding the relationship between women’s empowerment and employment among the immigrant women in Bergen, I selected the qualitative research method. Though different set of indicators of women’s empowerment and composite index for measuring is developed, often it is quite difficult to measure these indicators. As I understand empowerment as the perception of having the capabilities one desires in their lives those intersect personal, family, social, cultural, economic and political space. These vary from person to person – time to time, and also vary from place to place due to socio-cultural differences. The same person can perceive different level of empowerment, measured on a particular index, at different time periods, at different geographical locations and having different social affiliations.

Qualitative analysis method is selected as most suitable for the project as “Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell 2007: p. 37). Qualitative measurement by dealing with measuring the change in terms of certain standards is suitable to measure the process of empowerment to find the perceived changes in the empowerment status and capabilities. Qualitative methods help us in finding why and how of decision-making and not only what, where and when by analysing the qualitative data which are generally in the form of words both spoken and written, and visual images. Explanations and conclusions of the issue in question are derived through looking closely to the collected empirical data i.e. the evidence that has been collected. As such, while quantitative research can show some trends, qualitative research enables us to explain.

Moreover, I selected in-depth interview method for collecting my primary data as I found it most suitable for collecting information about individual experiences, options and feelings.

These expressions of feelings can be of very private nature and quite sensitive especially within the inner circle of the informant group. Many of the individual feelings about oneself can also be perceived as humiliating. As such, I found this method appropriate also because it is suitable for collecting information about sensitive topics. As my study deals with empowerment, which again is based on individual experiences, options and feelings, using semi-structured open-ended questions gave the informants opportunity to respond in their own words in opposite to forcing them to choose from fixed responses as quantitative methods demand. By using prompts, probes and checks at the interview time I gained worthwhile and detailed insights of different aspects of the problem too. At the same time the informants felt free to discuss different issues of sensitive nature in these face-to-face interviews, which might have been difficult for them to put in writings.

5.2. Selecting the Target Group for the Study

The target group for the study was a few employed immigrant women in Bergen. It could have been interesting to include man also in the field study to find out their perceptions on the issues discussed in the paper. This could have provided with data for making comparison between the perceived differences between women and men. But due to time and resource constraints I decided to confine myself only to women for the sake of this study.

The informants were selected through purposeful sampling keeping in mind that they should be married or having a male partner, engaged in waged employment and have educational background at university level. Being married or having a male partner gave my informants opportunity to tell me the differences in practices the household affairs between women and men. Being engaged in waged employment allowed them to describe the present situation in the intra-household power relations and also allowed then to imagine a situation if they were not employed. Moreover, I have selected my informants having educational background from University level just to make sure that they have the capacity to join the employment market both here in Norway and in their countries of origin.

The informants thus selected were best suited for the purpose of my study. All of them are educated and thus it was possible to communicate with them in English, though sometime it was necessary to use Bengali, Hindi and Urdu languages. The informants are in age group between thirty four and fifty two years, eleven of them are married, two of them are divorced.

Selection of the informants was through private links. Many of them are personal/family friends of mine. Before I started my work for the project I planned to contact my informants in written requesting them to participate in one-to-one face-to-face interview sessions. But as I am one of them in the socio-cultural environment, this was not practical. My informants could have perceived this as an arrogant act from the most junior member of the group and may have rejected such an invitation. Rather, I personally contacted them over telephone to inform about the project and requested them for an interview.

To select informants, I used the snowball method, requesting my informants to use their social networks to refer me to other potential informants for the study. This helped me in getting suitable informants needed to get relevant information. In my first conversation over telephone with these informants I introduced myself and informed them about my purpose of calling.

In follow up call/calls (as it was more than one sometimes), upon receiving the confirmation about participating, we made further appointments and plans for interviews. Then I called them once again the day before to confirm time and place of the interview.

5.3. Choosing the Dimensions of Women's Empowerment for the Study

Empowerment as we have seen is complex and complicated phenomenon. How women become empowered depends on variety of factors of multi-dimensional nature, which is challenging to measure.

As I mentioned before, due to time and resource constraints, I had to narrow the range of my field study and focus mainly on three dimensions: familial/interpersonal dimension, economic dimension and socio-cultural dimension. Further, the study will only focus on the indicators in household level of these dimensions.

Though I did not consider other dimensions such as legal, political and psychological even then these three dimensional operationalization of empowerment allowed me to explore and assess different impacts of employment and women's empowerment. These dimensions gave me an idea of the many facets of women's empowerment, and gave an indication of how and

when employment empowers women in these three dimensions, and when and why it does not. In other words, it helped me reveal how a woman may be empowered in one dimension, even one aspect of a dimension, and not in others, or even feel disempowered in another.

5.4. The Indicators

In the interview process, I tried to find the indications of how and when employment empowers women in these three dimensions, and when and why it does not.

The dependent variable in this context is women's empowerment while the independent variable is employment. However, there are lot of other variables which contribute to women's empowerment but considering the complexity and diversity of involving other variables in the study, and time and resource constraints I confined myself to only one variable - employment. Indeed, I tried to include the impacts of few other socio-demographic characteristics as control variables like education level of both the informants and their partners' (usually husbands), age, knowledge about women's empowerment and violence against women, and access to different sources of information.

As I mentioned before I selected the indicators participation in domestic decision-making from familial/interpersonal dimension; access to and control over resources from economic dimension; and mobility/freedom of movement from socio-cultural dimension for the purpose of my study. It may be noted here that these indicators played as proxy measures of empowerment those influence women's autonomy by helping us to determine certain outcomes using calculable values in the context where the possibility of measuring exact value is not available in qualitative research as mine. These indicators are not empowerment themselves. Only the specific outcome of these indicators is the evidence that the process of empowerment has occurred. These proxy measures were used in determining women's empowerment using calculable values when I did not have the ability to measure the exact value of women's empowerment otherwise. From open-ended interviews I tried to produce information about interpersonal, interactional and behavioural dimensions of empowerment. It is very important to keep in mind that the measures are "connected to the experience of the research participants as they state it, and contextually grounded in their life experiences"

(Zimmerman 1995, p. 596). As such, it can be argued here that it might not be possible to have a generalizable valid measure of empowerment for all groups.

All these three indicators led me to measure women's empowerment through behavioural measures where informant responses were produced automatically, without conscious thought, but represent what is present in a particular environment. This type of measure allowed also informants to present in a virtual environment, by not demanding them to consign an exact value, in my case what if they were not employed and what if they were in their country of origin - behaviours she would expect in an identical real environment.

As it is mentioned earlier women's empowerment is a process as such, the study focused on understanding the areas of enhanced power in terms of these three indicators where employment played the role of a catalyst for change and women as agent of change. The enhanced power - measured through existence of choice, the use of choice, and the achievement of choice - is the result achieved and can be considered as outcome of the process of women's empowerment. Questions were also asked to correlate the effect of immigration to Norway on these three indicators.

In addition to these three indicators of behavioural measures I also included one attitudinal measure to look at women's views on gender inequality and domestic violence for the purpose of my study to make it sure that they understand the context of my study.

5.5. Data Collection

I started my work with data collection in June 2012 and continued to the beginning of September 2012. It took quite some time to get the reply from my informants about their decision to participate in the study after I personally contacted them with the request for the first time. As all of my informants are employed it was difficult to get an appointment for the interview which suits all parts. Consequently, the interview process was spread over a long time span between June and September 2012.

For the first few interviews I selected a restaurant as our meeting place, which did not work out because of the atmosphere around us. Instead, we met either at my informants' homes, their offices or at my home. We selected a time when we could be alone and the interviews

were conducted without the presence of any one known to us who could have disturbed the interview. This allowed me to get the most out of the available interview time.

To start with I gave them a copy of the interview guide (Appendix-1). Though most of the information about the project and its objective were there in written form, I also explained verbally the purpose of the meeting after a short introduction. These “Hi and Hello” conversations I found quite important in this type of open-ended interviews. They opened the horizon of discussion to start with and relaxed the informants, and also helped establishing trust between me and the interviewees. I also explained verbally the term empowerment to wanting them understand the problem. Ethical issues were also discussed. After explaining as much as possible, I once again asked them whether they really wanted to participate in the project and were ready to sign the written consent. Having signed the written consent (appendix-1) agreeing to join the project, the interview process could start. Interview notes were taken in English only in writing.

In the open ended interviews, guided by the above mentioned interview guide, the focus was to examine the role of women in taking various household decisions in terms of participation in domestic decision-making, access to and control over resources and freedom of movement. I also wanted to find out whether these roles are linked with education and occupation of the informant and her husband; media exposure, country of origin was also noted to find out explanatory variables. The whole interview process with each of the informants was conducted in one session each. In a few cases, I also made a follow-up conversation per telephone to confirm earlier given information.

To make the interview sessions as relaxing as possible informal conversations were made between the formal questions. The answers having informants’ key points and additional information were also written down. Further, any inconsistencies, observations of body language, use of words were also noted for further analysis. Suitable level of eye contact was kept throughout the interview and notes were taken of the non-verbal communications to help interpret the interaction later. During the interviews, prompts, probes and checks were used to gain worthwhile and detailed insights. Prompting by repeating a question, repeating the last few words spoken by the informant and giving some examples about the topic of discussion were useful to spur the informant to speak in the moments of silence. The idea was also useful in bringing the informants back into the right track by revealing their knowledge or thoughts

on the particular topic under discussion. To gain a deeper understanding of a particular topic, probes like asking for examples, clarifications and details were quite useful. This also helped to find any inconsistencies in the informant's line of reasoning which needed unraveling. Finally, the checks like summarizing the answer at a strategic point about a particular topic were used to confirm that I understood the informants correctly. This also helped my informants to correct in cases where I misunderstood their answers. Moreover, using checks in interview process also helped me collecting accurate and relevant data and consequently guaranteed its validity. Interviews were monitored cautiously to find out any tricky, boastful, exaggerated answers or answers intended simply to please me. To have the reliability I was aware of the fact that the answer is unique owing to the specific context and the specific informant. In this respect, my interview guide worked as a checklist and was quite helpful in collecting reliable information (Denscombe 1998).

Considerations were given to the factors which might affect the interactions during the interviews and interpretation of data such as reveal disgust by distancing me from the issue by using words or body languages. Sign of surprise, discomfort or pleasure through facial gestures or body languages were also kept in mind in this context. This also prevented in receiving answers intended simply to please me or avoid the topic by my informants. Many often cross references were used to confirm the validity of the answer received. At the same time, the rights of the informants were also duly respected, for example, they were not pushed to answer a particular question where they were not willing to do so. Being an immigrant I found myself as an insider in this context. As such, being neutral with my body language was very important to insure my role as a friend with my informants and their families at the private level, and as an interviewer for the purpose of the thesis in that particular situation.

Having ensured that most of the relevant topics were discussed, I invited my informants to inform on any point that they considered important for the project and not covered before. They were given thanks for participating in the interview. I also informed that I will let them know the results of my study in due time. This was seen as a gesture of our closeness and helped getting their moral support.

A number was designated to each interview to link between the interview notes and the informant. The completed interview notes are kept securely. All the documents will be

destroyed or archived as suggested by the University of Bergen authority after completion of the report.

5.6. Challenges Met During the Field Work

The major challenge I faced was the time period. As the field work was done in the summer, quite often I had to wait for informants having summer vacation. This was quite critical for the informants contacted through snowball process. In those cases I had to wait twice, once for my direct contacts to give me some time to introduce with their friends/persons known to them. And then I had to wait for getting appointment with the informants thus contacted through snowball process. This condition has prolonged the interview period longer than I assumed in advance.

I found some of my contacts whom I expected to be my informants unpredictably denied to participate in the project. That made me quite uncertain about the number of informants in the beginning. Fortunately the snowball process of contacting informants gave me sufficient informants at the end.

My idea of having the conversations in restaurants did not work out as planned. Though it was not a problem in getting a place in the restaurant and it was seen as neutral for both me and the informants, the surrounding noises kept disturbing the interview. Keeping informants on track and observing them while answering became a great challenge. The seating arrangement and the space available in a restaurant for physical movements in between the topics were also not quite suitable for such interviews. I found both myself and the informants not in a relaxed mood at the end of the interview period in the restaurants. Moreover, as the interviews took around three hours per informant it was not convenient to be in a restaurant for that long time without ordering food; in this case it was coffee and snacks. I finally decided to change the interview location to either their homes or their offices or at my home.

As an insider I found many discussions went out of track, even having topics of private nature. Though it can be a general problem in such open ended interviews, I had to be more cautious about this off-tracking all the time and had to get them back in track from time to time.

Though my insider identity gave a lot of advantages, I also felt that sometimes it was difficult to prompt and probe to find out more about a problem because of the personal character of the relationship. Even when the theories are made basing on experiences, I found it can be quite difficult to follow in many practical situations as it was in my case of prompting and probing. Moreover, my culture was also an obstacle as it does not permit to deny the elder ones. In both the cases I had to be diplomatic in questioning. It made the interview sessions unnecessary longer. Indeed I realized that theory and practice are two different things where we have to have room for reassessment and adjust ourselves depending on the situation.

As junior to most members of the group, my insider identity also prevented me from contacting some of the potential informants because I assumed jealousy was in picture from their behaviour and their fabricated reasons for not willing to be an informant. Finally I avoided contacting them in this regard.

The length of the interview sometimes went beyond three hours as planned in advance. Sitting in the same place and concentrating on a subject of such serious nature and of so great importance is a challenge by itself. Sometime it seemed more difficult for me to stick to the interview guide than was the case with the informants who were willing to provide information on various issues.

5.7. Ethical Considerations

Ethics can be explained as the norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Ethics or what we can call standards of conduct helps any research project to promote the aims of research, such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error. Ethics facilitates cooperation and coordination among many different people in different disciplines and institutions by promoting the values that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness. The ethical norms also ensure that researchers can be held accountable to the public and gain public support for research. A variety of other important moral and social values, such as social responsibility, human rights can also be promoted through the ethical norms.

As we understand, research is an activity carried out by the researchers to find the reasons of a problem, and give suggestions for solving the problem by analyzing the relevant information

obtained through different sources. Consequently, research is directed towards accumulation of knowledge within a discipline (Hammersley 1995). This information collected through different sources can come into conflicts with the peoples' right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. Use of good ethical codes may thus help us avoiding such conflicts and thereby help us in conducting better research.

“Because qualitative research inevitably involves contact with human subjects in the ‘field’, ethical problems are not usually far away” (Silverman 2010, p. 152) for this project. Consequently, I followed the general ethical principles of any good social research.

Recruitment of the informants in the research project was absolutely on informants' personal choice without using any form of force and manipulation, and they had the option of withdrawal ensuring voluntary participation.

To be open and trustworthy I informed my informants about the project and its objective. They were also informed verbally and in written through the interview guide about the methods of data collection, field of study, intended possible uses of research data and what risks it may involve. In this way I secured their trust and written consent, and the process obviously helped me in getting better information for the study. The information was given in both written and verbal form to avoid any misunderstanding. Written consent from the informants was taken for documentation before data-gathering. I never used any form of deception during my field work, and it will be my obligation to protect research informants as far as possible against any harmful effect in the future that may be caused by their participation in the research. By using disguised names of the informants in this thesis I tried to make the data anonymous so that no one can trace the informants and use the information for humiliating any of my informants. I am also aware of the fact that leaking these information will certainly destroy their faith on me, and hamper my and my family's private relation with them. Consequently, I am going to destroy all the written notes from the field study after completion of the thesis to avoid any chance of leaking the information. As such, I was, am and will be sensitive to the possible consequences of their participation and will endeavor to guard against predictably harmful effects.

The informants' right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality was maintained at all levels of the project so that no information will be disseminated to other informants, colleagues or

gate-keepers of this research in such a way that can cause harm to the informants. This also applies to the safe storage and disposal of the field notes. To assure privacy, anonymity and confidentiality the questionnaire only contains a serial number. The table of links between the questionnaire and the interviewee are kept in a different password protected document in my own computer which is not shared by any other person.

Though the informants are only from Asia and Europe, it was not due to any discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion or any other factors. The result is only due to my limitation to contact other nationals through private level.

As I conducted studies in immigrant communities, considerations were taken to avoid any acculturation stress. Different norms and practices in these groups, other than those of the Norwegians or of mine, were duly respected to the best of my knowledge.

The fieldwork was independent and impartial in all respect without having any undeclared conflict of interest. Proper acknowledgement was given to any direct or indirect contributors through letter of thanks and or through a follow up telephone call.

The project proposal was forwarded to Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS (NSD) and the University authority for clearances and research permit. I started my field work only after getting permission from these authorities. This information along with the name of my supervisor was also informed to the informants to gain their confidence.

Although ethical codes, policies, and principles are very important it might not cover the whole situation making it important for me to learn how to interpret, assess, and apply these ethical codes, policies, and principles (Resnik 2011). This helped me at the field work and obviously will help to make decisions and to act in various situations in future.

This research project has no other political goal than the production of knowledge. As such, it might fall in the dilemma of deception for the interest of the benefits of knowledge. Only where “the benefits of knowledge outweigh the harms and where the harms have been minimized by following convention on confidentiality and identity” (Punch 1986) deception can be thinkable. But even then I shall inform the informants in an honest, direct and explicit way before giving information to any third party at any situation.

I am aware of the fact that there can be unexpected consequences as a result of making the finding public to the informants as well as wider audience. Thus it is my moral duty to protect the interest of the informants at all times, because very often they are in a position of relative powerlessness and can most easily be harmed.

Using the appropriate ethical principles according to the context of this kind of research I found it helpful in getting the information I needed and leading a good ethical practice. I am also sure this will enrich the outcome of the study too.

5.8. Data Analysis

Using qualitative text analysis and discourse analysis of the in-depth interview materials I will try to understand the perspectives of the target group and get the opportunity to understand the problem in its depth.

“[Qualitative] data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion: it is not neat.” (Marshall et al.1999: p 150). Keeping this in mind I went through the interview notes later on the same day to make sure that I have noted most of the points we discussed and other non-verbal factors I observed. I tried to rewrite the notes if and when necessary too. I re-read the whole interview note for giving a second check and also for getting familiar with the findings.

My next objective was to prepare the data for further analysis. In this regard I started with interpreting the data by coding, categorising and conceptualizing. Only after that I could start the next steps of verifying the data and then finally representing them for the research purpose.

As I was using an interview guide, it was easier for me to code and categorise the notes. Mostly I followed from one category of questions to another as it is prescribed in the interview guide. Due to the nature of the open ended interview, informants quite often jumped from one category (dimension of women’s empowerment) to other. Even in many situations one particular answer can be used as true for a few other questions. I had also reduced the data

by carefully discarding the notes not appropriate for the study. By proper coding I was able to categorise these answers for further use. Finally, conceptualization consisted of a narrative explanation of the findings.

I went through the coded results several times to make sure its consistency with the field notes I have taken. Any discrepancy was then thoroughly checked and updated. Quite often previous answers gave some clue which enabled me to understand the discrepancies later.

In the next three chapters I am going to present the findings of my field study in the light of the theories described earlier. I am going to present the impact of the *resource*, employment, in enhancing the ability of women in my target group to make effective choices and transform those choices into desired outcomes for empowering themselves. Thus whether and how, through the access to waged employment and empowering the *agencies*, they have the *achievements* of having the *capabilities* in their disposition. I am also going to focus on whether these capabilities are desired by themselves and for themselves; moreover, whether they were denied/could have been denied before by not having access to the resource under consideration – the independent variable waged employment.

6. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN DOMESTIC DECISION-MAKING AND EMPLOYMENT

6.1. Introduction

Regarding the findings about participation in domestic decision-making, ten out of thirteen informants show a positive relation measured through some key components between employment and participation in domestic decision-making. For the rest three of them the situation would have been the same in this regard whether they are employed or unemployed. The relative condition about participation in domestic decision-making compared to their respective countries of origin has shown a positive improvement due to immigration. The perceived differences in their capability to participate in domestic decision-making in their respective countries of origin in the context of being employed and unemployed would have been almost the same as that is here in Norway.

Most of my informants assume that the situation would not have been the same in most cases if they were unemployed. The informants assume that the capability of participating jointly in domestic decision-making would have dramatically reduced in case of unemployment. The situation is perceived better for them here in Norway than what it could have been in their countries of origin.

Before looking at the findings from the study regarding my research questions, I would like to introduce a few facts relevant for further discussions.

6.2. Gendered impacts of migration

First of all, I want to discuss the social status of these women (informants), especially those who needed visa to enter Norway, at the time of migration. The result is interpreted from the information given in the interviews regarding their first experience after coming to Norway. These experiences reflect Morokvasic's view described in an article "Birds of Passage are also Women" in 1984 regarding immigrant women's dependency on men and consequently their subordination. The situation did not change much since then. Almost all of them, eleven out of thirteen, migrated to Norway by marrying someone who was in Norway from before. This new relationship forced them to leave their own social network in their respective countries, and thus made them feel more lonely and more dependent on their male counterparts to start a new life in Norway. On one hand, this stimulated their subordination

and decreased their self-esteem which again resulted to a decreased level of threat point. On the other hand, the situation naturally gave their husbands the upper hand to exercise authority over them. Moreover, at the point of starting their lives here in Norway their status was very much unsecured because legally they were dependents on their husbands though they came to Norway on a visa called “Family immigration permit”. This dependency was linked to legal relation with their husbands. Without having this dependency link they may no longer be allowed to stay here in Norway. As a matter of fact, the act of migration itself is an experience of disempowerment for this group of women in two different ways – first, by leaving one’s own social network, second by making them dependent on their spouses both socially and legally. Further, it took a long time to overcome the power relations because of the vicious circle of dependency and subordination. Having migrated in this way has resulted in their loss of capabilities in many respects including their self-esteem - a source of power within.

Secondly, most of my informants perceive that they could have got a job of at least the same or better category in their countries of origin. This implies that access to employment by itself is not a factor of empowerment among this group as they do not perceive that this capability would have been denied being in their countries of origin. Though most of them were not employed in their country of origin, they perceive that getting access to a decent job in their respective countries may not be of much difficulty considering their level of education, position in the society and social networks they used to have. As such, access to waged employment here in Norway is not a new opportunity (resource) which could have been denied in their countries of origin and consequently it may not be considered as a gain in their capabilities. In other words, it can be claimed that access to employment did not empower my target group in this context.

Moreover, though there are reasons to believe that discrimination due to ethnic background, which itself is a factor of disempowerment for this group, prevails in the Norwegian employment market (reference: survey report presented by The Directorate of Integration and Diversity 2008). I am not going to discuss the matter in this context due to its complexity and diversity. Rather, I am assuming that *ceteris paribus* these women have full access to employment market and they are capable of having a decent job if desired so according to their qualifications. Keeping this in mind, I am going to highlight the policy taken by the Norwegian government in getting these women in the waged employment market and its impact on women’s empowerment.

The vision of the Norwegian government is to create an equal society without discrimination through statutory prohibition of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, national origin, descent, skin colour, language, religion, belief, political opinion, membership in an employee organisation, sexual orientation, disability, age, temporary employment or part-time employment based on positive actions embedded in the Gender Equality Act, the Anti-discrimination Act, the Anti-discrimination and Accessibility Act and the Working Environment Act (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality 2009). As it concerns the immigrant population, attention is given especially on integration aspect of both women and men immigrants. Inclusion in the workplace is seen in many contexts as a criterion for integration into Norwegian society (Bergen municipality 2007). But as I found, this policy of integrating immigrant women can be seen in relation with the thinking of WID approach where the productive process – the waged employment – is given priority for women's efficiency and economic development.

As we realize from the capability approach, understanding gender inequality is only possible by comparing the functionings and capabilities which intrinsically matters and not only the means to achieve them as for example facilitating access to different available resources – access to employment in our context. As such, attention should have been given to the challenges to overcome differences in immigrant women's abilities to convert these resources into capabilities. Thus if the present policy of integrating immigrant women through employment market is considered as a means to empowering them then it should be under investigation through the gender lens. It should be kept in mind that even two women respond differently to the new opportunities even if they have the same background because individual differences in the ability to transform resources into valuable activities is one of the main components suggested by Sen in his argumentation of capability approach for empowering. Women's empowerment as a result of paid employment depends on how they perceive empowerment through available work for them.

As my informants have a higher participation in the domestic decision-making in the form which indicates that the decisions in the family are taken jointly. This could have been seen as an empowerment by itself if and only if it was denied to them before getting employed keeping in mind that this kind of decision-making can also be a disguised male dominance. The findings about the joint decision-making ensure the nature of the power structure of these

families, having higher socio-economic status, which indicates that they generally take major decisions jointly. As such, this capability is nothing new for them and would not have been denied if unemployed.

From the above discussion it can be concluded that neither migration nor the employment itself contributed much to improve household bargaining power which could have led them to higher participation in domestic decision-making and thus higher empowerment. But even then, ten out of thirteen informants perceive positively empowered measured through some key components, while for the rest three of them the situation would have been the same whether employed or not. The reasons for such a result can be among others, first, women from this group by the virtue of having education possesses a higher self-esteem and demand higher respect from men, and as such, expects to be heard their opinion in domestic decision-making. By their exposure to information as a bi-product of employment outside home they gathered sufficient knowledge about the social system of the new environment, in the long run, which again gave them an upper hand in participation in domestic decision-making. Moreover, having the knowledge of the social welfare system and other supportive systems from the State they are enhanced with higher bargaining power in the household by boosting up provisioning capacities and their fall-back positions. And thus, they are in a position to command greater voice in participation in decision-making within their families. These changes in the bargaining power will also be the source of changes in social norms towards gender equality in this group for the new generation.

6.3. Findings on Participation in Domestic Decision-making from the Asian Informants

In this chapter I am going to present the findings regarding impact of women's paid employment on their participation in domestic decision-making. The informants were asked to describe issues like sharing household work and child care activities with husband, making food and decision about what items to cook, purchasing required stuff for the family and self, education of children, going for picnic or club with other friends, visiting and staying with friends and relatives, planning vacations, providing for children's requirements, their education and taking initiative to income generating activities. Focus was given to examine the role of women in taking various household decisions by participating in the process of decision-making, and whether they think the situation could have been different if they were

not employed. At the same time I tried to find out whether they think that it could have been different if they were in their country of origin.

Most of my informants come from classical patriarchal societies where men generally decide over women demanding women's subordination. As described before these societies are male-dominated and in which the male is the primary authority figure central to social organization and plays the central roles of political leadership, moral authority, and control of property. It implies the institutions of male rule and privilege, and entails female subordination. Patriarchy is in many places the ruling system in social, legal, political, and economic organization. Though most of the male partners have moved to Norway long time back, talking to their wives I get the impression that the norms of patriarchy are still dominant because of strong cultural belongings.

6.3.1. Women and Household Work

According to the online Oxford Dictionaries (2013) an "activity involving mental or physical effort done in order to achieve a result" or purpose can be defined as work, and by giving it a perceived social value within a given cultural context it is an important source of self-definition in our society. Variation in the importance of different kinds of work is a result of their respective perceived social values (Ghidina 1992).

Generally, employment outside the home is known as work. This kind of understanding of the word work (i.e. paid work) undermines the importance of many household and reproductive works which are generally conceived as women's domain and should be carried out by women because of the sexual division of labour as practiced in many societies. Household works can be categorized mainly in three types: housework, child care and shopping for goods and services (Bittman et al. 2001).

According to Bittman et al. (2001) women in general are viewed as more specialized in household work because of their capability of child-bearing and higher capability of child rearing. This concept is largely due to their biological advantage among others breast feeding. Furthermore, child rearing can easily be combined with the household works. Even this unique characteristic of women many often leads to segregated occupations for women by linking to activities determined from the preconceived idea of their gender role. Women's specialization in domestic works and men's in outside paid works can also be a result of

discrimination in the labour market in women's disfavor. As men generally are engaged in those works which are physically and monetarily more visible they often labeled these as skilled works. On the other hand the works women do are labeled as unskilled works because they are generally of reproductive nature, and unpaid, carried out at home and as such invisible (Bittman et al. 2001).

According to bargaining models relative wages can also affect relative contributions to household works. Many economists suggest that a family has a single utility function and cooperates to utilize the available resources most efficiently - both economic and non-economic. But the bargaining model suggests that partners are not totally altruistic. As a result, conflict of interest prevails in the family. Thus according to the bargaining model one who earns more can influence the other partner to do the household works and enjoy the leisure times self. This can even be true when they are using same amount of time in paid work outside the home (Bittman et al. 2001).

Household is the basic unit of the society. This is where socialization and economic cooperation takes place, and the gender roles are expressed. Each member of a family can gain by the formation of a household through cooperation. But this gain can differ quite much from one arrangement to another (Robeyns 2001). Robeyns (2001) by citing Sen mentions this situation as co-operative conflicts where the outcomes depend on the bargaining position of the individual. Thus by analyzing the gendered power relations at household it can be possible to observe the gender components of empowerment.

Women's work varies from society to society "in spite of sex-role stereotyping and cross-cultural regularities in the sexual division of labour" (Moore 1988, p. 44). Women are generally engaged inside and outside the home in both productive and reproductive fields of work. In general women's work can be divided in four categories: agricultural work, commerce, household work and paid employment. Household work consists of production, reproduction, consumption and socialization. Women's unwaged work in the household and outside home in both productive and reproductive sectors becomes invisible and goes unrecognized as it does not give any direct economic return (Moore 1988).

Naila Kabeer (2000) in her book "The power to choose: Bangladeshi women and labour market decisions in London and Dhaka" provides insight into the dynamics influencing labour

market choices made by immigrant women. She argues that for analysing effectively the cultural nuances determining worker's labour market choices and interests we need a theoretical perspective integrating sociology with conventional economics. She argues that by living in two cultures, an immigrant woman might not have the opportunity to choose but the decision of getting employed can be a "fait accompli" of societal norms and values due to 'meta-preferences' of class, gender, race and social upbringing. She shows how even becoming house wife can become the only option available to immigrant women because of double closure of gender and racial labour market segmentation.

Predefined role of women as a housekeeper, as it is in their country of origin, still prevails in this target group. All household works are perceived as women's duty even when women are also engaged in paid employment. The responses reveal that women's participation in the paid work has not automatically resulted into burden of household works. From the interview results we do not find any deviation from the predefined role of women in respective societies as Bina informs:

"I do almost all the work at home and work (paid employment) outside at the same time. He feels tired after coming from job and does not want to do any household work after coming from job. He does a bit when he is free. My employment just doubled the burden on me. I do not have much leisure time anymore."

Bina is from an Asian country. She had her university education from her country of origin and has full time employed having a professional job. Both Bina and her husband have equal working hours outside the home. But still Bina describes household work is unconsciously assumed to be a duty of women. Being here in Norway, where sharing household works between husbands and wives appears rather common does not seem to have affected Bina's husband. As it is understood according to his thinking household works are for women and he does not care much about it. He may not even think that this is giving double burden for Bina having job both inside and outside the home.

After getting immigrated to Norway some of them have tried to adjust to the new society, but still the question remains to what extent. Dalia tells me

"Well, he does around thirty percent of the household works. I know I had to do all the works alone if I was unemployed. This would be the case if we were in our country of

origin too, but there I could have paid helping hands working for me and relatives to look after the kids if necessary.”

Dalia is from an Asian country having higher degrees from her country of origin and from another foreign country. She did not find a proper job here in Norway according to her qualifications. Rather she works at two different places – one full time and one part time. Her paid works along with household work do not leave any free time for herself.

Mostly women and men in my target group are following the traditional line of division of household labour where women are involved in low-control household works like cooking, cleaning, child caring and purchasing daily day household necessities. Men, on the other hand, are more involved in works outside home and high-control household works traditionally defined as masculine household works as for example mowing the lawn, repairing the house, managing the official affairs for the whole family. Women, in general, are afraid about the fact that any attempt to change the pattern of household decision-making against the gender ideology may lead to conflict in the conjugal life and may damage peace in the family. As such, my target group may also try to manage a delicate balance between the push for gender change and avoid disputes over the division of household labour to avoid conflict in the family. In doing so they are accepting their subordination as they learned from their culture of origin. Because the threat point, according to the household bargaining power theory, in this case would be a divorce. But consequence of applying this threat point can have a much greater negative effect than accepting the subordination. As such, it can be asserted that the household bargaining power is constrained by the new situation as mentioned in the previous sentence.

The results from my empirical findings show that men are sharing part of the total household works by engaging themselves in masculine part of it, as for example mowing the lawn, repairing the house or managing the official affairs for the whole family. In this way he is obviously contributing to the pool of household labour. But at the same time distribution of household work in such a manner is creating a gender division of labour which itself is considered as an unjust as it is a product of unjust gendered nature of our societies. This gender division of labour is a result of among other things images and ideas on the desirable gender roles and the way “socialization into masculinity and femininity is accented and embodied through the social segregation of the sexes, gendered tasks and tools with which to

accomplish them, and gendered use of space” (Dover 2005, p. 175, 176). This is also a result of perceived expectations of women and men about the reproductive works. Further it is a consequence of, remaining other things constant, women’s lower wage compared to men and in general more experience of men due to the average age difference between wife and husband. It can be added that social view considering men as guardian of family honour, a bread earner and responsible for financial security of the family is also a factor of such gender division of labour. Finally it can be argued that acceptance of gender division of labour by both women and men to avoid disturbing peace in the family by opposing it for the sake of making a change towards just is a perpetuating factor in sustaining gender division of labour. Considering all these factors together for gender division of labour the obvious choice to work less outside the house or quit a job will fall naturally on women’s side in this context, as it was suggested by one of my informant’s husband. In such a situation immigrant women from a household point of view, and at least in the short run, might not have their freedom to choose in the pursuit of better influence the course of their lives and the decisions which affect them. Rather the choice will be based on gender related structure of constraints with imperfect information and asymmetrical risks. Thus gender division of labour by curtailing the freedom to choose acts as a catalyst of disempowerment as a whole and reduce women’s bargaining position at home in particular.

Moreover, at least if men could have shared in these so called feminine household works then they could have understood how demanding these works are. By participating in these unpaid so called feminine household works and understanding its importance might result in having greater respect for those who are responsible for execution of these – the women. Such respect will lead men to treat women with dignity. It is beyond any doubt that getting greater and proper respect, and treated with dignity by men is likely to empower women more and increase her capabilities.

6.3.2. Gender segregation in household work

Moreover, as I described before in the patriarchal societies the male has the authority to control over works outside home (official matters) as only they are entitled to move freely outside the home. Lack of mobility in these societies prevents women from participating in many organizational, socio-political and cultural activities. Even when it is possible for the women in my target group to move freely outside their homes here in Norway still they are

not given the opportunity to exercise their ability to deal with the outer world. As Chameli mentioned

“My husband tells me that if I can manage all the official matters, pay the bills (the practical part), contact workers for maintenance of the house he can save a lot of time, and thus he can use that time for household work. But what he does not understand is that I also need some free time.”

Chameli is from an Asian country having studied up to higher secondary level from her country of origin. She is employed part time in the social service sector. Chameli according to herself has sufficient time for works outside the house. As Chameli mentions even when she is capable of managing many of the official matters as for example paying the bills, she was not given the opportunity to do so. The idea of gender biased division of work was the main reason for such division of labour in her household even when her husband told her if she can manage works outside he could have worked at home. But in reality he never gave a try. Chameli also thinks that he is not interested to change his preferences. These are only empty words without having any real meaning. Having control over the outside world and through their patriarchal position of final authority men avoid many responsibilities of day-to-day maintenance of family and home. Chameli does not think that having paid employment outside her home made any difference in the sharing of household work in her family.

As a matter of fact the pre-conceived ideas that the women should stay at home and should have the responsibility of household works is still quite dominant in this group of the first generation of immigrants reflecting what Agarwal (1997) argued about skilled and unskilled work. Household works are unwaged and generally are not physically and monetarily visible. Thus they are labeled as unskilled works and assigned to women. This can be seen in what mentioned by Chameli as described in the last paragraph and what Lily tells

“I do all my household work even when I work outside. I feel tired but I have to do it as I did when I was not employed. My husband rather asks me to quit the job as I feel tired to do household works after my job. He told me that he earns enough money to maintain the whole family, so my job is not necessary. But I work anyway. This gives me the pleasure of changing the atmosphere.”

Lily is also from an Asian country. She has her higher university degree from her country of origin and having a job as middle level manager. Lily’s husband could have found other

alternatives rather than to advise quitting her job. Lily in this case could not gain the bargaining power necessary to negotiate the division of household works as bargaining power depends on the women's perceived contribution to total family income, and socio-cultural norms and practices. Lily's works, and thus her contribution to the family, are perceived as less valuable than that of her husband. Logically quitting her job remains as the first option according to the rational choice. As a matter of fact the implicit assumption in the economic theory of the family as an undifferentiated unit governed mainly by altruism is far from the reality. Rather arguments back gender division of labour decide the outcome in general in these contexts. Consequently, Lily's husband suggested Lily to quit her job. And according to him may be this is the only rational choice available.

Even by discouraging Lily from working outside home due to the social norms prevailing in this group can also weaken her intra-household bargaining position over available resources, for example, her desire to have some leisure time. This will not only restrict/reduce her earning possibilities but will also limit the range of tasks she may perform, reduce her presence in public spaces and thus her access to the outside world, and define household work as her responsibility. In this way limiting her mobility and ideologically constructing her as dependent on her husband (Agarwal 1997).

According to Lily he will never consider the possibility to reduce his own work outside home and do some household works to help her. Lily's work is important to her giving her space for show her worth. It is important to her for her self-respect and a source of freedom from her household boundary. And thus she accepts the double burden of working both in and outside of the home.

6.3.3. Socio-Cultural norms and practices, and gender roles

We can find from our discussions that different social norms and practices influence our preconceived ideas about our gender identity. The discourses about the gender roles are consciously cultivated through ritual and other cultural means from the childhood by the society. Even the informants themselves many often could not come out of the boundaries drawn by the socio-cultural norms and practices they learned from their respective countries of origin. As Lily mentioned

“My husband can make food but he never cooked for us. I make food according to their choice not the food I like, as my husband and the kids do not like the food I like.”

Lily cooks food according to others' preferences and not her own indicating that man gets first priority in getting access to resources before her because he is the bread earners. This is what Lily learned from her country of origin. It is the men who earn for the bread and as such, should be given priority in the intra familial distribution of resources. Moreover, from her altruistic natural characteristics she gives priority to her kids more than her own preferences. For her it is for granted and not a point of discussion. So the question of decision-making in this regard does not exist. For her it is a duty to execute what is decided and/or desired by her husband. Lily does not feel any discrimination in this regard as she takes it for granted because of her beliefs and acceptance of the social norms she is coming from.

Lily's attitude seems to be typical as that of any women from traditional societies where they attach less value to their own well-being relative to the well-being of others. Following Sen's (1990) argument it can be predicted that as a result of this sort of "perceived interest response" (Sen 1990, p. 24) her bargaining will be less favorable for herself. Due to her altruistic character as a result of the social norms she follows she is not able to negotiate but accepts the subordination to her husband.

But the situation is even more evident in Radhika's case when she tried to decide something on her own even when that decision is also not for herself but for her husband. As she mentioned

"Once I made a special chicken dish to surprise him (my husband). Instead of getting happy he just told why I had to buy so expensive food. From then onward I lost my freedom to purchase food alone in the future."

Radhika is from an Asian country having higher education from abroad. She is partly employed.

Socio-cultural norms and practices have a great impact on one's behaviour, one's desire to attain something. This was quite visible in the results of the study having informants from two different continents. As we can find from the discussion in later that Chompa and Shila being from Europe can think of going to night club alone or have shorter vacations alone, the condition for Dalia who is from Asia is quite different as she expresses

“I can only plan to visit my relatives whether in my country of origin or somewhere else. But he does whatever he feels like doing. He can travel whenever it suits him. Sometimes I come to know about his plan of travel (alone) just the day before. Sometimes he does not even bother to inform me.”

Or for Iris, who is also from Asia, it has a totally different dimension. Her religious beliefs do not even allow her of thinking many of the freedoms others enjoy as granted. She adds

“I can decide travelling alone if I wish. My husband allows me to visit my relatives and women friends alone even out of Bergen. But visiting male friends or vacation alone is not allowed due to my religious beliefs.”

Iris has her higher education from her country of origin and having a professional job in the education sector. Iris is actively religious. Iris has her ideas of what is right and wrong from her religious beliefs which again do not have anything to do with whether one is employed or not employed.

In the same manner Bina’s answer also confirms the same but from a socio-cultural perspective:

“But, as you know, we do not go to clubs. What we (women from the same country) do is arrange parties at home and only for women. No man is allowed to be there. My husband has no problem in accepting that.”

My target group is the first generation immigrants in Norway having their gender identity from a different socio-cultural environment follows the norms and values they were taught in their countries of origin, and are still bounded by those. Their capability of making decisions on different household affairs are determined by the socio-cultural norms and values they learned at their country of origin. In my study we find the same trend, i.e. separate practices. What they have learned from their countries of origin they practice the same in spite of being in Norway.

6.3.4. Social class structure and the gender role

Almost all of my informants and their respective husbands are having higher socio-economic status in the society due to their higher level of education and income. By achieving a certain level of education, having reasonably stable and well-paid decent work, access to resources

such as land, credit and having social support from the State women can exercise greater decision-making power within their families. Moreover, by increasing respect due to possessing the capabilities mentioned here they demand higher status in the society (United Nations 2009). Members of this group, having higher status in the society, generally are more egalitarian and thus take major decisions jointly than those in the lower socio-economic categories. In this class they often let their wives take the responsibility of the children's' education and look after the children's' daily interests. This generally has no relation with the employment status. On the other hand having the responsibility of the children's' education and taking care of children's' daily affairs give them some opportunity to make few household decisions on their own thus giving them a feeling of empowerment. But the case would have been the same whether my informants would have been in employment or not, and whether living in their country of origin. I did not find any difference in that norm even when they are far away from their countries of origin. Bina told me

“Decisions about the daily day affairs of my children are taken by me because the children feel more open to me than their father.”

The same was mentioned by Lily

“I decide all the groceries and what children need for example piano lessons, football practice and other school activities”.

This trend of joint decision was also mentioned by Bina when she added

“As long as economic decisions are concerned my husband takes it. He asks for my suggestions, but it is he who makes the final choice.”

As such, we find that women in my target group has the capability of making decisions only on some household affairs which are mostly routinized works or to some extend pre-determined. But whether this is due to maternal altruism or absence of choice or greater paternal irresponsibility can be questioned. As Argarwal (1997, p. 23) puts it “Observationally it is difficult to infer from people's' overt behavior whether they are conforming to an unequal order because they fully accept its legitimacy, or accept it partially, or out of fear, or because they believe they have no other options.” Absence of choice can be linked with women's' subordination and consequently their disempowerment.

6.3.5. Findings from the European informants

The traditional pattern of thinking from the societies they have immigrated from is still prevailing among the people of this group too, even after they have migrated to a new country. Even here we can find many of these male partners trying to stay away from household works. They even do not lend a helping hand to their wives when it is necessary. This characteristic can be noticed from Chompa's statement:

“When I ask him to do any household work he gives the excuse that he is tired after the job, and will do it afterward. This never or seldom happens and then I finally do it myself.”

Chompa is from one of the East European countries. She has a part time job in the Health sector. In addition she is a student of nursing which takes almost the same time as a full time job. She is highly educated from her own country but that degree is not enough to find a relevant and decent job in Norway. For that reason she has chosen to go for another professional study – Nursing - in the hope of getting a better job in the future. Chompa thinks that the arguments her husband comes with to avoid household work are just false excuses because he even do not have the capacity to imagine that his wife can also be tired after the job. They are just following the norms as they were taught in their upbringings.

As such, we can find similarity between people from a patriarchal and traditional society as long as participation in the household work is concerned.

The trend of joint decision is even true for this European community as Chompa informs

“Most of the decisions are taken jointly, as I mentioned before our relationship is based on partnership. We do not want to disturb the peace of our family.”

But, it seems to me that what she really means is that she does not try to control alone, in that case the factors disturbing peace in the family can be triggered.

6.4. Discussions and comments

As we find women's lack of power to exercise the right to equal participation in domestic decision-making is the product of gender inequality. This gender inequality “is intimately tied

to men's practices and identities, men's participation in complex and diverse gender relations, and powerful masculine discourses and culture" (Flood 2005:2).

In the introduction part of this chapter I mentioned that the result of the study indicates a positive relation between employment and participation in domestic decision-making showing a perceived increase in empowerment in this context. Thus I found, employment can give higher bargaining power to women for different reasons including the economic one.

The issue of intra-household bargaining power in my context seems to be a crucial one and quite different from that of bargaining power in terms of economic contribution to the household budget.

Though I did not ask questions about income level, it can be assumed from the husbands' level of employment that the husbands earn more than the informants in most of the cases. Therefore, because of lower income than their respective husbands, it is not a factor in terms of intra-household bargaining power. From another question it was revealed that though my informants contribute to the total household budget, the respective families are not critically dependent on their income. This assumption can also be supported by the answers which show that ten out of thirteen informants do not work for economic reasons.

From the findings I can argue that the families of this group are not dependent on the income of my informants, and my informants cannot claim a better status, as long as earnings from employment is concerned, which might have commanded greater individual intra-household bargaining power in the family due to employment than that of their respective husbands.

Further, the informants in my study have at least two years of university education or more. Similarly all the husbands except one have the same level of education as that of my informants or higher. The result of the finding regarding the level of position in employment shows the same trend as that of education, i.e. husbands are employed in higher positions than that of their wives. Consequently, most of my informants are not in a position to claim better status and thus exercise higher bargaining power over their respective husbands on the ground of education or level of position they hold in employment.

As experienced, it is not the economic dependency but the knowledge acquired due to employment and education which increased the bargaining power of the informants. Otherwise, if my informants would have gained higher household bargaining power in economic sense gained through their relative contributions to the household budgets then it should have been reflected through less participation in household works by the informants. Though the intra-household bargaining theories assumes that one's bargaining power is positively related to their relative contribution to the family income, it might not be true always. In my examples from the field work it is revealed that even having equal income some of my informants perform more household work than their male counterparts. This intra-household bargaining power again depends on the women's perceived contribution to total family income. Perceptions about contribution vary depending on the visibility of the work performed. As men are generally engaged in the works which are physically and monetarily more visible, their contribution to the family can be perceived as more valuable than that of women even when both of them are spending equal amount of time for waged work. Moreover, bargaining is constrained by gender norms and practices. As Agarwal (1997, p. 7) describes "social norms both affect the outcomes of bargaining and can themselves be subjects of bargaining".

Increased knowledge through education, trainings through employment and other sources, and/or employment give rise to one's status, which again has a direct or conditioning influence in exercising individual power. Employment gave them the possibility to encounter the outer environment and thus gain knowledge about the new society. In this way employment facilitated my informants to place them in a position of higher status in the family having better knowledge about the social environment than it could have been without being employed. As a result, it was revealed that most of the household decisions are made jointly and/or at least the informants were asked for their suggestions which can be considered as a factor of empowerment. This is even more evident in Rebecca's statement. Rebecca is better educated and has a better job than her husband. According to her, the decisions she makes for household affairs get priority in the family, as she mentioned "My husband gives priority to my decisions" showing that she decides about household matters more than her husband in the family.

At the same time it can be noted that having higher socio-economic status of the family due to the educational level and level of income of both the informants and their respective husbands

ascertains that this group generally takes major decisions jointly. The perception of joint decision-making prevails in their mind in such a way that most of my informants do not even consider that joint decision-making can also be considered as a part of domination. The informants do not even in a position to imagine that they themselves could have a different decision if they were alone. The possibility exists that when joint decisions have been taken, it really implies convincing women to agree with the male head of the household “with disguised male dominance” (Kabeer 1999b, p. 44).

As we discussed before, dealing with the distribution of the household works in this group can be seen as a result of the socio-cultural norms and practices they learned from their respective countries of origin. This is the case both for the informants and their respective husbands. This may also be the reason for men dealing with works outside their home while women are more reluctant to those official works, and depending on their respective husbands. In practicing such distribution of the household works again gave the men an upper hand in making decisions especially official matters. Immigration added an extra limitation for women in this context too. Men for the same socio-cultural reasons became more exposed to the new society and thus gained better knowledge about the new environment than that of their counterpart. And such knowledge surely added as a positive incentive to the hegemonic gender beliefs of inequality and/or subordination making a vicious circle of gender inequality.

Thus, it can be said, the discourses about gender roles and gender identities which are consciously cultivated through ritual and other cultural means have a deeper effect in the way we react in our lives. Even the perception about empowerment varies due to these discourses. This is perfectly reflected in the statements by my two informants when Lily tells me “In our religion we believe that man has the authority to decide” and Jesmin confirms by stating that “According to me women should think it is better not to quarrel with husband to avoid problems. I prefer not to go for war so question of winning or losing does not appear.” But, obviously, the loser is of course the women alone by not challenging the unjust and submitting to the vicious circle of disempowerment.

7. WOMEN'S ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT

7.1. Introduction

Access to and control over resources shows a quite opposite picture compared to the situation about participation in domestic decision-making. Here eight out of thirteen think the situation would have been the same whether she was employed or unemployed. Two of them describe a very insignificant change saying that they would not have a bank account of their own but a joint one if unemployed. Ten of the informants have fully or partially access to their income though they cannot use it without a joint decision which means they do not have full control. One of those who mentioned that she does not have full control over her income, having a joint account, nevertheless has a high purchasing power with her money if desired. In general the results indicate that the use of the income is not the main issue, rather dialog between women and men regarding use of the total household income is the most important factor here – again the very question of decision-making comes into the picture. Though the informants have their access to their own income they do not have the total autonomy to use that either due to men's control behaviour or subordination as a result of social norms.

As it is mentioned before, both in patriarchal and traditional societies women have lower voice or no voice at all in household decision-making. Women's employment contributes only to the total family budget. Control over resources primarily lies on the hand of male household heads. The result from the field study regarding access to and control over resources confirms this assumption. It also indicates that women's subordination and disempowerment is a fact in almost all societies as found in my study by analysing data from informants in two different societies with different cultural norms and values.

From my earlier discussion, I found how gender division of labour reduces women's bargaining position at home and results reduced participation in domestic decision-making. Capability of women's control over resources diminishes when men are having the authority to take the major household decisions about the allocation and distribution of resources though these resources are pooled together through both women and men's income and labour. Thus, as a result of gender division of labour, by not being able to take major decisions alone, women in general fails to achieve the capability of having control over resources too.

We can assert from our findings that women's new experience as employed does not challenge their deeply rooted identities as wives and mothers. In addition, these women of my target group develop ties of affection and loyalty toward their husbands by sharing together the adversity of migration and working toward common goals of establishing in a new environment. Due to this affection and loyalty towards their husbands along with their altruistic characteristics they very often surrender their control over resources to the male counterpart and accept subordination. Moreover, accepting control over resources by men can also be perceived by women as less disruptive of culturally-sanctioned gender hierarchies within the household.

7.2. Findings on access to and control over resources

As noted by Kabeer (1997), to understand the power relationship concerning resources at household level we can divide the whole process from flow of income to management of the use into three dimensions. In this process access simply shows the availability of resources, control over resources indicates who makes the decision about where to use and management is just execution of the decision made.

Informants were asked to describe issues like control over bank account, freedom to purchase jewelries/ornaments and other goods according to her own choice as well as control over cash, valuables and properties.

7.2.1. Benevolent dictatorship, and access to and control over resources

A large part of women's domestic/reproductive labour is organized through household structure. As such, household structure plays a vital role on women's lives and on their access to and control over resources. Women's access to work and other resources is determined by the organization of gender relations within the family and the household. These relations are also one of the key factors in producing and maintaining gender ideologies. The process of control and allocation of resources in the household is a complex one which reflects a web of rights and obligations (Moore 1988).

The answers from the interviews reveal that even these earning members need the blessings of their husbands for using their own income to fulfill their desire and/or for equal distribution of resources. Even some of them do not have access to their earnings as Dalia informs:

“I do not have a separate account for myself.....”

It was revealed in the interviews that some husbands prefer to control use of income by informants. This was clear from the answer by Maria:

“I do not control our economy. I have my bank account where my salary is transferred. He (her husband) knows the password. He goes through my account statements to see the nature of transactions made in that account.”

Maria has a professional degree from her country of origin and having a full time job in the same profession. Her salary can be assumed almost the same as her husband's. But still she is not in a position to have control over it. She continues

“Even I cannot buy things for my children what they wish if it is not for everyday use. The problem is even more if it is expensive.”

As it is asserted by Maria, neither she nor her children have the freedom to fulfill their desire in spite of the fact that Maria's income is as much as her husband's income. As such, Maria along with other informants has less bargaining power in the family. Consequently, they have almost no control over their own income. This powerlessness can be linked with their exit options in marriage. In many cases this option could have used as threat-point for the purpose of gaining intra-household bargaining power if it was socially accepted. This exit options in marriage, as Agarwal (1997) mentions, depends not only on women's economic prospects outside marriage, but on the social acceptability of divorced women. As such, it explores how social norms can be a constraint to bargaining power.

In this regard Chameli tells:

“Though I have money I cannot buy all what I wish. I know my husband will be angry. But what I do is I buy according to my choice when he is on tour. He then cannot stop me from buying. When it is bought so it is bought, he cannot return it anymore. Sometime we have to use some tricks over men. Men just want to have control and try to avoid situations when they feel that they are losing control. In this way I manage to purchase the things that I like.

My children never ask his father when they want to buy something of their choice. They ask me to accompany them to the shop. They know they will get it from me but not from their father. Their father always argues whether it is necessary or not. Our preferences are never appreciated.”

Chameli is a good example of what is described by Kandiyoti (1988) in her article “Bargaining with Patriarchy”. Chameli’s strategy here is to wait until she gets her freedom to act according to her wishes while her husband is not present. In this way, she is using the coping mechanisms available to her in this context to deal with the limitations of the patriarchal system. Even her children are using the strategy of not asking their father but the mother. As they know chances of getting it from their mother is much higher than that of from their father they are making a coalition due to satisfy their own interests. In this way, the patriarchy is reproduced for the next generation and manifested in the society through acting on prevailing socio-cultural values, attitudes, customs and expectations. This patriarchal bargain will be susceptible to transformations calling for renegotiation of relations between genders due to new areas of struggle and through the knowledge of the new generation about socio-cultural norms, rules and practices present in the society at large where they live now, as social norms can themselves be subject to bargain over and change over time (Agarwal 1997).

These benevolent dictators of my study are educated and intelligent enough to keep the proper balance. They are also very aware of the social status and concerned about ‘what people say’ which is reflected in the findings from the field study as many of my informants according to their own opinion are free to purchase jewelries/ornaments. Having jewelries/ornaments is part of showing social status within this group. Moreover, in a time of crisis these ornaments can very easily be converted to cash for using in other purposes necessary for household consumption. Even many often, this will be done without proper consent of the owner of these ornaments – the women selves. This indicates that control over property is considered to be reflecting the kinship relations where kinship/family system constructs women’s capacity to own things in a way which is always less than that of men (Moore 1988). As such, whether this is a privilege for the women’s to satisfy their desire or men’s requirement for keeping status can be questioned.

Men deploy different kind of mechanisms to hold control over women's income as Maria:

“.... He goes through my account statements to see transactions made through that account. So I cannot use my salary as I wish to.”

Even I pay from my salary all the social gatherings we arrange and I am responsible for other social obligations as he does not want to pay for these. Even he gave away my ornaments I got in my marriage as present to others.”

In Marias case the ornaments, are at her disposal proving only that she has access to those but the real ownership is controlled by the male counterpart as the decision of giving away of these ornament are mostly taken by them. Though these were given to her as presents at her marriage, it is perceived as gifts to the family and consequently the male overhead of the family got the power to decide over those.

Above statements as described by the informants lead to the assumption that most of the informants' husbands do practice some control over women's income. Consequently, the informants lack the capability to control their own income and family resources. It is only when women shall have full control over their income they can earn potential bargaining power in the household, as we have noted in the concept of 'capability' what a person is able to do or be to make strategic life choices is a function of access to and control over economic and financial resources. I experienced that most of the informants' claim to the household resources are subject to approval of their husbands. Contribution of the income earned into a joint conjugal budget by my target group could not make any difference in the power structure as the family economy is under male control. Moreover, it is discovered that the sexual division of labour among my target group prevents women of this group to have access to all financial services essential to allow them exploit fully the economic opportunities. As a matter of fact the norms and rules that define the social relationship among this group place men in dominance over women differentiating choices available to women including access to and control over resources – known as 'structures of constraints' by Folbre (1994).

7.2.2. Structures of constraints, and women's access to and control over resources

As we understand, structural constraint limits the options of social role (functionalist perspective) and access to social, cultural, economic or political resources. These structural constraints again help to cultivate socio-cultural norms, practices and discourses through

ritual and other cultural means. Consequently, these socio-cultural norms, practices and discourses determine the way we think and react in different situations of our lives. At such it is noticed that the socio-cultural norms and discourses that my informants bear play a vital role in utilizing the privileges one might have. This was illustrated by Lily in the following way:

“When I got my first salary I wanted to buy a watch for me. I could not do it without the permission of my husband. I called him for his permission. It is true that he told me ‘it is your money, and you can use it as you wish to do’. But my consciousness did not allow me to use the money for me without his permission, because this is what I have seen my mother does – this is what my grandmother did.”

Lily by this way following the preconceived knowledge gained from her previous generations about men’s authority over available resources. As such, she does not feel discriminated or subordinated in this regard. She is just following the result of structural constraints without being aware of the fact that these can be discriminating to women. Having such the social and ideological construct prevailing in the patriarchal thoughts, men find themselves in a superior position than that of women. The feelings of superiority among the male counterpart were experienced also among my target group. As we can find from Bina:

“As long as economic decisions are concerned my husband takes it. He asks for my suggestions, it is he who makes the final choice. This includes purchasing properties and other costly things. It could have been worse in my country of origin as other family members could have taken the decisions and impose on us because of joint family relations”

Though many of my informants show access to their own salary, the control of it is by no means in the hand of those who earned that. Whether this is due to altruism of the women or benevolent dictatorship of their husband or the acceptance of the socio-cultural norms inherited from their country of origin and lack of power to challenge those socio-cultural norms that put control on the hand of men is quite a difficult task to explore. As Agarwal (1997, p. 23) mentions “Observationally it is difficult to infer from people’s *overt* behavior whether they are conforming to an unequal order because they fully accept its legitimacy, or accept it partially, or out of fear, or because they believe they have no other options. For understanding women’s perceptions about the inequitable nature of gender relations, we

therefore need to examine not only their overt acts of resistance but the many covert ways in which they express their disaffection.”

Whether having joint account is really a situation where both man and women have their equal right to have control over the available resources or in reality it is just a disguised phenomenon to have control and monitor the resources is subject to discussion. It is very often conflict occurs when any decision goes against one’s gender ideology. Dalia’s words lead us also to the direction of the second situation as she told:

“We have joint account where both my and my husband’s salaries are transferred. I can use money as to my wish, but I am sure it could have been impossible if I did not have paid job. Anyway, I just do not feel comfortable in using the money alone. I feel he has a dominated mood as a result of cultural background and using money alone can reduce peace in the family.”

The pursuit of being empowered in respect to access to and control over resources depends only on someone’s direct control over their income or by having the bargaining power to influence the decision on the use of the total family income. Dalia is placing herself strategically in this mini patriarchal system by accepting the subordination for the sake of family peace. By accepting the fall-back position or using the threat-point, which can be a separation or disrupting the peace of the family, for my informants can lead to very little gain but can lose a lot in the name of honour in their environment they live. As a matter of fact we can find here that the perception about need differs from women and that of men. Women’s need here is underplayed, even by themselves, by the family need of peace and tranquility. Thus, the structure of constraint such as the norms and rules which define social relationship are placing here men in a position of dominance over the women in this group. The structure of constraint differentiated the choices available to women and men giving men privileged access to resources leading to exercise authority over women within the family and beyond resulting reduced women’s empowerment. The system of gender relations in this group reinforced its logic to the devaluation and dependence of women. Men have the control over material resources, capital and women labour - by having control over their income.

I am going to cite Radhika’s answer once again just to show how little it took to lose the freedom she had.

“Once I made a special chicken dish to surprise him (my husband). Instead of getting happy he just told why I had to buy so expensive food. From then onward I lost my freedom to purchase food alone in the future.”

On the other hand the findings indicate the presence of discourses about femininity and masculinity in this group as well. As all social practices are constructed through the prism of socio-cultural norms and values, the management of the distribution of resources is quite often falling in the hands of women. Women have to take the burden of executing all the decisions, especially regarding household and child-care activities in addition to all the responsibilities they have from before. Lily’s statement is an example of such practices:

“I decide all the groceries and what children need for example piano, football, other school activities”.

These findings describes that decision-making among this group follows the traditional gender line where women having low-control household tasks make decisions concerning day-to-day details of family life. On the other hand men are holding the control over major decisions regarding career choice and resource allocation resulting reduction of women’s control over resources.

The women in the target group have access to their income by having a joint account. But in most of the cases the income of my informants are handed over to a so-called joint account where the women in reality have no control. In reality men have the authority over decision about where to use the family income. At the same time, the incomes of women are generally used in the areas seen as women’s responsibility such as child care giving an invisible effect on the perception of contribution to the total family economy.

As it is observed from the results of the interviews, being employed gave my informants access to cash but as I described in previously, it did not give them the bargaining power leading to higher empowerment in the form of control over resources. In other words they did not achieve anything new or better what they did not have it from before. In this group it can be noticed that women’s wage is just contributing to family income and purchases which on the other hand is controlled by the male household head.

In addition to the above fact the women in my target group by immigrating to Norway lost their contact with the support networks, kinship and non-kinship contacts; resulting a loss of the ability to gain access to resources. Being isolated from the support networks women in my target group find themselves more dependent on their husbands, and thus are more likely to become target of male authority within the household.

7.2.3. Findings from the European informants

The answers from the interviews reveal that even these earning members of the family need the blessings of their husbands for using it to fulfill their desire and/or equal distribution of resources. As Chompa mentions

“We have always a joint account. I use from that family account according to need.

But if I want to purchase anything expensive I inform him first. If I do not ask him in before he minds.”

With some hesitation she also mentioned

“I sense some injustice in allocation of resources from his side. For example when we buy gifts for Christmas he prefers to buy mostly for his family.”

Though employment gave to some extent raise to empowerment to Chompa in this regard, it is again constrained again by social norms and values. Chompa in the same way as Dalia from Asia is placing herself strategically in this mini patriarchal system by accepting the subordination for the sake of family peace. Her fall-back position “[A] divorce when the man leaves the wife it’s even worse than death for her” (The World Bank 2011, p. 94) (the quoted statement is related to the country where Chompa is from) according to the perception she believes from her country of origin. By accepting the fall-back position or using the threat-point for her can lead to very little gain in social perspective. As a result Chompa is just trying to accept the thing what she cannot change in the same way as Dalia.

7.3. Discussions and comments

As mentioned before, having access to and control over resources lead to increase in women’s intra-household bargaining power, because of its positive relation to women’s empowerment resulting from their perceived contribution to the total family economy. But questions should also be asked whether others in the family are dependent on this contribution or not.

Economic dependency on partner's income is thus a crucial factor and another threat point in this regard. In other words, economic circumstances which led to women's participation in paid employment play a vital role in the power distribution concerning control over resources. Lack of economic dependency on informants' income prevented my informants gaining bargaining power over their respective husbands. Consequently, we see that my informants perceive very negligible differences in their ability in accessing to and control over resources as being employed contra unemployed. Being here in Norway or living in their respective countries of origin shows also the same pattern between being employed or unemployed but a reduction of power as a whole in this context if they were in the countries of origin. Even they mentioned the dominance of other family members, for example head of the joint family and/or leader of the clan could have decreased their capability to access to and control over their own resources.

From the statements of most of my informants it is clear that they did not achieve bargaining power due to employment. They have their access to their own income but they do not have the total autonomy in using that. This again proves that the norms and rules which define social relationship placing some in position of dominance over others and differentiate the choices available to them, gives men privileged access to resources leading to exercise authority over women within the family and beyond resulting in reduced and/or denial of women's decision-making power. The income generation of my target group, though independent of male household members, is not in a social relationship outside the familial sphere of command and control (Kabeer 1997) resulting in lack of control over their own income.

The total situation boils down to the ability to have decision-making power, in this case economic decision-making. As mentioned earlier my target group can be placed in the upper quadrant of the gender equality matrix due to higher socio-economic status resulting from education and level of employment. This group generally prefers to take joint decisions in all respect. Consequently, women in this group enjoy some freedom of decision-making which is again a result of the sanctions by men.

As per information given by the informants they have access to their income but do not have total control to use that. Using the income needs joint decision, in other words not total autonomy in deciding its use but a total/partial dependency on the benevolent dictators. This

benevolence varies depending on their level of education, own income, total income of the household, status in the society and of course the mood of the dictator at the time of decision-making among many other factors. In addition due to the ideologies of maternal altruism this group gives preferences in favour of other members of the family at the cost of satisfying their own needs. As a result of the weakness of maternal altruism and by exercising the power gained from the gender biased social norms, the benevolent dictators can always take the control over resources and can utilize it towards a gender biased decision of distribution of resources.

8. WOMEN'S MOBILITY/FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

8.1. Introduction

As for mobility/freedom of movement is concerned, six out of thirteen shows a higher possibility to have mobility/freedom of movement due to employment, while for seven of them the situation would have been the same even as unemployed here in Norway. Majority of the informants perceive that their total mobility/freedom of movement has been reduced by immigrating. The relative effect of employment on mobility/freedom of movement in their respective countries of origin would have been the same as it is here in Norway. At the same time I find that the Asian informants are more secure in going out alone here in Norway than that of their respective countries of origin showing a positive relation between immigration and mobility/freedom of movement at the community level among this group.

From our discussions about distribution of household work it is clear that this group as a whole has lost their capability to have leisure time as waged employment outside home became their double burden and reduced any time available for enjoying recreational activities – another component of the capability approach for being empowered. Tourism in the modern world considered as a significant form of mobility/freedom of movement. Women in my group under study have their limitations on this aspect of mobility not only because of social norms but also lack of time for recreational activities due to gender division of labour.

8.2. Findings on mobility/freedom of movement

In this empirical chapter I am going to present the findings regarding impact of women's paid employment on their mobility/freedom of movement. Variation in the mobility due to gender differences, structural differences in the society, class, race is quite common in both developed and developing countries. Access to possibilities and time usage differs substantially due to gender norms. Socio-cultural and religious constraints, level of education and symmetries/asymmetries of power play the vital role in determining the pattern of mobility/freedom of movement (Uteng 2011).

The variations of daily mobility based on gender are a common phenomenon in both the developed and developing world. To understand the mobility of women it is important to focus on the causes and consequences. Understanding the issues which impact gendered

mobility such as institutions, laws, social practices, cultural representations, religious, education, and (as)symmetries of power and opportunities are of great importance to analyze how “daily mobility is either reinforcing gender norms in the frame of representation versus reality and of tradition versus modernity or being produced as an effect of these dialectics” (Uteng 2011: p. 5). It can be noted that the mobility/freedom of movement is about the construction of possibilities for movement and not the actual traffic (Uteng 2011). This will encompass the freedom of action or the range of options a person has whether or not she/he chooses to make use of that opportunity in socio-economic, technological and behavioural context.

In my study emphasis was given to find out the freedom to move by asking questions regarding mobility outside the home for example going to shopping centers, going to movie/theater and other recreational activities, visiting and staying with friends and relatives, and travelling practices. I tried to explore how and where, if any, paid employment plays a role in this context.

8.2.1. Gendered differences and women’s mobility/freedom of movement

Controls due to social norms and practices on women’s and girls’ mobility create powerful barriers to their empowerment in many parts of the world. For instance, in South Asia the importance of preserving honour and social status women have to made tradeoff between the need to earn a livelihood and the importance of preserving honour and social status (Kabeer 1998). Many even have to choose between economic and social costs by paying the economic cost, as I noted before – “starving invisibly at home or taking on badly paid work in other people’s homes ‘where nobody would see’” (Kabeer 1998: p. 66). Furthermore, restrictions on women’s mobility in public places are increasing due to the rise of new religious fundamentalist movements in the Middle East and South Asia. This also has great influence on women’s and girls’ mobility in these societies (Esplen et al. 2007).

Moreover, as it is found from the discussions about the outcome of the study of women’s participation in domestic decision-making, gender-differentiated roles related to household work of my target group generates great pressure on the use of time available to them. As mentioned before women’s participation in the paid work did not reduce the burden of household works. Thus by spending more time in household maintenance activities women have less time for leisure. Having the major responsibility for looking after dependent

children, women have less flexibility in scheduling and changing trips for vacations. Women quite often have to adjust their plans according to the schedules of their male partners. Gender differentiated control over the resources of my informants, as discussed in the previous chapter, causes also limitation on their capability regarding mobility behaviour/freedom of movement such as how often, why, where and when the trips are made. All these factors along with women's subordination to men result in differentiated mobility pattern; some of which were mentioned in the previous section - Socio-Cultural norms and practices, and gender roles. These facts are also illustrated in the discussions later in this chapter.

Women's fear about sexual assault, even here in Norway, often results in self-imposed precautionary measures limiting their mobility significantly contributing under representation of women in certain settings.

In addition, if we try to understand what Chameli mentioned "My husband tells me that if I can manage all the official matters, pay the bills (the practical part), contact workers for maintenance of the house..." indicates that even when women are free to reach the outside world here in Norway they are prevented by the gender segregated division of household work. This on the other hand limits the mobility of women resulting reduced access to formal institutions like offices, banks m.m. Lack of mobility for such reasons, on the other hand, preventing women from having other sources of information on such matters as opportunities, prices and rights resulting a vicious circle of powerlessness and incapability in all respect. This is a clear picture of the gender-specific structures of constraint assigning lower value to the capabilities and activities associated with women.

Gender identity, femininity and masculinity, determines transport-related activities and thus determines the pattern of mobility such as mode of transportation. As I experienced having driving license and access to private cars increase mobility/freedom of movement. From my case study it is observed that though all the male counterparts of the informants have driving license only nine out of my thirteen informants have it. This again prevents, for example, these four informants in having a long drive alone if desired. The reason for not having license is not because they are hindered from taking driving license by their male counterparts or for economic reasons but due to their attitude towards driving, due to their fear of less technological knowledge and time-space available to them. This fear again is socially

constructed by giving them the idea that driving is a masculine job, thus it is quite difficult and women are not able to do so.

Even having a driving license seen as a burden rather than a freedom by some of my informants as Chameli mentioned

“... Then I have to drive also in addition to my job and household works for shopping and to different activities of my children. I might also have to drive him (her husband) when he will want to have a drink with his friends. Why should I take that botheration”.

As such, the social construct in this case made the privilege of having a driving license a perception of burden. It is the result of what Chameli experiences in her daily day life regarding division of labour and domestic decision-making.

Moreover, due socio-cultural limitations men can move freely anywhere they like but for women such mobility behaviour can be presumed as transgression. This was revealed from Dalia’s statement

“I can only plan to visit my relatives whether in my country of origin or abroad. But he does not have any limit....”.

As a matter of fact the findings from the study reveals that gender-differentiated roles related to familial maintenance and social norms play a vital role in trip purpose, trip distance, transport mode and other aspects of travel behaviour, and as such, constitutes mobility and is constituted by mobility (Cresswell et al. 2008).

8.2.2. Social Security and women’s freedom of movement

As I mentioned earlier women’s mobility/freedom to move depends upon how the family and community view women’s rights, and is intrinsically dependent on the prevailing levels of violence against women in the household and the community. Bina’s description of her position regarding freedom of movement clearly justifies that. As she mentions:

“As I do not have many relatives here in Norway, my mobility is reduced by coming here from my country of origin. Employment helped me integrating with the Norwegian society. The language then was not a problem. In that way I got some Norwegian friends.

We can move outside our home freely here. We do not need any escort as it is the case in our country of origin. But, as you know, we do not go to clubs. What we (women from the same country) do is arrange parties at home and only for women. No man is allowed to be there. My husband has no problem accepting this.

My children always ask permission from me for going out and not from their father. They know they might not get permission from their father. Even sometime I give excuses of their father if I feel not to permit them from going out somewhere.”

From the above statement, I can find the range of authority fathers in a patriarchal society have over younger men and women members of the family who are subject to distinct forms of control and subordination to him. I experienced, due to the nature of command fathers possess it is only referring to them is sometime sufficient to control the younger men and women members of the family as Bina does when she tells “... Even sometime I give excuses of their father if I feel not to permit them from going out somewhere”.

From her (Bina) answer and others I experience all my informants find it easier to move outside the home freely here in Norway than in their countries of origin asserting that they got higher freedom to move. But I find it only applicable at the community level. As I find when it comes to individual/familial level the picture is quite different.

It is clear that the social security of movement here in Norway gave them higher opportunity to move outside their homes freely and alone. Moreover, neither the mobility of women is constrained by the norms, beliefs, customs and values of this society which also gave a positive incentive for the informants in their freedom to move. These are some of the implicit characteristics found in this society for achieving women’s higher mobility. In addition having paid employment outside their home gave my informants the opportunity to reach the information necessary for mobility and thus make plans accordingly.

On the other hand by immigrating to Norway these women of my target group are disconnected from their known community where they could have found their shared identity based on location and/or social grouping. Individual member of a particular community is most likely to get cooperation from other members in respect of greater economic, social or

political gain that can possibly be achieved through network support. Hence the member may have gained bargaining power economically and socially as a part of the community. The community due its desire to retain the loyalty of its members who are the human and material resources of the community and its political strength would have promoted support networks, formulating and enforcing consensual rules, and so on. This again could have given them more options for mobility/freedom of movement (Agarwal 1997). As for example, by excluding the possibilities of going out for movies, theaters or other cultural activities those are of their own they miss the opportunity of mobility in this sector. Having no relatives and not many friends here in Norway they do not have many places to travel.

Further we noted, by missing the social network as a result of migration the scope of mobility has decreased dramatically for this group of women. In fact, employment enhanced this capability within the constraints of social norms by creating new social networks here in Norway. But the question remains whether these immigrant women are able to utilize this opportunity in this new context.

8.2.3. Socio-Cultural norms and practices, and women's mobility/freedom of movement

Even in the case of women's mobility/freedom of movement the discourses about gender identity learned at the country of origin play a major role in the attainment of women's mobility. Even total income of the families, social status, religious beliefs and cast can also affect the way of women's mobility. Age, marital status and level of education play also a vital role in this respect. Older women being more autonomous in their decision-making might enjoy higher mobility compared to younger women. Single women (never married, divorces, widow) might have a higher possibility to decide her mobility (though not alone in many societies) than that of their married counterpart. The situation will be the same for married women who live with their husband will have less autonomy in mobility than those who live alone for different reasons. Higher education might lead to the positive direction in favour of women's mobility. Consequently, whatever we desire are constrained by those socio-cultural values and shape our activities. This is again supported by statements given to me as Bina says:

“I can travel to my country of origin to visit our families alone and/or with the children. This may not be the case in visiting friends. I did not try.”

Same is case for Iris:

“... My husband allows me to visit my relatives and women friends alone even out of Bergen. But visiting male friends is not allowed due my religious beliefs. This might be a problem with my husband too but I know it is allowed in the western countries.”

As it can be noted her religious beliefs is setting limits on what can be bargained about and visiting a male friend is not a real option at all for her.

I also experience here that only paid employment did not change the attitude of the informants, nor gave them grater capability to move freely than what they have from before. As we can find from Bina:

“Earn money does not mean make ability. I cannot travel for vacation alone though I have money. I do not feel to do that without my husband, my morality prevents to do so.”

and from Dalia:

“It is only because I have paid job I can travel to my family abroad alone. But it is only to visit families not a vacation alone. That will not be allowed I know.”

Having a paid job in her country of origin would have given the same result she mentioned later.

It can be assumed from the above statements that due to the fear of confrontation women often suppress their wish to have the strategic life choices. The threat point in an intra-household bargaining situation they could have posed in this context is not utilized as a result of fear for sanctions that may apply to the threat as well as to the act itself. As I mentioned earlier, in Lily’s case the desire to have some leisure time by giving a share of her household work to her husband resulted in getting a suggestion to quit her job. Quitting job directly would have limited the range of tasks she may perform, reduce her presence in public spaces and thus her access to the outside world, resulting in limitation on her capability of mobility/freedom of movement.

Dependency on the male counterpart is also present in this connection which I experience from Maria who says:

“I do not have control over vacation plans. I can only travel for official purposes through my employer. Other vacation plans are not under my control.”

As such, it can be argued that the possibility of deciding vacations by women in my target group is not only a result of paid employment, rather depend on social norms, values and practices of the society showing that they have the freedom of action only within the framework of structural constraints.

8.2.4. Findings from the European informants

As I mentioned earlier socio-cultural norms and practices have a great impact on our behaviour - in our desire to attain something, our way of doing things, and is quite difficult to change at a later stage of life. This is quite universal and true for all individuals. Generally we follow those norms and practices almost impulsively without questioning. As Chompa mentioned

“Yes, I can go to night club alone if I want to. Same if I want to have shorter vacations alone. But I do not like doing those alone because I do not want to go for confrontation with my husband if any which might occur. The situation would be the same in my country of origin.

..... . Same if I want to have shorter vacations alone (she meant visiting friends). But we always travelled together. I cannot use the vacation time, I have to save the days for family vacations together.”

As such, it can be argued social norms were preventing women from Asia even thinking of going to a night club or having a shorter vacation alone whether or not they are going to practice it. But for the European informant the option of thinking such is possible whether or not they want to use that freedom.

For Shila paid employment gave some freedoms indeed as Shila mentioned:

“When I did not have job I could not decide about the vacations. Now I can. But he did not like me travel alone. Anyway I did it sometimes, because he did not have time to be with me, although that was not popular at all.”

Shila has her higher education at the university level from her country of origin and having a job as office worker. As such, her possibility of deciding vacations is not only a result of paid

employment but rather practices of the European society. Even when her statement shows that they have the freedom of action but it may never be utilized in action due to considerations of other familial factors. From our quotes above it can be argued that the informants from the European countries have the options open much wider than their counterpart from Asia about the capability of movement which they can choose but might not utilize for different reasons. This again indicates the impact of social norms and practices on our behaviour to make effective choices and transform those choices into desired outcome.

Though many of the characteristics in household decision-making, access to and control over resources and mobility/freedom of movement are the same among both the Asian and European informants, the most important distinction I noticed is in regard to mobility. As a matter of fact it is observed that there are variations in utilizing the substantial opportunities among the informants from two different socio-cultural regions. This is true even when they have the same set of means by having waged employment here in Norway, but having heterogeneities in their gender identity. Differences in the possibility of deciding vacations alone by the European counterpart is not a result of substantial opportunities due to employment but due to their heterogeneity and diversity in this culture by having different values and aspirations than that of the Asian societies under my study.

8.3. Discussions and comments

Though employment gave these women the opportunity to social inclusion and widened the boundary for movement, generally these first generation immigrants still could not come out of their socio-cultural norms and practices, and as such, is not in a position to enjoy all the opportunities available in this society. As for example going to club alone, for women from Bangladesh, is not a question of discussion because they do not feel like as they were not habituated in doing so. Though they might have the freedom, yet they are not in a position to utilize that. Moreover, it is difficult to measure whether they have achieved a capability in this regard as long as the reaction of such an act is not examined by setting it into execution. Same can be named for going to mountains. It can be assumed that no husband would have resist my informants from doing so, but we are not sure about the outcome as it is not desired to perform by those I know on their own wish (from my experience from private conversations with many of them later). Taking into account the ways women in this society utilize their freedom of movement my target group are generally not in a position to exploit the same. In

this way the target group feels that they lost their mobility compare to their respective countries. Rather it can be said they miss the activities of their interests back in their country of origin. As such, they have limited area of exercising this power of mobility.

When we see the pattern in the answers regarding visiting and staying with friends and relatives, and travelling practices it follows the pattern as we find in our previous discussions. Mobility/freedom of movement in these areas is again constrained by the norms, beliefs, customs and values of this society where for example travelling alone for vacation not to the relatives is undesired. Being employed or unemployed did not have any/much contribution in advancing this power. In most cases the decisions are imposed on the women about vacations.

Moreover, as we find from the discussions before, women in my target group has to perform most of the household works and execute the the decisions regarding economic affairs, especially regarding household and child-care activities in addition to have paid job. As such, paid job is perceived as a double burden as far as available time is concerned. Any free time available to my informants is utilized for the reproductive activities in the spirit of the ideologies of maternal altruism. Consequently, this leaves them in a situation when they do not have the opportunity to utilize the benefits of mobility/freedom of movement in the form of recreational activities like going to movie/theatre, outings, travelling or tours.

Immigrating to Norway reduced the possibility to engage servants to accomplish many of the household works done by my informants self. This again curtailed any time that could have been available to them for their own interest revealing that the capability of mobility has reduced due to immigration as mentioned by some of my informants.

“Rousseau long ago declared in *The Social Contract* that the cripple who wants to run and the able-bodied man who doesn't will both remain where they are. But by focusing on internal resources and intentions, Rousseau forgot to mention all those whose mobility is affected by external constraints. To consider those constraints is to notice how the built environment -- social practices and material infrastructures – can create mobility disabilities that diminish the difference between the ‘cripple’ and the ambulatory person who may well wish to move.” (Uteng 2011, p. 6 citing Langan 2001, p. 459).

In our case women not only have to express their own interest to be empowered and thus try to gain the bargaining power necessary for their own mobility/freedom of movement. Also they themselves have to fight back the socio-cultural norms those keeping them as cripple in the household and society at large. Considering women's empowerment as the key route to gender equality expressing their own interest to be empowered must be one of the most important steps toward that (Kabeer 1994).

Emphasis should be given to find out how social norms, technologies and policies create differentiated mobilities. In doing so considerations should be given in finding out the processes of gender production in the mobile world through the interactions of gender and mobility in different context, different aspects of mobility or the meaning of such mobility in cultural sense, and the policy oriented contributions (Cresswell et al. 2008).

9. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The objective of this study is to analyze: When does employment empower women, when it does not, and in what ways? Due to time and resource constraints, the study was further narrowed to study whether employment leads to expansion of women's empowerment, with special reference to a number of immigrant women in Bergen, in:

- Participation in domestic decision-making
- Access to and control over resources
- Mobility/Freedom of movement.

Having informants from two different geographical belts I have tried to show the effects of employment on these three indicators of women's empowerment in two different contexts and tried to compare between these two in the previous empirical chapters. In doing so, I have presented the effects on the individual level depending mainly on household bargaining model and gender relations in these two regions.

In the context of participation in domestic decision-making, the result of the study indicates a positive relation between employment and participation in domestic decision-making showing a perceived increase in empowerment in this context. The result indicates that employment can not only increase women's bargaining power directly by making them contributors to the common household budget, but it also helps developing power within, such as self-esteem and self-confidence and make them empowered.

Findings from the study indicate that employment had very little effect on control over resources. This indicator of empowerment depends mainly on other socio-economic and cultural factors such as their level of education, own income, total income of the household, status in the society. Gendered characteristics like maternal altruism, and gender biased norms and practices in the society play a vital role in this context.

The result about mobility/freedom of movement of my target group shows also that employment had very little effect on this indicator. Employment opened opportunities to integrate my target group in the society. But, their ability to utilize this opportunity is constrained by, among others, double burden of work due to employment, social norms and values and cultural differences. Known community where they could have found their shared

identity based on location and/or social grouping can play a vital role in the context of mobility/freedom of movement.

It is observed that gender role and gender identity produced by the social norms, values and practices is reflected in the discourses about femininity and masculinity. These are consciously cultivated through ritual and other cultural means have a deeper effect in the way we react in our lives in almost all aspects. It is obvious from the findings that the most important factors toward women's empowerment are the structural aspects of intra-household relations, the norms of female seclusion and the gender division of labor. Gendered structures of constraints limit the scope of gender equality and gender justice. Access to new possibilities by giving access to new resources is not sufficient in itself for gender equality and balance of power relation but willingness among women to empower themselves is the pathway to move forward. It is also clear the one should keep in mind the difference between women as a socially subordinate group and women as a highly diverse group of individuals in understanding women's empowerment. As such, it is observed variations how empowerment itself is understood differs across different context.

As it is noted before, impact of gender neutral division of household work has a significant impact on women's intra-household bargaining position. As such, attention on the present state of unequal distribution of household work, which alters the structure of both paid and unpaid work, is vital to reach gender justice and consequently women's empowerment. Without having an equal gender neutral distribution of household work, employment will be considered as a double burden by women and cannot be considered as a source of empowerment in this context.

It can be argued that employment, which is not designed through the gender lens and having some other intentions than the gender equality itself, will have limited capacity to contribute to the women's empowerment as a whole and immigrant women in particular. The policy of integrating immigrant women into the society by giving them access to job market cannot be considered as a key to women's empowerment. This is because integration is the prime objective in this context and not women's empowerment itself. The importance should be given to the variations in perceiving empowerment among the immigrant women. Cultural meaning and social acceptability of women's employment across different context should also

be taken under consideration. Further availability of decent work opportunities within particular context has to be recognised.

Empowerment can be seen as a source of light. To illuminate the room (an individual woman) with this light she needs windows and doors to be opened so that the light can come inside the room through these. Employment can be seen as one of these windows. Obviously, it can illuminate a part of the room subject to one has the opportunity to fully open that window. The opportunity to open this window again depends on many other factors, as empowerment intersects personal, family, social, cultural, economic and political space at the same time. The outcome totally depends on the attitude of the environment the person is living in and the bargaining power of the individuals to attain the result. Each and every woman should have their right to be illuminated by the capabilities of this source of empowerment. They should have their right to choose what one thinks is best for herself to make strategic life choices. Due to gender injustice, the deprivation of men, and socio-economic and cultural factors women are constrained from expanding in their ability to make such strategic life choices. Employment plays only a small role in facilitating this light to illuminate the environment and to reach the room where women's personal empowerment or disempowerment takes place.

Moreover, it can be assumed that employment which is meant to serve any other interest than gender equality and gender justice will have limited capacity to contribute to the women's empowerment. Different kinds of employment have different impacts on women's lives. Experience and implications associated with employment vary considerably across different contexts due to the cultural meaning and values attached to such employment.

So, the answer to the questions when employment empowers women, when it does not and in what ways depend on the context under which women exercises their power. It is not possible to make a general list of dimensions or indicators which is common to enhances women's empowerment in all situations depending on just a particular independent variable, in this case employment, as it should be kept in mind that even two women respond differently to the new opportunities though they are from the same background because of their individual differences in the ability to transform resources into valuable activities.

Thus, future research agenda to find out the contextual factors which empower women, should focus on exploring the processes of personal transformation those increase the

capability of working women for challenging the power relations in the domestic domain. Attention should be given to those issues which increase collective consciousness of gender injustices and active political agency. Further, questions should be asked the way empowerment functions across the public–private divide and about the condition that allows women’s agency in the public domain to renegotiate relationships in the private domain. Moreover, it is to be revealed the contexts where women’s enhanced agency within the home lead to greater agency in the public domain (Kabeer 2008).

To conclude, I would like to mention that women do not have to have the serenity to accept the things what she cannot change – but courage to change the things what is not just. And for that change gender justice as prescribed by Sen in Capability Approach is a precondition as the approach describes the link between one’s ability to convert resources or commodities into valuable functionings by taking into account the impact of individual characteristics and social arrangements. Focus should be given on theory, policy and practice that link gender equality. Thus the strategic move should be taken towards discovering socio-economic and political systems that are biased against women’s interests and reinforce unequal power relations between women and men. The next step shall then be to transform and implement them in order to fulfill the potential they hold for accelerating progress towards gender equality. The goal is to find out the needs for gender justice by keeping in mind that justice may be collectively desired, but it is individually experienced.

REFERENCES

- Agarwal, Bina** (1997) "Bargaining" and Gender Relations: Within and Beyond the Household, *Feminist Economics*, Volume 3, No. 1, p. 1 – 51.
URL: [http://www.ccee.edu.uy/ensenian/catgenyeco/Materiales/2011-08-10%20M2%20-%20Agarwal\(1997\)BargainingAndGenderRelations.pdf](http://www.ccee.edu.uy/ensenian/catgenyeco/Materiales/2011-08-10%20M2%20-%20Agarwal(1997)BargainingAndGenderRelations.pdf) [11.05.2013]
- Barne-, likestillings- og inkluderingsdepartementet** (2011) Handlingsplan, Likestilling 2014, Regjeringens handlingsplan for likestilling mellom kjønnene, Oslo, Norway.
URL: http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/BLD/Likestilling/likestilling_2014.pdf [25.04.2013]
- Berg, Else Kristin Utne and Kvilekval, Ingvild** (2011) "Når løsningen er problemet - Et casestudium om mangfold på arbeidsplassen", thesis paper for Master of Public Administration 2011, Handelshøjskolen i København, Denmark.
URL: http://brage.bibsys.no/hint/bitstream/URN:NBN:no-bibsys_brage_18083/1/Else%20Kristin%20Utne%20Berg%2c%20Ingvild%20Kvilekval.pdf [25.04.2013]
- Bergen Municipality** (2007) Mangfold I praksis: Handlingsplan for rekruttering og inkludering av arbeidstakere med innvandrerbakgrunn 2007 – 2010.
URL: https://www.bergen.kommune.no/bk/multimedia/archive/00033/Mangfold_i_praksis_33684a.pdf [25.04.2013]
- Bergen Municipality** (2013) Utlendinger i Bergen.
URL: <https://www.bergen.kommune.no/omkommunen/fakta-om-bergen/befolkning?artSectionId=6125&articleId=63576> [28.05.2013]
- Bittman, M., England, P., Folbre, N. and Matheson, G.** (2001) When Gender Trumps Money: Bargaining and Time in Household Work, Population Studies Center, 3718 Locust Walk, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (presented at Population Association of America, March, 2001).

Braunstein, Elissa (2008) WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT, EMPOWERMENT AND GLOBALIZATION: AN ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, UN, New York.

URL: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/ws2009/documents/EC-WSRWD-2008-EP3%20Braunstein%2026Feb09.pdf> [11.04.2013]

Clark, David A. (2005) The Capability Approach: Its Development, Critiques and Recent Advances, GPRG-WPS-032, Global Poverty Research Group, Institute for Development Policy and Management, University of Manchester, UK.

URL: <http://economics.ouls.ox.ac.uk/14051/1/gprg-wps-032.pdf>

Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2003) Press Release WOM/1377, 20.01.2003.

URL: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/wom1377.doc.htm> [27.05.2013]

Connell, Raewyn (2002) Gender: Short Introductions, 2nd. Ed., Cambridge, Polity Press.

Creswell, J.W. (2007) Qualitative inquiry & research design. Choosing among five approaches. London UK: Sage Publications.

Cresswell, Tim and Uteng, Tanu Priya (2008) Gendered Mobilities: Towards a Holistic Understanding, Cresswell and Uteng, ed., Gendered Mobilities, p. 1 – 14, Aldershot: Ashgate.

URL: http://www.lundhumphries.com/pdf/SamplePages/Gendered_Mobilities_Ch1.pdf [04.05.2013]

Denscombe, Martyn (1998) The good research guide for small-scale social research projects. Buckingham: Open Universtiy Press.

Dover, Paul (2005) Gender and Embodiment: Expectations of Manliness in a Zambian village. In: Ouzgane L. and R. Morell: African Masculinities. Men in Africa from the late nineteenth century to the present. Palgrave-McMillian/KZNpress.

Dreze, Jean and Sen, Amartya (1998) India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity, Delhi: Oxford India Paperbacks.

Drydyk, Jay (2008) Durable empowerment, *Journal of Global Ethics*, 4:3, 231-245, Routledge, London UK.

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17449620802496354> [13.04.2013]

Esplen, Emily with Brody, Alyson Brody (2007) Putting Gender Back in the Picture: Rethinking Women's Economic Empowerment, BRIDGE (development - gender), Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE, UK, online.

URL: http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/BB19_Economic_Empowerment.pdf [29.05.2013]

Flood, M. (2005) Mainstreaming Men in Gender and Development, presentation to AusAID Gender Seminar Series, Canberra, December 2005.

Folbre, N. (1994) *Who Takes Care of the Kids? Gender and the Structures of Constraint*. London: Routledge.

Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko (2003) *The Human Development Paradigm: Operationalizing Sen'S Ideas On Capabilities, Feminist Economics*, Routledge, London

URL: <http://ideas.repec.org/a/taf/femeco/v9y2003i2-3p301-317.html>

Gale, Thomson (2008) Patriarchy, *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*.

URL: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Patriarchy.aspx> [07.04.2013]

Gender Norway (2010) *Work, Welfare & Economy*, Norway.

URL: <http://www.gender.no/Topics/12> [06.04.2013]

Ghidina, Marcia J. (1992) Social relations and the definition of work: Identity management in a low-status occupation, *Qualitative Sociology*, Spring 1992, Volume 15, Issue 1, pp 73-85.

Hammersley, Martyn (1995). *The politics of social research*. London: Sage.

Kabeer, Naila (1988) 'Subordination and struggle: Women in Bangladesh', *New Left Review*, 168: 95-121.

Kabeer, Naila (1994) *Reversed Realities: Gender hierarchies in development thought*. London: Verso Publications.

Kabeer, Naila (1997) "Women, Wages and Intra-household Power Relations In Urban Bangladesh", *Development and Change* Vol. 28, Institute of Social Studies, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Kabeer, Naila (1998) 'Money Can't Buy Me Love?': Re-evaluating Gender, Credit and Empowerment in Rural Bangladesh, Discussion Paper No. 363, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton.

Kabeer, Naila (1999a) "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment." *Development and Change*, Volume 30, Number 3, July 1999. Blackwell Publishing.

Kabeer, Naila (1999b) "The Conditions and Consequences of Choice: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment", United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Discussion Paper no. 108, Geneva, Switzerland.

URL:

[http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/ab82a6805797760f80256b4f005da1ab/31eef181bec398a380256b67005b720a/\\$FILE/dp108.pdf](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/ab82a6805797760f80256b4f005da1ab/31eef181bec398a380256b67005b720a/$FILE/dp108.pdf) [13.04.2013]

Kabeer, Naila (2000) *The Power to Choose: Bangladeshi women and labour market decisions in London and Dhaka*. Verso, London and New York.

Kabeer, Naila (2008) *Pathways of Women's Empowerment*, IDS, Sussex, UK.

URL: <http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/PDF/Outputs/WomenEmp/PathwaysWP3-website.pdf> [05.05.2013]

Kandiyoti, Deniz (1988) Bargaining with Patriarchy, *Gender and Society*, Vol. 2, No. 3, Special Issue to Honor Jessie Bernard pp. 274-290.

URL: <http://www.smi.uib.no/seminars/Pensum/kandiyoti,%20Deniz.pdf>.

Kishor, Sunita and Gupta, Kamla (2009) Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in India, International Institute for Population Sciences, Deonar, Mumbai – 400 088, India.

URL: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADQ633.pdf [05.05.2013]

Library of Congress (1992) "Poland: A Country Study", published by the Federal Research Division.

URL: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?cstdy:2:./temp/~frd_jsxt:: [15.04.2013]

Library of Congress (1996) "Russia: A Country Study", published by the Federal Research Division.

URL: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?cstdy:2:./temp/~frd_kiax:: [15.04.2013]

Malhotra, A., Schuler S. R., and Boender C. (2002) "Measuring Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development.", World Bank Gender and Development Group and the Social Development Group: June 28, 2002.

URL:

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Resources/MalhotraSchulerBoender.pdf>

[27.05.2013]

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G.B. (1999) Designing Qualitative Research, 3rd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Modhadam, Valentine M. (Editor) (1994) Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies, The United Nations University, World Institute for Development Economic, Research, Helsinki, Finland.

Moore, Henrietta L. (1988) Feminism and Anthropology, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Moore, Henrietta L. (1994) A Passion for Difference, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Morokvasic, Mirjana (1984) "Birds of Passage are also Women", International Migration Review, Vol. 18 No. 4, Special Issue: Women in Migration, p. 886 – 907, New York.

Mosedale, Sarah (2003) “Towards a framework for assessing empowerment” Paper prepared for conference: New Directions in Impact Assessment for Development: Methods and Practice, Manchester, UK, November 24-25 2003.

URL: http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/research/iarc/pdfs/iarc_wp03.pdf [26.04.2013]

Mosedale, Sarah (2005) “Assessing Women’s Empowerment: Towards a conceptual framework”, Journal of international Development, 17, p. 243 – 257, Wiley InterScience, online.

URL:

http://www.equalinrights.org/fileadmin/filelist/documenten/Guides_and_Manuals/1._A_human_rights-based_approach/mosedale-assessing-empowerment.pdf [26.04.2013]

Napikoski, Linda (2013) Patriarchal Society, Feminism Definition, About.com.

URL: <http://womenshistory.about.com/od/feminism/a/patriarchal.htm> [07.04.2013]

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS (2013) Kvinnerollen i Norge, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste (NSD), Norway.

URL: <https://www.samfunnsveven.no/laering/sosiologi/kjoennsrolle/> [19.05.2013]

Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality (2009) Action plan to promote equality and prevent ethnic discrimination 2009–2012, Oslo, Norway.

URL: <http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/BLD/etnisk%20disk/HPL/4043-materie-engelsk-trykk.pdf> [07.04.2013].

Nussbaum, Martha (2000), Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Nussbaum, Martha (2011), “Capabilities, Entitlements, Rights: Supplementation and Critique”, Journal of Human Development, vol. 12, no. 1.

Oxford Dictionaries (2013), Work, Online.

URL: <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/work?q=work> [22.05.2013]

Punch, Maurice (1986) 'The Politics and Ethics of Fieldwork. Qualitative Research Methods, Volume 3, London: SAGE Publications.

Rawls, John (1971), A Theory of Justice, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Resnik, David B. (2011) "What is Ethics in Research & Why is it important", The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), North Carolina USA.

URL: <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/whatis/>.

Robeyns, Ingrid (2001) Will a Basic Income Do Justice to Women?, Analyse & Kritik 23/2001, p. 88 – 105, Lucius & Lucius, Stuttgart.

Robeyns, Ingrid (2003a) Sen's Capability Approach and Gender Inequality: Selecting Relevant Capabilities, Feminist Economics 9 (2 - 3), p. 61 – 92, Routledge, London.

URL:

<http://csde.washington.edu/~scurran/files/readings/April28/recommended/SelectingRelevantCapabilities.pdf> [12.05.2013]

Robeyns, Ingrid (2003b) The Capability Approach: An Interdisciplinary Introduction, University of Amsterdam, Department of Political Science and Amsterdam School of Social Sciences Research, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

URL:

<http://www.soc.spbu.ru/img/up/files/File/1.8%20Robeyns%20The%20Capability%20Approach.%20An%20Interdisciplinary%20Introduction.pdf> [12.05.2013]

Rowlands, Jo (1997) Questioning Empowerment: Working with women in Honduras, Oxfam: Oxford.

Sen, Amartya K. (1985) Commodities and Capabilities. Amsterdam: North Holland.

Sen, Amartya K. (1990) "Gender and Cooperative Conflicts," in Irene Tinker (ed.) Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development, pp. 123–49. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sen, Amartya K. (1992), *Inequality Re-examined*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sen, Amartya K. (2004), 'Capabilities, Lists and Public Reason: Continuing the Conversation', *Feminist Economics*.

Sen, Amartya (2005), "Human Rights and Capabilities", *Journal of Human Development*, volume 6, no. 2, Routledge, London.

Sen, Amartya K. (2009) *The Idea of Justice*, London: Allan Lane.

Silverman, David (2010) *Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook*. (3rd ed.) London: Sage.

Statistics Norway (2001) Utdanningsstatistikk. Innvandreneres utdanningsnivå, per 1. oktober 2001, Online.

URL: <http://www.ssb.no/utinnv/> [30.05.2013]

Statistics Norway (2012) Immigration and immigrants.

URL: http://www.ssb.no/innvandring_en/ [2012]

The Complete Site on Mahatma Gandhi (2012) Woman's Status And Role In Society, Bombay Sarvodaya Mandal, Gandhibook Centre, Gandhi Research Foundation, Jalgaon.

URL: <http://www.mkgandhi.org/momgandhi/chap60.htm> [30.05.2013]

The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) (2008) Integrert, men diskriminert – en undersøkelse blant innvandrere fra Afrika, Asia, Øst-Europa og Sør- og Mellom-Amerika. IMDi. IMDi-rapport 9-2008.

URL: http://www.imdi.no/Documents/Rapporter/Rapport_9.pdf [07.04.2013].

The World Bank (2011) *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development*, World Bank, Washington D. C.

United Nations (1948) "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, December 10, 1948."

Prepared for Internet by the Information Technology Section, Department of Public Information, United Nations 1998.

URL: <http://www.un.org/rights/50/decla.htm> [30.05.2013]

United Nations (2009) “2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women’s Control over Economic Resources and Access to Financial Resources, including Microfinance”, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for the Advancement of Women, New York, USA.

United Nations Population Fund (2004) Program of Action. Adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994.

URL: http://www.unfpa.org.mx/publicaciones/PoA_en.pdf [13.04.2013].

University of Minnesota (2000) Circle of Rights: Developing a Rights-Based Perspective, Part 1, Section 1, Module 1, International Human Rights Internship Program, Human Rights Library.

URL: <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/IHRIP/circle/modules/module1.htm>
[04.05.2013]

Uteng, Tanu Priya (2011) World Development Report 2012, Gender and Mobility in the Developing World, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). Trondheim, Norway.

URL: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/uteng.pdf> [23.05.2013]

UNWOMEN (2011) Progress of the World’s Women: In Pursuit of Justice.

URL: <http://progress.unwomen.org/pdfs/EN-Report-Progress.pdf> [05.05.2013]

Wikigender (2008) Gender Equality in Norway.

URL: http://www.wikigender.org/index.php/Gender_Equality_in_Norway [30.05.2013]

Wikipedia (2013) Intra-household bargaining.

URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intra-household_bargaining [22.05.2013]

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

Zimmerman, Marc A. (1995) Psychological empowerment: Issues and illustrations, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Volume 23, No. 5, p. 581 – 599.

Table - 1: Demographic profile of the informants

Serial number and name used in this thesis (01)	Informant							Husband	
	Age (02)	Area of origin (03)	Number of year/years staying in Norway (04)	Level of education (05)	Employed in position (06)	Would have worked in the country of origin (07)	Possibility of getting a better or equal level of employment in the country of origin (08)	Level of education (09)	Employed in position (10)
01 – Bina	34 to 52	Asia	1 to 28	4	2	2	2	4	2
02 - Chompa		Europe		5	1	2	2	5	4
03 - Dalia		Asia		5	1	2	2	5	3
04 - Rebecca		Asia		4	2	2	2	3	1
05 - Chameli		Asia		3	1	2	2	4	3
06 – Iris		Asia		4	2	1	2	4	3
07 - Jesmin		Asia		3	2	0	0	3	4
08 – Lily		Asia		5	3	1	0	6	2
09 - Maria		Asia		5	2	2	2	6	2
10 – Srabonti		Asia		6	2	2	2	-	-
11 - Radhika		Asia		6	2	2	2	3	2
12 - Shila		Europe		5	2	2	2	-	-
13 - Bindu		Asia		5	3	2	2	6	4

Table - 2: Values used in Table - 1

Level of education (Columns 05 and 09)	Secondary School	1
	Higher Secondary school	2
	Bachelor degree (two years)	3
	Bachelor degree (honours)	4
	Masters degree/Professional	5
	Ph.D.	6
Employed in Position (Columns 06 and 10)	Top level Manager	4
	Middle level Manager	3
	Office worker/Professional	2
	Worker	1
Would have worked in the country of origin (Column 07)	Yes - Full time	2
	Yes - Part time	1
	No	0
Possibility of getting a better or equal level of employment in the country of origin (Column 08)	Yes	2
	No	0
	Not sure	1

Appendix-1: Interview guide

University of Bergen



**Interview guide
for the project**

**Employment Opportunity and Women's
Empowerment: A Study with Special Reference to
Immigrant Women in Bergen.**

Student:

Tahmina Tanzim Hasan

Supervisor:

Tone K. Sissener

Interview number: _____

Place of interview: _____

Date of interview: _____._____.2012

Information about the project

Purpose of this research project:

This project proposal is designed for the fulfilment of the course in Master of Philosophy in Gender and Development at the Department of Health Promotion and Development, Faculty of Psychology, University of Bergen, Autumn 2011 – Spring 2013.

Objective of the project:

The main objective of the project is to study the extent of achieving women's empowerment through employment with special reference to immigrant women in Bergen. Thus the project will try to find out the linkages between women's empowerment in the field of socio-economic status and social network, and employment opportunity.

The idea of this project is to study the impact of employment in improving people's ability to make strategic life choices to achieve the capabilities as desired which they were denied/could have been denied before. As work place can be seen also as an agency of socialization it will focus on the impact of employment in family relations, family life, and relations with friends, colleagues and others, among other indicators, which make a difference to their perception of being empowered. Due to time and resource constraint this project will only try to find the indication for:

Does employment lead to expansion of women's empowerment, with special reference to immigrant women in Bergen, in:

- **Participation in domestic decision-making**
- **Access to and control over resources**
- **Mobility/Freedom of movement.**

As such, the study will try to reveal: When does employment empower women, when it does not, and in what ways?

Information about data collection methodology

General information:

Informants in the research project is absolutely on personal choice with possibility of withdrawal.

The informants' right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained at all levels of the project so that no information will be disseminated to other informants, colleagues or gate-keepers of this research in such a way that can cause harm to the informants. This also applies to the safe storage and disposal of the field notes.

The proposal is forwarded to Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS (NSD) and the University authority for clearances and research permit.

I will be using a guide for the interview purpose and note the answers. All informants are free to add any relevant information which they feel important for the project at any time during the interview period.

Time required:

Around three hours.

Consent from informants:

Do you have any question in mind about the project?

Do you agree to participate?

If yes, please sign below to give your consent:

I do understand the purpose of the project and method of collecting information. I am freely willing to participate in the project as an informant. I do also declare that I am undersigning this document willingly, and I appear to be of sound mind and under no duress, fraud or undue influence. I will have my right to withdraw my participation at any time before publication of the report.

The information given can only be used for the purpose of this project. My permission has to be taken for any further use of the information.

Bergen, _____ . _____ .2012

Signature of interviewee

Topics of discussion.

1. General information about the informant and her family

- Please describe about you and your family.
- Please tell me about your experiences after coming to Norway.

2. Informant's understanding of gender equality and women's empowerment

- What do you understand by gender equality?
- What do you understand by women's empowerment?
- How the household works are distributed?
- Who does what?
- What about child care activities?
- What do you think the situation would be if you were unemployed?
- What do you think the situation would be if you were in your country of origin?
-

3. Domestic decision-making:

- How the decisions are made?
- Who decides what?
- What do you think the situation would be if you were unemployed?
- What do you think the situation would be if you were in your country of origin?

4. Access to and control over resources

- How the decisions are made?
- Who decides what?
- Who has/have access to bank account?
- What do you think the situation would be if you were unemployed?
- What do you think the situation would be if you were in your country of origin?

5. Mobility/Freedom of movement

- What you do at your free times?
- Are you free to do these alone?
- How do you enjoy vacations?

- Tell me about your participation in social activities
- Tell me about your participation in political activities
- What do you think the situation would be if you were unemployed?
- What do you think the situation would be if you were in your country of origin?

6. Information regarding being employed

- Please describe about your job?
- Do you think the job is according to your qualification and experience?
- Are you satisfied with your job?
- (If yes) – can you please describe some reasons?
- (If not) what did you expect? Why – can you please describe some reasons?
- Did you have education/job related training after coming to Norway?
- Do you have any plan for further education/get job related training in future?
- Do you think this might help getting a better position/job?
- What is the possibility of getting a better offer in future at your present employer?
- Do you think employment helped you socialize and integrate in the Norwegian society? Can you please describe how?
- Do you think being employed have affected your ability of decision making? How?
- Do you think being employed have affected your ability to have control over economic resources? How?
- Do you think being employed have affected your ability to mobility/freedom of movement? How?
- What do you think the situation would be if you were unemployed? Why do you think so?
- What do you think the situation would be if you were in your country of origin? Why do you think so?

Rounding up

- Do you want to add something else which you feel important for the project?
- Feedback about the interview.
- Information about the next step.
- Thanks for helping me by participating as informant.