

**EAST AND WEST:
EDUCATION, IDENTITY AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION**

by

Iffat Hafeez Javed

**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto**

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2000

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Abstract

My doctoral dissertation is a study with two themes. It is a research on the lives of three first generation visible minority immigrant women who came to Canada from South Asia in their early to mid twenties. The three women participants--Anita, Salika and I, went to school in Canada. Anita and I are teachers, Salika is a professional hair dresser. I studied for post graduate degrees in teaching in Canada, Anita did many university courses related to teaching, and Salika went to a hair styling studio to get her diploma in aesthetics. Anita and I have been living in Canada for over two decades and Salika immigrated just over a decade ago. The data collecting techniques for this auto/biographical narrative method, where, the

characters were fictionalized and their voices and background switched (He, 1998), was a combination of stories, journals and transcripts. Moreover, it was the analyses of the interviews that I, as a researcher, conducted with Anita and Salika, my participant women. Our stories were a recollection of the past based on memory, and the present day existence. These stories provided us a blend of perceptions that were intense at times and enlightening at other times. However, the challenging part of the thesis writing process was to interpret the stories in a way that was broad in magnitude and captured the past, present and future while maintaining the narrative truth. The research process which is presented as both, phenomenology and methodology, invoked among the participants, the questions, dilemmas and awareness about identity. An identity that we had while back in our homelands, and an identity imposed upon by living in a culture, where, a lot of times, the colour of skin sets the stage for undergoing disruptions and upheavals in life. The interpretation of our stories involved exploration of our chronicled experiences, along with the contemporary societal, cultural and language contexts, with which we have a corresponding relationship. Though my study focussed on women from South-Asia, it has significance for understanding identity and cultural transformation, due in part to the variable forces active in the host culture, and that some of the conflicts experienced by the participants are specific to skin colour.

The sub-theme, using the narrative inquiry, is my personal educational experiences in Pakistan combined with the Colonial Legacy, and the present state of affairs of education system there. Based on the findings, a conceptual framework is suggested to try to overhaul the primary and teacher education in Pakistan.

The sub-theme has significance for educators, curriculum developers and policy makers

in Pakistan. It also provides an understanding for the Canadian teachers and educators at various levels as to how and why South-Asian students function the way they do, in a Canadian school system.

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My thesis supervisor Dr. Michael F. Connelly, winner of the award of excellence in teaching, and a recent recipient of the life time achievement award by the American Education Research Association, has been an uncommon inspiration. He has been a constant guiding light and a compassionate captain who helped me steer my ship in the quest of writing my life story. At times the waves were unruly and awkward, at other times they replenished me intellectually. Dr. Connelly's perceptive vision and encouragement helped me throughout the process of the writing of my thesis. I admire his stamina, his dedication and the immense hours he spent reading and advising as the work progressed. He let me celebrate who I am and what I stand for. His intellectual energy directed me to look deeper for meaning and making connections with the larger whole, rather than skim the stories.

I sincerely appreciate the insightful and significant advise rendered by my thesis committee members. Dr. Howard Russell's welcoming disposition at all times and his knowledge of statistics, science and curriculum studies made my story more meaningful. Dr. Jamshed Mavalwala's patience, a listening ear and his knowledge of Multiculturalism and Anthropology, helped me to understand who I am and how I negotiate with myself and take a position in my

environment. This made my journey a pleasant one.

My special thanks to Dr. Michael Orm (late), of the department of Sociology, with whom I had the honour of one extensive meeting, the proceeds of which were tape recorded. Dr. Orm (may his soul rest in peace), is not among the community of educators, but his message, his teachings, and his signature through his voice are still with us.

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I feel most gratified to my mother for her hard work and commitment towards educating her eight children. She sacrificed many personal pleasures to look after them with relentless

dedication. I admire her for being an outspoken person who adhered to her principles and convictions no matter what.

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DEDICATION

For you dad

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
-----------------------	----

Acknowledgments	v
------------------------------	---

Dedication	viii
-------------------------	------

Table Of Contents	ix-xi
--------------------------------	-------

Chapter One Overview	1
-----------------------------------	---

The Phenomenon Under Study.....	2
Method.....	4
Analysis/Interpretation of the Field Text.....	8
Theory/LiteratureBackground.....	10
Cultural Stories: The significance.....	13
Chapter Breakdown.....	15

Chapter Two : Personal Background: Parental Influence

My Father.....	18
Admission At O.I.S.E.....	18
My Mother.....	23
My Most Beloved Child.....	28
TheTeacher In Me.....	35
Summary.....	37

Chapter Three: Methodology: Narrative And Story In Human Landscape

Introduction.....	38
Initial Attempts.....	44
The Chronicles.....	46
Journals.....	49
The Proposal.....	51
The Interviews.....	52

The Interpretive Process.....	56
Summary.....	58

Chapter Four : The Education System in Pakistan

Introduction.....	60
Education : A Historical Perspective.....	62
Personal Educational Experiences.....	68
Journals.....	71
Summary.....	84

Chapter Five : Racism

Introduction.....	85
Identity Crisis: Misrecognition.....	88
Personal Stories.....	90
Walking on a London's Street.....	91
Toronto's Highway : A Citizen's Arrest.....	92
Professional Stories.....	94
The Supply-Teaching Experience.....	96
Students' Perception of the Minority Staff.....	98
The ESL (English As a Second Language)students.....	99
Multiculturalism And Race-Relations.....	109
Equity.....	113
Stories Of My Children.....	114
The Turning Point.....	122
My Youngest Son.....	123
The Summer of 1994.....	127
Summary.....	128

Chapter Six : Narrative of a Woman : The Power Control Issue

Introduction.....	130
The women Participants: Initial Attempt.....	132
Second Attempt.....	136
My First Participant.....	137
Salika.....	138
Salika's Story.....	139
Jalaal Weds Salika.....	141
Reflection On Salika's Story.....	144

My Second Participant Anita.....	150
Anita Migrates To Canada.....	154
Anita Supports Her Family.....	155
Reflection On Anita’s Story.....	159
Summary.....	161

Chapter Seven : Primary Education In Pakistan: A Conceptual Framework Based On Findings

Introduction.....	163
My Information Gathering TripToPakistan.....	164
Researcher’s General Observation.....	166
Types of Schools in Lahore (Pakistan).....	167
The School Enrollment.....	179
The Link Between Theory and Practice.....	180
Pakistan’s Educational Plans.....	181
A needs Analysis Based on Information and Context.....	185
Teacher Education in Pakistan.....	188
The All-Pakistan Muslim Educational Conference of 1947.....	190
A context-based needs Analysis.....	193
Summary.....	197

Chapter Eight : Looking Back and Search For the Self

Reflecting on the Thesis Process.....	199
Why I worked on my Personal Biography?.....	203
What I Did in This Study.....	204
Writing of the Research- What I learned About my Participants.....	206
The Change Over Time In the Second Generation Canadians.....	212
Struggles of The Women From The East.....	213
Self-Reflection : Who Am I?.....	217
The Emotional, Intellectual and Social.....	217
The Structure and Control.....	222
The Peril.....	226
The Religious Training.....	227
Summary.....	229

References

ILLUSTRATION

Map of Pakistan.....238

CHAPTER 1

An Overview

The study I have undertaken emanated from personal stories, images, memories, values and metaphors that have been a part of my life for over four decades. To untwine and understand the complex web of these strands I chose to dissect and examine them using a narrative form of methodology. This helped me find the link between myself and the realities of life that I have encountered by living in two cultures, East and West. The narrative form has helped me delve into the characteristics of race, ethnicity, gender, color and culture and to establish my relationship with these variables on one hand, and myself as a separate entity on the other hand. It is a journey of personal inquiry into exploring the lived experiences of my two participant women and myself. While doing that, the focus shifted inward and outward into making meaning of the past, present and connecting it with the future. It is a connection of the self, with a deeper understanding of the self and the surrounding forces that helped me shape my life. It is a study of tapping into the latent forces and the inner voices with feelings, emotions, perceptions and receptions that have been integral to me all my life. All this could not be quantified by putting numbers and calculating them in any fashion, as human nature is compelling, fragile, very confounded and vulnerable.

In my research the stories of two women participants blend with my personal stories. These women hail from a culture similar to mine and are visible minorities like myself. Their stories are captured using a variety of field text construction techniques like interviews, verbal and written accounts and journals.

As I explored and researched, I began to read the literature by women writers like Sadat (1987), Heilbrun (1988), Bateson (1989), Bhutto (1989), Quddus (1990), besides literature in Urdu, my first language.

My educational experiences in Pakistan form the second theme in my thesis and are captured by journals written over a period of time. My upbringing, especially the part that my father played in my education, has a profound effect on who I am. This has been captured by stories and is complimented by my father's letters written over a period of ten years. This provides a window to my father's love and his image of me as a female educator who is seeking an opportunity to make a contribution in the field of education.

I am and have thoroughly enjoyed my 11 year teaching experience in Canada! An opportunity to work in the field of education in Pakistan is a dream come true! My work on the second theme in my research- the education system in Pakistan- is the result of that life-long passion.

The Phenomenon Under Study

The narrative account of my personal biography has two themes. The first theme is the phenomenon of my life, taking into account the 'concrete peculiarities' (Crites, 1975), of life and its experiences. The experiences of life are studied rather than using them as a contextual given for educational discourse (Connelly & Clandinin, 1998). Connelly & Clandinin further state that the storied quality of experience is both unconsciously restoried in life, and consciously restoried, retold and relived through the process of reflection, then the rudiments of method are born in the phenomenon of narrative

(ibid.:2).

The phenomenon in studying my life or life's experiences are: my upbringing and educational experiences as a middle class female, in the East namely in Pakistan. The second theme encompasses my educational, professional and social experiences of being a visible minority woman in the West, namely in Canada. The themes are addressed in their totality seeking inward, outward, forward and backward stances (Connelly and Clandinin, 1994), in order to better understand my life experiences. Furthermore, to make connections and meanings among these experiences and to relate them to future circumstances (Dewey, 1938), is the essence of my research.

The phenomenon of writing my life story translates a process that has occurred over several years of intensive work, that first started with the writing of personal stories and chronicles. Stories were written and re-written in order to give an individual signature, a personal point of view and interpretation reflecting an individual voice long denied agency (Smith, 1994). The emphasis was on process and meaning of the socially constructed nature of reality and its relationship with myself. This phenomenon has sought to answer questions, a multitude of questions, that stress how the past and present are linked to enable one to foresee in the future.

It was a way of finding out about myself, my life, a way of 'knowing', a method of discovery and analysis (Richardson, 1994), that allowed me to tap into my strengths and made me aware of my weaknesses.

This phenomenon illuminates the need for making meaning of the life stories and the particular conditions that prevail in a Western society for visible minority women from

the East. I speak from a particular class, race, culture, and ethnic perspective hence, there was that heartfelt need for my women participants to share their stories and experiences with my stories and experiences. This provided us with common stories that provided a glimpse of ourselves and a reflection of the human spirit. This complex interrelationships and a reflection on the multiplicities of ways in which a woman's life story reveals and reflects important features of her conscious experience and social landscape, has provided a self-examination both for me and my two women participants. This process has also provided me with a vision of meaning making and clarifying what and how meanings are embedded in the language and actions of. in Onley's term (1994), the 'social actors'.

Method

My autobiographical writing is multi method in focus where the theoretical aspect comes from the narrative mode, and the practical perspective comes from the strategies employed, namely, stories, letters and journals to create part of the field text. It was a challenging yet a rewarding task that needed a variety of techniques to capture the complexities of human nature and her/his feelings. It was a scaffold that needed to be explored using a qualitative approach to research to try to understand the intricate human relationships and their perceptions. The construction of this study hence, involves two fundamental components; an autobiographical and a biographical stance that complement each other and are integral parts of the study. The autobiographical section is the springboard for recovering the meaning of my life experiences. For example, growing up in a family of eight and being the centre of my father's love and care throughout my

life. has helped mould me into a person that I am being a teacher, a mother, a wife and a friend. How I still love my dad shedding tears in solitude when reflecting on his care for me. There are intricate stories of other members of my family that are interwoven, the meanings of which are far reaching and hold the key to understanding the past, the present and are implied for seeing in the future. There was the 'recovery of meaning' and 'reconstruction of experience' (Clandinin, 1988), in my life story that helped me to reflect on my life's experiences.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990:2), define inquiry into narrative as 'the study of the ways humans experience the world'. Deliberately storying and re storying one's life (or a group of cultural stories), is, therefore a fundamental method of personal (and social) growth: it is a fundamental quality of education. 'Narrative research' can only be build on this process of growth. Narrative method, in simplest terms, is the description and re storying of the narrative structure of varieties of educational experience.

The biographical section of this thesis tells the stories of two women participants who come from the same culture of the East as I do. My intent is to portray our 'connected knowing' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), between my participants and me. This is achieved by mutually reconstructing the telling of the stories that offered a way of giving an account of our work together. Moreover, it is a representation of a culture as well as it is a revelation of the unique individuals and their personal histories. The personal histories of my participants are influenced by the larger histories and structures of the Canadian society that have helped them to become a dialectic blend of the individual and the social. Experience is always social such that a person is never an individual only, nor,

is a person social, rather it is a dialectic blend of both (Connelly & Clandinin, 1998:8).

The collection of field texts involved several indepth open-ended interviews (taped and verbatim transcripts) and many formal, informal and telephone conversations. Their stories opened up a window to look into mine, and our stories found common elements that made meaning of the lives available to women. There was that heartfelt need for my participants to share their stories and the reader to share our stories. There was no other story as vital as my story and that of my participants because my story reflects the belief in myself and the readers to believe in me and my female participants. It was my intention to hear each others' stories and to complete the assignment undertaken in an interactive way. My participants were chosen because the contribution through their stories was vital to the lives of those who were part and parcel of one culture and decided to migrate to another culture. Not only that these are immigrant stories, these are the stories of daughters, wives and mothers who not only learn and mould according to the needs of the host culture. but intensely undergo silent cries and sobbs being visible minority women. These stories are written for those who care to examine the complexities of the facts of life of the research subjects at many levels. The socio-economics, the emotional trauma, the non-recognition in the host culture, problems raising their children in a culture and values different, sometimes at the opposite end of the spectrum, from the culture they were raised in. Above all, it is their struggle to succeed despite all odds against them. Making them a part of my research was to give authenticity to my work and to provide inspiration to other visible minority women to come forward with their stories. These participants were also chosen because I had previously known them, one as a colleague.

the other as a family friend. So, there was that mutual trust developed which is an essential part of this research.

The concept of story seems to involve not just a sequence of events told by the narrator or the participants, it also involves the readers of the story. It is a shared human experience that probes into the motivation behind human actions and thoughts. There may be common stories, or, some episode in a story that my readers might relate to and uncover the underlying truth for a better understanding about themselves, or the culture (s) one is living in. It is like inspiring by example and perhaps opening doors to life's possibilities.

My experience with narrative methodology started with chronicle writing while I was taking the 1300 course at O.I.S.E. with Dr. Michael F. Connelly. It was a mind opener as to how I could go on a memory lane and interact with myself writing and re-writing stories. I wrote four sets of chronicles separating them by decades, and re-wrote the stories that kept re-surfacing. It was tedious to highlight the themes and to dig deeper for more details and more stories. The summer of 1989 was spent writing journals about my educational experiences in Pakistan that date back from 1954 to 1972. It was a means to revisit with myself for further exploration and help with indepth writing of my story. Consultations with my thesis advisor, Dr. Connelly, constantly steered my way into possible directions and the reading material that would further enhance my understanding of my life experiences. There was no hypothesis, no problem statement, or one particular research methodology that I had to adhere to get the required results to acknowledge or refute the hypothesis. It was a combination of methods to collect the field text and then to

deduce from it whatever emerged, the common themes, the stories that repeated themselves time and time again. To further my research, these stories and themes were to be interpreted to make meaning while giving a 'whole' to the story of my life writings.

Analysis/Interpretation of the Field Text

Altheide and Johnson (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:489), state:

Analytic realism is an approach to qualitative data analysis and writing. It is founded on the view that the social world is an interpreted world. It is interpreted by the subjects we study. It is interpreted by the qualitative researcher. It is based on the value of trying to represent faithfully and accurately the social worlds or phenomenon studied. Analytic realism rejects the dichotomy of realism/idealism and other conceptual dualism, as being incompatible with the nature of lived experience and it's interpretation.....Analytic realism assumes that meanings and definitions brought to actual situations are produced through a communication process.

While writing and rewriting my stories I learned that the material could be interpreted in new and personal ways to look at life experiences from different perspectives.

Confronted with the field text, I faced the challenge of making sense of what has been written and learned about my life experiences and that of my participant women. Making sense or meaning out of events and phenomenon (Schwandt, 1996:118), through prolonged, complex process of social interaction involving history, language and action is called the art of interpretation. This may also be described as moving from the field to the text to the reader (Denzin, 1994:500). The practice of this art allows the field-worker-as-bricoleur (Levi-Strauss, in Denzin, 1994:500), to translate what has been learned into a

body of textual work that communicates these understandings to the reader. These texts are the stories that are shared among people. Interpretation requires the telling of a story, or a narrative that states 'things happen this way because ' or 'this happened, after this happened, because this happened first' (ibid.:500). The procedure in the narrative is unusually thorough and reflective and signifies the actions of the actors from various points of views. The aim is to discover and communicate the meaning-perspective of the people studied. There were times during this long, overwhelming process that I was mentally chilled which halted any action on my part. For days I would not type a word, my body would get tense and urge me to quit. I continued venturing, trying to unmask that was embodied in the stories. My injury at work in the year 1993 caused a two year delay in the completion of my work. The constant physical pain was followed by a surgical operation to my right shoulder and a 15% permanent disability to my arm deterred me at times. What sustained and kept me going was my father's image of me as a woman educator with a doctorate degree, and the determination to finish what I had invested so much in. So there was a double dilemma that I faced throughout the process. It was the physical discomfort and the rigorous mental activity involved in the interpretative and the writing process which continued to the end of my research work.

The very act of analysing stories forced a self-examination on my part and a peek into the story of my inner self as I have lived it. Equality, equity, democracy and free-speech are the terms that hold a different perspective for me. I am having to redefine myself, my place in the Canadian society at large and school system in particular. On the way I have gained a valuable experience by living a life in two cultures and having a combination of

the two cultures, East and West, that invoked in me a third culture. Ming Fang He (1998), points out that when people live between cultures, familiarity and strangeness merge and shift and that the notion of first culture and second culture shift with people's evolving experiences. She further states that cultural transformation occurs naturally when acculturation (learning of the second or additional culture), and enculturation (learning of the first culture), take place interchangeably. Furthermore, cultural transformation cannot necessarily happen all the time. I had lived in the second culture for over two decades before I started writing my story. The process of acculturation and enculturation had gone on sub-consciously for many years till my narrative inquiry led me to deal with and represent this multifaceted aspect of my research.

Theory/Literature Background

The major intellectual resource for the theoretical framework of my research is grounded in narrative inquiry which in large part is initiated from the work of Michael F. Connelly and Jean Clandinin. I was introduced to Dr. Michael Connelly's work through a friend at O.I.S.E as I was looking for a course to enroll in. It was a 1300 course. 'Personal Practical Knowledge' were the very first words that caught my fancy as I stepped in through the doors of the Joint Centre For Teacher development to go to Dr. Connelly's office to get his consent and signature on the prescribed form to enroll in the 1300 course. The term 'personal practical knowledge' is coined and defined by Connelly & Clandinin (1988:25) as:

A term designed to capture the idea of experience in a way that allows us

to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons. Personal practical knowledge is in the teacher's past experience, in the teacher's present mind and body, and in the future plans and actions. Personal practical knowledge is found in the teacher's practice. It is, for any teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation.

That was the first time. January of 1988 that I was introduced to Dr. Connelly and the term 'personal practical knowledge'. At that time my only concern was to get his signature so I could enroll in the course. What I was not aware of was the in-depth meaning based on the reflective mode, and the amount of work, sometimes excruciating work, that was involved to talk about my personal and practical knowledge in the past, present and future. The underlying notion is that teachers are knowers of themselves, what, how, where and whom they teach, and this knowledge depends in important measure on the situation at hand. Connelly and Clandinin (1988), further state that a narrative understanding of who we are and what we know, therefore, is a study of our whole life, acknowledging the tensions and differences among us.

So my real introduction with the personal practical knowledge and narrative started off first, by the writing of chronicles from early childhood to the present. This allowed me to portray the future by threading common links between the stories that were my personal lived stories, an exercise that was enlightening. I had a very different experience doing a quantitative research where the work was completed and I got the required credit. But was the work personally significant as the voice of the researcher was missing, is the question I ask myself.

Attending many seminars for works in progress at O.I.S.E, listening to voices that

flowed like a wave in a current of strong winds. Stories that sometimes touched my heart and soul, at other times I felt I was a part of those waves with dips and crests that I could relate to. I felt that narrative inquiry was the real thing. What can be more real than the stories one has lived and is living. Moreover, digging deeper for meaning in these stories, a meaning that is not available just by telling of the story. Narrative inquiry equipped me with the the most effective force that permitted me to examine my innerself and understand who I really am and where I am heading in the future. It provided me with a road to steer my way into the goal that was most meaningful for me and closest to my heart. It was like seeing a very reputable fortune teller in me, making meaning and providing vision where the things stand in my life, and what I had always wanted to do. Through this intense process, realization came that working with the underprivileged children, specially those of the land I come from, has been the top priority in my life.

Schon, Dewey, Coles, Clandinin, Connelly, Bateson, Car, Schwab and Elbaz were some of my sources of inner vitality and confidence. The works of these authors paved my way into the art of narrative by writing and sharing stories, looking back or reflecting and deliberating on these stories. Above all, it was Dr. Connelly's intellectual guidance and moral support that allowed my stories to unfold and to make a whole by connecting these stories. This enabled me to forsee the future. The making of a whole has allowed me to know my deeper self and understand 'life' with broader and more meaningful connotations. My work with my participants and the stories we shared, have made us stronger. We view the world from an angle that is more insightful, meaningful and is multi-dimensional. We connect the past with the present and gain perception of the

future. In the process I struggled to be transformed in meaningful way. It was an experience, a wealth of experience that allowed me to explore a new planet, it was not a newly discovered planet, I have been living on it for over four decades. I am more conscious and understanding of what goes around me, and where that could lead to. So it is a change at two levels: change in focussing and perhaps rethinking life's larger objectives, and a change for a better understanding of day-to-day living. All this would not have been possible by any scientific method or by quantifying the life data. Life is a complex whole. Our stories that are lived and shared form the text for my research. Reflection and 'deliberation' (Connelly and Clandinan), of these stories made me understand the various aspects of my life in a way I have never known before.

This journey however, is not over yet. The guiding light would steer my way into sharing more stories, similar stories that need the vision for the deeper meaning to make connections with life and history. For making connections makes one a better actor or doer.

Cultural Stories: The Significance

There are a few qualitative or ethnographic studies regarding cultural and identity transformation. Ming Fang He's (1998), research is the study of identity formation and cultural transformation of three Chinese women teachers as they moved back and forth between Chinese and Canadian Cultures. Using the narrative inquiry method, she explored the metaphor of landscape to give a sense of shifting and changing perspectives over time and space which signifies an understanding of identity formation and cultural

transformation. The metaphor of professional knowledge landscape is derived from the work of Connelly and Clandinin (1998:2) on teacher knowledge in terms of narrative life history, as storied life compositions. These stories, these narratives of experiences, are both personal - reflecting a person's life history - and social - reflecting the milieu, the contexts in which the teachers live.

Two other studies where the authors place themselves as participant teachers, are underway. One is the study of the process of teacher development in the context of cultural transformation (Li, 1996). This research connects the conventional understanding of teaching in the Orient, with the larger experience of teacher transferring into a new environment, namely in the West. Bariana (unpublished Doctoral Dissertation), is a narrative journey into the sense of 'self' that probes into the narratives of visible minority youths. The researcher is a third generation Canadian who portrays her upbringing in Western Canada. Her struggle and perception of the 'outsiders', the dominant group and her status as belonging to a subculture, form the core of the study. She furthers her study by relating her experiences with the people of the majority culture, and the common bond she shares with immigrant students. My research breaks ground in sharing visible minority teachers' experiences in the Canadian schools and classrooms, and society at large, a perspective that has been excluded from most discussions of educational experience in Canada and the subcontinent. It also contributes to the process of acculturation of a first generation Canadian. It is a story of struggle and success. It gives the reader a first hand insight as to the cultural, social and emotional upheavels which lead to innovative ways of knowing. This study depicts the social realities of being a

visible minority woman, where success does not overcome subtle and/or overt differential treatment. It is about the social issues of neglect, avoidance and non-inclusion based on ones color.

The meaning in the study is recovered from memory and dialogue from within, extending over two decades of the life of an immigrant in a host culture. Though my study focussed on women of the South Asian decent, mainly from Pakistan and India, it offers insights as to process of acculturation to all visible minority men, women and to youths who are first, second or third generation Canadians.

My research also opens up possibilities to understand challenges that the visible minority people face in their day to day living hence, to make theoretical contributions to, and implications for policy making related to teacher education, equity, equality and change in the attitudes.

The second theme of my research, namely the education system in Pakistan, both present and historical, is an attempt to present to the reader an analytical perspective of education in Pakistan. This comparative analysis is based on my educational experiences both in Pakistan and Canada. It offers an insight to the education authorities and policy makers in Canada and Pakistan with regards to the dilemmas of the learning process some immigrant students go through in the Canadian classrooms. It also presents, to the Pakistani education authorities in particular, the rearesearcher's point of view regarding the education system as it stands today. Moreover, a conceptual framework is provided to help improve the existing education system in Pakistan (see chapter 7).

Chapter Break-Down

Following is the sequence of the phases of my autobiographical narrative method that developed through the writing of eight chapters. In *Chapter 1. An Overview*, I outline the depth and magnitude of the research methodology and discuss my participant women. In *Chapter 2*, I establish my relationship with the reader by sharing personal background, my upbringing and the forces, my father's love in particular, that helped mould me into who I am today. My mother and some members of my family are also discussed in order to give a composite picture of my family life while being raised in Pakistan. *Chapter 3* discusses the narrative methodology and the frame work for establishing my research design. In *Chapter 4*, also as a part of my educational upbringing, I introduce the reader to the country Pakistan with a bit of historical perspective (Colonial legacy), of education system there. This theme is helpful in two ways: First, for educators and policy makers in Pakistan to look at the problems through the eyes of someone who has studied both in the West and East and provides a different perspective. Second, for the educational authorities in Canada to get a flavour of the education system in Pakistan both pre-partition (before 1947) and present, and to grasp the underlying difficulties some students face in Canadian classrooms. This ties in with *Chapter 7* as it discusses the present system of education there and provides a conceptual framework for growth. *Chapter 5* discusses racism and identity crises. The stories based on my personal and professional experiences in Europe and Canada unfold in this chapter, so do the stories of my two boys. Multiculturalism and race relations are also tied in with literature support to present their effectiveness to the reader. In *Chapter 6*, I use narrative interviews to share the

stories of two participants who, like myself, are visible minority women. Reflection on their stories is provided to understand the options available to women of color living in a culture where the majority has a different skin color. *Chapter 8* shares with the reader the self-analysis. It is what I, as a researcher, have learned about myself by writing my life story, and how this knowledge is applicable to people I come in contact with. My research starts with my story and ends with my story. The intervening and the most vital component is the personal growth that occurred between these two points. At the end of each chapter, a summary is given to recap the highlights.

CHAPTER 2

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Parental Influence

Public Role for Educated Women an Obligation

My Father

We should not handle knowledge, and our own freedom which flows from it, entirely for our personal pleasure and our private ambition. With education comes an obligation to act and to affect the world. Written within our education is a canon of human decency and of responsibility to our contemporaries. (The Pakistan Times, March 28, 1986)

My father passed away on April 30, 1986. I received his last letter on May 6, 1986, i.e. six days after his death. Enclosed in this letter was a cutting, a two column news from one of the leading newspapers in Pakistan, *The Pakistan Times*. The news was about the 55th Kinnaird College Convocation, where I was a freshman in the year 1963-64. My father had underlined the news where it highlighted the key note speaker, Dr. Elizabeth Kennon, who had her Ph.D from a US university. In his letter he had also mentioned the fact that there were six Kinnaird College graduates who had gone on to get their Ph.Ds, and that I would be the seventh recipient of this degree to add to the human resource.

It was not only in this letter that my father had perceived me in the role of an educator, throughout my life, and now as I am threading through the common themes of my life, I find that he had nurtured me with the hands of an experienced craftsman who wanted his daughter to contribute something worthwhile to the cause education. He was my custodian at the social, intellectual, academic and moral avenues of life. He implanted in me the seed to take charge and never to give up. His image of me as a woman educator kept me going with the writing of my thesis during the turbulent times in my life at various levels.

Admission at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)

After completing my Masters from Brock University in December of 1985, I was accepted At OISE for a Ph.D. programme in the department of Curriculum in September

of 1987. When I started my Masters programme in September of 1983, my father had told all relatives and friends in Pakistan that I had joined an M.A.- Ph.D. programme. At this point in time my Ph.D. admission had not materialized till I completed my Masters, which was followed by the writing of a Q.R.P. (qualifying research paper) in 1986. It was in April of the same year that my father passed away.

The death of my father, who was my mentor, teacher, a pillar of hope and moral support, changed me in a way where I made a commitment to myself to complete my doctoral programme no matter what the odds were in my life.

Through the writing of my story I realized that how I have evolved as a teacher, a mother, a friend and a companion, is directly related to my relationship with my father. His love and unconditional support for me were always there. Since October of 1974, I have been living in Canada and my dad in Pakistan, though I visited Pakistan every three or four years. He wrote to me regularly even though I sometimes did not respond to his letters. His letters were full of hope, encouragement, and striving for the best was always his message. I am beginning to find my voice and to begin to take charge of the inner strength I did not realize I had. This has come through the dialectic of my father's image of me and the writing of my story. There were times, morally, emotionally deep down low times, when I gave up (at least mentally), working on my thesis. My father's letters, all of which I kept and read them in times of distress, helped through the difficult times and provided me with a surge of renewed hope and ambition.

I share with my readers some of those letters written over a span of 12 years. These letters were written between 1974, i.e. the year I immigrated to Canada, and 1986, the year my father passed away (may his soul rest in peace). These letters were written in Urdu, my first language. A few words about the language: Urdu is the language of the camp\ army, from the Turkish word Orda. It is a composite of a base of a rich vocabulary of words from Arabic, Farsi, the Prakrits (dialects), Sanskrit and Turkish languages. It is the national language and is the medium of instruction in the Public Schools in Pakistan. An English translation of the letters is provided here with some sentences joined to help the reader with better comprehension without losing the meaning of the text. Some

explanatory notes are given in brackets to further help this understanding. The names used in the letters are fictitious to conceal identity.

Dear Iffat,

5-3-86

Asslaam-O-Alaikum (may the blessings of God be with you).

I received your letter dated February 20th. Thank you. After our phone conversation I understand that you are planning to come to Pakistan in July. Dear Nasreen (my eldest sister living in England), is also visiting in July. She will stay for a month, and Ivan (her only son) will stay for two months.

Congratulations on the successful defence of your thesis (MA)! May God bless you at all times (Amen). This success will help you pave the way for your admission to PhD. Your hard work has paid off and you are rewarded with a higher standing in education and better chances for 'professional opportunities.'

It is going to be scorching hot in the month of July, (in summer months, i.e. April to August are very dry and hot in Pakistan). The last time when Nasreen (my eldest sister) and Ivan (my nephew) came, Ivan had several nosebleeds. You will be spending a large sum of money, and travelling a very long distance to come and see your parents. We feel very proud and honoured and we welcome you with all our hearts. The information about the intense heat is a warning, so you know what to expect weather wise. I am thinking of booking a room or two for you and your boys in Murree Hills (North of Pakistan which is relatively cooler in summer). This may help you to have a restful and pleasant summer here. You and your sister are both most welcome and we feel very pleased with your forthcoming visit.

With lots of good wishes,

Your dad (signed).

This is an excerpt from a letter my father wrote on March 5th., 1986, just three months before he passed away.

My father's voice was gone. His memory of being a wonderful father who cared for me till his last moments, taught me many lessons. These lessons were his teachings through his own character and philosophy toward life. He taught me to be forgiving, to be polite, to love and respect all ages. To be humble and confident, to strive for the best, to trust and believe those around you, never to give up on life's ambition, and to support the needy and the deserving.

My father was helping the needy throughout his life and no one knew till the day

he passed away. There were several unfamiliar mourners, old and middle aged, poor women in particular, who revealed the fact that my dad was helping them monetarily on a regular basis.

As his letter reflects, my father was beyond himself with the thought of meeting with me and my children (two boys ages 12 and 6 at the time this letter was written). Even though he was ecstatic to see us, he felt obliged to inform us about the hot weather in advance. He was planning to take us to the Murree Hills. Murree Hills is a tourist resort in the north of Pakistan where summer months are cool, and even chilly in the evening. It is at a height of 2,240 metres (7,400 feet), and combines convenience with a cool pine forest amidst the magnificent mountain scenery (Shaw, 1988:115). It is about 3 hours drive from the city of Lahore (in the North- East), where my parents lived.

My father's love and his understanding of me has helped me towards the understanding of my thesis process. It is the power of love, caring, of sharing, understanding and the struggle to continue, as apposed to giving up, that draws the strength and determination of this journey.

Dear Iffat,

10-7-85

Asslaam-O-Alaikum (may the blessings of God be with you).

I hope that you and the children are fine. I received your detailed letter which sheds light on the present situation between you and your brother Syd (I and my second youngest brother who lived in Toronto, were in a small conflict situation in which my dad intervened and successfully resolved it). I have written to explain to your brother that since you are working on your PhD (I was writing my Qualifying Research Paper), you have to put in several hours of reading and researching, so it is easy to become 'tense.' I also reminded Nihat (my other sister, about 2 years older than me who was siding my brother in this matter), that when she was studying to improve her standing in Master's (English Literature) degree she too became tense at times. But this does not warrant a change in ones attitude or personality. I have written and tried to explain to Syd that PhD is the highest degree in education (or any other field), and that one has to work hard and spend countless hours reading and writing. My advise to you would be to try to forget what happened between you and Syd, and continue working diligently as your only goal for now should be the completion of your doctorate.

This prestigious degree for you, me, and your mother in particular, is a great honour in itself. Your uncles (my mother's brothers) are now bound

to feel that our family is superseding their families in education. With your education and Nad's (my youngest brother in Pakistan) successful promotion in the bank, all on the basis of his personal merit, are the answers to your mother's prayers. She prays for the dignity, respect and good health of her children all the time.

Look! It is the night fall of your mom's and my life. But we are content and pleased that our efforts (in raising our children), have paid off and we are respected among relatives and the community.

I am wasting your time. Please give our lots and lots of love to your children and greetings to your husband.

With good wishes.

Your dad (signed).

This is an excerpt from the letter dated July the 10th, 1985. Names in this letter have been changed for anonymity purposes, and some words are added and/or changed for better comprehension of the reader without changing the meaning of the text.

My father was a practical man, a home maker who knew how to keep peace and tranquillity with himself and his children even when they were miles apart. He had an insight for situations that were potentially explosive. He had an equally great vision and courage to either subdue, or to negotiate them in a manner that was appreciated by those involved. He was competitive, which inculcated in me the drive to work hard. I was a high achiever in school, always competing for the first three top positions. This is something my father considered a personal pride and shared with anyone who came to our house. My competitive nature thrived throughout my academic life. I averaged 92% (Grade Point Average 3.91 out of a maximum of 4), in my Master of Education programme from the Punjab University, Pakistan. I averaged 82% in the course work, same programme from Brock University, Canada. I was also very active in the extra-curricular activities and sports. Netball (girls' basketball), was my favourite sport throughout my college and university years in Pakistan. I also played baseball, badminton and volleyball and took part in provincial tournaments.

The moral and emotional support I received from my father every inch of the way throughout my life made me a confident, assertive and a vocal person, especially when I feel my rights are being violated. I am now undertaking the challenging task of writing my life story. The story of my life journey, gives me freedom to ponder and to take risks,

to express my innermost thoughts on paper, while having a reader participate. It is a process of growth, growth in understanding and of self-realisation. It is making connections between the past, present and the future, while trying to bridge the gap between the disparities of life.

My father was a liberal person, soft spoken and kind hearted. I do not remember him losing temper unless in very severe cases and those too can be counted on the fingers of one hand. In the following section I share with the reader my understanding of my mother, the kind of person I thought she was while growing up. Sometimes she appeared to be in direct contrast to the images my father held in his life, but he never objected or disapproved of the perceptions she had. He helped us to make sense of the situation(s) that I personally thought were upsetting, like my mom's very fragile temper.

My Mother

My mother passed away on August 17, 1993, i.e. seven years and four months after my father's death. She and I hardly got along. While growing up, my impression of my mom was that she was a bad tempered, strict person who did not let her daughters have any fun in life. She was mean to my dad for often getting into arguments with him. I especially did not approve of her when she said anything that she thought was to be said to whomever. Her getting up at 4:00 in the morning for prayers was a big inconvenience as it disturbed my sleep. I was very close to my dad but my mother was a strict and ill tempered person, whose idioms never made sense. Now when I look back, reflect and dig deep for meaning for the person that my mother was, I find her a woman of deep convictions and strong commitments. She was a religious person who believed in the purity of heart, mind and soul. She was outspoken and would not hesitate to speak the truth in words that were spontaneous, direct and to the point. According to her, the biggest sin was to hurt (emotionally), the fellow human beings, and being disrespectful to others. A lot of times she would use idioms to convey her meaning in a short effective way. Her one very favourite idiom was, '*jaisa krogay wesa bhorogay*' (thou shall reap what thou plants). She specially used it in the context of raising children, meaning, the

children will treat you in your frail and old age just the way you nurture them. So looking well after one's children for their physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs was a top priority for her. Being a devout Muslim, she prayed five to six times a day, daily recited Quran (the Holy Book), fasted in the month of Ramadan and regularly donated 'Zakat' (2 ½ percent of the annual savings), to the deserving and the needy. Her day started at four in the morning with a shower, to be followed by ablution and offering of her morning prayer. She then prepared breakfast daily with fresh homemade bread and sent her children off to school.

I have come to know my mother more now when I am writing about her. Her rule of limited social outings for her children, specially for her four girls (I being the youngest of the four), was unfair, so I thought. We were not allowed to go out with friends to the movies, make- up was a no no, talking back and loud to elders was a sin. Keeping a boyfriend was an unforgivable act of shame. The proper coverage of body curves was deemed appropriate. She lost her temper if anyone was found guilty of not going by the rules. She deplored going to the movies as there was nothing but open relationship of the opposite sexes, which, according to her, did nothing but pollute the young growing minds. It was unfair and at times, I rebelled. Now it seems it was to give structure to our lives with emphasis on getting education. She wanted us all to do well at school as education was a window or opportunity for a better life, was her belief.

Since my mother hardly ever went to the movies, at this point in time I would like to share the following story with my reader that was reiterated by my father on several occasions. My parents were newly weds. My mother was 15 and my dad was 18 years old when they got married in the year 1929. One evening my father told my mom that they were going to visit a certain relative. Earlier that day, without the knowledge of my mother, my father had purchased two tickets for an evening show of a movie that was a hit at the box office in those days, and my dad loved to see good movies. At the appointed time my mother got ready with her usual taste of fine clothing. They both got on the hired Tonga (a Victorian type horse buggie). My mom was pleased with the thought of seeing her cousin, so she was chatting with my dad to pass the time riding the Tonga. Just when

she was beginning to wonder where the Tonga was going, it stopped near a movie theatre to her sheer surprise. It was only then that my mom realised where my dad was actually taking her. In a very stern voice my mom asked the driver of the Tonga to turn it around and to take her back home. She also warned my dad that she would report him to the police if he further tried to trick her. My dad had no choice but to retrieve and take her back home. This was the first and the last time my mom ever got that close to a movie theatre!

This reflects a commitment to her principles, not only in words but by actions as well. She stood her ground without considering my father's reaction. It was against her principle to watch films on the screen, and nobody could make her believe or act otherwise.

My mother was a gutsy woman, this is one attribute that I long for myself when it comes to my relationships. She was open and vocal when it came to communicating with my dad if there was something she did not approve of. My father usually gave in. Then it was not appropriate, now upon reflection, my dad listened to the valid arguments and did what had to be done to keep peace and harmony. I, on the other hand, tend to go through an inner turmoil and not say anything till it is next to impossible to hold in everything.

My mom was the eldest, and as reiterated by her, was a very special daughter. The second child in my grandparents' family, a boy (my uncle), was born when my mom was seven years old. My grandfather was a rich merchant in India, who owned a booming business of embroidered woolen shawls. So, when my mom got married in the year 1929, she received a dowry worth millions. When I was a little girl, I remember having in our house a large number of copper and brass utensils, crockery of the finest China, and many of my mother's China Silk dresses embroidered with pure silver and gold threads. Gold jewellery that my mom received from her parents as part of her dowry weighed hefty 33 ounces.

I can still picture those unique hand made gold jewellery sets, the best were mostly worn by my eldest sister which she later received as part of her dowry when she got married.

On their wedding day, and as told by my both parents on many occasions, there were hundreds of invited guests. It was the feast of a life time where food was in abundance with many items on the menu. The streets where the wedding procession was to take place, i.e. from my mother's parents' to my dad's parents' house, were decorated like a Christmas Tree. The procession of the invited guests, as my father recalled many times, was a full mile long with live band on the front. Cash money was thrown over my father's head who was saddled on a white horse, elegantly decorated. Over his neck, my dad wore many garlands tightly strewn with money bills. After the wedding ceremonies at my mother's parents' house, my mom followed my dad's horse in a sedan chair. the two open ends of which were covered with gold embroidered red chiffon duppatta (a large scarf). People talked about this 7-day wedding, the dowry, the food and the decorations for many days to come.

My mother was the daughter of a rich businessman so she had a privileged life, according to her. She missed those days when times were rough with my dad's business. She was raised like a princess, a life style she missed when financial situation was tight.

My eyes are tearful as I am writing the following episode of my mom's life. I cannot help but think of some of the hard economic times she had to endure while married with my dad. She faced those times with courage and a belief in better times as nothing was everlasting.

In the mid 1950's when I was 6 or 7 years old, and I remember vividly to this day. My father had lost his otherwise very booming raw hide business. He lost tons of fleece in an overnight wind storm. The following early morning, my dad gave the news of the huge loss to my mom. He was disappointed but not hopeless. He said to my mom, 'Inshallah (God willing), I will start something else, you don't worry about a thing.' He had so much faith in his abilities and belief in God that it did not matter to him that he had lost so much, even his voice did not seem to falter!

My dad then got a job in a city 800 miles South from where we were living. My mother's decision to stay behind was due to our schooling. She considered it to be a disruption to our otherwise fine education, because the schools that I and my siblings

were attending were of high repute. The city my father had moved to did not have schools of the same standing. Providing best education for all her children was a top priority with my mother. When times were rough she sold her jewellery to pay for our fees. During those hard times, once my father suggested my mom to have the eldest son take a year off from college as his education was the most expensive at that time. My mother's response that I remember clearly was, that, she rather put off eating her meals than wasting a year of my brother's life. I carry the same commitment towards the education of my two boys.

When I started my full time job in September of 1989, I had completed all 6 required courses for the doctoral programme and had also written the comprehensive exam. I was working on the proposal for my dissertation. Since then I faced a tough time for two years. My husband had moved to Toronto, about 25 miles North to the suburb where we were living in at that time. He got this job in January, 1990. At that time we owned only one car that I was using for work. We decided that he would temporarily stay in Toronto to avoid commuting at least till his training was over. So he rented an apartment close to his work. I helped him in the move which later proved to be not a good idea. I had to look after the household, paying bills, buying groceries and looking after our two boys. I was under a tremendous pressure almost all the time. On the other hand, my husband perhaps got used to a bachelor's life style, as he moved back with the family after almost 2 years.

In the 1950s when my mother was taking care of her nine children and my father was away in another town, she had his full support and appreciation for what she was doing single handed. On the contrary, I was condemned for being a complainer. I was on a leave of absence for the year 1989-90, as it was just not possible for me to look after everything myself and to continue with my doctoral programme. I might have had a burn out if it was not for my younger brother who was living in Toronto at that time. He lent me a listening ear and supported me and my children morally and emotionally throughout this tough time. My uncle (my mom's brother who was born 7 years after my mom), supported my mother monetarily when my father's pay cheque arrived late. This is the time in the late 1950s when my father was working in another town. The check was sometimes delayed due to the mail disruptions. My mom paid back her brother when she got her money order

from my dad.

The difference between the two scenarios is, that my father had no choice but to go to another town to earn money for the family. And it was my mother's decision to stay behind for the sake of children's education. Moreover, my father kept a minimum amount of money for personal expenses and sent the rest to my mom. He travelled only once during the year to be with us for Eid (festival celebrated at the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting for Muslims). His arrival for us, specially for me was like a rebirth. I remember jumping up and down and hugging my dad, being out of myself with joy. In contrast, when my husband visited his family over the weekend I tried to explain to him the undue pressure I was in which was not recognized, hence a lack of support was evident.

My Most Beloved Child

My parents had ten children together, 4 girls and 6 boys. One boy died at the age of 2 years as he was diagnosed with some disease of the spine. He was the second eldest son. Another brother of mine died in 1969 at the age of 24. He was epileptic. My father loved us all dearly, his love for me was exceptional. He used to call me his 'most beloved child.' He loved to talk about my school achievements, my 'intelligent brain' and that how lucky he was to have a daughter like me. As mentioned earlier, I achieved good results at the end of each grade level and brought home awards and fresh flower garlands. My dad went crazy with pride and happiness, and shared my success story with everyone. He challenged my other siblings to do as well. The schools in Pakistan had yearly exam system where everyone was tested in all subject areas close to the end of the year. It was the most stressful time for everyone, especially for those who crammed up everything, even the English essays from the text books. These essays were sometimes 4 to 5 pages long. I was not a crammer. I read, reread, then orally went over the important points of the text. This was followed by writing them down on those rough copies (newsprint note books). In retrospect, the concept of the lesson was not clear. For example the place value in math, or differentiating between different cells of different leaves, or learning about the

circulatory system of a frog or a rabbit by dissecting them. I found myself trying to regurgitate what I had read from the text book, it never worked.

A comfort zone that my father had created around me and which contained much attention and praise, developed a great deal of confidence in me that helped me throughout my life. The abundance of love, care and praise in front of everyone, got to my head sometimes, which infuriated my mother. She complained to my dad in the strongest possible words, for him not giving the same attention to my sister who was about 2 years older than I. According to her, I was spoiled to the extent that I would not survive a day of my marriage unless my husband completely gave in. I am a person of my own convictions, principles and beliefs and would stand by them no matter the opposition. The fact of the matter is, that, my mom was my role model in inculcating these values in me and she rejected this reflection of hers in me. Sometimes there were emotional outpourings when she reiterated anything that came to her mind. My father kept his quiet demure with a smile on his face, perhaps to delude the situation at hand. The only words I ever heard him say during my mother's frequently thrown temper tantrums were, 'jan thayo baadshahow' (take it easy, you are the boss). A complete submission was evident, or perhaps his love for her was so overpowering that he could not bring himself around to take some charge. She was in total control throughout her life, he did not mind that. He fully cooperated, cared and was committed to her till the day he passed away. The only time he would break his rule was when it came to fashion. My mother was a well dressed person, however, she discouraged her daughters for wearing any tight clothing and going out of the house without properly covering head and the body. My father on the other hand encouraged us to go with the flow in fashion keeping it modest. My mother was totally committed to education and good moral conduct for her children and my father supported her on that a 100 %. My father wanted me to have a career in medicine, but that did not materialize as I slacked, or perhaps could not spend hours memorising chemistry and physics formulae that were not conceptualized in the classroom during lectures. So, I opted for a career in teaching which was suggested by a friend of my older sister, who was training to be a teacher herself in Pakistan.

I see in me a bit of both of my parents. I am very committed to the cause of education for both my children, and acquiring it myself. Since over last ten years I have been going to school doing courses and working on my university degrees. This is on top of my Master's degree from Pakistan. I set high standards for my students. 'Sky is the Limit' was the motto of my class written in big bold letters on the bulletin board, in my first year teaching. My classroom was filled with sayings that consider children a national resource and educating them a birth right. Moreover, motivating idioms that I thought may help students for a better performance were always placed hanging from the ceilings on visible spots in the classroom. During circle time on certain days, I would have the students read those sayings aloud which was followed by a discussion of the underlying meaning. I often found myself saying to my grade 3 students, 'you can be what you want to be in life, so long you put your heart and soul into it.' A lesson learned from my dad. As my mother would say, 'jewellery is good only for safe keeping or showing it off when wearing it, education is a beauty forever'. I consider education a beauty of the highest order where there are all gains and no losses.

My father, as I remember him, was a hard working man who spent his entire life providing for his large family. He died at the age of seventy three, just 3 months after he retired. His was the life imbued with a great structure in everything he did. As I recall, his day started at 4:00 in the morning by a one mile long walk. This was followed by a shower, ablution and offering of the morning prayers. He then prepared his breakfast which usually consisted of a hard boiled egg, a bowl of hot porridge, sometimes a toast or two and a cup of tea. He washed his own dishes though for the most part of her life my mom had a maid for dishes, house cleaning and the laundry. It was considered unusual and a shame for a woman if the husband was to clean dishes or do the household. My dad then read the morning newspaper from cover to cover, this was followed by ironing clothes and polishing his shoes for work. He hardly ever went out without creaseless clothes and shiny shoes and he expected the same from us. If he ever saw anyone of us leaving the house wearing dull shoes, he polished them himself saying, 'your first impression on people depends entirely on your attire and foot wear'.

My mom was the same, as I recall. She had a light skin, while my father, comparatively, had a dark complexion. They both had an exquisite taste for dressing. During winter months my dad would not go out without wearing a suit and a tie and my mom did not step out of the house till she was thoroughly satisfied with her looks. I find myself looks conscious, and both my boys have the same inclination. My husband is very casual about what he wears, even when going to a formal gathering. I do not remember the last time he wore a necktie or a three-piece suit. 'He was not even clean shaved!' was the comment my dad made when he met my husband-to-be for the first time. So, there is a contrast between the two important men in my life. My father, with all his soft loving demure that helped me raise the person that I am. My husband is carefree and does things in his own time to his own liking.

Going back to my dad's daily routine, he ate his lunch at 12:00 noon on the dot. It consisted of chicken or beef broth, one roti (home made bread), and a slice of papaya which he said helped digestion. He never missed his afternoon tea with a light snack at 4:00 p.m., and 8:00 p.m. sharp was his dinner. One hour after dinner was his time to write letters or to make notes of any kind in his well organised diaries. At 9:00 p.m. he retired to bed. It did not make a difference whether there was a party at home or guests were over, he excused himself for the night sleep. He followed this strict routine after 1968 when he had his first heart attack at the age of about fifty five. He continued with that regimented routine till the day he passed away, at the age of 73. He also quit smoking and lost a lot of weight the same year and never experienced any problem with his heart again. He died with a fluid build- up in his lungs. The day he passed away he was telling every visitor who came to see him in the hospital, that it was the last day of his life! My mom shared the last moments of my dad's life when I visited Pakistan two months after my dad passed away.

While growing up I felt that my mom favoured her sons over her daughters. For she would say that the boys were the providers and caretakers when parents become old and unable to look after themselves. The girls on the other hand, look after their husbands and children when they get married. My father never agreed with her on this matter. 'My girls

will give a good name to the family,' I recall my dad saying that to my mom. My mother thought my dad was out of his mind to believe that.

Dear Iffat,

3-4-85

Assalaam-O-Alaikum (may the blessings of God be with you).

I have saved some money for your brother Syd (in Toronto), so that he can open up a business in Pakistan. (My dad wanted my brother Syd to settle back in Pakistan and start his business in public transportation). Syd does not seem to agree with this idea. I suggested an alternative plan for him to open up a convenience store, but he cannot make up his mind for getting into any kind of trade. Your brother-in-law has suggested him to open up a canteen (a snack bar) in a local hospital, what Syd has to do is to provide the crockery and run the business. He doesn't seem to agree with, and always finds loop holes in anything anyone suggests. After trying for three months, proposing many options for entrepreneurship to him, I have come to the conclusion that he is not willing to settle in Pakistan. He is not serious about getting married either, nor is he interested in starting a business. (For the interest of the readers, my brother Syd was in his mid twenties when this letter was written. He is 38 now and still unmarried.)

Daughter, you have not written anything about your admission in PhD In your last letter you mentioned the fact that the decision about it (by the admissions' committee at O.I.S.E) would be made in April. Please give me the good news (that you did get accepted at O.I.S.E). Where ever your sister Nina (my sister who is 2 years older than me, and is a professor of English at a local girls' college in Pakistan) goes she gets the respect she deserves and so do you. We feel honoured and proud that our daughters have accomplished something special in their lives. Please inform us by telex regarding your admission, and that if you do qualify for a scholarship. (In Pakistan I had earned a Government Merit Scholarship after my

Matriculation and BA. exams, and I did qualify for a similar scholarship at Brock University while working on my Masters).

I end my letter now. With lots of good wishes, your dad (signed).

Note to the reader : this letter is not given in its entirety, the details of the proposed business options for my brother have been omitted.

Upon reflection, my father had a great foresight when it came to foreseeing his children's future. Now when I am putting pieces together I see the wizardry in my father's proclamation and the deep sight with which he went about his responsibilities.

My mother's most loved son was my eldest brother, who is 58 years old with a wife and 6 children (3 boys and 3 girls). Why I say favourite? Everyone in the family was made to do things for him, for example, ironing his clothes, polishing shoes, and if he was not home at the time everybody ate dinner, the best portion of the meal was put away before it was served to others. My mother over protected him all her life. He was a smart man with the looks of a movie star (he worked in several Pakistani films). He earned his Bachelor in Commerce degree when he was 19 years old. At the same age he was selected to play for the National Cricket team of Pakistan. He lead his university team for provincial matches when he was 18 or 19. My father did not approve of his career as an athlete. He instead, wanted him to be an entrepreneur and it did make sense at that time because he had relevant education. My father invested money for my brother's first business in film distribution, which failed after a few years. Now when I look back and try to put pieces of the puzzle together, I feel that over the years, my dad's decision to pull my brother out from the game of cricket he so dearly loved to play, proved fatal. He was denied that once in a life time opportunity. He hardly did as well in business as he did playing cricket. Moreover, throughout her life my mother was like an eagle, overprotecting and providing for my brother and his family. The day she passed away (may her soul rest in peace), I was by her bedside. My eldest brother was devastated to the point of being hysteric. He loved my mother very much, and in his grief he kept saying , 'what will I do, where will I go? My mother was my paradise.' I got very concerned as he had a heart condition, but it was important for him to grieve. My sister-in-law (my

brother's wife), was a woman of an exceptional character and nature. She carried on to her day-to-day living quietly and hardly complained about anything, or as it appeared to a visiting member. She was a workaholic and wore this innocent smile on her face most of the time. Gardening was her favourite chore which she tended to the first thing in the morning. Her normal day's work included, cooking fresh meals at least twice a day because if a woman did not work outside the house, it was expected that fresh food be served at least during lunch and dinner time. Moreover, she tailored her children's school uniform. When the cleaning lady was away for some reason she cleaned the whole house. This was a back breaking job as it was a big house. Sometimes she ran to the market for errands. My brother was very lucky to have had such an understanding partner in life. She came from a humble family with religious parents. According to her, they had taught her to treat her parents-in-law like her own parents, which over time proved to be a lesson well learnt. She looked after my mom during her sickness, and continued looking after her till she passed away. In the last two days of her life, and luckily I was in Pakistan by her bedside, my mother became so weak physically that she could not even walk to the washroom herself. My sister-in-law wheeled her to the bathroom, then lifted her to put her on the toilet. She then waited outside the bathroom for my mom's signal that she was ready to be wheeled back to her bed. Every morning she would ask my mom what she wished to have for lunch or for dinner, and would cook whatever my mom desired.

When I visited Pakistan in the year 1993- the year my mom died- my sister-in-law would go to the market first thing in the morning while everyone was still in bed. She bought the fresh meat and chicken. She would cook the whole chicken and bring it to my room palatably decorated. She did not keep any of the cooked meal for her own two young boys who were four and five years old then. 'You are guests,' she said when I asked her to leave some for her own children. If I were to write the story about my sister-in-law after she got married in 1974, it would be a different story with perhaps a different portrayal of who she really was. It is through this exercise of storying and restorying that I am beginning to understand the implicit and explicit underpinnings to make cause and effect relationship and to present the goings-on in my family, when I was growing up in

Pakistan and now when I am writing my story. I see the change in which I have made connections of things then and now.

With all the care and love from my father, and now when I look back and try to put things in perspective, I find that my father is my link to my students and to the people I deal with everyday. This includes the members of my family, and to the writing of my thesis. He was my guardian spiritually, intellectually and academically. When I was in primary and junior grades in Pakistan, after school almost every evening, my father spent a great deal of time helping me with homework. He would go over the 'notes' with me, and wouldn't leave till I remembered everything. In Pakistan, the students at all levels, especially at the primary, junior and secondary levels, were expected to memorise the copied notes, and to re-gurgitate them on paper when writing a test. My father had lots of patience to spend as much time as possible till I knew my notes. That again inculcated in me the strength and character of completing whatever I began.

The education system that I had gone through was very structured, memory based and devoid of any techniques to enhance creativity and thinking skills. This system was a legacy of the Colonial Days when British ruled the subcontinent of India between 1847 to 1947. This type of education was pre-dominantly suited to urban areas to serve the limited needs of the Colonial administrators. I do not remember group work, self-expression and experimentation was definitely not in. There was a stiff marking system. The students were mainly judged by what they knew from memory. Sometimes I failed a test because I did not write the exact words from the copied notes.

The Teacher In Me

I have been teaching in the Canadian Public School System for over ten years. Looking back and reflecting upon the ways I was raised by my parents, it has quite an effect on how I deal with my students. My mother tried to inculcate in me the values of being modest and behaving appropriately being a girl. Now when I try to rationalize my acts, I see that I expect the same from my students and my own two boys. In this day and age when teaching moral values is not part of the school curriculum, a teacher reflects

those from her person in an unprogrammed way which becomes a tacit knowledge for her students. A very important part of learning and the total development of a child, is a good moral character with an emotionally balanced personality. This holds a top priority for me and can be achieved by providing students a socially balanced and comfortable classroom environment. Moreover, a good repertoire with the teacher is of vital importance where she is willing to listen and devote undivided attention to individual student's needs. These needs may be academic, social, emotional or familial. The students very early on develop strong ties with the teacher and confide in her relating to any aspect of their life, providing she is a good listener and loving towards her students, just like my dad was with me. He was my friend, a confidant, a role model and above all a good listener and a problem solver. So, I am a propagation of my father toward my students and my two boys.

The Western society that I am so much a part of, is in a dire need to make amendments when it comes to open relationships between sexes. Religious teachings that were done away with many years ago, need to be reconsidered for becoming part of the curriculum.

The good universal values are common among all religions, lending a blind eye and a deaf ear to their official implementation is only going to exaggerate the existing problems. Everyday we hear about, from all media sources, the declining moral character and behaviour of the society at large, students as well. Crimes top the news every day. The talk shows reflect a complicated web of immoral acts and indignation to and among human beings. Where is this all leading to?

I find that I make every effort to provide opportunities for all, especially the ESL (English As A Second Language) students. The opportunities for students to present their work to peers and other students. This is accomplished through school assemblies, classroom presentations, and through morning announcements on P.A. This is complemented by sharing either their published books or good work. For me it is a major contributor to help boost self- confidence, a lesson learned from my dad.

The ESL students need a slight edge over other students when it comes to emotional

support due to the language barrier. The language barrier itself causes serious communicative, psychological and emotional problems. During staff meetings in school, my presentations usually centred around this theme and the hard economic times these children go through. How the new immigrants and their children try to settle in a new land, new people, new language and a new culture? I often found myself talking to colleagues and the administration as to the inner turmoil these kids go through. There is abundance of learning that needs to be done among staff, when it comes to understanding and educating these children and their parents. A handful of staff members who have background in teaching of ESL however, are very sensitive and supportive of the needs of these children. The educators' community can do a much better job by providing a mandatory in-service training for all teaching staff keeping in mind the cultural make up of Ontario schools.

Summary

This chapter gives the reader an idea of the forces and influences that helped me shape who I am today. My parents, my father in particular, played a pivotal role in my upbringing. I inherit attributes from both my parents. My father's predictions and far sightedness about each of us siblings outweigh my mom's. The focus of this chapter has been my father's belief in me and his trust in my abilities. Moreover, it talks about my mother's strict and regimented upbringing that has played a part in my upbringing. A flavour of the educational system that I had gone through in Pakistan is highlighted here. The next chapter provides more details about the same.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Narrative and Story in Human Landscape

Story. . . is an ancient and altogether human method. The human being alone among the creatures on the earth is a storytelling animal: sees the present rising out of the past, heading into a future; perceives reality in narrative form. (Novack, in Connelly & Clandinin 1988:1)

Introduction

My research is an autobiographical study in a narrative form where I propose to explore my personal, cultural and educational experiences in two different cultures. The complex and in depth data about my life and two of my women participants needed a comprehensive yet a medley of ways to collect it. Human nature is so complex and intriguing that one cannot put numbers or quantify it to explain emotions, feelings and stories. Furthermore, for a researcher to get under the skin of human feelings and stories, one needs to dig, reflect and interpret to make sense of the rich variety of human life and its phenomenon. Therefore, one needs a resplendent diversity of field text collection techniques that would encompass such prolific, yet very delicate study. So, opting for a qualitative research made sense. But, this sense did not come easy. I spent one year collecting data for a pilot study, which was a corollary to my previous research (Javed, 1986), and was based on quantity, numbers and percentage. One year's investment in time and data collection amounts to a substantial sum of work. And to opt out for something different, it must be meaningful and compellingly alluring to put behind all

that work.

I was introduced to the narrative or storying (two overlapping terms). of the human experience in Dr. Michael Connelly's 1300 course at O. I. S. E. I was fascinated by the stories that were shared in the class. I attended many seminar series listening to the stories of human experiences. I attended works in progress series. I listened to the life stories and experiences of those who had compiled their work and were about to launch a career. David Hunt (U of T), Jean Clandinin (U of Alberta), J. Mavalwala (U of T), Patrick Diamond (O. I. S. E), are some of the many names of the professors that stick out in my mind, whose presentations I attended. I would take notes, read them over to try to make sense as to how they were helpful with my research interest.

For the 1300 course I started writing my own stories as it was the course requirement. These were shared with Dr. Connelly and some with the group. One question that kept popping in my mind throughout my training was, o.k, we share the stories (some of which were very intimate) a discussion follows, some feed back is given, questions are asked, then what? How I got to the stage where it started to make sense, will be discussed later in this chapter. For now, I want the reader to know that it was an overwhelming task that changed my thinking and the person in me. It was a gruelling exercise but worth the journey for my life.

This journey is a narrative study where field texts through personal stories, journal records, interviews, collaborative story telling and letters were collected over a period of time. The personal stories were constructed and reconstructed to look deeper and make meaning. Personal is something in the past, something in the present, something in the

future (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988), and weaving it altogether makes a whole. Stories are individual, but they give meaning to the whole when common links are threaded through. The matters of lasting importance are somehow or other found in the whole and serve as the intellectual context with person in the situation holding the attention. The field text helped me tap into my past, namely my upbringing, parental influence, my father's exceptional love and care for me and my educational experiences in Pakistan. All these forces helped me steer my way through life and into the future. The interpretation of the field text, which then becomes the research text, lead me through my journey to adapt a dialectical stance towards who I was, who I am and what I want to achieve in the future. The whole process of interpretation is like a bridge between theory and practice, where theory becomes practice and the practice is grounded in theory (McKeon, 1952), and there is no dichotomy. I, being a teacher, my father's image of me as an educator, my life ambition of working with talented and the needy in Pakistan became more so known through the writing of this story. Good education can be bought in Pakistan (more in chapter 7), the talented are left out of their birth right of good education because their parents pocket book can ill afford it. I had always known that I wanted to help the talented and the needy children of my birth country. What and how I would do it, what were the forces and the images that shaped me into who I am today. Moreover, what I wanted to do in future, came in the limelight through the writing of my life story.

This process, moreover, encouraged me to discover myself in the milieu of teaching, learning, subject matter and the learner. How do I connect with them? How do I

connect my inner self with the outside? My quest for life-long learning, how do I relate to other people, my children, my husband? How does my personal experience of the two cultures, East and West, help me as a mother, a wife, a teacher, and above all the person that I am?

It was through weaving a complex web of common themes in my data that a visual topography emerged. It was a process of intense collaboration with my mental forte as a follow-up to the meetings with my thesis advisor, Dr. Micahael Connelly. It was a movement from experience to field text to research text to interpretation of the research text, i.e, the process of narrative inquiry (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988), that made the understanding of what I make of myself, my world, children and the fellow beings that I deal with on a day to day living. Narrative structure pertains to long-term or large-scale sequences of actions, experiences and human events. To our concept of a narrative belongs not only to a progression of events and a certain temporal organisation of events, but also a story-teller and an audience to whom the story is told (Carr, 1986:46). My readers are just as important as understanding myself and sharing my large-scale and long-term narrative with them. Some of you will relate to a story or part of a story. sometimes there may be a memory jogger, other times it would be just reading to get to know the person that I am. It will be an opportunity for a reader to know my women participants and their complex large-scale and long-term experiences in two different cultures, and many may relate to these experiences and events in life. Also, my research presents a comparative mode of education in two cultures, that of Pakistan and Canada. The policy makers and educators in Pakistan may find it useful, as it is a point of view of

someone who has studied and taught in both cultures and can paint the picture from a different angle. This includes the historical perspective and the present state of affairs of education in Pakistan, and how things can be improved in the education sector there. It holds significance for educators and teachers in Canada as well, because it gives them a better overview of the educational experiences of the students of the South Asian origin.

The two women participants for my research, Anita and Salika are composite fictionalized characters (He, 1998:ii), whose voices and backgrounds are switched to give a comprehensive interpretation of our stories, while maintaining the narrative truth. This reduces the risk to me and my participants and helps to maintain anonymity. Moreover, we told and retold our stories, switching our backgrounds and voices. Some of my stories were told through my participants, and some of their stories were told through me (ibid. :42). Our stories are relative with regards to the stories of other visible minority women, and by no means represent the general culture of the South-Asian women professionals. These women participated for almost half a year. Data were collected through a series of interviews that were structured, semistructured and open-ended. There were several formal and informal conversations between myself and the participants. My participants were the co-researches who assisted me in exploring their life experiences. Their stories and my stories were shared. There were common historical and cultural meanings embedded in our narratives. That provided us with a lens of empathy to look at each other stories from different perspectives. For me to look into my participants' stories from their point of view, and the participants to look into my stories from my point of view. The effort was to include more points of view.

The process of narrative inquiry has been like a ride on a roller coaster. There were dips and there were crests. There were moments of joy, of mental blocks, of fear. There were times when I had no direction to continue to pursue that I had started. I constantly felt lost and challenged, however, Dr. Connelly's persistent intellectual guidance at times of conflicts and frustration taught me to continue and further explore the avenues of the journey of my life writing.

I started with the writing of the chronicles on a continuum from my earliest memories as a young child to the present. The chronicles brought out the stories that I felt gratified writing and sharing them. That was just the beginning of the continued quest for shared story-telling and interpretations with my participants that reflect very meaningful aspects of our lives in two cultures. These facets may find some common meaning in other people's cultural, linguistic and educational experiences, especially those who have crossed the borders of East and have settled in the West. My thesis writing also enabled me to pull together my personal practical knowledge development with stories of my cultural and educational experiences (in Pakistan and Canada), grounded in Connelly and Clandinin's work on narrative and teacher's knowledge. Establishing the relationship between my personal educational background and my education and teaching in Canada, provided a continuum as to my narrative profile, hence I could connect my personal practical knowledge with the theories I possess on culture, education, teacher education and identity.

This chapter will present the procedures followed in this study, namely, the writing of the chronicles, journal writing, putting the proposal together, the interviews and the

writing of the thesis. It will also discuss the methodological considerations; the theory-practice relationship; the interpretive process; and the guidelines which directed the interviews with the participant women. The chapter will conclude with a summary of what was conceptualized as a result of the pilot study.

Initial Attempts

In September of 1989, i.e. 2 years after I had joined the Ph. D. programme at O.I.S.E. I completed all the required doctoral level courses and had passed my comprehensive exams. It was then time to propose a plan for my research for which I had some idea while working on my courses. I planned to work on a corollary of my previous research which was a study on math problem solving and was done using the quantitative research methodology. I had taken two narrative courses with Dr. Connelly on the use of stories which are narrative in quality. The stories that referred to accounts of individual teachers, students, classrooms and schools written by teachers, administrators and others. The focus on storied text was a life experience which provided context for making meaning of various school situations or otherwise. I was introduced to the qualitative research which was carried out in ways that were sensitive to the nature of human and cultural social contexts, and was commonly guided by the ethic to remain loyal or true to the phenomenon under study, rather than to any particular set of methodological techniques or principles (Altheide and Johnson, 1994:488).

Teacher's personal practical knowledge in the teaching of mathematics was the research topic I worked on, gathering data in the classroom of my participant teacher.

This teacher, very generously, allowed me access to his grade 5 classroom, 2-3 times a week for half an hour each time. The visitation lasted for six months. I had two interviews, each lasting for about an hour, and several informal conversations with the participant teacher that I had become very good friends with. Once his portable was broken in and left in shambles. We both took turns cleaning and reorganizing it. About six months into my research, my participant teacher took university courses. He sometimes visited my place to talk about and discuss the course requirements, or anything that he needed help with for the writing of his papers for the course work. So we bonded, trusted and helped each other.

The interviews with my participant teacher were tape recorded and later transcribed, and the data gathered as field notes was shared with the graduate students at O. I. S. E whose research was in progress and were taking the narrative course with Dr. Michael Connelly. I had gathered a fair amount of field text which was transcribed over a period of almost a year. I had adopted the narrative stance that I was attracted to as research methodology, somehow I could not link the research work I was doing to my own life. Math was not one of my good subjects especially after an incident in grade six. My math teacher smacked me on my face just when I turned my head to ask for an eraser from a girl sitting behind me. After that incident I despised that teacher and never did as well in math as I did in other school subjects. This memory kept ringing in time and time again as I was working on my research. I had gathered field text that comprised many hours of work, but it's congruence to my life was a question that kept surfacing in my mind. Over time, I had developed strategies to keep myself busy with other things so that I would

avoid dealing with my research work. Moreover, there was no sense of accomplishment or a feeling of growth that would motivate me to uncover the underlying traits that would link me with the life I was living. This disillusion with the ongoing work grew deeper, and getting weary of losing a sense of direction I spoke with my advisor. As always, he listened with a keen sense of interest and suggested working on my personal biography. As soon as he said that, I felt as if a flash of lightening had just touched my soul and there was a surge of beginning anew and starting something that involved my life, my person. That surge uplifted my spirits. On the way home that evening in the subway, I was already drawing an image of my very first day in school in a kindergarten class, as I was to start putting my life chronology together. I was amazed at the vividness of the image of that day, my very first day in school when I was 4 or 5 years old.

So one year's work was put aside. Meanwhile I had learned the techniques about interviews and participant observation research, that drive in part from phenomenology in psychology, ethnography in anthropology and the grounded theory in Sociology. For more on these approaches see Glaser and Strauss (1967); Harry Woolcot (1988); Strauss and Corbin in Denzin and Lincoln (1994) and Max Van Mannan (1982).

The Chronicles

Chronicles are a way to scaffold the histories of beginning the process of having them re-collect the experience. They are also a way to begin to hear a person's family stories (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994). I began the process of creating field texts by writing segments of my life, divided decade wise. I wrote significant memories of events, places

and special relationships, my father in particular, that I had enjoyed over time. I was writing without any preconceived notion of what I was to write, no hypothesis, no formulas to quantify my life in numbers. It was paper pencil and my memory that were the interplaying forces at work. It was a glimpse or an image of my life, my personal life and experiences with various highs and lows that were being portrayed on paper. I was writing daily, writing and rewriting as it would be the third or the fourth draft that I would share with my advisor. Each time I wrote I had an improved syntax and grammatical structure though the segments in the chronology remained the same. I was polishing and refining my written language, and at the same time, I was working on the initial stage of writing my life story. The two forces that provided the impetus to keep me going were, one, it was the story of my life, so it was an important story. Secondly, it was my father's image of me to attain education of that calibre so that I could 'affect' the world in some small way. Time and time again I was reminded of Dr. Kennon's (keynote speaker at the 55th. Kinnaird College convocation in Chapter 2:16) words, that, with education comes an obligation to act and to affect the world. Written within our education is a cannon of human decency and of responsibility to our contemporaries.

I wrote four sets of chronicles each covering a span of 10 years. The stories were there, surface stories, no embedded meaning or themes emerging, no special meaning attached to anyone. I wrote because a certain event or a particular relationship was important, so I thought. I put in as much detail as I could remember, and in an attempt to elaborate I could add a page or two. There was an exception to this rule. The one topic or the story that my mind could freely associate with was my father's unrelenting and

unconditional love for me. I could pull from memory, more examples of how he cared and nurtured me with so much love and understanding that we both were the best of friends. His ambition in life was to provide warmth, love and care to help me develop a personality that may suffice to do something out of the un-ordinary.

These stories however, were subjective, as they were my perceptions, my memories of incidents and events of my life. What am I going to do with these stories and how do they help me to uncover the truth of my life, was the nagging question I kept asking myself. At the end of writing the fourth set of chronicles that covered my life for four decades and that's how old I was at the time, I had no more to simply jot down memories. I knew that I had a few pencil lines to indicate to me by my advisor that those were interesting stories, and that the stories indicated by double lines in the margin of the papers could change into themes for my research text. Many times I read *Teachers as Curriculum Planners; Narrative of Experience* (1988), to gain insight as to the next step on the research process, and to gain insight in my stories.

I read and re-read my chronicles, the four categories that seemed to emerge were, (i) my educational experiences in Pakistan, (ii) my father's love and support for me, (iii) the differential treatment I had encountered while in Europe and being in Canada, (iv) tensions in my personal life. I was to dig, elaborate and write more about these stories that kept re-surfacing time and time again in my chronicles. I wrote and continued to write because I wanted to know something about my life I did not know before.

From 1989 to 1991 I was on a leave of absence from O. I. S. E for two reasons; my husband had moved to Toronto as he got a new job there, and I was to look after my both

boys and the household, and secondly, I got a full time job teaching after supplying for two years. I hardly wrote in those two years, this was followed by another leave of absence because of my injury at work. So I lost a lot of time for personal and physical reasons.

Journals

During the summer of 1992, I wrote journals keeping in focus my educational experiences in Pakistan (see Chapter 4 for more detail). I also wrote journals, off and on, about my experiences in Canada being a teacher and a visible minority woman. I was not writing stories anymore, but gathering fragments of my past and present experiences, initially as a student in Pakistan, and then as a full time teacher in Canada. I was writing journals about my feelings at work other than my educational experiences in Pakistan. These journals have become the 'historical record' (Richardson, 1994:526), and are a source of tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge includes what actors know, take for granted, and leave unexplicated in specific situations. This knowledge may have been learned in some formal and semiformal sense at some earlier time, both substantively and procedurally. Tacit knowledge may also include deep structures from the emotional memory of past generations, enabling responses and actions deeply ingrained in human emotional and physical survival (Altheide, 1994:492). So I was to dig for the deep structures, connecting and making sense with and among them in order to find a meaningful whole. In other words, I had raw data that needed to be sorted out and made sense of in an approach that was thematic, continuous and provided the reader with an

underlying and multi layered context of my life. The field text collected was like an overt behaviour shown in chronicles and journals written so far. What was needed to be done was, to make inference to my personality, character, my past and the future. The present was to used as the bridging gap between the temporal life episodes. It was a process where I had begun to grow intellectually, without realizing it. However, I was still facing the ambiguities, complexities, value conflicts and uniqueness that were part of my person.

After the summer of 1992, I did not write anything for a year as I was on a leave of absence the second time from O. I. S. E., due to an injury at work. It was a slip on the ice while on duty during the morning recess. I was away from work for three months and had received every possible treatment. Nothing seemed to work. The physiotherapist, the chiropractor, the massage therapist, herbal medications, anti-inflammatory pills and strong pain killers, all had temporary effect. On top of that, I had to prove my case to the Worker's Compensation Board that it was a legitimate injury with very real discomfort. Finally in June of 1994, after the arthroscopy followed by an open acromioplasty, the orthopaedic surgeon gave me the true picture of the problem. Since he had to cut across about 6" of my injured right shoulder, this is what he discovered and treated me for. There had developed an ulcer due to the impingement of the shoulder joint (rotator cuff), so he cleared the ulcer and removed part of the cup and the joint bones. Post operative treatment was long and intensive. This episode of my life not only effected me physically, but emotionally, socially and economically as well. I survived. I was back working on my research off and on since 1994. I was not fully recovered. After the assessment, the

doctor had proclaimed 15% permanent disability to my right shoulder, but I was more functional after the surgical operation than before it. I resumed my full time job in September of 1994. Between May 1993 to August 1994 I was working half days and was paid for only half days. I had run out of my sick days and had no coverage for long term disability. I survived the economic stress, but I could not spend as much time on my research work. My shoulder would bother me in cold and wet weather. I could not use my right arm, or hand for that matter, for a long period of time. The result, it took me much longer to complete my research. It is only now, i.e. 5 years after (between 1993 to 1998), that my life is back to normal. Some restrictions still apply to the functioning of my right arm, and I am a right handed person.

In September of 1994, I re-joined O. I. S. E. and started to put the fragments of information together that I had gathered over time. I worked towards putting the proposal together with the emerging categories from my chronicles and journals. The proposal was then to be presented to my thesis advisory committee.

The Proposal

The common categories that emerged so far were; my educational experiences in Pakistan; my father's love and his image of me as a woman educator, which filtered through his letters he wrote to me over a number of years (see chapter 2) and the tensions and experiences being a visible minority woman. These themes helped me to keep some focus, and hence to try to put a proposal together. I started with the foremost focus; my father's image of me as a woman educator, and how that helped me shape my life over the

years.

My story as a visible minority woman who hailed from the East, now living in the West for more than two decades, needed to be seen through the eyes of other visible minority women. The two participant women whose personal biographical reflections combined with their memories of the system they came from, their place of origin, and the system they have adopted as their second home, were to interplay with the recollections and reflections of my life story.

I had to have a short preliminary account of these participants to be part of my proposal. So, after the technical formalities of ethics for a dissertation writing, and the consent letters, I set out to do my first interviews with each one of them. Meanwhile, I was also working on the introductory chapter about myself and my background, for the proposal.

Until this time my persistent dilemma was the theme that would guide the development of my life story to be written. There was an overview written with the help of chronicles, journals and expansion on stories that seemed viable. The theme was still a 'restless theme', as Smith (1992), would put it. I was struggling with the idea of a theme. However, as it turned out, I did not really had to have a theme, even though there were common threads strewn throughout my thesis.

The Interviews

Interviewing is one of the most common and most powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings. Interviewing is a paramount part of qualitative research, because it lets the interviewer and the interviewee to interact with each other

and behave as if they are at an equal status (Fontana, 1994:22). Interviews have a variety of forms for collecting research data. The type used in my research is explained later.

The way an interviewer acts, questions and responds in an interview, shapes the relationship between the researcher and the participant, and therefore, the ways participants respond and give account of their experiences (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994). My two participants were good friends, so to establish that 'researcher', 'co-researcher' relationship through a mutual interaction and explanation of the purpose of interviewing, was not hard to establish (more on this in chapter 6).

My two participants were visible minority women, Salika and Anita who immigrated to Canada 6 and 23 years ago, respectively. The interviews were a combination of taped, transcribed and verbatim transcripts. A guideline like an annal, was suggested by the researcher to the participants, to help keep the data in a chronological order. There was also that flexibility of temporally going backwards and forwards, inwards and outwards to help better understand the events and relationships. Some probing questions were asked by the researcher to get insight into a certain period of the participants life, for example, 'in your primary school years, let's say, between grades 1 and 5, do you remember any teacher (s) that stand out in your memory who might have had some impact of a lasting effect on you?'

My participants' stories were counter narratives and a reflection upon those provided with insights, images, and models that helped me to broaden perspectives on our stories. There were common elements of not thinking, feeling or behaving the way women are supposed to. This in turn, helped us, as in Smith's (1994:299) words 'to continue to

negotiate new alternatives by the disciplinary training we were going through'.

There were conversations between the researcher and the participants, formal and informal, lengthy and short ones, the records of which were made before the end of the day. These conversations are still part of our meetings and phone calls discussing our ongoing daily life experiences. These experiences bring a flavour of the feminine and the minority perspective. The disenchanted, the powerless, and the second class citizen labels come strongly through. There were common strands among the stories of these women and myself; and the interviews allowed me to reflect openly on issues that were painful, sensitive and hard to talk about. My first attempt in the interpretive analysis of the women stories was intellectually challenging. The stories were heart wrenching, very special and interesting, but they tended only to define and set the terms for an inquiry. I had to dig for their meaning and the social significance to change from the field text, which is descriptive and has a recording quality but no reflective mode, to the research text. I thoroughly enjoyed this tedious experience that laid the ground work for extracting meaning contained in my field text and the emerging themes of my research.

The stories of the participant women were shared several times with them while in the process of putting the fragments together. They had a complete freedom to change and/or to withdraw any information they did not feel comfortable with. Salika, my 25 year old participant, while reading the final version of her story, wept. *This is my life the way it is and has been, I do not want to change or delete anything from it. It is like watching a soap opera on T. V., except that I am the main character in these episodes.* She said while wiping her tears off her face. Before she started sharing her story, she perceived that

everything should be kept discreet and quiet, especially the agonizing and lamenting moments of her life. *It is embarrassing to talk about the pain in your life, and it is unwomanly to say anything that might not fit right with your husband, especially when you come from the East.* Now Salika feels she is 'brave' and that it was worth talking and sharing her story, her personal experiences for my research. She is holding a full time job and has taken up cosmetology course. Her father who is staying with her, came to Canada from India, on her request. He is looking after her boys and provides emotional and moral support to her. She divorced her husband and has found happiness in getting engaged to a Caucasian male her age whom she became friends with at her work. She has filed for the child support and custody rights, the case is still pending.

The humiliation, the agony, the depression to the point of losing a good health, Salika finally took the courage to do what she had to. It was a process of intense struggle both physical and emotional, that finally made her realize that living with such a man was a disgrace in life. By making her story known, Salika not only responded to the need of her life that she was leading on a knife's edge, it also led to a relationship of collaboration of emotions between her and myself, the researcher. This was an ongoing process, living, as well as written in the research text.

Anita, my second participant, a middle aged full time teacher, made frequent visits to my place after school. We shared our on going lives at home, with children, at work and the life's tensions. This was an indication of a relationship that was based on mutual trust and care. We went to the musicals, carnivals and the movies together. She recently took two university level courses during summer and was regularly seeking my input for her

research papers.

Anita is living with her husband, there are tensions in their relationship, however, they are trying to improve their relationship by spending more time and doing things together. She still keeps herself very busy with her interest in music and regularly enrolls herself in some course work. She has a full time teaching job. She sometimes questions, *what do you do when your relationship with your husband is not the greatest?* So there are things unresolved in Anita's life, she however, enjoys her teaching career to the fullest, and spends her spare time rehearsing and singing for friends.

The Interpretive Process

The stories of my participant women (interviews and conversations), journals of my educational experiences, chronicles, letters written by my father over a period of time, formed the 'field text' for my research. Moving from the 'field text' to the 'research text', to the audience, is a complex and reflexive process (Denzin, 1994:501). The researcher moves from the field text and creates a research text, notes and interpretations. The researcher then re-creates the research text as a working interpretive document. This document (the proposal in my research), contains the writer's initial attempts to make sense out of what has been learned. This document is a quasi-public text, one that is shared with colleagues (my thesis committee members), whose comments and suggestions the writer seeks. Then comes the task, for the writer, to transform this quasi public text into a public text. This transformation embodies the writer's self-understanding, the understanding of those studied, and furnishes the context for the

understandings the reader brings to the experiences described by the writer (Denzin, 1994:501-502).

The interpretive process is the task, as Palmer (1969:244) puts it, of understanding such that the interpretive act is 'loving union that brings to stand the full potentialities of the interpreter and his text' (in Clandinin, 1986).

In the process of narrative inquiry the central task is evident when it is grasped that a person is both living their stories in an ongoing experiential text, and telling their stories in words as they reflect upon life and explain themselves to others. Since life is also a matter of growth toward an imagined future, and therefore, involves restorying and attempts at reliving. A person is, at once, then, engaged in living, telling, retelling and reliving stories. (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988:10-11).

The process of narrative inquiry provided me the opportunity to view realities of life from a different perspective. Through this process I felt that I could trace the mysteries of my life, which in turn could lead me to understand myself. It enabled me to gradually reflect on my personal life in the context of being an educator and a visible minority woman. It showed me how the elements of 'experience, time, personal knowledge, reflection and deliberation' are the figures in the narrative inquiry. And how these experiences and knowledge are intertwined with my life. The theoretical readings and discussions with colleagues helped in the interpretive process. I read to gain meaning, to understand author's meaning. To broaden my viewpoint and to help me 'experiencing the experience' to trace and better understand the life phenomenon.

In Zimmerman-Brown's (1992) reflection on her life, a narrative approach with interpretive analysis as a crucial element of the stance, is used to understand the phenomenon of her life. Jean Clandinin's *Image of Classroom Practice* (1986), focuses on the experiential knowledge of her two participant teachers using a narrative stance to understand the personal practical knowledge of the teachers. Eldridge (1996), uses the process of narrative inquiry to explore the 'humanness' of teachers' relationship with themselves and their students, and in Conle's study (1989), in the learning of the second language. All these works are done in collaboration with the participants giving an account of their work from their perspectives and a shared point of view of the

researcher and the researched.

In order to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study, i.e. my personal history, biography, gender, class, race and ethnicity, I shared my story with two women participants. It was a shared process of intense collaboration, reflection, interpretation and shared meaning. It was an intimate relationship to understand the socially constructed reality of life (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:2) to add depth, vigour, and breadth to the investigation.

The initial interpretive accounts were written after reading and re-reading segments of the stories of my participant women. During readings, memos were written in the columns to substantiate their meaning and insights with the theoretical readings I was doing. For example, Quddus (1990), Hayes (1987), Abdullah (1971) Bhutto (1989), and Shaukat (1989), opened up new meaning and experience as to the status of Pakistani women in general, and education in particular. The experience of the participants, or their recorded life episodes (interviews), formed part of the text, like any piece of literature. The interpretive accounts served as the re-construction of experience. This re-construction of experience is another interpretive layer, for interpretation occurs at the level of perception of the events and again as events are reconstructed and recorded in the field notes (Clandinin, 1986).

The interpretive accounts have been the means to understand the interpretive process, and to enhance my personal knowledge as an interpreter. Theoretical readings, discussions with friends, academics, colleagues and my participants' responses, have a bearing on the interpretive process. The participants' responses not only provided the feed back to my interpretive accounts of their lives as visible minority immigrant women, but also helped in tapping and strengthening my beliefs about the social realities of living in a host culture.

Summary

Chapter 3 presents the procedures followed in the collection of the field texts for my study. It discusses the theory-practice relationship, the guidelines that directed interview procedure with the participant women, and the interpretive process that was an integral part of the research process. Chapter 4 will bring to light my educational experiences in Pakistan that tie with the chapter 7 and forms the second theme of my research.

CHAPTER 4

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN PAKISTAN

I was born, raised, educated and lived till my early twenties in Pakistan, so she holds a very special place in my heart. Chapter 2 gives the reader a peek into my personal background, my educational experiences, and the support I received from my dad. My father's backing was a source of strength that enabled me to write my story and to look forward in accomplishing something in life. It has always been my dream to contribute something worthwhile to the cause of education to benefit people of Pakistan, children in particular. I consider myself lucky to have had the opportunity to live in Canada just as long as I lived in Pakistan. This has provided me an opportunity to live and experience two cultures at many levels. Canada is my second home and from an educational, social and cultural point of view I am a blend of Pakistani /Canadian cultures. So it is important for my reader to know a bit about Pakistan, the country I hail from and its education system in particular. The second theme of my thesis is the education system there, both present and historical. This chapter also serves the interests of the educational authorities and policy makers in Pakistan from someone who not only has the experience of two different education systems but, can offer an analytic perspective on the same subject.

I am not a historian, neither an expert on the education system in Pakistan. This chapter is partly based on my personal educational experiences between the years 1954 to 1965, i.e my schooling years from kindergarten to grade twelve. In part, the information is also gathered from sources which will be cited as they are quoted. It is important for

my reader to have some idea about the historical underpinnings of the education system in Pakistan which will set the backdrop as I share my personal educational experiences there. This may also help the educators in the Canadian Public school system to understand some of the dilemmas that children go through who come from the Public School System of the South-Asian continent.

Introduction

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is relatively a young country that came into being from the sub-continent of India in August of 1947. According to Aziz (1975), there were three main religious sects living in the South-Asian sub-continent before partition, i.e. when the British left India after ruling for 100 years. These sects were Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. The other minority groups were the Buddhists, Parses, Jains and the Christians. Muslims were in minority and formed the sub-ordinate class during the Colonial rule. Before the British came to India in 1847, and as I recall a history lesson in perhaps grade four or five, India was governed by the Mughal Empire. So, the Muslims were in the limelight for over 800 years. When the British left India in 1947, a new country was created by the name of Pakistan (land of the pure). The reason for coming into being of Pakistan was two- fold: freedom from the British rule and the desire of Muslims in India to have a homeland of their own.

Now, a bit about the demographics and location of Pakistan on the global map. According to the illustrated guide to Pakistan by Shaw (1988), Pakistan is the land of the Indus river which flows through the country for 2,500 km. The Indus river takes its course

from the Himalayas and Karakoram mountain ranges in the North-East to the Arabian Seas in the South. It is situated in the North-Western part of the South Asian sub-continent. It extends from 24 to 37 N latitude and from about 61 to 75 E longitude (Government of Pakistan, 1977-78:15). It has snow covered peaks, burning deserts, fertile mountain valleys, irrigated plains and is peopled by over a 128 million inhabitants, representing an array of ethnic groups by the Islamic faith. It is strategically placed at the crossroads of Asia, where the road from China to the Mediterranean meets the route from India to Central Asia. It covers an area of 803,944 square km. (ibid.:31), making it 3 times as large as Great Britain. Locating it on the world map, Pakistan is bordered on the West by Iran, on the Northwest by Afghanistan, on the Northeast by China and on the East by India. Its Southern coastline is nearly 1,000 km. long.

Pakistan is divided into four provinces. While growing up in Pakistan I had the opportunity during summer holidays or school trips, to visit some of the major cities of these provinces: They are Sind, Baluchistan, Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province (usually abbreviated as NWFP). In addition, there are two other regions, the Northern areas which include Gilgit, Hunza, Chilas, Skardu and Azad (free) Kashmir and Jammu, that are well known for their natural beauty.

The climate of Pakistan is mostly hot and dry. I remember the long hot summer afternoons that I spent either sleeping or just gazing at the ceiling fan wishing for a cooler air, when I could not fall asleep. However, when my family and I visited the Murree Hills in the North during summer vacation, the temperature ranged from 0 to 8 degrees Fahrenheit, which was a great comfort. The mountains are in the North and the North-

West. On the East, the terrain is flat on the Indus plain, and in the West is the plateau of Baluchistan.

Since the climate is also dry, there is very little rain. According to the Government of Pakistan (1975:30), a quarter of the country has less than 120 millimetres (4.7") of rain per annum and over 3 quarters has less than 250 millimetres (9.8") annually. Rainfall exceeds 500 millimetres (19.5") a year over a mere 7% of the land.

Urdu is the official language, and the language used as the medium of instruction in the Public schools. English is the official lingua franca of Pakistani elite and the most government ministries. It is also used as the medium of instruction in private schools. However, the students who attend private schools speak Urdu or Punjabi at home, like I did. The school I attended from kindergarten to grade ten, English as a medium of education started at the grade six level. Having two different languages to be used as a vehicle of instruction created a vacuum, which extenuated in the social structure of the Pakistani society. Using one language i.e. Urdu, the language most Pakistanis speak in their day to day living, may help to educate the masses. Other languages are Sindhi, Pashto and Balochi used in the provinces of Sind, North-West Frontier province and Baluchistan. The population growth rate is 2.86%. Muslims form the majority by 97 %, Christian, Hindu and other religions comprise 3% of the population (Pakistan's Official Handbook, 1977-80).

Education : A Historical Perspective

Before the advent of British in India in 1847, the Mughal Dynasty ruled the sub-

continent of India, now also known as Bharat, for over 800 years. To summarize Haq (1954), during the Mughal rule, the Islamic system of education centered around the training of men and women, which focussed on the close relationship between religion and education. Education was compulsory, and the religion guided everything from the minor to the major aspect of one's life. Schools and colleges in many cases were grouped around mosques (place of worship for Muslims), and primary schools were either housed in mosques or attached to them. The schools were open to all as there was no class, hence no domination of the school system. Farsi (Persian), was used as the court language and was the medium of instruction (Quddus, 1990) in the educational institutions. In late sixties, I had Farsi as an optional subject in my B.A, and always felt proud to communicate with my friends and school mates in a few words of another language. This meant that Farsi as a language survived in some form many years after the Muslim rule ended, while English became the official language with the arrival of British in India in mid 1800s.

The present system of education prevalent in Pakistan is the heritage of the pre-partitioned India. According to Aziz (1975), and Quddus (1990), the system of education that followed in Colonial India was introduced by the British. This system was designed primarily for carrying on the administration of the country in English under the British masters. The British left the sub-continent 50 years ago, but their encounter left its mark which has outlived their presence. There is a substantial amount of literature written on Colonialism, the British dominion in India, in particular. It is not my intention, neither it serves the purpose of my thesis to delve in any detail on the subject. It is, however, my

aim to give the reader a flavour of the education system that was designed by the British. The impressions of the Colonial Education are present till this day, both in India and Pakistan. Furthermore, my personal educational experiences in Pakistan, captured by the writing of journals over a period of time, will witness the legacy of the British teachings imposed upon a foreign people for as long as 8 centuries.

The system of education in India was designed by Lord Macaulay in mid 1800's. The aim of this education, to put it succinctly, was to produce 'your most obedient servant'. Moreover, the cardinal principle of such training was to produce a race that was 'Indians in colour but Englishmen in taste and aptitude' (Quddus, 1969:84). With this on mind, English became the official language and the language of curriculum in Indian schools. This means Farsi, which was the court language till 1835, was replaced with English and was used in the field of law, business and administration (Aziz, 1975).

Education is intimately connected to language and any basic change in the system of education entails a major overhaul. A system of education that prevailed for a thousand years during the rule of the Mughals, produced many Muslim scholars who contributed in the fields of math, science, philosophy and medicine. The names and contributions of these scholars were eradicated from the school curriculum (Abdullah, 1971:53), and under British rule British history took over. This is a vital point made by Dr. Abdullah. For the growing developing minds, accomplishments and achievements of their own kind in the history books and in the course of their studies, lead to self pride and a will to do better. Information without context is just information. It becomes personally appealing and jogs the memory over time when one can relate to it. I, along with other students in

school at the junior and senior grades, spent hours memorising King George, King Edward or Queen Victoria's tenure of reign and their accomplishments, without putting our hearts to it. This kind of information had no context, no interest, no applicability for us. We had to do it to pass our history exam. And if you ask how much knowledge I still retain on that subject, the answer is practically none.

By 1858, the mandatory use of English was expanded to the universities after the establishment of Calcutta University. With the advent of English language with all its authority, arrived the English way of life and thought. Its literature, philosophy and art gave birth to a class of bureaucrats to fit in the administrative hierarchy (Quddus, 1969:84), of the British rule.

Education has always a negative and a positive aspect: It protects society from the cultivation of certain weaknesses and it creates enlightenment and spirit of curiosity. The system of education established by the British in India successfully performed the negative function but its positive content and influence were unsatisfactory. It created schools where there were none. It taught the Indians the virtue of setting themselves free of social evils. It broke the spirit of caste and the hold of superstition. It cured some prejudices and opened a window on the riches of Western knowledge. But it completely failed to achieve the higher, the more positive, aim of education. In fact it was not devised to do so. Its organisation and nature excluded the pursuit of such aims. It did not create intellectual curiosity. It did not mould character. It did not produce the whole man. From the primary school to the university the ultimate end was to manufacture petty clerks who could be good functionaries but were incapable of thinking for themselves.

(Aziz, 1975:301-302)

With the lack of opportunities for enhancing thinking skills and problem solving at the

lower levels. the universities were fed poorly. Aziz further sheds light on the higher education as an expensive farce and the irrelevant curricula taught at the university level. The courses of study that were offered at the college and university levels, were politically explosive as they created political aspirations and lacked practical knowledge. The teachers hired for such system came from that class of society who were disappointed in getting other jobs, and lacked proper teacher training. Their salaries were meagre and the conditions of service deplorable. The teachers passed their frustrations on to the students with some bitterness. At this point in time, I am reminded of this famous joke that I heard while in primary school in Pakistan. A grade one or two teacher was teaching a lesson in spelling. He slowly spells 'g-i-r-l'. Then he pronounced and gave the meaning of the spelled word in this manner, 'grill, grill means larki' (larki in Urdu means a girl). A student having realized that the teacher had made a mistake in pronouncing the word girl, spoke out, 'masterji (meaning, O respectable teacher), it is girl and not grill'. The teacher responded, 'unless they (the administration) gave me a raise in my low salary I would continue to teach grill'!

Upon reflection, I can make connections with the kind of education system that I had gone through in Pakistan and can well relate to its roots. Speaking English was a status quo. There was this memory based curriculum that us, the students, spent hours memorising to regurgitate on the exam papers without understanding the concepts. Having British teachers in the school system was something to boast about. Wearing clothes, imported or sent by a relative from England, was the talk of the town. The presence of any white person anywhere demanded buttering up, which translates into

having an inferiority complex of your own race. Talking low to your own kind in the presence of a foreigner was an indications of a race who was ‘Indian in colour but English in taste and aptitude’.

I do not remember a lesson in Islamic history or the reading of the Quran (Muslims’ Holy Book), during my school years in a missionary school where majority of the students were Muslims. I do however, remember memorizing verses upon verses from the Bible for a coming test, which never made meaning. At home my teachings were based on the tenants of Islam, at school I sang Christian hymns, said Lord’s prayer and read excerpts of Bible on stage during Christmas time. At home I was taught not to look in the eyes while talking to an adult. At school I was guilty of some misdemeanour or crime if I did not make eye-contact. I was to keep the tone of my voice low while addressing my parents. Any lady my mothers’s age had a right to criticize, and for me to listen if I fell short on something, and she still deserved respect like my own parent. I was not to disapprove or make any adverse comment even if I felt that a grown up was being irrational. Calling an adult by the first name was a no no. All adults were either aunties or uncles whether related or not. My personal problem was anybody’s problem and I was to tend to the advice given by whoever. The two conflicting ideologies, one rooted in the Western education, the other, training at home based on Islamic values, developed a rebel in me. This rebellious nature sometimes got me in hot waters and I was labelled as ‘rude’, ‘talkative’ (negative connotation), and ‘hard headed’. At times I would talk back to teachers or to my parents (my mother in particular), when I thought I was being misunderstood or wrongfully blamed for something I thought I did not do. As a child,

growing up between two repelling forces, I picked up a few strategies from each force that I considered served my purpose. I respected all adults and elderly people, and I still do. I still experience problem dealing with arrogant, ignorant people regardless of their age. I also learned to pretend. Pretence of more than I really knew in order to please or impress others, especially when it came to my knowledge of spoken English during my school years in Pakistan. English magazines were a good commodity to show off my knowledge of the West, it did not matter if I understood only 50% of the text. I had memorised some songs of Elvis Presley and Cliff Richards and was proud to sing among friends. I would die for going to an English movie, Urdu movies were 'ok' too. Now it is the reverse. This depicts my inclination more towards my language and culture. I still have a natural affinity for discipline and structure that I learned during my school years. When I find that I am being misunderstood, like I was at times while attending school, or at home, I either cut myself off of my surroundings for a while, or my 'rude' self surfaces and I speak out to whoever I need to.

In the following section I share with the reader, in some detail, my personal educational and school experiences from kindergarten to grade 12, in Pakistan, between the years 1954-1965. Whatever the impact of Colonial education in India was, it had many and far reaching effects for decades to come. Sharing my story with the reader, would shed some light as to the still prevailing effects of Colonialism in the field of education. However, the irony is that Pakistan has been liberated for 50 years now and not much has been done to do away with these lasting effects.

Personal Educational Experiences

The tool to capture my thoughts and memories related to my educational experiences in Pakistan are journals that have been written periodically over a span of time. These journals helped me make links and sense of the past experiences, education in particular. The journals and stories are the theoretical elements that tell the story. The practical elements are the living and the reflection of the story, that are reiterated in the proceeding sections of my research.

I started writing journals when I was 12 years old, and wrote for about one year. I picked them up later for the writing of my thesis. When I was 12, I wrote journals only when my father and I were in a conflict situation. Since I was very close to my father, he would do anything to resolve the opposing matter at hand. I, on the other hand, acted stubborn at times, and at other times I felt hurt on little things. The closeness and the very comfortable zone that I had created around my dad made me a very sensitive person. Anything not going my way was a cause for hard feelings. My dad felt the hurt and would do anything to bring things back to normal. At times it did not help me. I felt an inner turmoil that propelled me to say things I should not have. I was considered a 'big mouth' by some, 'outspoken' by others. My mother never approved of me for being candid and open, for her I was 'rude' and spoiled. On the other hand, my father could not bear the thought of me being upset or angry because I would stop eating. He forced fed me if I refused to eat.

One of my early journals that I wrote over 3 decades ago and I remember it so vividly as if it was written yesterday. I was in a conflict situation with my mother and as a protest

I stopped eating. This journal talked about how my dad hit me on my hand with a hand fan when I refused to put the morsel in my mouth that he had held in his hand. It was more of an emotional hurt than the physical pain. My dad had never, before or after that, ever raised his hand on me. He just could not bear the thought of me going hungry. I had to eat no matter what.

The journals, according to Connelly and Clandinin (1988: 34), 'are an on-going account of practices and reflections on these practices'. Journal is a form of narrative, as well as a form of research, a method to tell a story. In this chapter, the story is of my personal educational experiences and the inequality of the provisions of educational opportunities for the two genders. Moreover, it sheds light on the unethical and corrupt use of money to get the required educational results.

Writing journals was like a personal sense of revisiting with myself in the past. It was reliving my past stories in a written text and reflecting upon them to explain and share the meaning with the reader. This revisitation provided me both, a direction and an inlet to further probe the ideas that provided depth to my writing. At times, some quotes came in handy that formed a part of my journal writing (notes on journal, July 8/92). These quotes and readings from a wide variety of literature (written in English and my first language Urdu), steered my way into in-depth meaning and re-thinking possible direction for my thesis. It was a 'personally reflective method' (Connelly and Clandinin 1988:12) where, I added my own reflective voice, my inner voice, to provide insight into the personal knowledge. The knowledge of who I was, who I am, and who I am becoming.

It was the summer of 1992 that I started writing journals in order to recapture my

educational experiences in Pakistan covering the period from 1954 to 1965. This span of time covers my kindergarten to grade 12 school education in Pakistan. The writing of journals and the 'reconstruction of experience' to 'recover meaning' (Connelly and Clandinin 1988), continued throughout the summer at regular intervals. They were read and re-read over a long period of time. This allowed me to connect themes that became apparent as the research process progressed.

Journals

July 8/92

'He holds a Bachelor's degree and listen to the English he speaks', or 'he must have gone through an Urdu (the national language) school'. This was a sarcastic remark made by one of my cousins who studied in a convent school and spoke good English. His parents happened to have enough money to send their eldest son to this expensive institute. His 2 younger brothers were receiving education in a less expensive school. As I'm reading about the Colonial Masters who ruled the sub-continent of India years 1847-1947, this annotation keeps ringing in my ears. In one single family unit, two classes were in the process of becoming. One prioritizing spoken English as the symbol of an educated, intelligent person, the others, perhaps, not as committed to judge others by the language one spoke. The following quote from Hayes, (1987:19) seems befitting. The British rulers did little to promote the cause of learning and they were indifferent to the educational needs of the masses. The Colonial experience itself introduced foreign values and institutions which to varying degrees conflicted with the traditional culture and lifestyles of the local population.

In Pakistan, the different levels of the Public School System work this way: Grades kindergarten to the tenth (matriculation), are usually housed in the same school building. After passing matriculation exams, the successful candidate enters a college for a 4 year programme towards a Bachelor's degree. This is followed by a two year programme for a

Master's degree. The students seeking admissions in professional schools like medicine and engineering etc. spend two years in college receiving a Faculty of Science (F.Sc.) certificate. It takes about four years of schooling after that to become an engineer, and five years course to become a doctor. Internship is on top of that. The national language of Pakistan is Urdu, so is the medium of instruction in public schools. The private schools present a different scenario which will be discussed in chapter 7.

A university graduate with a good standing in Bachelor or Master's Degree, is considered to be an unlettered person if s/he does not speak English. The graduate who may have spent good sixteen or seventeen years of life attaining the degree, is immediately dropped off from the social hierarchy due to a lack of oral proficiency in a foreign language. This takes us back to the mid 1800's when, in India, Farsi and Urdu were replaced by English, by the British. The lasting impressions of such reign created snobs and classes in a society, and a picture of the Victorian era that had relevance to the educational impact in Pakistan (India before 1947). It ignored the character-building quality of education, nor was the curiosity encouraged. The mental outlook of a Pakistani youth gone through an English education was like a half-baked product. S/he was like a person who was led half the way and when the appetite was whetted and the eyes began to discern things, was halted from stepping further. The mental development was held back and the capacity to think and be accepting and broad minded, was halted as well. The university and college youths attended these institutions to get a job after passing the exams, and that was the ultimate motive. Education was like an artificial prize to be won in order to get a job.

The following episode reminds me of my school days in Pakistan. The school housed kindergarten to grade 10 which means I was in the same school for 11 years. The school was run by the British missionaries. The principal and the teachers who taught English, music and religious studies (Catholicism only, whereas the majority of the students were Muslims) to all grades were British. The rest of the staff, about 2/3, were local Catholics. The medium of instruction for all subjects was Urdu and English was taught as a language from kindergarten to grade 5. Starting from grade 6 to grade ten, all subjects were taught in English. There was a complete switch of the medium of instruction from one grade to the next. Moreover, starting from grade 6, no student was allowed to speak Urdu, but English only. The penalty for not doing so was a fine of Rs.10.00 (about .50 cents Canadian). Obviously, how does one expect a sixth grader to fluently speak a foreign language that in the previous 5 grades was taught only for ½ hour per day? The emphasis on language learning was the grammar, spelling by rote, the three tenses and that too were out of context. English text book essays were to be understood in their literal meaning. One had to know the meaning of each sentence in simple English (rearrangement of the same words from the text), or in Urdu, if a local teacher was to teach English. Essay writing was the work of memory so was the spoken word.

I remember to this day, saying, 'I beg your pardon'. This meant, I would love to talk to you in English but I didn't have the vocabulary or the confidence to do so. The next moment I switched to speaking in Urdu. We all did just that, and nobody paid the fine unless caught by a teacher in the school yard. To impress the junior students of grades 2,3, 4 or 5 while I was in grade six, I recited aloud the English poems that I had

memorised. We were not trained to think or to speak objectively, we just regurgitated.

A point of interest for the reader. No matter how the language was taught, English was my favourite subject throughout my school years. I averaged 80% or more in most semesters. I secured a third position in province wide grade 9 English exams.

The highest percentage of failure in my school was at the grade 6 level. One of my older sister's friends, who was in grade six while I was one year junior, was retained in grade 6 as she had failed in English. She averaged an 'A' grade in all other subject areas. She later became a medical doctor! What a waste of her precious year. She could not cope with a sudden switch of the language from one year to the next. It was not her, but the system that had failed her.

May 6/92

It was March of 1967, Miss N's picture appeared on a national newspaper as the winner of a gold medal for her outstanding performance in B.A. Miss' N' was my best childhood friend and still is after all those years. Her parents threw a big party to celebrate their only daughter's exceptional success. My gift to Miss N was a 22 Karat gold ring that I had purchased from my scholarship money. Among friends and relatives, Miss N was known to be a very organised person, who allocated a substantial amount of time every day, doing her school work. I happened to visit Miss 'N' at her home one summer afternoon. At the time of my arrival, she was in her room studying, and the door was closed. Her mother knocked at the door and announced my arrival. She came out after five minutes, very serious looking and pre-occupied. The first thing she asked me was, to test her in the text she was learning, rather memorising. I took her note book from her hand and she started re-gurgitating, 'Oxygen is a colourless and odourless gas.....', She went on reciting everything she had memorised from her notes on the gas oxygen, in one breath. She had, somehow, misspelled the word oxygen and had onygen (onjen) in her notes and was memorising it as such. I could not help but correct her of the error she had made in copying teacher's notes from the blackboard.

The criteria for good test and good mark was and still is, how well one memorised the text and reproduced it on the test sheet. The text was either a straight copy of the teacher's notes from the blackboard, or a few chapters from the text book. We knew of no other way of understanding a concept. The literal meanings of difficult words were copied from the dictionary to be memorized. We did not understand most of the concepts, rather we were learning tricks to remember them. There was no such thing as hands on activities, or manipulatives to complement the concrete operational stage of learning at the formative years. Asking questions was irrelevant. I was once labelled as a 'problem student' for asking too many questions to my Geography teacher. I did not like her remark and responded by saying that I was trying to understand what she was teaching. She took it as a personal insult and walked me to a kindergarten class to stand in a corner in front of those kiddies. I was in grade 6.

There was no creativity allowed. We were learning by rote, we crammed and mugged. To prepare for the exams, we solved questions from the previous year's exams. We read textbooks' guides and teacher's notes to try to remember everything without understanding much. This happened only once a year, i.e at the year end final exams. I would sit all night studying, wearing an off sleeve shirt to keep me awake during my grade 10 exams. Off sleeves because it was winter and we didn't have any indoor heating. The chill to my arms was a stimulant to keep me awake besides sipping black tea all night. There was too much to remember and never enough time. We were trying to devour ideas and concepts. Most of the time we felt that we did not have much time to digest everything. Most of us passed. Some even got first three positions, I was always

among the first three. Pass percentage was and still is a mere 33%! 'Imagine a medical student graduating with 33% marks, only 33% of his patients would survive his treatment', was another joke of the time.

Many in India and Pakistan blame the British for forcing Western education down their throats against their will. The British education was different from the Indian experience. It split the mind of the educated class and made it neither of the East, nor of the West (Aziz, 1975:306). To blame the British is irrelevant because it was not unique to India. Moreover, Pakistan has been liberated for half a century, it cannot blame history for infinite. At the present time however, it is the consensus of the educators, policy makers and educational administrators to try to change the existing attitude, rationale and objectives of education in Pakistan.

.....with the coming of freedom, the present system has become anti-dated and outmoded, having no relevance to the social, political or other problems facing the country. What we want now is not an army of clerks and small functionaries to fill our government and business establishments, but a body of useful, self-reliant, balanced citizens, imbued with the national ideal, conscious of their heritage and capable of contributing towards the prosperity and glory of our country.

(Jaffery, 1969: 85)

At present, both the quality and the equality of the existing educational system at primary, secondary, college and university level is far from being adequate. The four milieus of teaching, namely, the curriculum, text, the teaching professionals and the teaching methodologies do not measure up to the demands of the country. The 1 percent budget allocation (Jabeen, 1989:47) does not call for radical alterations in the system. The lack of communication and collaboration between the educators, the common person and the social system has resulted in failure for defining the rationale and objectives of

education.

July 9/92

It was summer of 1986, I visited my mother in Lahore, Pakistan. There was a three member team, a mother and two daughters ages 11 and 12. This three member team came every morning at about 9 a.m. to clean my mother's house. It took them good two hours to first sweep each of the five large bed rooms, two verandahs, the alley, three bathrooms and the foyer. This was followed by mopping the whole house that took another hour and a half. After their job of cleaning was done, my sister-in-law would give them food. The food was to be eaten in their utensils, and definitely not in my mom's dishes. If they happened to forget the only bowl they possessed at someone's house they also worked for, their food was then transferred on a newspaper held in their hands and served as a plate. If they asked for drinking water after they finished eating, it was poured from a jug on their cup-shaped hands. The distance between the jug and their hands assured no touching between the two. 'Why don't you send your daughters to school?' I asked feeling very apprehensive about the whole situation. 'Bibi ji (meaning, big sister), we are poor people and we cannot afford school. It is in our fate to work like this'.

The most disturbing element about this scenario is that the social and economic disparity is ingrained in the minds of the society, poor in particular. They accept it as their life long ordeal to be disadvantaged. There is a lack of desire on their part to do something better rather than staying untouchables and eating in the newspaper. 'They are unclean (physically), and are non-believers', was the reaction of my mom and sister-in-law when I felt that they were treated sub-humanly.

The poor strata of the society is not to be blamed totally. Education is a must for all children. It is their birth right, not a privilege of which the children of the poor are denied. The disadvantaged sector of the Pakistani population are disillusioned with their lives and have given up hope. They do not know who to turn to for help, or how to make

an extra buck. They are poor because they are born poor, hence, they are who they are for the rest of their lives. However, there are exceptions to any rule. Another young mother who was employed by my mother to clean the dirty laundry and dishes, was sending her kid regularly to school. A substantial amount of her pay was allocated for meeting the education needs of her son. *I want my son to have a better life than I do.* She would say.

Schooling in Pakistan at the primary level is free and compulsory on policy papers alone. When it comes to implementation of the policy, there is no follow up on the school age children who do not attend school. As a result, the poor masses of the society send their children to work to earn a meagre earning, to help their families with the very basic provision of food. This in turn leads to the problem of child labour, which recently has been brought to the attention of the world media and the global community.

July 7/92

My sister took her chemistry exams for F.Sc. (Faculty of Science), in the year 1961. She did not do well in her exams, so she thought. She wanted to inquire about her mark from the Secondary School Board before the exam results were published in the newspaper. She phoned this section officer in the department of education who happened to be my friend's father. She found out that she was failing by 5 or 6 marks, and that she needed to pay a certain amount of money to pass that paper. My sister paid the required amount of money. After a few days, she phoned the same section officer to follow up on the payment she had made. The voice from the other end of the phone said that, 'five injections have been given to the patient, hopefully he will survive without more injections'.

This was the code language meaning that five marks had been added to the actual

score and that the candidate had a chance of passing the chemistry exam. My sister being a moral person did what was considered to be a regular practice. Now when I am writing and reflecting on this episode, it all seems so unfair and fraudulent. Then it was nothing out of the ordinary. Anybody who could afford it, paid the bribe either to get the exam questions in advance, or to get the required mark to compete for the entrance in an institute of choice. This kind of practice or mal-practice was the symptom of the deep rooted malady, which was an instinctive craving to plunge into whatever it took to bid for an energetic and exciting pursuit. It was also the bad choice of courses in which a student enrolled. Moreover, it was a breach of discipline which reflected a lack of control and vigilance on the part of parents and the educational authorities. Mind you, this did not mean that there was an absence or lack of hard working genuine students who earned what they deserved. There is no doubt that a vast majority of student community had a good sense to recognize the virtue of hard work and to reap the fruits of their genuine efforts.

A very dear friend of mine paid 2 lakh rupees (\$2,000 Canadian) to get his son in the medical school. The boy had failed his medical school entrance exams, but his father wanted him to become a doctor. This was my husband's uncle talking who visited Canada a few years ago.

(Journal entry, July, 7/92).

Good education in Pakistan is the game of money. It is economically oriented where the affluent parents buy expensive traits, sometimes regardless of their child's abilities. This has led to the educational backwardness which has a positive correlation to the economics of the society. The economic backwardness is itself a consequence of

defective system of education. It is a vicious cycle. The education does not address the needs of the individual of the social order, and the interrelationship between the two. However, education in the developing societies is often presented as a significant factor in overall socio-economic development. There is pessimism regarding the role of education in bringing about income distribution that will equalize the life chances of individuals (- The Research Perspective :1). So, significant educational change cannot be brought about without parallel changes in the economy of the society.

July 8/92

It was the year 1958 or 1959 when I was in grade 5. My father had a job in another town situated about 800 miles to the South of the city where I was living with my mother and 8 siblings. My father sent money home once a month as he was paid monthly. Sometimes the money arrived late because of the postal service interruptions, or that my dad got paid late. Whenever a situation like this occurred, my mother borrowed money off her brother who lived in the same city as we did, and was always willing to help. My parents had a regular correspondence with each other. In one of the letters that my mom wrote to my dad, talked about the tight financial situation, and that if my dad could send money as soon as possible. My mom asked me to mail that letter on my way to school. Somehow, I forgot to mail it and left it in my notebook. That letter ended up in my teacher's hands. She not only read that letter but treated me like a piece of dirt from that day on.

I had a choking sensation, the feeling of being under severe stress while writing the above journal. If it was the material prosperity that set the standards in the classrooms, then the teacher was devoid of a sense of professional honour. Moreover, there was a lack of educational climate in the system. There was also a paucity of that missionary spirit with

which the educators devote themselves to the propagation of knowledge regardless of a student's colour, creed or wealth. The problem of low standards in education and the educators, can be traced back to 1947 when millions migrated from India to Pakistan, and vice versa. In case of Pakistan, soon after independence, there was an emergency period where hasty policies were made and quick decisions taken. In the education sector, most of the educational institutions deserted by non-Muslims had to be re-opened and new ones started without any loss of time. Anyone who could show him/herself as a teacher was readily accepted (Quddus, 1975:271), as such. Nobody insisted on documentary proof in the face of the general excuse that their certificates and diplomas had been lost in India. The same applied to the admission process for the students. A student who had failed grade 9 was admitted to grade 10 without regard to his/her abilities. Examination standards were lowered to avoid hardships to those who had already suffered much in migrating from India. Now, it is not difficult to see that it was these very indiscriminately admitted students who were taught, in most cases, by hastily recruited qualified and unqualified teachers. These teachers today fill our universities and colleges and are responsible for the present low standards (ibid.: 271-272).

July 8/92

It was March of 1965, I was writing my English exams for grade 12. There were about 100 students sitting in the examination hall. There were 10 rows, and each row had 10 students. The girl sitting in front of me was a class fellow who was writing non stop in the first half hour after the exam had started. All of a sudden, and to my surprise, she turned her head back and asked me in a whisper, 'what word comes after...'. She whispered a word that I do not recall now. I

could not help her because I did not memorise the essay from the text book. She was writing the exact words of some essay. Since she lost one word, she was in trouble for the rest of the essay. I do not have a clue how she managed after that, but I do know that this girl became a medical doctor and married a deputy commissioner of one of the towns in the province of Punjab.

At this point in time a similar story comes to mind. This story was being staged in our own family but had a different ending. My eldest sister had a life ambition of becoming a family physician. In order for her to achieve her dream of getting in the med school, she studied day in and day out for her pre-medical exams. I remember her carrying a tray with freshly brewed tea in a pot, a cup and a napkin exquisitely placed in the tray. This routine took place every night at about 8 o'clock and continued till the early morning hours. She continued this routine for about two to three months before the final exams. The tea was to stimulate her throughout the night so she could study. Her study pattern was to first memorise (by heart as it was said) the physics and chemistry formulae, and then she repeatedly wrote them in rough (newspaper print) note books. She did the same for her biology studies. I remember those thick note books that had turned black by writing immensely on them. My sister wrote the exam three times instead of the usual two. She could not make it. The problem was, she had done all subjects in Urdu (the national language), till grade 10. Everything switched to English in grade 11, because it was a pre-medical course. After desperately trying for three years, my sister quit school and never went back. A point of interest for the reader, my sister's only son is training to be a heart surgeon in one of London's (England) Universities.

The overall picture of the education system in Pakistan that I had gone through for a number of years and the elements that emerge, have great limitations, restraints and control. Literacy is authoritarian based, and there is a wide disparity as to the access and provision of education conforming to one's socio-economic status. Moreover, having financial stability does not warrant a sound education system for the children of those who can afford it. There are structural flaws like the one mentioned in the above journal. How do you expect a grade 10 student who has done all the courses in Urdu, to switch to professional courses in English

by grade 11?

I have been living in the West for over two decades. I have gone through my post graduate education here and I have been teaching for almost 10 years now. This experience and exposure has provided me with an opportunity to compare and contrast the two systems, the education system of the East which I am a product of, and that of the West which is my second home. The education and experience of the West provided a finishing touch to my personality, and equipped me with a vision of analysing a good, bad and a moderate provision of a child's education. I consider myself lucky to have had such time and experience on my side, and contributing a portion of this experience is a dream come true! My own school in the heart of Lahore (Pakistan), the city I grew up in. A school whose mission would be to help children who deserve the best education but their parents lack financial means.

Having gone through one education system when I was young, and now, seeing the mismatch between the knowledge purveyed by my training in professional schools in the West, I begin to see the complexity, uncertainty, and instability of the practice situation in Pakistan. There is the interconnectedness of the problems, the disorder in the teaching environment, the conflicts of values, goals, purposes, and interests which if ignored will further deteriorate the already faltering system. I visited Pakistan in March of 1996 and gathered first hand information on the existing educational practice at the primary level (see chapter 7). I feel dismal that over a span of over 2 decades things have not changed. As a matter of fact, certain aspects of the public education system have further decayed. The rising tuition fees, bribe to get into 'good' schools, high cost of private tutoring after school and

transportation etc. are some of the many problems. The mismanagement of government's already lean funding, coupled with the conglomerate dilemma of inadequate professional knowledge and physical facilities are the icing on the cake. These hurdles are faced by 80% of the nation's children. It is a cycle of misfeeding, resulting in unproductive output of high unemployment rate with the overproduction of graduates in many sectors of education. The children of the rich and the affluent present the unconventional story, and it is not the intent of the author to focus on the minority.

Summary

Chapter 4 gives an introduction on the geographical position of Pakistan on the global map. A historical perspective is given with regards to the education system there. An education system that is the legacy of the Colonial British who ruled in the Indian sub-continent over fifty years ago but, their mark is still present to this day, both in Pakistan and India. My personal educational experiences while growing in Pakistan, are shared with the reader with reflective notes after each journal. The prevailing education system in Pakistan is discussed in Chapter 7. The findings are based on my research and the available literature. Chapter 4 ties in with chapter 7 which presents the present state of affairs of education in Pakistan. The next chapter 5 is titled *Racism* which shares the stories of the life experiences of visible minority people living in the West. This is another facet of my life which has been quite a learning experience.

CHAPTER 5

RACISM

Introduction

I immigrated to Canada from Pakistan in October of 1974. Before coming to Canada, I stayed one year in London and Birmingham, England, with my two older sisters, during which time my older son Faisal was born. My both sisters took a great deal of care for me and my baby, so it was like being home away from home. After getting married in March of 1973, my husband and I lived six months together before he came to Canada to work on his Hotel and Restaurant Management diploma course in a local college, and I followed him a year after. So when he left for Canada, after about two months, I went to England. It was in England that the whole immigration process took place for me to join my husband in Canada.

As my plane landed at the Heathrow International Airport, London, England, on a mid afternoon of October 1973, it was the first time that I saw, from a distance, white people in majority. The sight was new and not new. It was not new because I had British teachers in school and college that I went to in Pakistan. The novelty was the sheer number, so this experience was of a different kind. It was the first time that I travelled in an aeroplane, and the very first time to be landing in a country thousands of miles away from home. I was sick in the plane, maybe because I was pregnant, or maybe it was the flight sickness. However, I was glad to be on the ground again after flying for about 9 hours. As I recall now, I had no particular thoughts or feelings during the flight or at the touch down. It was as if my brain had stalled on me with the on-coming change. It was a high point in my life

and I was past any feeling. My brain was numb. I do however, remember looking out the plane at the touch down and seeing people who looked and dressed different from myself. I smiled, perhaps liking what I saw. This was my very first contact, from a distance, with people and culture that I was to spend many years of my life. My initial sight connection was superficial, a bit pleasant, and mostly oblivious of what was in store for me in the unknown culture. I was used to having and dealing with people of my own kind, except for the teachers in school. But they were my teachers from whom I learned. These were the people I was taught to respect, to do as they wished and to work for and with them, was considered an honour. I was told that they were my spiritual moulders, intellectual guides, hence they deserved appreciation, courtesy, honour and regard of the highest order. They were not to be questioned, their word was the last word, and no one could say otherwise, let alone challenging them.

Walking in a Canadian school hallway, enjoying the credible status of a teacher, I heard a student calling out 'Paki', from behind and I was right in front of him. I can only hope that the reader might just get a flash of the crumbling dignity, honour, self-respect and the shock that I experienced at that one moment of my life. It was as if everything froze around me. It was the epitome of disappointment and sadness for someone like me who spent her academic years looking up to teachers as gods, a perpetual lesson given by my parents at home. It was not only the teachers, all adults were to be respected, and to be addressed as uncles and aunts. They had the right to even slap my wrist if I failed to observe something or was being discourteous.

The teachers, British in particular, or any white person for that matter, were given

respect not only in school or college premises, but anywhere they went. They enjoyed special privileges, were members of the prestigious clubs, had chauffer driven cars and had maids to look after them and their living quarters. This was not only true for my British teachers but for any white male or female who was living in Pakistan for a long term, or was there on a short term contract. They enjoyed much higher standard of living than most Pakistanis did. They were looked up as special people and guests of Pakistan, so they were treated in a very appropriate manner. The way I interpret this, perhaps it was and still is, the legacy of the Colonialism where the white person was treated with honour and dignity since he was the 'master' or the 'ruler' for one hundred years in the Indian sub-continent.

When I arrived in London, England, I was setting foot on a foreign soil with a mind set that foreigners were treated with respect and dignity. As for having a different colour and being treated differently based on it, was beyond the grips of my mind. I was oblivious to such reality. Everybody is equal because they are created and end the same way, was the tacit knowledge that was tucked away somewhere in my head, having lived with my kind of people. They were not 'my kind of people' while I was growing up among them in Pakistan, they were human beings like myself. Some had more money than others, and that was that. I knew that girls at my school wanted to be more friendly with someone who was rich. However, this was hardly a criteria for my friendship. My best childhood friend who belonged to a middle class family like myself, was the best of companion and confidant. We both shared some common bonds, like the love for school work and enjoying a good taste in clothing and jewellery.

In the West, namely in Canada, I entered in the second phase of my life. I was 23 years old and a new comer, who was starting off with a clean slate of life about the human relationships based on colour. It has been a tough, rough and enlightening at times experience. The experience that has added a different perspective to my repertoire on human relationship being a first generation visible minority woman.

In the following section I share with my reader some of my personal and professional experiences having lived and worked in Canada for over two decades. Some of my readers may find a common story, or are reminded of an incident that happened a few or several years ago and is tucked away in the brain somewhere, and brings back the memory with a reaction or just a nod of the head. Whatever the response is, the sufferers of racial discrimination know that it is a loathsome picture and does not fade away with time. Its impressions are everlasting.

Identity Crisis: Misrecognition

My life is a struggle on many fronts being a visible minority woman. The existence of colour has given an added feature - a superficial physical difference which has provided a pretence for exploitation at my profession and other facets of life. The experiences are heart wrenching, more so for those who have encountered the same or some what the same sub-human treatment.

I started teaching in September of 1986, being a visible minority teacher I have experienced prejudiced attitudes on part of some of my colleagues in the sector of education. According to Taylor (1992), the other sectors of public life, be it social,

entrepreneurial, economic, entertainment and so on, carry the same ambivalent overtones that inflict harm and cause depression in the victim, the victim of prejudiced attitude. These kind of nuances lead to non-recognition or mis-recognition and can be a form of oppression and imprisons someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being. I can relate well to what Taylor is suggesting here. That people suffer a real damage, when people around mirror back a demeaning or contemplating picture of them. My recollections of the misdeeming treatment have been captured in stories written over a period of time. This social reality is an ongoing process and seemingly there is no end to it. I did not know the word 'prejudice' or 'racism' till I came to England in my early twenties in the year 1973, i.e. one year before I arrived in Canada in 1974.

The terms 'racist attitude', 'prejudiced attitude' and 'differential treatment' are used intermittently throughout this chapter, so an explanation is in order. These terms are used in a broad social sense in which it is implied that people are treated differently according to their nationality or other characteristics like colour. People of colour are not only treated differently they are excluded in virtue of their being deemed members of different colour or race (Goldberg, 1993). According to Weis and Fine (in James, 1998), Whites engage in a process of 'othering' where 'White' becomes the norm against which all other communities of colour are judged (usually to be deviant). Colonialism and neo-colonialism have contributed to 'the marginalization of people of colour and the resulting normality of whiteness' (James, 1998:158). James, further states that much of the white identity formation stems from colonial times to the present, that involves drawing boundaries and rings around the substantively empty category 'white' while at the same

time constructing 'others', or non-whites. The definition of 'racism' offered by Omi and Winant consists in those 'social practices which (implicitly or explicitly) attribute merits or allocates values to members of racially categorized groups, solely because of their race'(in Goldberg 1993:96). The word 'racism' includes racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behaviour, structural arrangements and institutionalised practices resulting in racial inequality (UNESCO, 1978:4).

If race is a conception, then racism is a condition. Thus racism involves those conditions that promote differential treatment, exclusions, restrictions and non-recognition. The victim of such condition (s) may suffer psychologically, emotionally, mentally and physically, and the effects can be life-lasting at times.

Following is an account of 'some' of these stories that reflect the process of social construction and marginalization towards the 'different kind'. These stories are at the personal, social, and professional level. For some these stories may be an eye-opener, for a few others these may be common occurrences of their day to day living.

Personal Stories

I have been living in Canada for the past 22 years now, and being the first generation visible minority immigrant I have a few achievements to my credit. For these humble achievements I am thankful to God, as I am a firm believer that nothing happens without His Supreme Will. The underlying requirement for any kind of success, be it worldly or spiritual, is the hard work. 'God helps those who help themselves', is the saying I firmly believe in emphasizing the importance of genuine hard work. Secondly, I am grateful to

my father for inculcating in me the attitude of endurance and striving in the worst of times and not giving up on life's larger ideals. Moreover, I believe that every human being that sets foot in this world has a purpose in life. It is up to the individual to realize that purpose. I acquired my goal of life through the writing of my life story. It is a vision of being in the field of education, helping young minds to achieve for themselves what they dream of. The young talent that has the brains but no means to fulfill their desire of control over their lives. Here, I am specifically referring to those Pakistani children and youth who are under-privileged and so are deprived of a chance to life, because their parents do not have the means to send them to schools.

Now, the stories that grip my heart with sorrow and sadness and keep reminding me of my 'status' as a 'second class' citizen, as I look different from the culture of the majority.

Walking on a London's Street

It was the month of October 1973, and the time was mid afternoon. I was walking on one of London's (England) South-West streets with my sister and nephew. We were on our way to my sister's friend's house who had invited us for dinner. My nephew who was about 3 or 4 years old at the time, was walking slightly ahead of me and my sister. My sister and I were kind of strolling and chatting, and at times I would glance at the passers by or the small business stores on sides of the road. All of a sudden, something small hit hard at the back of my head. 'What was that?' I turned back and questioned, completely surprised rubbing the back of my head with my hand. My sister looked behind us and

rather mad said, 'son of a b...'. It was her response to my question which at the time made no sense to me. I followed the direction of her eyes and saw two young lads racing on their bikes apparently trying to get away. I repeated my question realizing my naiveness of the situation at hand. For a moment my sister was quiet and upset and followed those two teenagers with her eyes. I was having a difficult time trying to make sense but hesitated to ask the same question the third time. After a few moments' silence, or perhaps my sister had her temperament under control, said, 'you don't know..... those two boys blew grains of lentils by a straw aiming at us, and one of the grains hit you in the head'. 'But why?' was my next question to her. 'They do this when they see a brown person, it happened to my friend (my sister's friend where we were heading) too'. The 'but why' question persisted in my mind, reflected my ignorance on the first encounter of its kind. I did not say much, just listened to her reiterate other incidents of the similar nature, some even life threatening that the visible minority people faced every day. Some of those racially motivated incidents made headlines in the newspapers. When we reached at my sister's friend's house and shared with her our unpleasant experience, she confirmed that it had happened to her and that it was a common occurrence.

It was the start of a personal inquiry in pursuit of an evolving understanding that has meaning for the many similar incidents that followed this first one and are part of my personal experience. These experiences are tear-jerking as they were traumatic and dehumanising. It is a sentimental part of my life journey to retrieve them for my story.

Toronto's Highway - A Citizen's Arrest

'Don't touch me', demanded a white male on one of Toronto's highways. It was the year 1976, my husband, my two year old son and I were coming home (we lived in one of Toronto's suburbs), after visiting a friend in Toronto. Just before an intersection where we were to take a left turn, my husband came to the neutral lane by overtaking the car in front of him, which was driven by a white male. My husband thought there was a safe distance between this man's and our car before he overtook it. The man in that car looked at us while we were overtaking. My husband took the left turn. The next thing we knew was that the same man had halted his car in front of us with a screeching halt. My husband reversed the car, changed the lane and started going our way again. 'Why is he doing that?' I questioned my husband. 'I don't know', was his response. My husband tried to ignore him but he would not let us go. We tried taking a different route, he side-slammed our car twice. I finally asked my husband to stop the car and we came out. He approached us saying, 'I am making a citizen's arrest'. We had no idea what citizen's arrest was, being new in the country. I tried to explain to him as to how we were to make an immediate left, and that the overtake was done at a safe distance. He was not ready to listen to any reasonable argument, neither was he willing to discuss the problem at hand. I had no idea as to how he felt at that point, probably he had a bad day, he just was not listening to what I was saying. I thought he was not willing to give us a chance to explain, or to reason with him. He perceived that we were at fault hence he had no choice or alternative but to report us to the police. When the policeman came at our apartment the same night and heard our side of the story he dismissed the case by saying, 'it is nothing but racism'. My husband and I also felt the same way. The policeman was one of the

people who was willing to weigh an evidence and to take what he could from our side of the story to gain insight, and he made his decision.

According to Sowell (1994), people are creatures of their surrounding environment and have their own culture, patterns of skills and behaviour. And when they travel or migrate to different parts of the world these patterns persist from generation to generation. To this, I would add that not only the patterns of behaviour exist but the immigrants also adapt to the patterns of the host culture. I have been living in Canada for over twenty years now and I have, in certain ways, become and sound like a 'North American'. This I am told by friends and relatives when I visit Pakistan. I may be sounding like a North American, more so a Canadian and living by the norms of the Canadian society, but to a Canadian I am not a North American, because I don't look like the majority. Back home when one does not look like the majority, one is treated with respect. It took me a long time to understand the difference of treatment based on ones colour. I may understand this unpleasant phenomenon, but I still have not come to grips with it. So, the one aspect of the Canadian culture that intrigues me the most, is the differential treatment on part of some of the educators who are at the realm of educating the future generations. The generations who are to be trained 'keeping in mind the global perspective of education, a task for which Ontario's diverse population is a valuable source' (The Common Curriculum, 1995:7).

Professional Stories

I have witnessed the educated and the professionally trained, the cream of society,

making fun of ethnic names and using idioms that reflect the intellectual inferiority of the ethnic parents. Many a times I have listened quietly to conversations among staff members based on misinformation or misinterpretation of facts and stereotyping. I also feel that there is a lack of recognition for the hard work put forth by the minority staff. For me, this absence of acknowledgement over time, gave birth to the feeling of being inadequate. This in turn lead to working harder to prove my adequacy. It took me much time and emotional ache before I realized the underlying notion. The notion that the shortfall is not in my person, it is the colour I bear. Once that reality strikes, 'why bother trying to prove myself when any amount of diligence or sincerity is not going to make a difference in upgrading my status as a second class', or, to avoid being excluded. This is the reaction I carry. I do what I have to do to the best of my ability, and that is that. Other teachers of colour that I know have shared the same feelings. 'Are you a teacher helper?' or 'are you a parent helper?' These are the kinds of questions minority staff is often asked when going on school trips and sometimes in the school yard. A policewoman on a school trip assigned me the duty that was given to the parent volunteers only. She had seen me getting off the bus with the children and I had introduced myself as a teacher when we arrived at the premises. No other teacher who came on the trip was assigned that duty. I did the duty. At the end of the trip while the students were being bussed, I went back to the same policewoman and said, 'for your information, I am a teacher not a helper'. 'Oh'. That is all what she had to say.

The racist behaviour creates a tension in the victim who feels a lack of belonging, or being an important part of the host culture. It is regardless of the many number of years

one has lived in it. As a result, the process of acculturation becomes 'deculturation'. It is a strategy when one isolates oneself from the daily hee haa. It all looks so superficial because one does not feel part of it. I am at a point when my concentration alone is on teaching the kids to the best of my ability and sincerity, and the rest becomes a 'waste of my time'. When this stage of cutting oneself off from the social surroundings comes, it generates a kind of hopelessness which is sometimes accompanied by depression, and one begins to question one's very existence in the host land.

The Supply-Teaching Experience

In September of 1989 I got a short term, followed by a long term contract to teach in a senior school. I was supply teaching since 1986, i.e. when I completed my master's programme. I was supplying for only 2 days a week as I had started writing my Qualifying Research Paper for admission in the doctoral programme at O.I.S.E. Between 1987-89, I was supplying only one day a week as I was working on my doctoral courses. This senior public school that I got my contract in on the basis of the work I was doing while supplying, had very supportive administrators and I was very pleased to be working with them. Some of the staff was friendly and helpful. A few days into teaching, the school principal received a phone call from this one parent whose child was in my class. The phone caller alleged that I cried in the classroom in front of the students. I never did that, it was very unprofessional! I might have become a bit emotional while talking to the kids as to how they should behave in and out of the classroom. The students' good behaviour holds a vital importance for me as a teacher if I am to impart any life skills to

them. The principal suggested that I call this parent and clear my name of the false accusation. I did just that. That parent was nice to me on the phone and said that her daughter, who was my student spoke highly of me. On my further inquiry she mentioned the name of another parent whose idea it was to call the school. The next day, this other parent left a message for the principal to call her back since the principal was busy in a meeting when she called. Ten minutes after she had called, her husband called leaving another message for the principal to disregard his wife's call. Probably the husband and wife did not agree with whatever was going on, maybe she wanted to complain but the husband would not go for it. Getting weary of it all, I went to the principal and asked her about the parent's behaviour. Moreover, she was trying to involve other parents in it. The principal abruptly answered, 'the parent is doing this because you are different'. Now, when I am writing and reflecting about this episode, I happened to be the only coloured teacher in that school. That parent perhaps was not open-minded, and may have had some pre-conceived notions about a certain ethnic group. My principal being an experienced person and having a good public relation skills, came to understand the underlying notion of the phone calls. I had just started my first short term contract so I was not in the system long enough to pick up vibes on the elements of racism.

What I was teaching or how I was carrying on my duties, was perhaps not so important for that parent. It was overshadowed by a certain feeling where individuals are judged by their colour and not what they stands for, or the quality of experience they have. So my interpretation of this one episode is that, since I belong to a visible minority group, education and the quality of my individual self do not hold as much importance for

'some' parents as does the colour. With time and over a decade of teaching experience, this categorical status still prevails, and other minority colleagues that I know have shared similar thoughts and experiences. This kind of differential treatment by the dominant or the host group is, what Kramer (1970) calls discrimination. This in turn permits the dominant group to maintain a monopoly of its way of life and to look down upon those who do not look or speak like them.

Student's Perception of the Minority Staff

Two grade six students passing in the hall during recess at a school where I was teaching, called out 'Paki' and I was right in front of them. They were disciplined by the principal who also called home to the boys' parents. The boys gave me a written apology and hopefully, did not use a racial remark again at least in the school premises. While being a student myself at school in Pakistan, I looked up to teachers as special people who deserved the highest respect regardless of their colour. The colour was never a consideration for setting any criteria for behaving towards a teacher. A teacher was a teacher and we were told time and again to obey and listen. Having that kind of a cultural and societal upbringing, it took me a long time to overcome the humiliation, within myself, of this spiteful social reality.

The involuntarily ascribed and negatively evaluated treatment that comes in the package of being in a minority situation, however, did not lower my morale. I was sad, but at the same time I was thinking of the dilemma of acculturation in the Canadian society. One aspires for higher learning and inclusion in the larger society, but the

frustration caused by the feeling of being 'other' is a constant reminder that one looks different and hence a minority, and be treated differently. Internally, or at the emotional level, an immigrant goes through all the stages of acculturation with language, the societal norms, expectations, rules and laws of the land. So, there is a constant change inadvertently creeping in over a number of years. When I visit home in Pakistan, I am told that by family and friends that I am more North American than I am a Pakistani. This judgement comes perhaps the way I speak or speak my mind at times, which is independent of my colour or how I look. In comparison, to a North American or a Canadian, I am a visible minority woman. How I speak, behave or dress up like a Westerner I am still different from the majority. 'You speak English?', or 'you understand what I am saying?', or, just the looks that tell you that you are not welcomed. These are some of the constant reminders that you are a foreigner, a visible minority and hence the feeling of being inadequate. The desire to be included is always there. A lack of recognition, and the feelings of being non-existent, are part of the social system and are by no means haphazard.

The ESL (English As A Second Language) Students

In the late eighties I got a full time job as an E.S.L (English as a Second Language), teacher in another school. I was very pleased to be working in that school as things were going well in the beginning, or at least I thought they were. But this feeling did not last long. This particular staff member, I'll call Miss 'A', ignored me for long periods of time every time I went to her class to talk about one of her ESL students. This boy was a recent

arrival to Canada and had very limited English. I had several concerns about this child regarding his orientation in the system and other class mates' behaviour towards him. After school one afternoon, I went to see Miss A to discuss this child. I waited, close to her desk, for at least ten minutes for her to acknowledge my presence while she was rearranging the classroom furniture. I had a few papers in my hands so I rested them on one of the students' desks that was close to Miss A's desk. After about a minute, Miss A came close to where I was standing, quickly pulled that desk from underneath my hands without saying a word, or excusing herself. I was perplexed and shocked. I was perplexed due to the thought of why she did for what she did. Maybe she was in a hurry to rearrange the classroom furniture. I was also shocked because at that moment I felt that she was being rude to me. I did not say anything to her regarding her behaviour which I interpreted as being abrupt and cheeky, but what I had gone to say to her about this ESL student. This was not an isolated incident. There was another visible minority ESL teacher in my school on a long term contract. Very often, Miss A expressed to me, her dissatisfaction of the ESL programme run by this other visible minority teacher. She expressed similar views about my ESL programme to this other teacher. We both collaborated and discussed as to how we could improve the programme to satisfy Miss A. I was working with the ESL students from three different classrooms so was the other ESL teacher. There were no complaints from any of the other teachers we were working with. How did I know that? I knew that any shortfall on my part would immediately reach the principal's office, and I would be informed about that by the principal. As a matter of fact, in my eleven years of teaching experience, I have never had any complaint regarding

my programme. I have had a positive feedback from many parents of the ESL students, and from some colleagues. In words of one of my colleagues, 'I don't know what you do with these kids. In a short period of time they simply turn around and gain so much confidence that they start presenting their projects in front of the whole class'. My response would be, 'the child is very bright and eager to learn, I just have to provide him/her the experiences he/she needs'.

The ESL student that I had mentioned earlier and was in Miss A's class, had recently come from India. He was shy, withdrawn and did not speak any English. Since he was new in the country, new to the Canadian education system and the language was foreign to him, he needed time to go through the process of acculturation. It was essential for his classmates to try to understand his foreignness in the ways he dressed or acted in certain ways. According to my training, the classroom teacher and I shared the combined responsibility for his orientation to the system and to give him time and a chance to accommodate himself emotionally first, even before the academics could kick in.

The students in Miss A's class did not treat this ESL student well, as Miss A herself mentioned in one of the meetings. He was a stock for the class laughter and no one wanted to sit beside him. As I knew and understood him (I spoke his first language), he was polite with a good sense of personal hygiene. He had a quiet demure, and was sad for the most time, which in the beginning was an enigma for me. He was trying hard to learn. He loved library visits, perhaps to get away from the not so friendly class environment. On several occasions he was beaten by class mates on his way home. Initially he did not complain, but when it became a daily occurrence, he came to my room

one afternoon, with tears in his eyes and narrated his heart breaking experience. 'He must hate it here', was my immediate thought. I brought this matter to the attention of the principal. The boys were disciplined by the principal and the problem was solved for the time being. For the time being because it was dealt with at the surface level. After a few days the problem re-emerged. I, and the other ESL teacher wanted something done in the classroom to promote awareness for the whole class about the immigrant children, their struggles for survival and the language learning, and why they looked different. Our school library at the time did not have much resource on the subject of immigrant children. So, the other ESL teacher and I went to a local library and chose two videos that talked about the struggles of new comers, students in particular, and how the Canadian classmates could help to make their transition easier. The following day, I passed on those two videos to Miss A to be shown in the classroom and suggested a follow up in the form of class discussion. The next day Miss A returned those videos without showing them to the class, saying, 'I don't want to make a big deal out of it'. My immediate reaction was, perhaps, this teacher wanted to leave this student alone. The 'unwritten contract' as Kehoe (in TESL, 1989) would put it, where the student and the teacher leave each other alone. Or, perhaps, she was contending with the dominance of 'Whiteness' in the school, where there is no room for the alternative ideas to flourish. Was she considering this student's culture as an enrichment for his peers, or was it merely a 'cultural baggage?'

Dei (1996), talking about anti-racism education and challenges of inclusive schooling refers to the Canadian educational institutions being Eurocentric, patriarchal and thus

'systematically oppressive institutions'. The many experiences an immigrant like myself experiences through the cultural and the administrative environment of these academic institutions gives one the feelings of being small and deficient.

Furthermore, Dei (1996 :77) suggests that there are significant differences in the schooling experiences (broadly Euro-American Contexts), of minority youth, and that the structural processes of schooling and education provide unequal opportunities and create differential outcomes for students according to race, ethnicity, gender and class. Moreover, Eurocentric approach has only fostered greater student marginalisation and leads ultimately to fading out (ibid.:82).

I brought this matter to the attention of the principal who simply shrugged his shoulders without saying a word. Perhaps he was grappling with the understanding of how race and relational aspects of difference affect the schooling and different educational outcomes of the students. Or, maybe, it was a message of cultural disempowerment where 'tradition' had to prevail to silence my voice. I never went back to him with a similar problem, not that there were not any.

There is a dire need to heighten awareness of students and teachers to try to eliminate personal and institutional prejudice in the classroom and playground. As, in the words of Rivers (1968: 263), we are all born into a particular culture which teaches us how to view the world. Attitudes, reactions and unspoken assumptions become a part of our lives without being conscious of them. The first encounter with a different set of behaviour patterns and values can come as a shock, perhaps causing us to consider the members of the new group to be 'peculiar, bad-mannered, rather stupid or even morally lax' (ibid

:264). As for the teachers to reflect on their teaching practice, Mavalwala offers a series of questions: 'What am I doing, by word or by action, to react to the many human beings that I deal with, as human beings in their own right? Even more important, what am I doing to make all others deal with me as a human being?'(TESL, 1989:20). Martha Fraser (TESL, 1989:101), further encourages teachers and the administrators to ask themselves of what inspires contempt for immigrant students among themselves, then one might discover elements of personal prejudice either forgotten or unconscious. Only with an awareness of our own biases can we then understand and attempt to lessen others. So, overall, there is a need for improvement and innovation in pedagogical methodology not only for learners, but classroom teachers themselves have an obligation to re-assess their professional identities (Sivell & Curtis, 1989).

Connelly and Clandinin (1996:4) have developed a term, 'stories to live by', which is used as 'an intellectual thread' to link teachers' knowledge, context and identity, and to understand them narratively. These stories are shaped by such matters as secret teacher stories, sacred stories of schooling and teachers' cover stories. I am perhaps sharing with the reader my secret and cover stories, pointing at the same time the changing 'landscape' where teachers are to ask themselves, 'who am I in this situation?' than, 'what do I know in this situation?'

Dei (1996), suggests inclusive schooling, which refers to educational practices that make for genuine inclusion of 'all' students by addressing equity issues and promoting successful learning outcomes, particularly for students of racial and ethnic minority. It means opening spaces for alternative, and sometimes, oppositional paradigms to flourish

in schools. Dei further states that, it means ensuring representation of diverse populations in schools by developing broad-based curriculum and diverse teaching strategies, and having support systems in the schools that enhance the condition of success for all students. This success may come when we begin to ask ourselves as to the meaning of the educational initiative or approach for specific groups who continue to exist on the margins of the school system despite the good intentions of inclusion.

The student in the above story stayed in our school for two years, then it was time for him to move on. One day, to my sheer surprise, I learned that he was adopted. He revealed this truth spontaneously when another child was explaining her experiences as an adopted child. He had strict instruction by his adopted parents, who were his paternal uncle and aunt, not to tell anyone that he was adopted. So he was going through a double dilemma. He was away from his family whom he missed. There was perhaps, a lack of understanding in the context of his background, his culture, his needs and a very little mediation in an attempt to do the same. 'Everybody has a problem with him', was the impression his teacher and the principal had of him.

When the minority students perceive that the nuances of their shifting identities and intersecting marginalities are exacerbated by the failure of the education system to recognize that all students enter classrooms with a reservoir of cultural and political capital, and when they utilize such capital to resist hegemonic norms and values which they perceive as subordinating them further, they are labelled as 'deviant', 'problem children' and 'at-risk youth'.

(Dei, 1996:78).

The above story is just one small segment of the two- year life of an immigrant child in the Canadian school system. The same attitude is reflected in the treatment of minority

staff.

There is no eye contact with the minority staff by the administration during the staff meetings. Sometimes, there is an avoidance of the point of view of the minority staff, who sometimes are even pushed around or bullied by some members of the majority staff.

Following is an episode of this staff member (Miss B), who got upset because the principal placed a new ESL student in her class. She had no prior experience teaching students of English as a Second Language, however, she had worked with special education students. I was working with this new ESL student in a small group and found her to be brilliant and very friendly. She had some background in English and did well in her previous school in the country she came from. She was spending half of the school time with me, and for the other half she was in the regular classroom with Miss B. I put together a modified programme for her so she could continue to work on her language skills while she was with Miss B in the classroom. At times, she needed explanation of the work while she was with Miss B. Miss B, on the other hand, chose to constantly interrupt me for small matters to help this new student. By a stroke of luck, my ESL room was next to Miss B's room, so she walked in any time she wanted to and interrupted even while I was in the middle of a lesson. For some time, I quietly put up with her interruptions and her tone of voice as if I was a junior working under her.

One morning, at recess, she started talking out loud in a firm tone while I was coming out of the school office. I was stunned, as an initial reaction, then shocked at her demure and did not know what to say to her except, 'What's wrong in saying that you need to

explain the work (or a piece of work), to this student (while she was with Miss B in the regular classroom), if she has difficulty doing it'. The reason for her outburst was that she thought it was rude of me to ask her to explain this student her work if she needed to. I would go over and explain the work to this student that she was to do in Miss B's class. Sometimes she needed a reinforcement having a limited use of English. I ignored Miss B for her limited interpretation of facts, though I did tell her there was nothing rude about doing our jobs as teachers. She said she was 'getting frustrated', perhaps trying to help the student. I remarked that the word frustration was not in my dictionary, being an educator of the special needs students. This particular student was an all rounder with a keen desire to learn, and I considered myself privileged to be able to help her.

The following day, Miss B stopped me in the hallway and started talking out loud to me again. I was on my way to the yard duty, so I cut her short and said I did not have time to listen to her. I had no clue what the grudge was this time. At the end of the day, getting frustrated and disturbed by a colleague's downgrading behaviour, I went to the principal, the vice principal came to the meeting too. They both sat and listened. The vice principal was sympathetic and suggested that Miss B should be disciplined. Later she wrote me a note saying that she was upset because I was upset. The principal just listened, the only remark he made was that Miss B was 'excellent' in doing what she did. His comment reflected a lack of support, verbal or moral and that he might have been hearing but not listening to me, as I interpreted it. To his comment I remarked that I was not questioning or challenging her ability as a teacher, it was the perhaps a hazy notion of the situation at hand and maybe, it was an exploitation of an easy target. Moreover, it was the

principal who had placed that ESL child in her room and not me. She was perhaps focussing on the curriculum requirements, whereas I was focussing on an individual's needs. I looked at that child as a model in itself and started with her strengths and tried to focus on the needed areas. I felt especially pleased working with her because of her happy disposition, polite mannerism and an ability to quickly grasp new concepts.

The principal spoke with that teacher about the complaint I had made, which he perhaps himself had heard only superficially, and arranged for both of us to meet in his office. Miss B apologized to me for her despicable behaviour towards another staff, her equal, blaming the pressures she was under outside of the school. The principal perhaps thought that he had seen all sides of the issue and tried to neutralize it by having that teacher and I talk. What he did not understand was that seeing all sides of an issue was no strength unless he had acted where real measurable injustice was done. He did not say one word to Miss B to discipline her, which the vice-principal had earlier suggested. It was nothing more than a technique to perhaps further immobilize me. For the administration the dispute was settled, even though nothing was said with regards to my 'wonders' and 'discontinuities', Connelly and Clandinin (1990). For me, in both, Miss A and Miss B's stories, the classroom environment for the ESL students was not connecting to the emotional and social needs of the students. Both teachers were following the guidelines for the academics, but the diverse needs of the students were not being met in the classroom, so I thought. Connelly and Clandinin (1996:25), regarding the in-classroom place, write:

Classrooms are, for the most part, safe places, generally free from scrutiny,

where teachers are free to live stories of practice. These lived stories are essentially secret ones. Furthermore, when these secret lived stories are told, they are, for the most part, told to other teacher in other secret places. When teachers move out of their classrooms onto the out-of-classroom place on the landscape, they often live and tell stories, stories in which they portray themselves as experts, certain characters whose teacher stories fit within the acceptable range of the story of school being lived in the school. Cover stories enable teachers whose teacher stories are marginalized by whatever the current story of school is to continue to practice and to sustain their teacher stories.

There were several other incidents which I did not report to the administration. I did not want to be labelled as the creator of weaves, moreover, I was to continue to practice my role as an ESL teacher. But the question of my 'identity' as to who I was in my school, still loomed.

The teaching staff at any school is a social group, but even within this most social group are many relations which are not social yet. Members use each other to get desired results, without reference to the emotional and intellectual disposition and consent of those used. This, according to Dewey (1916), is not a true social group, no matter how closely their respective activities touch each other. I was part of the staff and doing what I was supposed to do. I attended the staff socials, but I never truly felt a sense of belonging. It was like being alone in a crowd. I was there in person because I was expected to be there, and if I missed I might be labelled as non-social, which is like a stigma.

Multiculturalism And Race-Relations

There is a substantial amount of literature regarding race relations, equity and multiculturalism at the board, ministry, provisional and national levels. There are

publications regarding the relevance and quality of learning material in schools. The acceptable content involving good taste, avoidance of derogatory terms and anthropological errors. Moreover, the emphasis is on the accurate accounts of the contributions of all groups to the Canadian community. And that a scholarly, balanced and up-to-date treatment and presentation of controversial themes should be presented both in Canadian and world history (Ministry of Education, 1985). In multiculturalism, there are numerous recommendations based on several studies done on ethnic and the minority groups at local, provincial, federal, and federal-provincial levels. The intent of my story in this point in time is to establish my personal experiences of day to day living, in the light of these published recommendations and policies. Some of these recommendations just mentioned, relate to the funding of multiculturalism programmes. The government is to support and fund race relations and intercultural training, federal government is to fund majority youth organisations to increase the participation of minority youth. Moreover, the political parties are to increase the participation of visible minorities by developing more effective outreach programmes. The federal government is to promote the hiring of visible minorities in the private sector, and that the Ministry of Multiculturalism should assist more non-governmental organisations in making prestigious annual awards. These awards are to be given for reportage, documentary, advertizing [or other areas which contribute to harmonious race relations (Minister of state-multiculturalism: ?). Similar recommendations have been made by the Peel Board of Education (Equity, 1995), regarding anti-racism and ethno cultural equity for the four disadvantaged groups: the women, the Natives, the handicapped, and the visible minority

people of the Canadian society. Apparently, there is an ample amount of literature written on race relations and equity, that may give an outsider the impression of a utopian society. The question of how much of the recommendations and race- relation policies are implemented, probably some. There is progress made, perhaps by hiring a different face in the work place to give the impression of equal opportunity. But I ask, if we get down to the mere basics of people treating people on equal footing, or respecting minorities, which implies no bias by omission and recognition for a job well done, there would be fewer heartaches for the visible minority and the disadvantaged. Moreover, recognizing the knowledge developed across time and cross cultures would help bridge the social gap between the majority and the minority by inclusion of the latter. The documents on multiculturalism and Race-Relations have been devised with the best of intentions, but there is still the difficulty of translating them into concrete plans of action. Due to the absence of appropriate guidelines, accountability of these issues have been left to the individual school boards and school principals. Due to the lack of resources to implement these government policies, the increased staff representation and curriculum diversity have still not being implemented to affect educational outcomes (Dei, 1996:81).

Race conflicts do not arise from cultural misunderstanding, the oppression of the racial groups is by no means an accident, but is rooted in the social and economic developments of the Canadian society (Bolaria; Li, 1985). I have listed just a few incidents, not that there were not any more. I often hear other minority staff members sharing the same or some what the same stories who are working in other schools. There is always that desire of sharing them to the larger audience. For me to write the stories

through my personal biography serves two purposes. It is like a vent through which I release my pent up disillusionment and frustration with the treatment based on not the quality of work but the colour, and secondly, my story has an audience who might share common stories with my story (ies).

One of the members on my school staff was receiving a mandatory counselling for being unable to tolerate the 'minority people'. The very look on her face, I translated it as, you were not welcomed in her room. The word people meant not only the staff she was working with, it included the students in school, their parents, any parent volunteer, or any ethnic person she came in contact with on day to day basis. She had several scuffles with another minority teacher, who was an outstanding teacher by all standards, and had received an award of excellence in teaching. She reported this staff member to the principal on at least three different occasions reporting incidents of derogatory and racist behaviour. On one occasion, as this other minority teacher reiterated to me, she felt insulted when this teacher spoke loud and in a rude manner ignoring the presence of students. The students of this minority teacher, having witnessed their 'dear' teacher getting humiliated by another staff, came to her after the incident with mixed emotions of anger and sympathy. Some of them suggested that they would accompany her to complain to the principal. Several students took it as a personal insult and consulted their parents on the matter. This particular staff member continued to serve in school without any repercussions, until she retired.

This kind of sub-human behaviour comes from suspecting the behaviour of the minority group which again leads to racial disharmony and cultural conflicts. This

disharmony is at its peak when there are staff socials. Some of the majority on staff, i.e. those belonging to the majority (white) group and culture, I felt, would not even acknowledge the existence of the minority staff. If I tried to squeeze myself in the group, not that I really wanted to, I kept a superficial smile and an occasional nod of the head to give the impression that I was a part of the majority group. But inside I felt very uncomfortable, sitting on my toes and looking at the clock every five minutes. Sometimes, an excuse of being somewhere else would work, so that I could get out of the most discomforting situation as soon as possible.

Eye contacts were maintained by and within the majority staff. I did not converse much because the avoidance and exclusion caused self-suspicion. I always said to myself, I rather sit quiet than saying something that might not fit well with the others. This is non-recognition by omission, and the reader, I hope can imagine the uncomfortable situation when minutes seem like hours in the staff socials. This may also explain the absence of the minority staff at such occasions, who are generally labelled as non-social.

As a multicultural society, many Canadians find it difficult to consider race as an important aspect of the Canadian society, assuming that the society is homogeneous albeit ethnically diversified. It is perhaps more difficult for some to entertain the concept of racial oppression, when the policy of multiculturalism and 'equity' seem to offer protection to all cultural groups (Bolaria; Li, 1985:7).

Equity

Equity is a monumental fiction. I remember this uproar in the school staffroom when this video on Equity, put together by the Ministry of Education (1995), was shown for the first time. Some of the staff members from the majority group got up one after another and, the subtle ways of racism all of a sudden became loud and clear, so I felt. Those who expressed their views, clearly reflected their disappointment and resentment towards the meaning of equity, and how the four designated groups, i.e. the women, the disabled, the natives and the visible minority would be considered for job employment. The arguments ranged from reserve racism, to qualifications, to experience indicating that whites were being denied jobs and education. And this in turn, as portrayed by the majority staff, was due to the financial burden of race-specific policies and that incompetent minorities being admitted to jobs and colleges (Small, 1998). For me it was a shock, where all lip service that did no good to promote equity and race relations, was lost. It was as if the curtain had been raised for the audience to see what goes on behind closed doors, or in the minds of those who consider no one at par with them. By no one, I mean the four disadvantaged groups. I felt so much out of place as I was reminded that I did not belong where I was sitting or working. I walked out quietly in the middle of that meeting without even being noticed, or no one cared to notice. Small (1998:7), further questions that if 'race relations' are not the relationship between biologically different races, then what are they? He brings the reader's attention to economics, politics, power and the ways in which structures, images and ideologies operate to sustain inequality and injustice, which he calls 'process of racialization'. This process refers to the institutional arrangements like the economic system (distribution of jobs), laws and policies and Affirmative Action.

These were introduced to end segregation and continue the process of racialization, though their goals are clearly in a different direction.

Stories Of My Children

This story was written with permission from Faisal. Faisal is my oldest of the two sons. He is 21 years of age and in the second year of business programme at a local university, when this story is written. Faisal is the kind of person for whom any mother would feel proud. He is very focussed, knows where he wants to be 5 years down the road, and what he wants to achieve in life. Throughout his high school years Faisal was actively involved in sports, had several friends, some really close. He was respected by the staff and his teachers for showing respect to them. Academically, Faisal was not inclined to excel but to do just the required, as he often questioned the relativity of the learned material to the real life skills.

Throughout his school years Faisal hardly ever got involved in arguments or fights. He was a peace maker and a calm headed individual.

One afternoon, at high school when he was working on his O.A.C's (grade 13), he got into a fight. He was modelling for this fashion show at the school. There was a large crowd outside the auditorium through which he tried to make his way to go to the gym and then to the back stage. One boy would not let him pass through besides several requests on Faisal's part. Finally, Faisal pushed his way in because he was to report for his presentation. This infuriated that young man and he swore at Faisal. Faisal was not

the type who would get into a fight, or lose his cool, and especially when he was to appear on the stage in a few moments. According to the witnesses at the principal's office, Faisal initially tried to calm this boy down. This boy swore again, nudging Faisal with his elbow at the same time. By this time Faisal had lost his cool. He punched this boy on the face and then few fists were exchanged between them. The matter was brought to the principal's attention who called for the eye witnesses. The other boy was reported to the police and they both got suspended, my son a day less than the boy who started it all. This was the fight Faisal ever got involved in, or rather got pushed in. To reiterate this story here, is to establish for the reader that Faisal is a peace loving, cool headed person who would try to avoid getting involved in a conflict situation as best as he could.

In his primary school years, i.e from kindergarten to grade five, Faisal stayed in one school. I would skip his senior school years (grades 6-8), at this point in time and then come back to it after his formative year schooling.

Faisal was 28 months old when I registered him in a nursery school. By the time he was ready to go to a public school, his social and language skills were at par with his age group. He was admitted to a neighbourhood school at the age of 5+, as he was a January birth. He enjoyed going to school and doing things with peers in and outside the classroom. I was not working at that time, so our evenings were spent together playing, reading, watching T.V. and going to the park during summer evenings. Walt Disney's childrens' story books were his favourite and so was playing with Lego. He spent hours sitting and making different shapes, and loved to show what he had assembled to me or to

his father. Like other children his favourite T.V. show was the Sesame Street. This show helped him learn alphabets and numbers, that I reinforced in different contexts. So by the time he started school at five, he had recognition of the alphabet, knew numbers from 1-20, he recognized primary colours, patterning was his favourite activity as he spent a great deal of time making models with Lego. Playing in sand or dirt and water were other activities he enjoyed. My husband's free time hobby was photography, so Faisal and I were his favourite subjects to photograph with the natural scenery as a back drop. Somehow, Faisal never liked his pictures taken, especially when it came to posing by himself. Every time we went on holidays during summer I would carry his favourite story books and toys with us. Our visits to Pakistan during summer were long, between one to two months, and I tried not to interrupt his routine of reading, spelling and playing together. Sometimes I said to myself, perhaps I was pushing the child too much by carrying on his schedule for reading and writing while we were on holidays. At the same time, I knew that my modelling of teaching, scheduling his time, and spending quality time together was of vital importance to set the stage for the rest of his life. Formative years especially were of a significant importance, where I wanted to do the best I could. My husband being a religious person himself concentrated on religious aspects of Faisal's training.

Now when I look back, I was trying to provide a structure in my son's life. I was being flexible in certain ways, like having him try to solve his own little problems with friends and toys and having me as a guide. I was perhaps unconsciously aware that childhood was the time when flexibility was at its greatest, and if this flexibility was

channelled properly he could be a good problem solver, which I am proud to say that he is. Faisal has developed a foresight in matters of every day life that supersedes my judgement sometimes. We have developed a bond among us, which leads to having a mutual friendship and trust. Somehow, Faisal could not become close to his father. There is this barrier, this partition that kept him at a distance from his dad. This perhaps is due to the fact that when Faisal was born, I was in England and my husband was in Canada, and Faisal did not see him till he was 8 months old. Moreover, my husband restrains himself when it comes to openly admitting his love, and kids need to hear that often. A positive reinforcement rather than negative comments come in handy to assure the young growing brains that they are loved and cared for. My husband spent fortunes buying best clothes for Faisal, which according to one neighbour, Faisal was, 'the best dressed kid in town'.

Faisal was admitted in a nursery school at the age of 28 months, and as mentioned earlier, by the time he was ready to go to a public school at the age of 5, his social and language skills were age appropriate. When he was in grade 1 or beginning grade 2 (late 1970s), he was deemed gifted and was recommended for the enrichment programme at his school. His teacher was very pleased with his work, especially with his language development. This was confirmed several times by the school teacher- librarian, who was pulling him once a week from his regular classroom to provide him programme for the gifted. Everything was going well for Faisal, or at least I thought it was.

I was picking up this slow change coming in Faisal when he was in grade 2. At least once a week he sat up in his bed, usually at night or sometimes first thing in the morning

and asked me to sit beside him. Then he cried bitterly. His tears would form a never ending trail only to be absorbed by the foam of his pillow that he placed in his lap. I can still picture the agony of that young innocent heart, as if someone was crushing it under a bulldozer. I could, and still can feel the pain in his eyes, and the slow sobbing that followed the treacherous out pour of the injured feelings with tears. He was too young to explain what was eating him inside. On my query, he would say, 'mom, you know when the teacher asked you to get a partner for this game, nobody wanted to be my partner.' Or, 'this girl asked me why I was dirty, was it because I did not take a shower every day.' I hardly ever sent Faisal to school without bathing, it was his colour this little girl was referring to. She might have said this not realizing the damage her words were causing to a young innocent life, who otherwise was an exceptional child in many respects. Now when I look back and try to put things in perspective, I interpret it as an attack on identity based on the colour. This is a form of psychological abuse, because identity is compatible with psychological development (O'Hagan, 1993). This further suggests that any effective attack (those sure were very effective seeing the misery and change in my son!), upon identity is likely to be psychological damaging. So attacks on identity (race, colour, creed, culture and language), is a central goal and characteristic of racism. This was an on going torture, a silent torture, that nobody saw, nobody felt because my son never complained about it to the teacher, neither did I. I could only comfort and suggest him to avoid these situations which he had no control on. It was like asking him to swallow a bitter pill with a smile on his face. Moreover, I did not pursue the matters with the teacher(s) as I was not aware at the time if something could be done about it. But this

ignorance on my part did not last long when the racial incidents became so overt and frequent.

One winter evening I was waiting for Faisal after school (he was in grade 3 then) by the door of the apartment building we lived in at the time. The school was only a three minute walk. I had the door about half open and I stood in the centre so I could see Faisal coming. Two minutes into waiting and all of a sudden I heard him shouting 'mom, mom'. I stepped out of the door immediately and saw him running as if he was trying to save his life. I also saw three white boys chasing and throwing snow balls at him. When they came a little closer to where I was standing I heard them yell 'Paki' to my son. I was outraged seeing those three bullies calling out racial slurs, throwing snow balls and chasing my son. It was quite a scary event for an 8 year old to even begin to understand, especially when he had done nothing wrong. I yelled at those boys, who looked slightly older than Faisal, and asked them to stop throwing snowballs. I also told them that they would be reported to the principal. They hit their last snow ball on the front wall of the apartment building, called out 'Paki' one more time and left. I asked Faisal if he knew the boys as we came inside the building. He was traumatised by the incident and the only thing he knew was that they were from his school. He did not know their names or what grade level they were in. That evening I looked in the last year's school book. Faisal and I carefully scrutinized pictures on each and every page till Faisal recognized two of them. I wrote down their names and, at 8 o'clock the next morning, I reported the incident to the principal in his office. The principal called those two boys to the office and asked them for the third one who was part of their gang. The third boy came to the office and the

principal had a talk with them. The boys apologized with a promise that they would not harass Faisal (and hopefully other students of the ethnic background), again. The principal gave me their home phone numbers in case they tried to bully and scare Faisal again, and If I was to call the police I had to inform their parents. The boys did not bother my son again.

There were similar stories shared by my ethnic friends and the dilemmas their children were going through. In certain cases there was the involvement of police because the charges were not only name calling but property damage as well.

There are many parents of ESL children who do not speak English, and this observation comes from personal experience being an ESL teacher. Perhaps the reader can imagine the plight of these parents whose children suffer the same humiliation, by attacks on their identity, their culture, their language and colour. To top it all of, the parents of these children do not have the language or know the approach to do what I did in the case cited above. I have heard a lot of them advising their children to ignore being racially victimized, and to carry on with their routines. The children have a very strong sense of their identities, whether they openly admit it or not, and the perception of the same make them feel threatened by such abuse.

Over the years, I have met parents who feel very insecure just to step in the school premises, the reasons are varied; they do not understand the system (education), they do not have the language to communicate, and they do not have the slightest idea of the short/long term effects of such abuse, except that their son or daughter gets sick every morning before coming to school. Some parents lament by questioning the wisdom

behind their decision to migrate, and I have heard them say time and again, 'we would have been better off back home owing even half of what we have here'. They realize the torture their kids go through and many parents have reiterated, with tears in their eyes, the accounts of racial abuse that depict their wounded souls.

Going back to my son Faisal's story. He did average throughout his senior school (grades 6-8). The common complaint by his teachers was that he was not performing up to his potential. He was getting sick in his stomach, periodically, with the excruciating pain caused by some 'gas'. The doctors could not diagnose anything physiologically wrong with him. Maalox was prescribed all the time that had no effect. When there was this bout of pain, Faisal curled up on his knees with his head on the floor and moaned due to this stabbing pain in the stomach. He could not lie down, sit or stand up, and his face would go pale like a yellow autumn leaf. I sat beside him comforting orally, the only thing I could do. I got sick myself by the agony of the pain he suffered. I can only hope that the reader can imagine the plight of a mother who could just sit beside her son and could not do anything while he was going through such anguish. I wrote this story many years after it had happened. I am still heart broken and pray that no other child goes through that agony, but it is only a wishful thinking.

The Turning Point

Things turned around when Faisal was in grade 10. He got involved in sports and school tournaments, participated in extra-curricular activities, and was becoming confident about himself. His teachers throughout high school spoke highly of his good

manners. the respect he was giving them, and that he was a brainer. He made several friends. The religious training provided by his father, and I on his side all the time, developed an insight and discipline in him that I am very proud of. He has developed this notion of discriminating between right and wrong, and putting everything in perspective with a solid grasp of the underlying reasoning as to why the things are to be done in a certain way. I am very content and thankful to God that Faisal managed to come out of the heartache that was created for him. This heartache had overshadowed his personality and talent for a long period of time. During his high school years he often said to me, 'mom, I really feel sorry for those ethnic students who walk close to the edge of the hallways, and look through the corners of their eyes. I wish they would get involved in sports that might help them with their shy and withdrawn behaviour'. I just smiled and agreed with him. In the heart of my hearts I said, thank God you did just that which helped you turn things around for yourself.

For his admission to the university, Faisal had an average of 'B' grade. His involvement in small business and other ventures of the sort, and his strong quality of public relations paved his way to the university. He has a summer job and puts in a lot of overtime hours.

He has put together a few business proposals, hopefully this business-minded attitude will pay off one day Inshallah! (God willing).

My Youngest Son

This story is written with Fahd's permission. Fahd is my second and the youngest son

who just turned 15, and is in grade 10. He is very outgoing and is a 'social butterfly', as often remarked by his teachers. He is the type who would not put up with anyone who tried to bully him or take advantage of him. If there is a problem he would bring it to the attention of the concerned adults. When he sees that he is not getting anywhere with the help of adults to eradicate the problematic situation, he would not give up on the situation, but would solve it his way, which, sometimes may not be the right way.

A white boy ('J' for easy reference) in grade 9, was a constant bully to not only Fahd but every other ethnic student in his class. Fahd initially tried to win his friendship by offering him rides home, eating lunch with him on the same table, or chatting and walking home with him to get to know him better. Nothing seemed to work and 'J' constantly bullied Fahd. He gave his school bag to Fahd at lunch to carry it for him, and would disappear for a long time. At times he tipped off Fahd's hat from his head and threw it around, or closed the book on him when he was writing. At other times he put his leg in Fahd's way to trip him over. This went on for quite some time without my knowledge. When Fahd realized that his personal efforts to win J's friendship were not paying off, he became disappointed. He lost his appetite and interest in his school work. Often times, I picked up that look on his face of mental preoccupation and I insisted that he tell me what was going on. He was confiding in his older brother Faisal, but gave me the impression that nothing was wrong. I guess his patience ran out when 'J' tripped him in a mud puddle. The same evening he told the whole story. I documented everything, writing the dates and the precise details of each bullying incident. The next morning I went to see the school principal. The principal heard everything with patience and said

that he knew 'J', because there were complaints about him from other students as well. He got the paper from me in which every incident was documented, and said that he would talk to 'J'. The next day I received a phone call from the vice-principal of the school saying that he had spoken to the boy, and hopefully he would not bother Fahd again. For the next two days the things were quiet, 'J' did not bother my son. The effect of the vice-principal's talk lasted for two days only, and the trouble started again. The bully's troublesome behaviour continued. He was power-tripping on my son who was pretty shaken up. Since I was aware of what was going on, and so did the principal and the vice-principal of the school, I was not going to let him fight this battle alone. Keeping my calm and portraying assertiveness, I phoned the vice-principal reminding him of my previous meeting with the principal and the documented evidence that I had provided him. Now looking in retrospect, I was making a polite fuss, without giving the impression of being an over-protective parent. The vice-principal phoned 'J's' mother, a single parent, and called back to brief me on his conversation with her. In other words, the administration did what they could do, or what was in their power to be exercised. But I knew the trouble was far from over. 'J's' persistent bullying behaviour continued with not only Fahd, but other ethnic students as well. These other students, according to Fahd, were quietly putting up with him. I knew that the talk alone would not have any effect because 'J's' attitude towards the minority was deeply ingrained.

It did not take long before my fears were realized. A week after the vice-principal's talk with 'J's' mother, 'J' started pushing Fahd around while he was in the school cafeteria eating lunch. This time Fahd sternly warned him to stop. 'Or what?' asked 'J', pushing

Fahd in a corner at the same time. My son so far had been pretty tolerant of his violent ways and his reign of terror. Now looking back, he did that initially by being friendly with him, ignoring or downplaying it, then bringing it to the attention of concerned adults, not once but several times. At that crucial moment in the cafeteria, when nothing had worked besides his warnings, he landed the fiercest blow on his bully's face, who punched back. There was blood gushing out of two noses. Ironically the principal was in the cafeteria and had seen 'nothing', was called in. Later that day J's mother and I were called by the principal to let us know that both boys were suspended for three days.

I went to see the principal the same day after school and reminded him of the signals that were so strong and indicative of the outcome that the school administration witnessed. His emphasis was on seeing two people covered in blood and exchanging fists, as if it was an isolated case of its kind. I reminded him of my previous visits and the serious signals I had given him both oral and documented. I also prompted that this case had a history and should not have been dealt with purely on the basis of what he witnessed that day in the school cafeteria. He understood that, I hope, though he did not openly admit it, but I guess he had to follow that outdated school discipline policy by suspending both, the bully and the victim for the same period of time. For the bully, the suspension time perhaps served as a short holiday. Shortly after this episode 'J' moved, and Fahd could continue to work peacefully using his potentials to his advantage by being an honour student.

The next story that I am going to share with my readers, does not happen in the school premises but brings one to look at 'racism' from a different perspective.

Two years ago, it was the 'Devil's Night', i.e. the night before Halloween. Fahd and his few ethnic friends were walking on a side walk talking and minding their own business. Earlier that day they had gone to a mall so they were on their way back home. They lived close to each other. They were walking together on the side-walk after coming off the bus. It was a coincidence that it became dark as they were returning home and that it happened to be the night before Halloween. A few minutes into walking, two police officers stop their cruiser on the curb of the side walk where Fahd and his friends were walking. The police officers asked the boys to stop, which they did. Then they came out of their cruisers and asked the boys if they were 'carrying anything' with them. The boys looked at each other with a perplexed look wondering what they meant by 'carrying anything'. They all had their wallets, perhaps some change, and may be a key or two. These were their entire possessions other than what they were wearing. Looking back, the police officers on the other hand, had their occupational status and perhaps wished to maintain it. This status automatically entitled them to question and 'body search' the 'youngsters', without any complaint from anyone or any previous police record. Those boys were law-abiding citizens on their way home from a mall. What they did not realize, and the way I look at it now, was, perhaps their colour that might have enticed the police officers to test their social strength in the name of their title and their status. The police officers whose job otherwise is to serve and to protect. They were acting out of self-interest rather than on any moral principle, as there was no breach of any moral, ethical or legal law. The whole scenario was perhaps the result of a false social perception, culturally determined, as a handful of minority teenagers were walking out after dark on

the Devil's night. Their motive was pre-judged as nothing but perhaps vandalism or property destruction. There was no reason given to the teenagers before body- searching them.

The Summer of 1994

One afternoon in the summer of 1994, when Fahd was 14 years of age, he was playing with water pistols with a neighbourhood boy. They were spraying water and running to get the closest shot to spray each other. While chasing each other they went on the main street which was about 15 feet away from the street they lived on. As they reached the main street they were stopped by two plain clothed police officers who were sitting in a private car. As reiterated by Fahd, both police officers came out of the car and one of them asked the two boys, Fahd and his friend, to let him inspect their water guns. On his demand Fahd asked the police officer to show his badge, as he had told the boys that he was a police officer. Looking back, this was a spontaneous reaction on Fahd's part that reflected his presence of mind that he could not be fooled by the impressive status of a policeman, even though he was not in a uniform. Moreover, without proper credentials, he had no right to inspect anyone, even a minor. This, according to Fahd and his friend, infuriated the officer. He took his badge out, brought it close to Fahd's face almost covering his eyes and said, 'on your face'.

After having heard the story I called the local police station and gave the officer on the phone, the physical description of the police officer as was provided by my son and his friend. To a mixed feeling of relief and disappointment I was informed that yes he was

a commissioned officer with the Police.

The above cited encounters of an unpleasant kind with the police, reflect the not so legitimate use of their power, and the prejudicial view some of them hold of the minority-group members, do not help to diffuse the situation, rather aggravate it.

Fahd like his older brother Faisal is a disciplined teenager, and a high achiever. His compassion is computer, whereas Faisal has a high potential of being a successful entrepreneur. Moral character 'tops every professional and intellectual attribute', as both my children say. Only time will confirm!

Summary

Chapter 5 talks about some of the unpleasant stories that the visible minority people and their children encounter. These stories have long and short term effects depending on how they are dealt with. The majority of the first generation immigrants leave their homelands in search of a better future, it is hard to imagine their plight by someone who has not gone through such dilemmas in life. On one hand, they are struggling with the economic, social and emotional aspects of their new lives in a new land. On the other hand, they face the ridicule and racial abuse. One has to have an iron will to survive, and most immigrants do besides the odds against them. In order to excel in an environment that can be hostile at times, it takes a special person with a special mind, heart and soul to achieve something out of the ordinary. Chapter 6 will share the stories of my two visible minority women participants, shedding light on their lives in their homelands and the struggles they face in the country and culture they choose as their second homes.

CHAPTER 6

NARRATIVE OF A WOMAN: THE POWER CONTROL ISSUE

Introduction

My thesis writing is a narrative inquiry that constructs and reconstructs my personal life stories and their account. Such inquiry is founded on the belief that human experience is basically a storied experience, where the researchers come to grips with the storied quality of it. These stories, according to Connelly and Clandinin (1998), are close to experience because they directly represent human experience, and they are close to theory as they are educationally meaningful for participants and readers.

In the last chapter, I shared with the reader the storied experiences of myself and my children, of living in a host culture where some standards are set according to the colour of an individual, what the individual is inside the skin is often ignored. In this chapter I share the human experience of two women participants, who are of the same ethnic background like myself. Their stories are cultural, historical, and temporal like the stories in Chapter 5 (Racism), and provide another view of the landscape of the lives available to women in general. I am reluctant to use the words, 'women of the east' here, instead of women in general because these are common stories and know no cultural or global bounds. However, my focus is on the stories of women who hail from the same or somewhat the same culture as I do to give the reader a more comprehensive look in our lives. This includes the educational opportunities, especially in the east, that are dealt

with in the next chapter.

These stories are a part of close, deliberately negotiated relationship with my participant women. Their stories and experiences intermingle with my own experiences and stories that provides me a lens of empathy. This lens gives me the power to enter into the emotional harmony with the stories of my participants. In doing so, I gain more from comparing notes and trying to understand the choices available to these women, to the choices available to the researcher. My recollections interplay with the stories and recollections of the lives of these two women who are a composite fictionalized characters (He, 1998: ii), their backgrounds and voices are switched to give a more comprehensive account of the interpretations of their stories, while maintaining the narrative truth. One of my participants is from Pakistan and the other from India. India and Pakistan were both part of the same sub-continent India (South-Asia), before 1947, i.e. when British left India, and Pakistan was created as an independent Muslim State.

The stories of my two participant women were shared in the form of interviews that were a combination of recorded and verbatim transcripts. There were many informal conversations and note taking was used, however the participant felt comfortable. These interviews ranged from 'inquisitional questioning' to 'informal conversation' that ranged in topics and interests of the researcher and the participants. To study the personal experiences, the methods are simultaneously focussed in four directions: inward and outward, backwards and forwards. By inward is meant the internal conditions or feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions, by outward, it is the existential condition, or the environment. By backwards and forwards one is referring to temporality, past,

present and future, and the questions have to be asked pointing in each the four different ways (Connelly and Clandinin, 1993).

In the words of Dewey (1916), to study education one has to keep a balance between the formal and informal, the incidental and the inertial. In other words, to study education one has to study the experiences of life gained in through direct association with the environment, that are intertwined with formal and inertial. So, to study life one has to study life experiences and education (formal, and informal) as part of it. as education is a vital aspect of one's life.

Coles (1989), in his autobiography as a psychiatrist, sees his patients as human beings who have stories to share, stories of their lives and that one can move directly from stories to their lives. The study of life experiences and life itself are intertwined, one may be a psychiatrist, an artist or a teacher, above all one is a human being with life experiences, and stories to share. This forms the experiential whole, the study of which is part of the study of narrative.

Following is an account of the procedure and the ethical process that was adopted to involve my women participants as co-researchers in my study.

The Women Participants: Initial Attempt

The initial contacts were made with several prospective participants for my research and my success was minimal. Coming from the culture that I do and sharing ones life stories particularly when it comes to be part of the public domain, is considered to be against a woman's integrity. Moreover, without the permission of a husband it is difficult

to share a woman's life experiences besides her own will to do so. It brings a bad name to the family and lowers a man's prestige when stories are told. I also realize that the culture I am talking about has no bounds. My research is not an isolated social phenomenon, it is relative to other social realities. Moreover, as I write stories the themes emerge and I have no control over them.

I asked a very close friend of mine for her story. This friend migrated from Pakistan almost three decades ago. We have been friends for over seventeen years. I could write her story without her telling it all, as we have been confiding, sharing our interests and lives together. Her immediate response was a willingness to participate. By the same token, she offered to bring in another friend as a second participant. I suggested that before we contacted her friend, I wanted her to understand what was involved in the whole process of being a participant. She would share her story with me in the form of an interview (s), which may be tape recorded, and that, I may ask her questions to probe further. She would share only what she felt comfortable with and could withdraw any time she wished. I further explained that pseudonyms would be used for names and places to conceal identity, and any other change (s) in numbers etc. would be done the way she wanted to. I asked her to take some time to think over it and to get back to me when she was ready. She asked me to call her back after one week, which I did. *Oh, I did not give it a thought yet,* was her response. I sensed her reluctance to part with her story, as opposed to her initial reaction of not only being a participant herself but bringing in another friend as a second participant. 'Would you like me to call you back maybe in a week's time, perhaps you need more time to think about it?', was my reaction to her

reluctance. *Call me back in two weeks*, she answered. Though we talked to each other on the phone during the interluding time of two weeks. I did not ask her about her decision. After waiting a little over two weeks I called her specifically mentioning my intent. She said she was going to call me back later that day to set up a time and place to meet and talk. Her last comment before we ended our conversation on the phone was, *how much more can you burn a person who's already been scorched*. Listening to those comments, put so succinctly about her life, I knew she was not going to participate. Her comments reflected her disappointment with some aspects of her life and the feelings that go with it. For her to retrieve and to share her life experiences in the form of a story was going to be painful, but not as painful as living it! She did not call back as she said she would. We are still good friends and spend much time sharing our lives together. She was not given 'permission' by her husband to share her story, as she later told me.

There is a sense of dependency on the male partner when it comes to decision making. Secondly, the woman is fettered by the forces of tradition that talking about subjugation, or any experience for that matter, is to bring humiliation to the man and to her family whom she loves and very much cares for. These are social and moral restrictions and shut-ins that are imposed upon her, and by virtue of the same she has little freedom. She has to have her mate's approval if she wants to share something personal. My friend was more than willing to share her story but without her husband's consent she withdrew her initial consent.

According to Quddus (1985), this one scenario like many more of the same sort, is the result of a man's attitude towards women, as less than their equal, their inferior, and an

entity for child bearing and house work. These are the self-created social prejudices and outdated moral values, which get their impetus from the fear of social censure. This kind of fear that my friend perhaps realized, of bringing a bad name to the family, is greater than any other factor as human beings naturally always want to confirm to their social pattern. Sometimes morality and religion are also left behind in the eagerness to follow the existing modes of society (ibid.: 289). However, in Pakistan, there are some changes being seen and experienced in a very few selected upper class females who have some control on their lives. They are educated, and economically, they are not totally dependent on their husbands. As the feminist culture will take a long time to develop in India and Pakistan, my research, therefore, is not contained by a proposal, it is driven by what I cover and how the themes emerge. I hardly have any control on the themes.

‘I keep my wife under control’. I have heard this many times when males go on an ego trip. It is not blaming the mankind, the fault lies in the basic way of thinking and acquiring the wrong values. These values are social as they spring from the moral conscience of the people.

I contacted a distant relative of mine who was raised and educated in Pakistan, and had recently come to Canada from a country in Africa after twenty years. I had some idea of how her and the children were in the process of adjusting to the new country and culture. One of her sons was candid enough to share with me the family’s struggle which was sometimes coupled with frustration while trying to cope with the new environment. She declined by saying that she was busy doing two part time jobs, hence ‘too busy’ to participate.

When it comes to sharing personal life stories, which eventually become a part of the public domain, people do not feel comfortable no matter how anonymity is kept. It would take a long time and a great deal of effort to bring these stories into the open to realize women's distinct role in the family and society at large. The change is there, but it is slow and painful.

Second Attempt

In the interluding time before I called another prospective participant, I spoke with my thesis advisor Dr. Michael F. Connelly, about the hurdles I was facing to get participants for my research who were from Pakistan. Pakistan was part of the sub-continent India till 1947, and India was ruled by the Mughals for a 1000 years before the advent of the British in 1847. So having lived together for so long, Indians and Pakistanis share much in common regarding some traditions and culture. Based on this premise, and with the consent of my advisor, I decided that one of the participants would be from India and the other from Pakistan

I contacted another friend of mine for her participation. She was a young Indian woman, a house wife with two children. She needed time to think. Her response at my initial request was that the decision to share her life story was going to be hers, and hers alone. *The way I was pushed and forced into leading my life the way I am, was my parents' decision, and the story of it is beyond anyone's imagination.* I sensed rebellion. However, I was not sure at this point in time if she would part with her story, though there was a glimmer of hope. I explained to her as to what was involved in my research

and what were her rights if she decided to part with her story, like I did to my first prospective participant who later declined because she couldn't get permission from her husband. I was to call her back in a few weeks time for her decision.

Meanwhile, a colleague of mine with whom I had spoken earlier about my research interest, was somehow willing to participate. She was a first generation immigrant woman from Pakistan. It took many weeks for her to decide whether or not she was willing to be part of my research.

My First Participant

After about three weeks I contacted this young Indian woman who needed time to think before she made her decision. She was ready and willing to share her story! *One day I am going to write the story of my life myself*, she said. How daring and different, I thought. Several weeks before our initial interview, I explained to my Indian participant her rights to withhold information that she did not want to share, and that she could withdraw any time she wanted to. Moreover, her identity would be concealed by using pseudonyms for names and places. She was to read the written text of her interviews, or any other information for that matter, and if she did not feel comfortable with anything, it would not become part of my proposal first, and then the actual dissertation. Besides, the sharing of her life story and its interpretive analysis would help her understand her life better, which in turn might help her in decision making. We would be sharing our stories together to look into the lives available to women, visible minority women from the East living in the West, in particular. These stories may have common threads with the lives

of other visible minority women and youth and perhaps an eye opener for some.

Following is a detailed account of the life story of my young Indian woman participant to be shared with you, the reader, so stay tuned!

Salika

Salika is a fictional, composite character (He, 1998), drawn from three people from three different places. Originally, all the three characters are from India.

Initially, several contacts were made with Salika explaining her the potentials of my research for her. For instance, the recording and studying of her life would help her to understand the 'texture of hidden' and 'unrecorded' (Bateson, 1989:5), making invisible, visible and the desire to empower aspiration. The comparing of life histories would enable me to see patterns of creativity, penetrate cultural barriers and to discover the power of self and the integrity of others.

A written consent was obtained from Salika through a letter explaining her rights. We had three formal, unstructured and open ended interviews in Urdu, Salika's first language, and were translated in English for this research. All three interviews were conducted at Salika's place because she was not allowed to go to anybody's place without her husband. Two interviews were recorded verbatim, and the last interview was tape recorded and transcribed. These interviews took place between December, 1994 to February, 1995. Many informal phone conversations took place between Salika and I, and the notes were recorded as soon as the conversation ended, or soon after. We still share our life experiences, we talk often, we meet and confide in each other. It is an ongoing process as

we have become the best of friends, trusting, caring and relying on each other for moral and emotional support.

Salika's Story

I became acquainted with Salika after she got married and came to Canada to join her husband Jalaal (fictitious, composite character), in the late 1980's. She was nineteen years old, and her husband Jalaal was forty nine when they got married. Jalaal and his ex-wife Nomi (fictitious, composite character), of twenty years, were our family friends. They had two children together. Nomi had a full time job, Jalaal was unemployed and given to drinking for a number of years. After putting up for five years with his drinking habits, and a lack of co-operation in the household, Nomi asked Jalaal for a divorce. They had been separated before on several occasions but got back together for the sake of children, and Jalaal's false promises to Nomi to go for rehabilitation.

When Nomi asked for a divorce, Jalaal started gossiping among relatives and friends including my husband and I, that his wife was sleeping around with other men. He blamed Nomi for the marriage break up because of her infidelity and keeping their children away from him. At the time of their divorce, Nomi was in her mid thirties and Jalaal was 48 years old. They had been married for 20 years and it was a marriage of choice and not an arranged one, which was a usual practice in India those days. They were married in India.

One year after the divorce, Jalaal went to India and re-married at the age of 49. He married Salika (my participant), a 19 year old student in Bachelor of Arts programme in a

local college. This marriage was arranged by a sister of Jalaal who lived in India and was married to Salika's uncle. According to Salika, Jalaal's sister told Salika's parents that Jalaal was an engineer by profession and was a rich man. Salika did not buy into that, she refused to marry a man old enough to be his father, and, a divorcee whose children were her age. She was put under a curfew by her father and was not allowed even to go to college unless she agreed with her parents proposal. Salika protested for many days and cried her eyes out. When nothing seemed to work she stopped eating and got sick. She came to a point when she was past any feeling. *I had gone through so much emotional and physical turmoil and it took so much out of me, I did not know or care any more of what was happening to my life.* Her transition from refusing to marry Jalaal to getting married to him, came in several stages. Her initial reaction was that of a complete disbelief and shock. For many days she was in a complete denial as to her parents' agreement to such a proposal. Her father being the family's sole decision maker, as reiterated by Salika on many occasions, this time he was supported by his wife (Salika's mother), in accepting Jalaal's proposal. Facing an unyielding decision made by both of her parents, Salika realized that her consistent denial of marrying the man of her parents' choice was of no avail, she stopped eating and locked herself in her room. She was not allowed to go to school where she could get some refuge by talking to a friend about the anguish her parents were putting her through. In the seclusion of her room, thinking about her desperation to get out of the most undesirable situation and no help offered by anyone, she finally compromised feeling dejected and helpless. At that point in time there were two things on Salika's mind: First, knowing the stubborn nature of her father and

being the family's sole decision maker, and secondly, this time her mother agreed with her father's decision, Salika was left with no choice but to give in. She felt numb, did not know or care anymore what was happening to her life. She might have been looking for some kind of a concession if her mother disagreed. All odds were stacked against her this time. If she left home and ran away, which is unthinkable, she might have ended up at her father's doorstep in a few days. Almost everybody in that town knew her father, secondly no one would give refuge to a runaway girl. Salika had no choice but to give in to her parents' decision.

Jalaal Weds Salika

Jalaal married Salika the second day he reached India. He returned to Canada after three weeks. Salika followed him after about nine months till all the immigration formalities were completed. Her life in Canada since her arrival from India had been no less than *hell* as she told me during the interviews. She perhaps had gone through the highest point in her life to experience distress, agony and disappointment with the social system. To top it all off, the attitude her parents had towards the whole scenario, inadvertently *ruined* her life. Her mom who in Salika's words, *is simple natured to the point of being stupid*, sided her dad, and paid no attention as to how Salika felt.

Salika had two children with Jalaal. She left him once when he hit her but she had to come back as Jalaal told the police that she had abducted their son without his permission. They had only one child then. She often wondered out of sheer desperation and hopelessness, *I don't know what to do anymore*, with a deep sigh of agony that

depicted her wounded spirit. Jalaal held two temporary jobs in six years, and that is how long he had been married to Salika while this story was being written. He had not have a job in the last three years. He was an alcoholic who spent his evenings drinking, shouting, using abusive language, and if Salika tried to defend herself, he resorted to physical violence. The police had been called in a few times. To avoid repeating this embarrassing situation both for herself and her children, Salika kept quiet for the most time no matter how outraged and ridiculous Jalaal's behaviour got while he was drunk. Sometimes she locked herself in the bedroom with her children during the night time till the next morning. As Jalaal was so heavily drunk every night that he would not get up till late afternoon the following day.

Salika came from an upper middle class family in India. Her father owned a lucrative business there. He married Salika's mother when she was 13 years of age, he was 22. He, according to Salika, abused his wife (Salika's mother), physically and emotionally. He also beat up his son and daughters except for Salika as she was very *close* to her dad. However, Salika's father was a good *provider*. He showered his wife with gifts all the time, *but, it was no use spending money, taking the family for holidays or eating out at expensive restaurants, when you saw your mom getting hit in front of her children and her siblings* (Salika's uncles and aunts). *I could never like my dad.*

I am, one day, going to write the story of my life. I kept everything to myself and never told anyone the excruciating physical and emotional pain I was constantly going through after marrying Jalaal. That drove me crazy. Not anymore! I had to let people know what was happening to me. Salika picked up this connotation from a social worker she was

confiding in when Jalaal hit her the first time. Salika was confiding in someone when she was at the verge of a nervous breakdown. This in turn provided her the strength to confide in someone her race, religion, colour and who shared a common cultural background with her, i.e myself, the researcher.

I had no sex education, so I had no idea about the physical relationship of a man and a wife when I got married. My oldest sister got married at an early age, she did not tell me anything either. When I complained to her about not preparing me for such a relationship, she just smiled and said nothing. This in retrospect points to an education system that had also failed Salika other than her sister or mother.

I used to have an excellent decision making power, but due to a constant put down (by Jalaal, her husband), that I'm ugly, I have a big mouth and have no idea how to talk, I no longer know what I am doing. I have to make a decision about my life.

Salika had a good educational background. She was in the last year of the Bachelor of Arts degree programme when she got married, or forced into getting married. For her junior and high school education she and her sisters went to an army school of a high repute. She was fairly competent in oral English. She spoke well and was an excellent host. Both her children had a good role model in their mother. She provided religious training to the older one to which Jalaal objected sometimes, with the argument that the child was still young to understand anything. He was 5 years old! The younger child was 18 months old when this story was being written.

Reflection On Salika's Story

The above episode was a brief account of a young woman's life who was caught in a complex web of male hostility that started when she was the daughter of so and so. It continued in its worst form when she was the wife of so and so. The unpleasant memories of her childhood were repeated in her day to day living after she got married. She experienced rejection and oppression caused by her supposedly life-long partner. Salika was the product of an upbringing where females had no voice or choice. She had prohibitions, anger was forbidden, so was the desire for power and control over her life. Her nostalgia of her childhood was the hidden anger and the unrecognized voice to publicly complain. *In a state of shock, we watched our dad hit my mom while she said or did nothing.* Salika was depressed for the most time due to her suppressed feelings of anger and of denial of who she really was. It was the denial of her voice and her very own identity, which for sometimes, had Salika have a low image of herself. To quote Nancy Millar (in Heilburn, 1988:18), identity is both, it is inherited cultural fact and as a process of social construction. It was inherited because Salika's mother was being subjected to the same or somewhat the same control by Salika's dad. He had the right and the power to run the affairs of life the way he wished. Salika's mom had a very little say. It continued in Salika's life. She was first, the daughter of her father and then a wife of her husband. Who she really was and the kind of control she wanted for her life was perhaps not significant. She was considered a person without an agency. She had been criticized for her looks, her speaking, her way of upbringing her children, and the friends she made. She experienced power and control that had deprived her of taking any charge of her life. For men in control the power is beating up a woman, denying her rights as a human being

and above all trying to stay in power by any means possible. For Salika it was a battle for power, authenticity, physical and intellectual stature to which men claim to be the sole proprietors. *How dare you call me ignorant and illiterate when my friends come to me for advise.* This would be Jalaal's egotistical response as loud as he could yell when Salika sometimes dared to bring him to face the reality that he was a pest who drank in the presence of his children and told them, *it's a vitamin drink good for your health.*

You are ugly and you come from a village (meaning, she was uncivilized). It was another put down that Jalaal constantly used on Salika that I personally heard many times. Salika was living in a hostile and dangerous world created by her partner's hostility and exploitation. For the quest of physical and psychological survival, Salika endured solitary confinement in her room with her children, and did not speak to her husband often and for prolonged periods of time. *I don't even look at him for several days and have no longing to do so,* Salika often said.

I, the researcher, found Salika to be an attractive and a very strong woman. Having endured hostility first from her father and then from her husband, and this volatile combination made her a person with an extraordinary courage and a narrative so compelling. Some female readers of Salika's story may relate to her experiences. Salika wanted to become somebody, to achieve something in her life. but encountered a violent opposition by her husband at many levels. She was a women of ambition and was career oriented. When her counterpart feared the threat of his desires and domination to be given a secondary place, he even resorted to even a tighter control, which further complicated their relationship. *I am not allowed to either receive a phone call at home, or call*

someone I wanted to. So much so, the only telephone we have, he carries it in his brief case when he goes out.

A woman's talents usually go unrecognized by a partner who is abusive. It does not matter what aspirations or principles a woman has, the focus is to look for the negatives. I can personally relate to that. The result of such tension and emotional abuse is, either each partner goes her/his way, or it costs the health of the ambitious partner.

Salika was to be commended for her courageous act of allowing her narrative to be in the public domain. She was trying to deal with power and control by making the text of her life, born out of the 'sub-culture' of oppression and powerlessness, to be shared with other women. Women will starve in silence until new stories are created which confer on them the power of naming themselves, these lines so eloquently depicted by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in (Heilburn, 1988:34) that reflect courage, generosity, responsibility and wisdom due to women like Salika. For a long period of time she starved herself and her counterparts by keeping her narrative to herself, thus avoiding or delaying a model by which lives are lived. It is the stories, according to Heilburn, not the lives we live by. It is a hard thing to make up stories to live by. We can only retell and live by the stories we have read or heard. We live our lives through texts, through narratives, that must be shared.

Some male counterparts assume that women are not at par with them or are not their equal. Most of the social taboos that exist for women in India and Pakistan, or for that matter in the Western society as well, are the creation of male ingenuity. In Indian and Pakistani societies, women are the silent sufferers because they are economically

dependent on men. Divorce, according to Quddus (1990), is looked down upon with contempt, and not as easily available to women as men. She further states that even our women find it better, socially, to carry on with an impossible husband than to get a divorce. It is the lack of courage, and even if a woman is self-sufficient economically, the slow process of litigation is extremely hard to put up with. Moreover, there is no legislation for the payment of alimony if a husband files for divorce. For a non or semi-skilled woman it is next to impossible to carry on without husband's support, no matter how difficult the relationship is. This fits the scenario of Salika's mom and many more women like her. A man sometimes gives financial support to not only his wife but her parents and siblings as well. *That's the reason my mom stayed with my dad besides his bad temper and abusive behaviour*, reiterated Salika. This limitation lowers the morale and self-respect of women.

Jalaal (Salika's husband) was divorced only for a year from his previous wife and he managed to get another wife less than half his age, is another social taboo that women endure. *He is old but he is rich*, a mentality that portrays a very superficial understanding of what is involved in a healthy relationship between a husband and wife. 'So long he takes care of me financially, I don't care what he does outside the house in his spare time', are the voices echoed, and perhaps Salika's marriage echoed the same voice when she was made to believe that Jalaal was a rich man. In fact, he had very little money as he was unemployed for a number of years before marrying Salika. Nobody bothered to investigate the reality before shoving Salika in a living hell. A woman of 19, so innocent, or I would say ignorant as the society did not equip her even with the knowledge of

physical relationship between a husband and wife. Mothers learn the intricacies of a married life after they get married. Most of the time it takes a whole life time to understand a basic human trait, especially when it comes to understanding the life partner. So, whatever knowledge or information is gathered as a practical experience by those who experience it, is kept in a closet. Sex is a difficult subject and almost impossible to handle when it comes to sex education of the daughters. 'Oh, they will learn when they get married'. Sometimes the daughters end up paying a heavy price for their ignorance by having children of the husbands they hate. Any knowledge of sex, or the family planning would help them get out of the situation without bearing children. Having children means these women are committed for life with the same man and their lives are controlled in the manner a man deems fit. This is a bitter reality that I witnessed myself when I visited Pakistan in March of 1996. The boys have access to better education than the girls in the same family. The girls are not allowed as much freedom, be it social, educational or financial, as the boys do. So right from the childhood or the boyhood, a male begins to accept and internalize the special treatment he is provided in the academic, social and family life. He sees the role of his mother and that of his father and ingrains as such, i.e. the superiority of men over women. My mother used to give the best portion of every meal cooked in the house to my eldest brother. If my brother was not home at meal time, his portion was kept separate and no one was allowed to eat it. Very openly and proudly, my mom portrayed the superiority of boys over her daughters, and believed that it was the boys only who looked after their parents when they are old and frail. In Pakistani and Indian societies, the elderly people are not housed in old age homes, like in the West,

instead it is the responsibility of their children to look after them.

To flip to the other side of the coin regarding a woman's productivity, in India and Pakistan, a woman who does not become pregnant within the first two to three months of marriage, rumours start spreading that there is something physiologically wrong with her. Everywhere she goes she is taunted and/or hinted to have children otherwise she is only 'half' the woman. Nobody ever talks about the man having any such problem, it is always the problem with a woman's reproductive system when she is unable to bear children.

I, the researcher, did not know anything about sex, or the relationship of a man and a woman till I was in grade 10! My source of information was a class fellow who got married, and was circled by friends when she came to visit us in school. To our sheer embarrassment and making the greatest 'discovery' of our lives, she reiterated her first night experience with her husband.

A woman's centre of her life is a man, his career is the only one that gets on the top rung of the hierarchy of moral values, that are created by man himself. She lags behind, and unless and until this gap is corrected, the insight and any control to her life are hard to come by.

My Second Participant Anita

My second participant was Anita (fictional composite character). Anita migrated to Canada from Pakistan. Anita was willing to be a participant when I approached her and explained what was involved in my research. She needed some time to think, and in a few weeks time she was ready to share her story. The same procedure was followed as in the

case of Salika, my first participant, regarding confidentiality, anonymity, freedom to withdraw, and a written consent to share only what she felt comfortable with. I had three semi-structured interviews with Anita between December 1993 and December 1994. There were several informal conversations between Anita and I, and notes were made immediately after each conversation. All three interviews were written verbatim in Urdu, though Anita spoke Hindi. Urdu and Hindi languages are spoken almost the same way, the text is written different. If there was any words (there were very few) in Hindi that Anita spoke and I was not sure of the meaning, Anita would explain them either in English or by example. These interviews were recorded verbatim because Anita did not feel comfortable with recording of her story on tape, and they were translated in English for the research.

Anita came to Canada from Pakistan in 1970, from a city that was about 300 miles South of an Indian border. When she came to Canada, she had an M.Sc. and a B.Ed. degrees with some teaching experience to her credentials. She belonged to a large family. Her father was a medical doctor and her mother had grade 8 education. During the Independence War of 1947 between India and Pakistan, i.e when Pakistan became a separate Muslim state on the global map having parted from the sub- continent India, Anita's father was retained to look after the war casualties in the city they were living in. Anita's mother with her three children was forced to migrate to another city as refugees. All their possessions were taken over by the state and the family was conscripted to live in refugee quarters. After the war was over, Anita's father was posted in a city about 250 miles North of the city where Anita's mom was stationed with her three children. The

family was separated for 3 to 4 years. The father visited his children and wife from time to time, and it was in those years of separation that Anita was born.

After his duties with the war casualties ended, Anita's dad got a job with the government of Pakistan. As a result of this government service, he got transferred every year and so the family had to move with him. The education of children was affected due to the frequent moves. However, Anita remembered getting awards for her outstanding performance in dance and drama when she was in the elementary school. She had no recollection of any teacher being close to her. *Teachers in Pakistan were different.. They hardly formed a bond with their students.*

Anita vividly remembered being physically punished by her father. *My father and mother's mental levels were not at par with each other. He was educated (he was a family physician and the mother had grade 8 education), and was not satisfied (with his life), so he took his frustrations out by beating us.*

By the time Anita was in grade nine she stayed in a boarding school because her father was posted in a village where there was no proper schooling for girls. So Anita's two sisters and a brother rented an apartment to study in the town where they were before the father got posted in a village. The father sent some monetary help. One of Anita's two sisters got merit scholarship that helped them to pull through school.

During my elementary school years, I received canning on my hands for not being able to answer a question right (there was only one right answer), or sometimes for not doing my homework. Sometimes I was asked to become a 'rooster' as a form of punishment. Becoming a rooster meant that the student had to bend the knees and head

with the bottom up, lining the head with the feet at a distance of about one foot. Then swirling and bringing both arms from between the shin and thighs bent at the knees, to hold ears with them. It was a very painful position. *That's why our personalities didn't develop (to the fullest).*

There were other factors, as Anita recalled, that stood in the way of a healthy emotional development. She was considered *ugly* and got beaten up by her father. *My mother never did anything (to stop the abuse) about it. My father degraded and humiliated me, sometimes even in front of his patients. In contrast, my oldest sister was studying to be a medical doctor and was considered good looking, so she received a favourable attention from my dad.* He provided for her training in music but did not like Anita's looks. *This really effected me (emotionally). Now when I look back and think about it, my husband didn't confer me (love and attention), what I had missed getting from my father. He (Anita's husband), didn't physically abuse me, but hardly ever provided the emotional support I needed.*

My father favoured boys as their would-be wives would bring dowry, whereas the dowry had to be given to the girls (when they get married). Food was always served first to the boys in my family.

Besides a lack of emotional and moral support from her dad, and the corporal punishment, Anita did well at school. However, in her M.Sc.(Master of Science), part 2 exams, she merely got a pass mark. *My parents used to fight a lot. Sometimes, my dad chased my mom to hit her, as she had the courage to talk back to him in case of a conflict. The emotional and physical abuse in the family had its toll, which effected my*

performance at the post graduate level.

The school system in Canada is different (from the public school system in Pakistan), and is very supportive of helping the child develop his/her personality through various modes, like project presentations and public speaking etc. The child as a result, becomes out-spoken and does not hesitate to talk. In Pakistan they just train the book worms.

Anita's favourite subjects at school were fine arts and biology. She remembered her field trips to forests for Botany classes, and to the mountains to look for the formation of rock and its layers for the geology research. *Boys and girls were always segregated, going out with boys meant earning yourself a bad reputation.*

Anita Migrates To Canada

In the year 1970, when Anita migrated to Canada, she had two degrees (M.Sc.; B.Ed.), and some teaching experience from Pakistan. When she arrived in Canada there were two things on her mind, to support her ailing father and her younger siblings who were still at school in Pakistan. Also, to further her education so she could get a proper job for herself. She joined her sister in Canada who, at that time, was working on her Ph.D., and could not support Anita financially. Anita applied for jobs to about seventy or eighty places but could not enter the work force. She sometimes was labelled as overqualified, or not having any Canadian experience. She finally took a job at a garment industry where her assignment was to iron clothes. *The environment at work was mentally torturing. Anita was facing discrimination. There were racial slurs and name calling.* Anita had to endure this humiliating and mortifying situation as she needed money for

herself, the ailing father and the school going siblings in Pakistan.

Once I visited a government office while I was searching for a job, an elderly lady in the office looked at me and said, 'aren't you lucky you are here '! If I had white skin and spoke English like they do, they would have given me a good job (with my credentials). They have ingrained hatred for us. Anita remembered how someone broke into her van. We had to put up with vandalism too. The looks you get (from the white people) when you go shopping openly tell you that you are not welcomed in this country. So it was racism at multiple levels and places that Anita was being subjected to. There are racist teachers in the system (school system). What will they teach children (about harmony and equality), if they are racist themselves. And it's women putting down women.

I was walking on a street one day, a youngster pulled down his car window and yelled out 'Paki', 'Paki'. Pause..... Perhaps we are living in a wrong country. I could very well relate to that.

Anita Supports Her Family

Anita started sending one hundred dollars a month to her family in Pakistan as soon as she got the job in the garment industry. Sending money to Pakistan did not sit well with Anita's husband. He started gossiping among friends and relatives stigmatizing Anita's support for her family. *Looking after a big family (her 4 or 5 younger siblings, an ailing father and a mother), with such a small amount is hard. The same amount could have provided a better care if it were a small family.* For the time being Anita's aspiration of furthering her education in Canada had to come to a halt. Anita met her husband

through a marriage club and got married in early 1973, i.e. 3 years after she had migrated to Canada. He belonged to a different 'caste' and spoke a different language, but understood and spoke Anita's first language too. This created a lot of problems for Anita in the years to come. At times she was forced to think that having married a man outside of her 'caste' was a mistake. She avoided going to her husband's friends as she did not know the language. In 1974, Anita moved to a different province in Canada. Upon her arrival in this new city, Anita was looking for a job again. She applied at about a hundred different places, including teaching, as she was a trained teacher. She also applied for laboratory work, as she had worked as a lab assistant while in university in Pakistan. Moreover, she sent applications for the secretarial work, but she could not get in the work force for two years. Getting weary of it all, Anita enrolled in courses like pottery, ceramics, flower arrangement and some teaching courses, that she had special interest in. In 1976, Anita was hired as a supply teacher, it was a real breakthrough for her. She supplied for a few days a week which provided her some monetary relief. But her memory of the dehumanising behaviour and the racial remarks from the students was a very painful memory in her repertoire. Anita was a fighter. She got in the working force, but enduring the differential treatment was a losing battle for her. *Who can you fight with? The education department thinks your degree is filth, it is nothing. I have an M.Sc from a very reputable university in Pakistan. I wanted to do more courses to upgrade my qualification in order to get a full time job in teaching.*

Anita's problems were compounded when her mother-in-law visited from Pakistan to be with her son's family for a year. She was a vegetarian, and spoke the language that

Anita neither spoke, nor understood. Anita could not cook meat at home as she usually did before the arrival of her mother-in-law. *There was no structure at home since the arrival of my mother-in-law. I was stressed out. I had to put up with the negative and racist forces at work, and my husband was siding his mother all the time. I tried to create a balance on every front I was fighting at. I wanted to raise my children in a way that would provide a balance between Canadian way of life and the culture we inherited.*

Anita lost heart often times, so much so that she would not want to go back home after work. All this led to a big rift between Anita and her husband that continued for a long time. *My husband yells and I don't.* He became vindictive. He was blaming Anita for not trying to adjust. He refused to talk to Anita's relatives and would not help her in any way. He took a passive role to make Anita realize that it was her who had to adjust, and was very domineering at the same time. He made quick unilateral decisions regarding family affairs. Anita was taking her frustration out on her two children (a boy and a girl). *In teaching we try to be as close to perfection as possible. I didn't want my kids to be influenced by the differences between their parents. In order to keep them busy and away from home I enrolled them in jazz, tap ballet, swimming, boy scouts, soccer and all sorts of sports.*

It was very important for Anita to raise her children properly, providing them the best she could. *Abusive parents have abusive children. I think it is through education that you can judge what is best for your children. The way you have been raised had a lot to do as to how you raise your children. My husband talks loud, I talk soft, maybe because I got beaten up (by her father) and never became vocal. When I was taking singing lessons my*

tutor always told me to open my mouth and to sing with a louder pitch. It takes time you cannot change overnight. Anita gives credit to people who appreciate what she does. This makes my husband jealous. Sometimes the marriage of choice does not work. It is the infatuation of immature minds, it is not love. Once you get married you have to live with the same man no matter what. (This is according to the Hindu belief system).

During the years 1976 and 1980, Anita continued supply teaching. She wanted to get a full time job which she did not for four years. So she decided to call it quits. She stayed home and looked after her children. She also started running a family part-time business in ceramics, flower arranging, and taking up more teaching courses, with a hope perhaps that she may get in teaching full time. She resumed supply teaching in 1989, and continued till she got a full time job in 1994. Since then on, she focussed on teaching and continued with her love of music and singing which are her part time activities.

By 1989, Anita had done 5 additional university level courses of teacher's qualification, with grades ranging from B+ to an A. Presently she is working as a full time E.S.L (English As a Second Language) teacher, the job she got year and a half ago. She is still on probation (the first two years are probationary for new teachers in the board she is presently working with). She shared her first year evaluation report (done by the principal of the school) with me, which was nothing but praises for the kind of professional she is. Both her children are in their teens and are enrolled in the enhanced programme of their school. Her love of music continues. She regularly practices and tries to improve her singing talent, sometimes she invites friends including myself, to share and enjoy her singing. I am a big fan of her singing talent. *All my life I tried pleasing*

others. I am going to buy myself a thousand dollar speakers and a mixer!

Reflection On Anita's Story

This is another story of a visible minority immigrant woman who was a survivor despite all odds stacked against her. She was not only a survivor, but a winner. Winner in the sense that she was determined to achieve her role in teaching as she was a trained teacher by profession. She kept herself focussed, taking up related courses, even though she opted out once to stay home with her children, but she never gave up. She struggled hard and devoted a substantial amount of time and energy to upgrade her qualifications, if that would help her in getting a full time job. She also spent an ample amount of time and opportunities to teach her kids her culture. When times were rough at home with her husband and her mother-in-law, she kept her children busy in various extra-curricular activities outside of the house. This in turn, helped her children to not only maintain their identity and culture but, they were fully participating in the culture they were so much part of. For Anita, this was a way to keep her sanity and to continue towards a goal in the end.

Throughout this process of unrelenting struggle with strenuous hurdles in its way, Anita found a change in her life, a change that had been slow, difficult and very painful. She felt very honoured when she got a full time job in the profession she had great admiration and respect for.

There were two different worlds before Anita. The world of male domination that brings with it all sorts of social, moral and economic restrictions, and the other world was

her own world of freedom, education and an ability to stand on her own two feet to earn a respectable living. The major stumbling block for Anita, besides all her efforts at many different levels, was the grim reality of the differential treatment by the host culture. Often times, she endured quietly feeling tormented inside. She went through a period of disappointment and anger, coupled with a feeling of being rejected and defected, first by her parents, her father in particular, which continued later on by her life-mate. She continued her mission in life, to blend together a career in education and a good home.

Anita went through an education system which was not progressive and did not prepare students for life work. Talking about it aroused Anita's latent feelings of disquiet and condemnation for it. Since she had been in the West for a number of years she was able to look at things from a different perspective. She often compared and contrasted the two education systems, one she had gone through herself as a young girl, and the other she was serving as a teacher. In the West, she had experienced and learned different teaching methodologies and the environment in which the student-centered teaching took place. In the Pakistani system of education, which, like India, is the legacy of the Imperialism, the emphasis is on the subject matter and memory work. Imperialism and Colonialism are two different names for the same period of time, that brings to memory the British Raj (rule), in the sub-continent of India between 1847 to 1947. For more information on the Colonial System of Education see chapter 2.

When Anita's mother-in-law visited Canada and there was that tussell between her and her husband, she was expected to accomodate everything. So much so that there was no communication between between husband and wife. As a result, Anita's husband

made all the family decisions without consulting her. He reflected a thinking where a woman has to try to accommodate and compromise during times of crises. It was Anita who had to give up her rights and choices even in bringing up her own children. Anita's children were not allowed to speak their mother tongue, but the language of their grand mother. There is such a thing as mother tongue, grand mother language is out of the ordinary. However, both wife and mother are women, both deserve respect and equal rights, but not at the cost of each other's place in the society.

In Anita's story the age old problems of racism, sexism and status quo emerge, just like the story of any other visible minority woman. The white woman has fought long for her rights, but she also belongs to the group that oppresses minorities and I can very easily relate to such oppression. It is important for the white women to understand the profound impact of racism on the experience of women of colour, and the depth of identification they have for their people (Seller, 1994:338). The white woman's movement for equal rights and freedom helps other women to move forward. It is like a chain reaction. Being a feminist, i.e. struggling for gender equality and women's rights, and also being the oppressor, is a bad and distasteful equation that does not sit right with the women of colour who are torn between sexual and racial inequality.

Anita is working diligently for her teaching assignment. She takes a great deal of pride and feels honoured to be teaching full time. At present she has two clubs running at her school, the dance and the pottery clubs that are very favourite among her students. On school assemblies her students present their talent of Pakistani dance that is thoroughly enjoyed by the spectator parents who feel part of the system where their children are

being educated. So she is not only teaching the required curriculum but helping the students to identify with their heritage and feel proud about it. By doing so, Anita receives her satisfaction by the appreciation from the parents who acknowledge her for doing a fine job. Anita considers herself to be lucky to have a very supportive principal because, *this makes all the difference as to how much you put in your work and what you get out of it.*

Summary

Chapter 6 provides succinct accounts of two visible minority women. These women's lives have been the dictates of their life partners, the society, the unjust norms set for the women, coloured woman in particular. Anita learned to cope with her anger that was suppressed for a long time, by sharing her story, and telling it all. She expressed her opinion, her desire to anyone who needed to be informed, be it her husband, a colleague or the administrator at work. By doing so, Anita was defying the conventional expectations of a woman, particularly a visible minority woman, who according to her culture, was expected to endure all the grief and the emotional pain, without ever opening her mouth. She had taken the courage, after years of oppression and subordination, to confront power and control and to take charge of her life. This kind of freedom is not a culture, but a sub-culture born out of oppression and either stunted or victorious only at often fatal cost (Heilburn, 1988:17).

Anita is walking a very thin line of her marriage and its break up. Salika on the other hand is enjoying her life with her second husband. She divorced her first husband just over

a year ago. Her second husband is very caring and understanding, though, *he is just like any other man when it comes to help in the household. I can handle that because he is very supportive emotionally and economically. I sometimes joke with him and say, you are such a nice person you are going to die soon!* Salika has the sole custody of her two children who are well looked after by their step father and this is my personal observation. By breaking the norm of the society and wasting her life with an abusive husband. Salika empowered herself with a right to have control on her life. She is a full time aesthetician and makes good money. She recently moved in a very comfortable house with her family. *My husband (the second husband), tries his best to keep me happy, but what happened to me in the first 7 or 8 years of my life (when she got married and came to Canada), still has impressions on me. I guess the time is a big healer.*

It was my, the researcher's, intuitive feeling and hope, that Salika out of self-discovery, would soon become more conscious of her strengths and rights and would grant herself the identity of a female who is neither a subordinate nor inferior to a man. It was proven with time that she was capable of bringing such change in her life.

CHAPTER 7
PRIMARY EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN:
A Conceptual Frame Work
Based on Findings

Introduction

In chapter 4 of my research, I shared with the reader my personal educational experiences in Pakistan from years 1953-1965, i.e. from kindergarten to grade 12 of my schooling years. These experiences were written through memory with the writing of journals and stories. In order to up-date myself with the present educational infrastructure in Pakistan, I arranged to personally visit Pakistan keeping in mind two objectives: One was to see if there were any changes that may have occurred there over the last three decades in the education sector, secondly, to put in perspective the educational policy literature, to find the relationship, if any, between my personal educational experiences and the present state of affairs there. My interest to find the larger picture was due to the fact that I had always wanted to open up my own school in Pakistan. Furthermore, this portrayal was to help policy makers and educators in Pakistan to look at the system from the point of view of someone who had received education in two different systems and could provide a comparative mode as to the pros and cons of the existing system.

In order for me to bring in the policy literature I had to recreate a bit of history to give the reader some historical background in education, and how it connects to the present day system. My personal educational experiences in Pakistan from the mid 1950s to the

mid 60s, would serve as a linking bridge with the past and the present systems of education in Pakistan.

My information Gathering Trip to Pakistan

It was in March of 1996 that I had arranged to go to Lahore, the city I grew up in, for the purpose of gathering information in the educational sector. The city of Lahore is in the province of Punjab which is in the North-East of Pakistan. Lahore has been considered the heart of Pakistan as it has been the capital of Punjab for nearly a thousand years. It was first ruled by the Ghaznavid Dynasty, founded by Mahmud of Ghazni from 1021 to 1186. Then came the rule of Muhammad of Ghor, followed by the various sultans of Delhi. Lahore reached its full glory under Moghul rule from 1525-1752 (Shaw, 1988:89). The third Moghul emperor, Akbar, held his court in Lahore for fourteen years from 1584-1598. The Moghul rulers built many Moghul monuments that make this city fascinating for the travellers. Lahore is also the cultural and intellectual centre of the nation. Its busy streets and bazaars, and wide variety of Islamic and British architecture make it a city full of atmosphere, contrast and surprise (ibid. :88).

My visit to Pakistan in March of 1996, was not the first trip there after having immigrated to Canada twenty two years ago. On the average, I have been visiting friends and relatives in Pakistan every 4 years. This particular trip in March of 1996, was of a different nature. It was a fact finding trip with the objective of getting a first hand information in the education sector by personally visiting schools and meeting with various academic personnel. What I learned during the 3-week stay there was not

surprising. I had several conversations with teachers, principals, administrators, college professors, educators, friends or whoever was willing to share information and to discuss about the turns and twists the education system was taking place in Pakistan. The main achievement of this trip was that I was able to gather first hand information on the present educational infrastructure in Pakistan. This in retrospect, lead to an insight and personal awareness that I was able to link to my own educational experiences in Pakistan. What I had learned during my trip was not different from what I had experienced there over three decades ago. However, this trip was like a refresher course where my memory was jogged, and I was rediscovering my experience of the past, in the present. As I continued to collect data, I realized that with the changing times, not much was changed in the education system.

In Pakistan, if you have the right connections you can meet people you want, hassle free. Luckily I knew a few family friends whose help made it less tedious to meet the educators, and hence collecting the information was a wrangle free experience. During the day time I met an educator like a principal or a registrar of a certain school, and in the evenings I would write my notes to make a record of the day's activities. I met individuals at various levels of the education system: principles (from 4 different schools), teachers (from 5 different schools), 1 college professor, students from 5 different schools, parents of these students and 1 member of the board of directors of all private schools in Lahore.

These visits and interviews (recorded as field notes), conversations with educators, and information found in the official publications, provided me with enough information to develop the following analytical report of the present day education system in Pakistan.

Data Collection on the Present Day System of Education in Pakistan

The routine of collecting data was ongoing for the first two weeks during my visit to Pakistan in March of 1996. In the third week, I occasionally engaged myself in a reflective dialogue on the information I had gathered with anyone who was willing to listen and take part in the discussion. A lot of times I was given the impression that since I had lived and trained in the West for a long time, my views about quality and equality in education for all children were not feasible in Pakistan. Sometimes the discussions were extremely insightful, depending on who I was talking with.

Based on my observations and interviews with the educators in Pakistan, I will suffice just by highlighting the ways the education system is working in Pakistan. I would not indulge in minute details because the aim here is to give the reader an idea about the present day system of education in Pakistan and how it connects with my personal educational experiences (chapter 4). Once this connection is established, a comparative mode of writing would shed some light as to the changing time. Moreover, a conceptual framework would provide a guideline as to how the primary and teacher education in Pakistan can be overhauled.

Researcher's General Observations

There is a fair amount of good literature written by Pakistani writers and educators of high repute, which I would refer to from time to time for statistical purposes. There appears to be a consensus among the senior officials, educators and the general public, regarding the problems that exist in the education sector of Pakistani society.

The government has allowed the private sector to establish schools in every community, as a result, there are as many as 4 to 5 schools in certain communities some of which are in the residences of the management. Each operates with its own resources and teaching abilities and there is hardly any collaboration or homogeneity among them. Some have uniforms for students, others have no dress code. A few have lavish environments for teaching, some are mediocre in nourishing the growing minds and bodies. Others are struggling to keep the children in schools for 2 to 3 years as the resources are scanty and the teaching is devoid of keeping a child's interest and the stages of learning at heart.

Following is an account of the types of schools that operate in Lahore. The findings are no different, they may be slightly better than how the system works in other provinces of Pakistan, as Lahore is the hub of academic centre of the nation.

Types of Schools in Lahore (Pakistan).

On the morning of March 12, 1996, I was walking in the walkway of this huge and majestic red walled building. The land on both sides of this building had an elaborate and professionally done landscape, that did nothing less than deeply impress me. An exquisitely uniformed guard in khaki pants and jacket, with a snow white head dress that was starched to keep the crown like part of it upright, ushered me to the main door of this rich looking school. The thick lofty walls of the school building were an indication of the inaccessibility of the common person here. On my way in, I could not help but notice expensive staff cars parked in the parking lot on the right of the walkway. I passed

through this huge, mahogany, hand carved door that had two shiny brass knobs on it. One of the two knobs was pulled back by the guard in khaki to keep one of the panels of the door open, and with his other hand he signalled me to go in. He did that in a very respectable manner with a slight bow of his head, that made me feel very special.

Upon entry to the main lobby, I noticed to my left and to my right, two sets of the main offices. These offices had immaculately clean, see through, glass walls. There was a third office adjacent to the office on my left where I saw a white, middle aged man busy with some paper work. The staff in the office on my right were all Pakistanis, there was no one in the office on my left. I noticed another hand carved door across the main entry door which opened to the first main floor of the school. As I was glancing at my very rich new environment, I was greeted by a white woman, who was in her early fifties and was wearing a Pakistani traditional dress. She introduced herself as the registrar of the school, hence all information relating to the admission criteria and curriculum were her responsibilities. She ushered me to the office, on my left, that was vacant till then, and asked me to take a seat as we walked in. It took her about fifteen to twenty minutes to explain very eloquently and succinctly, everything that was to be explained to a rather inquisitive person who was in that school for the first time. After this information session, I requested a tour of the school which she kindly granted. She asked the physical education teacher to take me around. Interestingly enough, the entire staff in the office were Pakistanis, however, the teaching staff except for the gym teacher, were British. The lady registrar emphasised it several times that it was neither a British nor an American school. The school however, was affiliated with Stanford and Harvard universities in the

United States, and some European universities as well, as it is was a university preparatory system. The school population age ranged from three to eighteen plus. The students were prepared for A level, O level and high school diplomas.

The school building was housed on several hundred acres of land and had three sections one atop the other to accommodate three levels of teaching, the primary, senior and the secondary level students. Each floor had its own hot cafeteria. There were two gymnasiums, three playgrounds, one jogging track and a swimming pool that was the size of a basketball court. While we were touring the school, it was lunch time for the primary and the junior divisions. The children were having beef burgers and french fries which they purchased everyday. The price of this hot menu was not cheap by any Pakistani standards.

After having covered the two floors and trying to assimilate the marvels of money, I requested the guide if we could talk about fees and to visit the book store on the first floor which we had missed. The book store was extensive with multiple shelves to stack the text books that were published by the Oxford University Press. The textbooks were to be purchased when a student registered in the school and paid six months fee in advance. The fees amounted to Rs.1 million (5 to 6 thousand Canadian dollars) per year, depending on the grade level.

I was perplexed and momentarily awed with this extravagance in education, and had one question on my mind. What percentage of Pakistanis could afford to buy this expensive education for their children. One of my uncle's son in the late fifties, went to a similar school and was looked upon as a special person and I personally felt humbled in

his presence (journal entry, July 8/92). It was and still is, the economic disparity and educational deprivation that has created class distinction in young growing minds and perpetuates through life in most cases.

It was overwhelming for me to see such unmatched luxury in education, it was even more so when just a few feet away from this educational manor I saw a young boy who was bare naked and was taking a bath in the dirty pool water. His skin was burned from the hot sun, obviously he was the inhabitant of one of the huts in the surrounding village. I kept asking myself, why such a gap, such inequality between two children of the same age? One received the top notch education, the other did not even have the bare essentials of life. Both were born the same way, were going to die the same way. Above all, what with the saying that I had always firmly believed in, as education to be the 'right' and not a 'privilege' for all children. My heart was bleeding with the plight of the naked boy who was completely failed by the society to even provide him with clean water and the free basic education. A promise that kept repeating itself in Pakistan's National Commissions on Education (more on this later). I was sad and felt heavy at heart while writing about this one boy who represented thousands like him. The biggest bias in this world for me is depriving a child of having some control on his/her life just because the parents have little or no money to send their children to school. This is even worse than the racial bias. These children are the unfortunate bearers of poverty and thus, have no access to the basic amenities of life. Through no fault of their own, their whole life gets shortchanged. There cannot be anything more tragic, futile and nationally catastrophic than denying a child his/her birth right of basic education. Two of these unfortunate children were the

daughters (ages 11 and 12), of the cleaning lady in my mother's house (journal entry, July 9/92), who did not go to school because their mother could not afford to. According to their mother, it was their luck or bad luck for that matter, that hindered the girls from going to school.

There are several other schools like the one described above, in all four provinces of Pakistan, where children of the diplomats and the very rich locals receive their education. In order for me to classify the kinds of schools in Pakistan, I would place this school on the top of the hierarchy of the education system. This is also the hierarchy of the economics which has devastating effects on the people of a nation, and the most unfortunate victims are the children of the destitutes.

According to John Dewey, in the first of the lectures that formed, *The School and Society* in 1899, it reads, 'what the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must be the community want for all of its children. Any other idea for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy' (in Silberman, 1970:1).

In Pakistan, the schools are perpetuating the socio-economic differences among the various strata of the society. There needs to be a balance where the poor and the disadvantaged could be moved to the mainstream of the society, namely the middle class. All children, rich and poor, of both sexes, should be wholly educated if Pakistan is to claim herself as a democratic society. Democracy, however, is in danger due to the ever widening gulf between the haves and the have nots. And one of the major root causes of this disparity, is the lack of opportunity to education by all children of the nation. This, directly or indirectly, has stunted the growth of a nation as a whole. As our children are

the national resource who can make or break a nation.

The second kind of private schools had locally trained teachers who were selected on the basis of fluency of the English language, spoken in particular. They were graduates with majors in science or art subjects, and were required to have some teacher's training. However, any candidate who spoke English well was hired without proper teacher training. There was no in-service teacher training. The emphasis was on daily writing of the day plan book which was frequently checked by the principal or the vice-principal. The students in these kinds of schools came from upper middle class families, which again was a narrow sector of the Pakistani population. I asked the teacher I was interviewing for a visitation to her class, she blatantly refused as it was against the school policy. The tuition fee was about \$60.00 to \$70.00 (Canadian) per month. The students buy their own text and note books. Transportation was the responsibility of the parents or guardians. Some students travelled long distances (mostly by private cars), every day. Same was the case with regards to transportation, for schools mentioned above as type 1. I remember going to a similar school in a 'tonga' (a Victorian buggy pulled by a horse), because we did not own a car those days. My parents were keen in providing us good education and it did not matter how we travelled to school, so long we studied in a reputable school. The owner of that 'tonga' collected about eight students every morning from different places, and it took us about an hour each way to reach school. The tongas are replaced by wagons in the outskirts of the city to do the same job, only faster. As I said earlier, I went to a similar school, the major difference was the British missionary

teachers who taught us English, music, science and religious (Bible) studies.

The third type of private primary schools were opened in almost every neighbourhood and their numbers ranged from three to four in a single community. The teachers in these schools were mostly young females who were undergraduates with no teacher's training and were constantly on the move from one school to another for a better pay. The majority of the young female teachers quit their jobs in a few years time when they got married. The monthly tuition fees in type three schools ranged from \$4.00 to \$12.00 (Canadian). If it was an English medium school, the fee was higher than that of the Urdu medium school.

One of the principals that I met during my trip in 1996, was running this type number three school. During our conversation, he kept reminding that, if the school's account books were in order, one would not run in to any difficulty by the government's supervisory council. Moreover, it was a lot easier if some amount of money was given under the table to have the required inspection done, otherwise some delay could be caused to hassle the owner of the school (notes on file, March 1996).

There's an interesting story that I would like to share with my readers at this point in time. My 7 year old nephew and his younger 6 year old brother went to this local private school in the neighbourhood, in grades 2 and 1 respectively. The younger six year old apparently had no problem with school work and was doing fine in the 'final exams'. The final exams were held in March, so I had the opportunity to witness what pressure a six and a seven years old go through during exams. Going back to the story, my 7 year old

nephew was experiencing a great deal of problem with school work, and was not doing well in exams. There were many complaints from his English and Urdu (national language of Pakistan) teacher, who literally had written on each and every page of his note book comments like, 'poor work', 'untidy work', 'dirty work', 'dirty writing', etc., etc. Several notes in the book requested parents to 'coach' him with home work every day, which was done off and on. However, he was 'good' in math, as I was told. I looked over in his note book several times and had trouble seeing that his work was either 'untidy', or that his printing was 'dirty' for that matter. He was an emergent writer, whose strength was the proper sentence structure, spelling and punctuation. The letter formation was as it would be expected of an average grade 2 student. He could read back his work, and translate it from English to Urdu, which was the normal way of teaching language there. I learned the language the same way except my British teachers explained the text in simpler English than in Urdu.

I could not help but write back to the teacher, pointing that positive reinforcement might help improve the situation at hand, though I did not think the situation was bad. I felt this way, maybe because I was not teaching in Pakistan, thus looked at the situation from a different perspective. I was keen to meet the teacher, so I availed the opportunity to attend the final exam result day assembly at school. This was supposedly an English medium school, and the only English I saw or heard was the print in the text books. I could not understand a word of the English poem my nephew was reciting for me, which he had memorised earlier. Same case scenario like my school days in the late fifties. My best friend was a high achiever as she was a good crammer (journal entry, May 6/92). I

recited memorised English poems to impress the junior students when I was in grade four or five. My nephew recited a ten line essay on 'My Cow' word for word as in his note book, just like he recited the poem in English. In his grade 2 math text book, there were mostly computational questions. There were word problems too, like, Sam goes to market with a five dollar bill, he buys candies for \$2.00, how much money is he left with? These questions require that the child reads and understands the question as to what is asked. Moreover, he/she needs to understand the mathematical operations involved, and the algorithm or the procedure that is used to solve the problem. My nephew's reading skills were not at par with how the question was worded, secondly, he experienced difficulty understanding what the question had asked. To my surprise, he had attempted all questions correctly. When I asked him to explain, he could not even read the questions properly from the text and had no clue as to how he managed to get them all right. My best bet is that the teacher explained the questions in Urdu (his first language), and perhaps he learned some tricks to solve them. There were about twenty questions of the same type on each page, so it was probably the repetition of the procedure that he followed and got all twenty questions right.

I experienced similar comprehension problems when it came to Physics formulae and math theorems, in grades eleven and twelve. I did the Chemistry and physics tests by just following the procedure written on the black board, without applying any deduction or extrapolation of the information at hand. The result was that I failed the final chemistry and physics exam results for grade eleven. I had to work extra hard to clear grades eleven and twelve physics and chemistry exams the following year.

Going back to the result day assembly, I met my 7 year old nephew's teacher after the results were announced (in the porch of the house where the school was stationed, and there was no playground or gym), and this is what she had to say, *I write each and every word on the board with its meaning and I go over it again and again. He (my nephew) remembers them for one day, the following day he forgets. This is the reason we stress on working (or perhaps drilling!) every day at home.* This again took me back to my school days when the students crammed everything from math formulae to abstract theorems, to English essays for the preparation of the final exams (journal entries, May 6/92 and July 7/92). The top mark was given to the student who could reproduce notes that had been copied from the blackboard or from the pages of the text books.

John Dewey in his *Schools of Tomorrow* (1962:3), makes this point clear for the reader by saying that we as adults, are continually uneasy about the things we know, and are afraid the child will never learn unless they are drilled into him by instruction before he has any intellectual or practical use for them. If we could really believe that attending to the needs of present growth would keep the child and teacher alike busy, and would also provide the best possible guarantee of the learning needed in the future, educational ideals and other desirable changes would largely take care of themselves. Moreover, the learning at this age has to be concrete, not abstract and disjointed, and more connected to the life's experiences which makes meaning and keep the interest level of the child high. The emphasis should also be on creativity, problem solving, and the development of speech with ample opportunities for field trips for a first hand learning experience.

The Public education in Pakistani made little progress with time, but do not get me

wrong! The so-called children of the rich are getting the best possible education who proceed to go to the foreign universities and perhaps choose to live foreign, or join the already well established trade of their parents. How does this help the Pakistani mainstream, or the naked boy in the dirty pool water? This is the question I keep asking myself.

The needs analysis of the general background and context of the education system in Pakistan suggested that the problem was multi-fold. The system overall faced a situation of profound crisis. There was a lack of proper educational amenities in schools, specially at the primary level. I found that certain schools did not have chairs or tables for the students and that many others did not have playgrounds or indoor arrangement for physical activities. The education provided in primary schools was abstract and did not relate to the child's community or the social life. The emphasis was on memory training where the best student was the one who could repeat on paper what s/he had memorised for the final yearly exams. This was no different from my school days experience. The supervisory panel looked only into the properly kept account books and checked if the regulations were being followed, i.e. if the dues were being paid to the government. There was no scrutiny of the content or the methodology used by whoever, trained or a non-trained teachers. The teachers were low paid (notes on file, March 1996), had low prestige and teacher training (pre and in-service), did not meet the needs of the profession. The criteria for teacher selection was substandard and teacher absenteeism was a major problem. *What do you do when a teacher is away from school?* I asked two grade nine students (notes on file, March 1996). *We wait in the hall for a few minutes and*

if the teacher doesn't show up we go to the cafeteria.

The overall components of the Public Educational System in Pakistan needed overhauling, and there was a dire need for collaboration among schools and communities they serviced. Innovation, testing and experimentation was to be given a proper place, and curriculum to cater to the needs of the community. All this led to the very basic and crucial question of the educational objective; was education the most vital national investment to bring about socio-economic changes at the national level, or was it to further strengthen the economic disparities that existed and had divided the nation into many classes. Or was it to make a quick buck?

The fourth, and at the bottom of the hierarchy of the kinds of schools in Pakistan, were the Public Schools. I heard first hand, many interesting stories from the students who attended Public Schools. Centrality of the issues was the same as in type number 3 schools. What makes these schools even more interesting was the frequent teacher absenteeism with no substitute provided. The students spent time in the playground, or in the cafeteria. They ran errands for the teachers, in or out of school time. The parents who wanted good education for their children but could not afford expensive private schools, provide for tutoring after school, which again was carried out by someone in the neighbourhood with no professional qualification or teacher training. Coaching or tutoring after school was a lucrative business in Pakistan. The monthly tuition fee was as much as Rs.1,000 (\$40.00 Canadian) per month!

There was no tuition fee in the Public primary and secondary schools, however, the students bought their text books, stationary and arranged their own transportation if the

school was not in the vicinity.

The fourth type of schools did not take into consideration those children whose parents could not afford to send them to the Public Schools because of the expenses other than the tuition fee. In these schools there was no tuition fee but the text books, transportation and providing the uniforms were the parents' responsibility. The estimated population of Pakistan was 128,855,965 (July, 1994), and the population growth was 2.86%, and about 49% of children aged 5-9 were enrolled in schools (Paxton, 1989-1990). What happened to the remaining 51% of the nation's children?

The School Enrollment

The low level of enrolment of children in primary schools in Pakistan is causing serious concern. The problem becomes more acute when disparities in the provision of educational facilities are also taken in account. Pakistan is comprised of four provinces. In the province of Baluchistan in the North-East, the enrolment ratio is estimated to be 32%. The North-West Frontier Province enrolls 52% children as opposed to 59% in Sind and 56% in Punjab (Ministry of Education. 1979:5). The Ministry's statistics further highlight the drop-out rate. About 50% of those enrolled in class 1 drop-out by class 5. Low enrolment and high drop-out rate have been attributed to a number of both out-of-school and in-school factors. These factors are general poverty, low motivation of rural parents to send their children to school. The un-inviting rural conditions and socio-cultural inhibitions towards education of the females, has lead itself to this low enrolment (ibid.:6). For in-school factors, according to Quddus (1990), are the extremely

poor condition of school building, lack of equipment and teaching aids, shortage and absenteeism among teachers, inadequate supervision, poor communication facilities, low morale of primary school teachers and their harsh treatment towards pupils contribute to the existing poor enrollment. Moreover, the inadequate curriculum and environment significantly contribute to the present state of primary education in Pakistan. In a nut shell, all this compounds to the present crisis of publicly funded schools in Pakistan.

The Link between Theory and Practice

In the following section it is my intention to try to link the gap between theory and practice, given the sound educational policies and objectives derived from philosophic choices considered most suitable for the achievement of goals. I would briefly quote policy literature, and this is done in view of giving the reader some information as to how the multidimensional problems that exist in the education system in Pakistan today compounded over time. My focus would be on the primary and teacher education. Based on my findings, a conceptual framework would be provided that may help policy makers and educators in Pakistan to look at the problem from the eyes of the one who has gone through the two different systems of education, that of the East and the West. There are high calibre educators in Pakistan who have studied in reputable universities of Europe and North America, and have written sound policies for nation's education system. However, my research presents a dialectic between theory and practice based on my personal educational experiences in Pakistan and how the system is working at the present moment. Furthermore, what steps can be taken to overhaul the existing

educational system in the primary and teacher education sector. The data collected in light of the policy literature and the present day educational practices in Pakistan, forms the core of my study. This is what is unique about my research. Moreover, the findings would also shed light and bring awareness to the educators in the West as to the underpinnings of the education of the South-Asian children who migrate to North America, specifically in Canada.

Pakistan's Educational Plans

The above introduction to this chapter served as a flavour for the reader, of the enormous and multidimensional problems of the education system in Pakistan. It is not the intent of the researcher to delve into more in-depth study of these problems, as there is a fair amount of literature that discusses the theme in detail. For example, Quddus (1990), Gore (1982), Siddiqi (1970), Chughtai; et al (1982), Sheikh, (1967), Sharpes (1988), Farrell and Oliveira (1993), give a local and an international perspective on the issues of education in general, and teacher education in particular with special reference to the developing countries.

Theoretically, all aspects of education including the primary, secondary, college, university and teacher education seem consolidated regarding curriculum, objectives, the ideological and philosophical basis and rationale for the programme of these divisions. For example, the first educational conference in Pakistan was held in November, 1947, immediately after independence from India and the British rule in August of the same year. This was followed by the evaluation of primary, secondary, vocational and technical

education in the first five year plan of (1955-60). There were sound objectives drawn, like enriching primary education and making it free and compulsory up to a period of five years which should gradually be raised to 8 years (Chughtai; et al 1982:25). The budget allocation for the primary education was 37% (of the 1% of the national budget), and the actual utilization was 20%, this resulted in the decline of literacy rate by 15% as shown in the 1961 consensus (ibid.:27). Moreover, the cost of enrolling one child in a primary school, as implicit in the first five-year plan, was less than one-tenth of what it would actually cost. This as a chain reaction effected the ground for achievement of free compulsory education within 15 years thereafter. Chughtai further sheds light on the target to establish 4,000 new primary schools and increase the enrolment by .6 million. Only 2,400 new primary schools were opened, thus achieving 60% of the target. The increase in enrollment was only 40% of the target, with the rate of annual increase of about 2% (ibid.:28).

The second and the third five year plans (1960-1970), were imbued with similar discrepancies with what was written in the policy papers and what was actually achieved. To summarise Chughtai (1982), a much smaller number of school age children were enrolled in the classrooms than what was predicted on paper. There was no accountability for the 57% who were not attending school. There was a drop in budget allocation. There were no school buildings, text books or any teaching aids provided which resulted in a high drop out rate.

This structural imbalance in education continued and the prospect of universal education receded further into the distance. This was a clear indication that the education

planners were not aware of the social and economical value of education and thus the priorities were not set straight. The perception of education as being a long term investment for the nation and its children, and as a change agent was overlooked. For me it was a question of changing attitudes on part of the planners and leaders to understand education, especially the primary education, as a tool towards nation building. To acknowledge it as an endeavour of the highest priority where masses, irrespective of their socio-economic standards and genders, participate in the development process of a sovereign nation.

From my experience of living and teaching in Canada, for over two decades, the school curriculum (grades 1 to 9), is revised from time to time taking in consideration a number of studies conducted over a period of time and Ministry of Education's findings through extensive province-wide consultation. The curriculum is designed for all students and recognizes that programmes must reflect the abilities, needs, interests and learning styles of students of both genders and all racial, linguistic and ethno cultural groups (The Common Curriculum, 1995:9). Moreover, the teachers are given pre and in-service training to meet the changing initiatives in education, and are encouraged to upgrade their qualifications (and pay scale), by taking university courses. This calls for a commitment to excellence and a recognition of the need for partnership (between parents and educators), and accountability in education (ibid.:8).

Pakistan's first education plan of 1955-60 was not treated as an independent sector in itself, but was included in the social services. This along with the manner of setting priorities, clearly indicated that planners were not aware of the economic value of

education and gave no serious thought to the relationship between education and development at that stage. Moreover, they appeared to think of education as a liability rather than an investment in people. That is why they did not provide more resources for education which in the long run would have affected the rate of economic growth (Chughtai; et al 1982:28-29). In contrast, the education in Canada up to age 18+ is mandatory and it is illegal to not send a child to school. This means that the percentage of school going age children is 100%.

The vicious circle around which education and economic development pursue each other, and the provision for free and compulsory education that could not be achieved in the first 3 five-year plans, added to the wastage of national resource. There were a large number of new children that must find school accommodation, this was offset by a high number of drop-outs every year. This inflated the number of children with no schooling in Pakistan.

The Third Five Year-Plan (1965-70) was formulated within the framework of the long term perspective plan (1965-85). The serious set back in this plan was the 1965 war with India and an embargo on the foreign assistance which further reduced the allocated funds reserved for education (Bulletin of Education and Research, 1982:33).

The most serious weakness of the Second as well as the Third Plan was the recurring expenditure which was excluded from the development expenditure, that was a significant departure from the concept of development in the First Plan, which included both recurring and development expenses needed. It was hoped that this chunk of money would come from the Provincial Governments, who failed to meet expenditure on salaries

of new teachers (ibid. :36). So under-funding, which created the multilayered problem of insufficient material and human resources, and the alarming rate of drop-outs contributed to the shortfall of the Third and the Second Five-year Plans. Thus, as a consequence, education in Pakistan remains inadequate. At the same time, the present world economic crisis is forcing many countries to make dramatic adjustments in public education, so it is unlikely that Pakistan will be able to increase its educational budget in any significant way. So it is not difficult to see that education system in Pakistan suffers a major set back. Its growth is stunted by poor planning, insufficient funds, which, as a result, have widened the gap between what is planned and what is actually implemented. This calls for a certain amount of commitment, ingenuity, integrity and communication among policy makers and policy conductors for planning and delivering the affairs of education which are the affairs of life itself.

A Needs Analysis Based on Information and Context

The future of any country, especially a developing country like Pakistan, depends on quality education for all. For all includes both sexes, boys and girls, irrespective of their socio-economic status in the society. It is my personal belief and philosophy, and an undisputed fact, that all children are born the same way, hence they are equal. Therefore, education is not a privilege, it is a birth right. So a very fundamental responsibility of a nation is to provide this right to all its citizens irrespective of their physical or material wealth differences. This calls for a complete government commitment and total national effort to achieve the objectives of the National Education Policy of Pakistan of 1979.

Designing the curricula and planning the educational programs for the expanding school populations is the responsibility of an enormous nature. Linking the bridge between my personal stories of educational experiences in Pakistan (chapter 4), over three decades ago, to the present day school stories and the actual state of educational affairs in the present day Pakistan, one does not see changes that are expected to have taken place in over a span of thirty years. The local communities are in a dire need of some kind of an educational programme where 57% of the nations children, and the poor sector of the society, girls in particular, may have some means of getting the basic education. There have been quantitative explosions in the form of private schools which by no means serve the purpose of the naked boy bathing in the dirty water. The communities need to be involved in a low cost way, with support from the government where local people or the parents get involved in teaching. To achieve this goal the foremost objective would be to give basic education to the illiterate parents so that they can carry on the education of their children at home. In other words mothers, or the fathers are the teachers. An establishment of the agreement teams who can confer with religious leaders or mullahs as to the teaching of religion, is to be incorporated in the day to day teaching. Education to become the responsibility of the community, is a cost effective way due to financial restraints and scarcity of resources. Therefore, adult and community education are to be linked together by mapping different areas for allocation of the trained personal and establishing a community-wise organisational scheme to direct the system in its entirety. This way the 57% of the nation's children who are not part of the school going statistics, are enrolled. This is to become mandatory with a follow-up if

some parents are reluctant to send their children to school. This brings in another important aspect, of training parents. This can be achieved perhaps through T.V. and/or by a group of trained volunteers. Where T.V. is not accessible, parents are to be informed, by the trained volunteers, of the vital importance of sending their children to school. This requires a determined endeavour to involve nation in the task of educational development to secure its firm acceptance and ownership, mobilizing its community resources at the same time.

The international experience clearly indicates that these reforms at the central or structural level cannot deal with what many would regard as the most important problems in Pakistani schools. The need is to significantly alter the way in which teaching and learning actually take place in the classrooms of a nation, and how these classrooms are related to the communities in which children live (Farrell and Connelly, 1994). The UNICEF-sponsored Community Schools initiative has demonstrated that it is possible even in the most remote and 'traditional' communities to effectively create and implement fundamentally different and much more effective and 'girl-friendly' forms of schooling. These schools provide a 'seed-bed' of new ideas and approaches to schooling which themselves are in constant process of experimentation and change (ibid. 4). The innovative ideas that seem to work can then be diffused from community schools to perhaps one-room schools to the wider system by community school facilitators or supervisory officials.

The second phase for the growth of the community schools would be the integration of child services in education, health and security, child welfare along with selected adult

education services. This plan of action was proposed by Farrell and Connelly (1994) to the Egyptian government, where the problems of education, particularly in primary and teacher education are very similar to that of Pakistan. However, the Egyptian government has initiated programmes to confront these problems by taking important actions at the national level, where as the government of Pakistan needs to address these problems by making major long-term national projects.

This plan might be composed of two major components: (1) the reorganisation of the already existing child welfare committees that use the Zakat (a tax that is 2.5% of an individual's savings) money to be established at the local level, and (2) parallel Committees on the child to look after the community schools. Membership on these committees should be restricted to well- informed government officials from various ministries providing health, security, education, welfare and other services relevant to the child, and to the representatives in charge of adult literacy programme. The principle function of this committee would be to collect information on existing resources, and on projected innovative plans, for example, distance education, latrine facilities etc. This information would be used to inform the parallel local community school committees on the child (ibid.:9), and his/her overall welfare including the basic primary education.

Teacher Education in Pakistan

The teacher, in an educational (primary in particular) framework, represents the very mind and spirit of the vital functioning of an extremely complex role of nation building by caring, teaching and nurturing of the growing minds. The future of nations lie in

building firm educational foundations, which in turn, is dependent on the training, preparation and the status given to a teacher. The teacher, therefore, is the most important element in the educational process and will remain, despite rapid technological and scientific advances. The teacher remains the main factor in the development and implementation of strong educational system. The democratization of education has become a global imperative. The expansion of educational opportunity according to the required curricula to meet the changing social needs, have become the hallmarks of the globe's educational systems. The pressure to cope with the global demand to provide education to all who need and want its services, drives the engines of teacher education in all cultures and geo-political entities (The Gulf Conference Preparatory Committee, 1984). Therefore, the education and training of teachers and other specialists is of significant importance to all nations, as the quality of education in our schools is directly related to the quality of teaching profession.

Teaching is the foundation of all other vocations, it is ideally, the most honourable profession and has the greatest effect on people's lives. It requires the highest degree of qualification and preparation in order to succeed in its mission. The teacher is not a mechanical tool used merely for transferring knowledge. S/he is actually a missionary of culture, science and innovation, whose main responsibility is to educate the generations and teach them to be exemplary citizens who will work for the advancement of their nations in the future. The teacher provides students with strength, thought and character. This enables them to overcome difficulties and adapt themselves to emerging new environments. These environments are of rapid change and development and by

translating goals into realities, and, in so doing, open the way to a better future for the students (ibid.:13).

Pakistan, like other countries of the world, realizes the importance of the teacher to society. As a result, Pakistani educators have conducted many conferences and research projects, both practical and theoretical, to find logical solutions to the problems that prevent the achievement of quality teaching professionals. Somehow, like primary education, what looks good on a research project or a policy paper does not get translated into every day practical situation. The reasons are discussed under the educational policies of Pakistan.

I remember my grade 6 social studies teacher who stood me in the corner of a kindergarten class as I was asking her 'too many questions'. My math teacher slapped me on the face just because I asked for an eraser from the girl sitting behind me. My grade 4 home room teacher opened and read my mom's letter written to my dad that I forgot to mail it on my way to school. My science teacher in grade 9 could not tell me the atmospheric height and pretended she did not understand my question. In my Botany class in grade 11, I lost marks in a test simply because I did not label my diagram the way it was labelled in the book. A brief history of teacher education in Pakistan follows.

The All-Pakistan Muslim Educational Conference of 1947

A short frame of reference is presented here with regards to the direction of educational reorganisation for teacher education in Pakistan. What actually has been implemented and achieved in the past 49 years, i.e. since independence from India in

1947, is also offered here. Based on the literature review, some needs analysis will be done to perhaps help upgrade the existing practice of teachers training in Pakistan. The aim of reviewing the policy literature is not to reinvent history, and I am not a historian, it is simply to set a background for future planner.

The task of educational reconstruction started with the All-Pakistan Muslim Educational Conference in 1947. The Six-Year National Plan of Educational Development of 1952, and the First and Second Five-Year National Plans of 1955-60 and 1960-65 were important steps in the direction of educational planning, keeping in view emergent national needs and the limits of our underdeveloped natural and human resources.

In the First Five-Year Plan (1955-1960), only 4.4% of the proposed allocation of education budget (1% of the G.N.P.) was earmarked for teacher education, out of which only 17% was actually spent and that too on training of graduate teachers for secondary education level (Chughtai, et.al. 1982:30). The estimated output of primary teachers was 19,000 and it was supposed to be raised to 40,000 by the end of the plan, no such gain was made (Institute of Education and Research, 1967:21). Perhaps this was the most serious flaw of the First Plan was in teacher education, particularly in the primary sector. Providing good training to the prospective teachers and then providing them with jobs requires substantial finances and resources. The allocated funds were too scanty to provide such gains.

In the Second Plan period (1960-1965), teacher education got great impetus. The plan set for the target of producing 7,000 trained primary teachers annually. The annual output during the plan period was 10,000, thus achieving 143% of the plan target. The plan

envisaged to open 15 new and improve 36 existing training institutes for primary school teachers. These targets were achieved to the extent of 100% and 76% respectively. Teacher education received 3.9% of allocation for education sector in the Second Plan (Chughtai, et al. 1982:33).

During the Third Five-Year Plan period (1965-1970), no new training institutes were opened for primary school teachers due to the lack of adequate progress at primary level. Even existing output of teachers from the normal schools had to be reduced for the lack of job opportunities. The total amount provided for teacher education was Rs. 36 million out of which only Rs. 15 million were spent. This reflects 42% achievement of the allocation which was a poor performance in respect of the crucial importance of teacher education. The expansion in enrolment was not accompanied by appointment of an adequate number of teachers due to shortage of resources to meet expenditure on salaries of new teachers (ibid.:36). The picture of the Fourth and the Fifth Year plans was no different from that of the previous plans as the quality of education could not be improved without attracting talented and committed young people to the teaching profession. So long as the present poor economic status of the teacher is allowed to stay, a majority of the candidates coming to education will comprise of the left-overs who work half-heartedly while looking for better job opportunities else where.

In the Second Five-Year Plan the commission on National Education recommended extended duration of teacher preparation. It suggested that teachers for classes 6-12 should undergo 2 year pre-service training instead of the existing 1 year training programmes (Institute of Education and Research, 1967:15). The duration of the training

programme was the same for a graduate and an undergraduate teacher. On my fact finding trip to Pakistan in March of 1996, I met teachers who only had grade eight or grade 10 qualification with no professional training, and were either teaching in schools or tutoring at home.

A Context- Based Needs Analysis

Teacher education, like the primary education in Pakistan, is facing a situation of profound crisis. Teachers are not only in short supply, they are poorly paid and have a very low prestige and motivational level. Teacher absenteeism is a serious problem with no alternative or substitute provided. The attitude of hard work, creativity and innovation of exceptional teachers is seldom reinforced. There is no comprehensive system of accountability and evaluation. A child who secures 33% marks passes, and teaching is considered to be the sole responsibility of the school. During my school years in Pakistan, I do not remember any interview night or parents' night. The only time parents came to school was when the final exam results were announced.

On education policy papers in Pakistan, there seems to be an effort to improve educational objectives, policies, programmes, curricula, facilities and equipment. But, it is only the teacher who translates all the realities of learning and teaching, more so of life itself, into practice in the classroom. There is a continuing debate that has persisted among educators in Pakistan, as to the best means of educating teachers. The history of the wrangling has been a long one, meanwhile everybody in teacher education blamed everyone else (Institute of Education and Research, 1967), without having much impact on improving either the status or training of the teachers. The standard of teacher

education at present seems on the lower ebb because of multifarious reasons (Ministry of Education, 1979:62). Therefore, the need to upgrade the quality of education by providing adequate facilities, both for pre-service and in-service training programmes have been felt in the country. The Pakistan's Ministry of education (1990:62), further reports that during the last several years, undue emphasis was given on the quantitative expansion of the pre-service teacher education programmes in the general (core) subjects. As a result of this policy, thousands of trained teachers are available who are still unemployed.

Keeping in mind the literacy rate of 43%, and the lack of quality teachers, Pakistan faces a two pronged problem: (1) The basic training of community parents to teach children in community schools, (2) the qualitative upgrading of teachers where people have financial ability but lack quality education.

Farrell and Connelly (1994:11) suggest a plans which includes the establishment of an organization of teachers, community workers, and others associated with the community schools. This should be membership-based, professional organisations that are primarily concerned with professional matters and perhaps ultimately, with working conditions. This organization should have a membership fee, the purpose of the fee should not be to support the organization, but, rather to generate a sense of ownership and voice. This organization should produce a newspaper to give its members added professional status. Furthermore, a journal can be published which could include in it students work of art, writing, projects and letters. Articles written by teachers, with the odd digest of research ideas world-wide, could find its way into this publication as well. Moreover, this journal could be used as a medium to attract desirable young people to the profession. This

organization should also foster frequent professional development, conference, meetings and exchanges. These could be as small as school-school exchange visits, especially between paired community and one room schools, or they could be as large as centralized meetings of all affiliated personnel. Extra mural school-community activities among schools could be sponsored by the organization. The role of the community in making the schools vital is just as important as the role of the school itself. The community that demands something visible from its schools, is to be involved in the development of the welfare of the whole community. This can be achieved by using the energies and interests of its youthful citizens--such community will have social schools, and whatever its resources, it will have schools that develop community spirit and interests (Dewey, 1962). In order to accomplish anything in this direction, the status of everyone associated with the community schools will have to be raised. Monetary incentives and rewards in the form of certificates and/or rewards for excellence in teaching, or pioneering innovative ideas will have to be put in place. As suggested by Farrell and Connelly (1994), key government officials who support the programme should also be rewarded with international certificates of leadership which might be designed by UNICEF (as UNICEF initiated programmes of teacher development in Pakistan). Leadership education programmes could be designed to send a corps of supportive government officials for high profile leadership training to Canada.

Going back to the training of in-service teachers in the public school system, in-service peer tutoring/collaboration is one of the very effective ways of professional growth, where an experienced teacher is paired with a novice teacher. On an ongoing

basis, the in and out of classroom and school experiences, related to the students, are shared. These experiences may relate to the subject matter being taught, how it is taught, the surroundings it is taught in, and the students' personal experiences that they bring to the school.

Another process for in-service teacher training is called 'reflective practice'. It is a process through supervised reflective practice, is a common sense notion of how teachers develop their strengths through consultation with supervisors and fellow teachers about their actual teaching practice. It is an adaptation of a notion promoted by Donald Schon in his two major works (1983, 1987). Schon's idea is that practitioners are essentially self-educated through pursuit of their ongoing practices and through reflection upon them. Teachers, he argues, learn from teaching. Schon distinguishes between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. He views teaching as a sequence of problem finding and problem solving episodes in which teachers' capabilities continually grow as they meet, define, and solve practical problems. The on-going problem finding and problem solving process he calls reflection-in-action. Reflection-on-action refers to an after-the-fact assessment and evaluation of what was done in or out of the classroom. This is followed by, perhaps a look over the weekly programme, of what was a failure, maybe due to a certain teaching method, or a particular content. Moreover, what were the successes and how things could be done differently. All this leads to improving instruction by deliberately undertaking a process of viewing. Supervised reflective practice capitalizes on the fact that the school systems that already have a supervisory staff, could be directed to teacher education by working cooperatively with teachers in a reflective practice.

Summary

The framework to suggest overhauling the existing primary education in Pakistan is two pronged: The first part is to establish a network of community and one-room schools where basic training is provided to the parents to teach children using the community resources. On the other hand, these schools are part of the larger school system as a whole, where there is a flow and sharing of novel ideas that work and are shared among schools. Sharing of such sort will enable the community schools to grow, which in its turn will help the schools to redefine their services with the march of time, as experiments with the innovative ideas of pedagogy will lead to better educational training of the individual child. The role of the community in making the schools vital is just as important as the role of the school itself.

The second part of the framework refers to the in-service training of the teachers who are already in the system. How to make these educators more effective without having to spend large sums of money which Pakistan cannot afford. On the job supervision by principals and in-service training, coupled with effective school-based management, may constitute viable alternatives to lower both training costs and total payroll. Teachers' involvement and participation in their own training can attribute to enhancing the relevance of the in-service training schemes.

Chapter 7 links my personal educational experiences in Pakistan in the late fifties and the sixties, to the present day education system there. In doing so a bit of history was re-created to give the reader a synopsis of the historical perspective in primary and teacher education there. In view of opening up my own school in Pakistan, all this information is

of vital importance, as it is like a guiding light to direct me to the channels I should use to open a school with a difference!

CHAPTER 8

LOOKING BACK AND SEARCH FOR THE SELF

**For it is only by accepting Myself for what I AM
that I may Discover what I may Become.
(The Reflecting Pond, in Lindquist, 1988:4).**

Reflecting On The Thesis Process

At the time of my interview with the Canadian immigration officer in England, in September of 1974, I asked him as to the criteria for getting admission in a doctoral programme in a Canadian University. He briefly explained that it was based on personal merit and some professional experience. However, things started to shape up in 1983 when, after having stayed home with my two boys for a number of years, I got enrolled in the Master's programme at Brock University. I did not have any problem getting in the Master's programme at Brock because I already had a Master's in Education degree from Pakistan with an overall average of 92%. Based on this average, Brock University awarded me a merit scholarship as well.

It was mid morning in June of 1983, I, along with other students who had enrolled in the Master's programme at Brock, were sitting in the students' lounge during the orientation meeting. I vividly remember, asking more questions about the doctoral programme, than the programme I was enrolled in. Somehow, I was looking in the future by not just focussing on the present, but drawing a bigger picture of what was ahead for me.

It was a vision that my father and I had for me. My father, moreover, provided me a

constant support and encouragement to enroll in for a Ph.D. programme, and I did manage to get in O.I.S.E for this programme, in September of 1987. From then on, it was a long and strenuous haul to cope with a full time job, family and to work on my Ph.D. I did not quit while the going was rough at the marital and health levels, as giving up was easy. One lesson that I did learn well from my dad was not giving up on life's ambition no matter what obstacles come in the way. And it was worth the stress, the mental exercise, the emotional upheavals, and the very long hours of work, because I would not have accomplished anything like making meaning of my life and those of my participants. My life narrative helped me make connections with myself and to get a vision of my past, present and future. It allowed me to recognize who I am and what I stand for. It opened up vistas to tap into my participants' lives, and how our stories have implications for ourselves and the society we live in. Our narratives provided us with an x-ray vision that helped us probe deep and search for the not so obvious corners and ridges of our lives. The narrative entity lead its way to the anatomization of the lives of the visible minority women who left their homelands for various reasons and what they endured in their day to day living at the conscious and subconscious levels, in the host culture.

My father had always wanted, encouraged and supported me to excel in everything I did in life, including the education I received. His genuine and persistent love, care and attention to my growing mind at the formative years and later on, inculcated in me the desire to accomplish the best in whatever I did. It took me many years to come to the point where I am writing the last chapter of my Doctoral Dissertation. The interluding time was a stressful time, for the most part. I worked full time teaching, while the writing

of my thesis continued. I consider myself lucky to be in the profession of teaching as I got summers off, and this was the time I mostly worked on my research. There were many long intervals when I hardly read or wrote anything on paper. Mentally I could not free myself of the thought of continuing to work and finishing up what I had started. Now looking back, these were the times that were part of the whole process of understanding my stories and making connections through narrative whether, on paper or making a mental note.

The story of my life is partly a story of my education, first in the East and then in the West. In the process of writing and reflecting on my narrative, I discovered that my story was more complex and intriguing than just being a teacher. There were other avenues in life that needed to be explored and made meaning of. Being a teacher, it was important for me to know the methods of teaching and how children learn, keeping in mind their learning styles and abilities. Moreover, my students were the children whose spiritual and emotional needs were my responsibilities. It was like merging of the head and the heart in the school community (Samson, 1998:353), to give school a deeper meaning. It was to provide children a secure and comfortable environment at the social and emotional levels, fulfilling the learning expectations at the same time. I felt it was my responsibility to orient new immigrant parents to the school system, which was a big part of the new culture they had migrated to. Now looking back, sometimes I was successful, at other times I merely made my presence known in the system, offering my help any time they needed it. As an educator, I was trying to provide a nurturing and intellectually stimulating environment, keeping the needs of my students. Was I a change agent in the

Canadian School System? Perhaps yes, when the parents of my students provided a positive feedback.

I needed to explore for a larger context. To understand the world I live in. To make sense of the messages we, as women receive, especially the minority women who left their homelands and are constantly on a search for an identity for themselves. There were many questions, some of which remain unanswered. There were many heart breaking realities that women face, visible minority immigrant women in particular. How does my research help them? The compelling narratives of my women participants are shared. They are not only shared with the world, they lead to an awareness and critical thinking regarding the gender and the color biases. These stories awaken the students, the training teachers and the curriculum planners to look beyond the color and language, and to look at a person for what he/she stands for. We live in a global community more so now than before. The skin color, for me, merely reflects the geographical boundaries and the climate one comes from.

Another aspect to explore was the motherhood. As a child growing up in Pakistan, I learned to strive for the best. Questioning of the authorities was not encouraged. My parents friends were all uncles and aunties. They had the right to criticize and discipline me if I fell short on something. These were the images of hard work, perfection, obedience, respect for the elders and the authority. One nagging thought I have always had as a mother and as a person was, to achieve something unordinary. To make an impact. To set a fine precedent for my family generations to come. I still question that. The writing of my life story and it's impact is one step. The following step to a bigger

achievement is still to come. Would my two sons carry their mother's story of hard work, of making a difference in their lives and those of others? The signs are there, but only time will tell.

Why I Worked on my Personal Biography?

Having worked on the mathematical problem solving for my Master's thesis (Javed, 1986) at Brock, I planned to continue my work on the same subject for my doctoral dissertation. I completed the six required Ph.D. courses before I started working towards the proposal. I spent one full year collecting and transcribing data with my participant teacher on Teacher's Personal Practical Knowledge in the teaching of mathematics. The work had little meaning for me. I was doing what was supposed to be done, but my heart was not in the work I was doing. I spoke with my advisor Dr. Michael Connelly, as I was taking his 1300 narrative course, and was very much intrigued with the women stories that were shared during the course work. At that point in time I was fascinated with the stories about a teacher, a housewife or a nurse's life. I was a good listener. What do you do with the stories, and why are they shared on a public platform? I did not have a clue. Some stories were heart wrenching, others very intimate, but they were just stories! Coming from the culture that I did, and the strict upbringing, caused a long delay before I was ready to share my story. My advisor Dr. Connelly, who had always been very supportive, knowing my reserve nature and quiet demure, advised me to work on my personal biography. His advise struck like a lightning bolt and made all the sense.

What I Did In this Study.

In the narrative as a methodology, I learned that it was an experientially- based course that helped me to explore my professional and personal life in two cultures. Being a woman of color added another dimension to the story that I was to share with the reader. What could be more important and interesting for any living being to dig and explore personal life and to thread the common themes for a better understanding. The understanding that enables one to make links with one's past, present and the future. Through this course I learned that a person's personal life is his/her professional life, and one's life experiences are education and education is life (Dewey, 1938). The connection between small parts make a whole. This whole is the curriculum, or the path of one's life (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988), just as the Romans ran their chariots on this particular curriculum to win the race. Understanding one's life curriculum, and making connections on the way for a comprehensive grasp, is an unmatched reward that is so fulfilling for the writer and sometimes for the reader as well.

Using the narrative methodology I inquired into my personal background with parental influence, specially the role that my father had played in my upbringing, education being a big part of it.

Journal writing let me tap into my educational experiences in Pakistan which, later served as a comparative mode to present a conceptual framework for primary and teacher education there. My primary interest in doing so was to explore changes, from the time when I was a student there over two decades ago, and the present state of affairs in the educational sector in Pakistan.

Narrative methodology also introduced me to the world of feminism with particular reference to the women of colour. This enabled me to inquire into the life of two visible minority immigrant women, who like myself, migrated from the East and had settled in the West. These women are my good friends and I respect them for the work they did to participate in my research work. Their storied accounts were collected through interviews (field text), and many conversations that were later transcribed. These storied accounts were reconstructed to the desire of my participants for anonymity purposes. Later, these stories were interpreted for better understanding, and for bringing our common cultural and personal stories together. Their stories were authentic as our relationship had grown strong through the course of my research. My stories were reinforced by their stories. The purpose of doing so was to bring about awareness of the struggles of the women of colour at many levels. The struggles in their personal and family lives, in their career, with the women of the majority, and with the culture and its people which they chose as their second home.

Narrative methodology and women studies allowed me to share untold stories and to give voice to the silent laments of women, the women of colour in particular. This in retrospect provided a profound understanding of the lives of the minority sect living in the western world.

The literature that supported my work, was from the education sector, including that of Pakistan. I also made a personal visit to Pakistan, in March of 1996, to collect first hand data and literature. Immigrant and feminist studies literature, played a vital role, as I became more aware of these two perspectives during my inquiry.

Writing of This Research- What I Learned About my Participants.

The writing of my personal biography and the stories of colored immigrant women opened up new vistas for me. My participant women's stories reflect the struggles of minority women which sometimes are combined with a sense of degradation and humiliation, but the desire to achieve an acceptable status is not stirred no matter the odds. These are the women who are open to change, revision, modification and adjustment conforming to upheavals and crisis in life. This adaptability concurs with an initial resistance to be followed by pain, isolation, sadness, emotional numbness and sometimes a sense of loss for personal ideals. They are compassionate and brave women with strong work ethics, who live the story of struggle to get accepted and to recreate identities for themselves for a better 'fit' in the society. In the process, they have no control as to how they would be executed, overt or covert, and in time and space. They have no control of how and when they are marginalised. Their story is that of a constant struggle, to find the antidote for being rimmed at times, sometimes by the people of majority, at times by their life partners. They are strained by the system and the social structures where they are not only dealing with biases because of their skin colour, they are also living the story of male domination.

There was a resonance of the stories we told each other. The patterns of our lives were similar. We all migrated to Canada in our early twenties. Anita and I started a family life here, which after a few years at home with the children, was followed by going to school and then having a career in teaching. Salika was a house wife for a number of years. After her divorce, she started attending school for a diploma in aesthetics and later had a career

in her chosen field, after she remarried.

In 1983, I got accepted at Brock University in Master's of Education programme. It took me two years to complete the degree. During those two years my husband was very supportive. He made many visits to the O.I.S.E. library to photocopy the required material, and he spent hours typing my assignments for me. Anita did her nine courses in education while having a part time business in ceramics, her husband helped with their children. Salika received support from her father who looked after her two young children, while she had a full time job and was working towards her diploma in skin and hair care. She had no help from her first husband. However, the majority of the household chores were our responsibility and so was the struggle for time. We undertook our responsibilities and more, with conviction and an effort to do well.

I had a very loving father, my mother was caring. They both worked very hard to provide for their children, and to send us to reputable schools, as providing good education to their children was a top priority in their lives. Anita's parents were good care givers, however, the care was different for different siblings. Salika's dad was a good provider for the family. He sent his daughters in a military school that is considered to be having strict discipline and good education.

Religion played an important part in our lives and for the training of our children. The universality of good rules and clean living was the lesson I learned from my parents. Salika's mother being very religious imparted the same message. Salika and I share the same religion, that of Islam. Anita being a modest and helpful person, is the follower of the religion of Hinduism, carries the same attitude.

I went to a Roman Catholic school where I learned structure. Obeying rules and authority, respecting parents and elders, were the lessons taught. Salika went to an army school, and Anita to a convent school and had similar training. There was a pattern to our upbringing, which was a combination of rigid structure and rules. We were not allowed to say much, questioning the authorities was a no no. Any shortfall at school or at home could result in light corporal punishment for me and Salika. We did not designate it as an 'abuse', it was done to discipline us.

Anita and I entered the profession of teaching. My father had always wanted me to get a career in medicine, but I could not get in the medical school. The other choice was teaching, which was suggested by a friend of my sister who herself was training to be a teacher in Pakistan. I got my first Master's in education degree in 1973 in Pakistan. I married fifteen days after I had written my last exam for my Master's. Anita's career story was somewhat the same. She completed her M.Sc., B.Ed. degrees from Pakistan. She got married in Canada in 1976, i.e. two or three years after she immigrated to Canada. Salika could not complete her graduation in India because of her marriage and migration to Canada, so she opted for a career in aesthetics.

The women in this story are high achievers who despite the hurdles of bad marriage, in case of Salika, and undertaking most of the responsibilities in and out of the house work, have made a difference for themselves. These are the women who withstood the blows of racial discrimination at many fronts, and still earned a name for themselves. They are brave and strong women who bring about changes in their own lives, and of those who are associated with them. This change sometimes came with a great cost to

them. The cost of having hardly any time for personal pleasure or social life. Moreover, they had little personal savings, as their interest was in providing the best to their children when men in their lives did not share their fair share in monetary help to the family.

Anita, having a Master's in Education and a B.Ed. degree from Pakistan, completed nine additional courses to get into teaching. I got a Master's in Education degree from Canada in 1985, having a Master's from Pakistan, to be followed by a Doctoral Programme at O.I.S.E. Salika joined the school to get a diploma in skin and hair care. These are major accomplishments that have brought change in our lives. We are the change agents. We are dedicated to our professions, like we are dedicated mothers. One question that haunts us, as women is, if our work is visible at the professional and family life landscape? I know that my two boys are very appreciative of whatever I do and have achieved in life. Anita's son is thankful and appreciative of her contributions to the family life. Salika's children are still too young to have any notion of the kind. Are men in our lives just as appreciative as our children are? Probably not.

Anita and I were dedicated to make a difference in the lives of the students that we worked with. We both mostly worked with students whose mother language was other than English, and were Canadian born. It sounds simple, and perhaps less complicated. At the first instance, it may just seem like a matter of teaching English As a Second Language. In reality it was a very challenging task. We were not only dealing with such a child on emotional, social and linguistic level, we are also trying to orient their parents to new rules, new standards, new expectations and regulations, in the Canadian School System. Moreover, we were their ambassador and a liaison between the teacher(s) and the

administration. While playing all these roles, we had to be careful not to encroach upon the blurry line between the homeroom and the ESL teacher, especially when the programme was delivered in an integrative/collaborative approach. In my experience of eleven years in teaching, I experienced that it is more challenging to deal with a difference of opinion between two educators, than it is to teach a child. There were times when an urgency was felt, on my part, to present to the mainstream staff and children, the reality of the economic restraint and the social and emotional upheavals the second language learners go through. This need is felt more so now, because after all we are living in a global community and a multi cultural society. A lot of times this urgency was ignored. We owe it to our children, and to the children of all nations and languages, to promote harmony, brother and sister hood for the good of the human race. It was very unfortunate, that sometimes, these ambassadorial voices were curbed, ignored or right out shunted. Anita and I felt that it was impossible for us to achieve the kind of identities we wanted as educators, for a number of reasons: i) the ingrained superiority complex of some of the members of the school community, over the members of the minority race, ii) a lack of cooperation by the staff members or the administration, to deal with, or outright neglect the incidents of racism. These incidents occurred in the classrooms and/or in the school yard. iii) deployment of the strategies of avoidance, neglect and indifference towards the minority staff in the school community, iv) lack of appreciation and/or ignorance of the traumas the second language learners in general, and new comers in particular, go through silently, v) due to the different cultural metaphors that the students and their parents bring with them to a Canadian society and the school system, the school

staff and administration were misinformed, hence misled. These were just a few of the reasons. Over time, space and through personal experience, the representative voices were silenced or curbed, and the message clearly was, that there were other matters of concern because these were the matters of the majority. The ESL issues were pushed to the back burner. I must pay tribute to a handful of educators who despite their proxy with the majority, worked sincerely with the ESL students. They shared their concerns only when discoursing one on one, because they felt for the minority students. At the same time they owed their allegiance to the majority staff, so, what was said one on one was never shared publicly .

My participant Salika, was 19 when she was forced to marry a 48 years old man. This man was an alcoholic and a divorcee whose children from the previous marriage were Salika's age. Salika was supposed to 'live well' with him, according to his parents. Apparently, she did live well with her husband as long as she did not share the narrative of her life. She tried to maintain her identity as a married woman and bore two children to this man, despite the fact that she did not want to mother his children because of the emotional and physical abuse. Her story changed when the man in her life was ignoring her narrative and labeled it as a 'problem free' marriage. She was portrayed as a happy woman. It was a perspective that was devoid of giving a leeway to a life partner, and prioritizing only personal priorities. Being a good mother and wife were the images that I and my two participants, Salika and Anita, had internalized. Our shared stories of motherhood were the stories of dedication, love and sacrifice, and our utmost success was to have well rounded, educated and modest children who were useful citizens.

The Change Over Time In the Second Generation Canadians

The stories of the first generation Canadians, like myself and my women participants, indicate a tendency to try to assimilate and reach out to others in the host culture. This may mean giving up on many things we cherish. For example, giving up on wearing ones traditional clothes in public places. Talking the language of the society we live in. Teaching our children the language of the host culture, as a result of which, there is an erosion of their heritage language. My two boys speak English only, they understand about 10% of my first language. Whenever there is a get together of the family friends who are the first generation Canadians, my boys avoid their company because they want to spare themselves the embarrassment of not understanding the given conversation. Moreover, they do not feel connected in any way. My biggest dilemma is to have them around when friends come over. They either have to go somewhere, or are busy doing something. I have to ask a friend to accompany me to the movie which is in my first language. When my boys are with me, I avoid listening to the music or the film songs that are in my first language. This may happen at home or in the car. I know that my boys get bored, they would rather listen to the contemporary Canadian or American music or the popular songs. Only twice a year they wear traditional Pakistani clothes, and that to on Eid-ul Fitr (celebration at the end of the month of Ramadan), and on Eid-ul-Adha (sacrificing an animal, keeping in tradition with prophet Abraham when he was ordered by God to sacrifice His son Ishmael). They have not had the privilege to get to know their

first cousins, uncles, aunts, and grand parents well, like I did when growing up in Pakistan. I was very close to my paternal uncles and to my grandmother. My boys missed that experience of being close to a relative, which for me was a great joy. My oldest son met my parents twice only, once when he was seven years old and the second time when he was twelve. He is twenty five now. My youngest son was five years old when he met my parents. He is 19 now. These are just a few of the many aspects of an immigrants life where their children miss out on pleasant experiences of relationships with relatives, and lose their mother language. My appreciation for my cultural heritage and language is far greater than that of my boys. They have been raised between the teachings of the two cultures. I have tried to inculcate in them, by example, my values and personal images. The good teachings are universal, and know no physical boundaries.

Struggles of the Women from the East

So long as the women of the East are totally dependent on men, they will have little or no control on their lives. The religion of Islam grants women much more rights and freedom than what they enjoy in our Pakistani society. In Pakistan 97% of the population is Muslim. It is well intended to recommend ways and means to give women greater freedom and to exercise control, but how many, just how many of our women today will be able to take advantage of them?

To summarize Quddus (1990), the roots of disparity of cultural standards between men and women, date back into the history of the sub-continent of India, with the establishment of the British rule. With this rule in the mid 1800s, the men at first showed

some resistance to foreign rule, but were gradually drawn towards to it. However, due to female conservativeness and educational inequality, women firmly adhered to the old values. Over a period of years, a wide gap had emerged between the cultural outlook of men and women. Men have accepted the Western ways of life but do not look upon it with favour for women. The story of Salika is representative of many like her, who are the unfortunate sufferers of the cultural disparity among men and women.

The forced upon and mismatched life partner creates life long problems. I am not suggesting that love marriages work, looking at the example of the West where most women chose their own husbands. However, the divorce rate is appalling. What I am suggesting here, is, that a mismatch like that of Salika and her husband should be avoided at all costs. Moreover, it is very important that the woman knows who she is going to marry, her consent is crucial. I know that this is happening on a small scale in Pakistan, where a man and a woman meet in the presence of the their family members to get to know each other. Moreover, they are given a chance to speak their minds about their parents' proposal. Here I am specifically referring to arrange marriages.

Salika, through her narrative realized that there were alternate ways of living. She became aware that, through a process of engaging herself in learning of life she had before and after marriage, that she could transform a life of humiliation and subjugation into one of awakening. She was a change agent who, with her story, paved a way for many women like her. Through my thesis writing, listening, interpreting and reading the literature has helped to share the life experiences of women, like Salika, with the larger community. There are many women like Salika in our community who need help to get

some control in their lives by talking to someone they trust. We are taught that a man's world holds the central point of a woman's life. Fine. What happens when that main player becomes an adversary and tightens his reins on a woman's life? Women do not need to let loose their images on life. I would urge all women, whether in Canada or in Pakistan, to get education or some life skill so that they can stand on their good two feet, if there is a threat of the economic dependency. I know that my counterparts from the East might think that I am enticing women to go against the norm, hence I am a rebel. It is better to be a rebel than wasting away your life to an unjust partnership. I specially urge the young girls to equip themselves with a trait even before they get involved with someone. For those who are in need of emotional help and suffer quietly on a day to day basis, talk. Share your grief, your narrative, on the way you are bound to get help. I recommend that there be a permanent crisis help center and support group for the Asian women, with councillors speaking their language and knowing their culture. I know that there are one or two such centers working on self-help in Toronto. The message is, it's ok to talk and get help, it's not breaking away the tradition by empowering yourself.

The plight of the Indian women is no different from the women living in Pakistan. The reasons are bi-fold: the caste system of the ranking classes and the economic dependency on the male counter part. I would also add that, the plight of women have considerably changed in Pakistan, from personal observation. Women and girls have taken some charge of their lives by working outside the house and gaining economic independence. Similar is the case in India from what Salika reiterates. But this is the story of big cities and a very small percentage of women are economically independent. The

women have to go a long way before any major achievement is accomplished.

My second participant Anita, she was a risk taker who tried many things in her life to get satisfaction. She did so by sending monetary help to her ailing father and younger siblings in Pakistan. She also did many courses to not only keep her busy, but to prepare her for her future career of teaching. Her life narrative changed a few years after her marriage. She was working hard before her marriage and had to work even harder after. However, she continued to pursue towards her goal of full time teaching, when she eventually achieved. In dealing with the dilemma of her work load after she started full time teaching, Anita realized that though her responsibilities had increased, her husband's role did not change. She could not be who she felt she should be with regards to her role as a teacher. She struggled with the nagging questions of her identity in the Canadian classroom. Her heart bled many times with the plight of some of the immigrant children in the system. She nurtured them emotionally, provided them with toys, clothing and did that with a very caring attitude. She had the image of perfection with a constant quest for achieving the best. This lead her to take many university courses in order to upgrade her teaching skills and knowledge landscape. By the sharing of her narrative with the larger community, she had broken the traditional image of a good woman who aches and does not complain. She is a role model to many visible minority women who are winners, despite the multiple hazards in their lives. She is an aspiration to those who are committed to a cause, but at times, are temporarily bogged down with the negative forces around them.

Self-Reflection : Who Am I?

It took me a long time to come to the point where I am starting to write the search for the self and to immerse myself in the discussion of who I am. It is an overwhelming task that encompasses the disclosure of the complex innerself with a conglomerate web of feelings, thoughts, memories, idiosyncracies and individual perceptivities. It had been a process that could not be hastened. A process that started at the first part of life, and will continue till I expire.

Since the beginning of writing my thesis, to the point where I am now, I have gone through change. Upon examining my stories, life events and the influencing factors that are complex and intertwined, have helped me better understand myself. Each of the traits that compose together to fabricate who I am, had to be explored individually, in order to write up for the last part of the last chapter of my autobiography.

Being a daughter, a mother, a wife, a teacher, a friend, and a visible minority woman, are the many faces of Me that play different roles at different times. And the traits that attribute to this multifaceted Me, are discussed separately for the sake of discussion and understanding.

The Emotional, Intellectual and Social

The emotional and intellectual threads that weave together, originated in the messages I received from my parents during my earliest years. These messages have been carefully saved irrespective of any evaluation, whether sagacious, helpful or otherwise hurtful.

When intellectually challenged I tend to do both, speak up, or suppress the emotion,

depending on the context and who I am coping with. Authority and controlling figures I tend to overlook, when I think that my rights are being violated. I was taught to respect the authority, which I do otherwise, perhaps because of the strict and regimented structure in my school years in Pakistan. So long I do my job sincerely, and to the best of my ability, I do not need to butter up to any person incharge of what I am doing. However, recognition of a job well done I long for. Indifferent attitude from the authority figure I work with, is hard to ignore as it suppresses my motivation to excell in whatever I do. The effect however, is temporary when it comes to my profession as a teacher, because my students hold the most important place for me.

In the late 1980s, I was working in this school as an E.S.L (English As A Second Language) teacher. For Parents' Night during the first semester, I spent a lot of hours single handed, collecting and displaying the peraphernalia for the Multicultural Display. I was at the counter for approximately four hours, as I had borrowed some items for display and did not want to lose sight of them. Unloading first, and then loading them back in my car, was part of the endeavor I had undertaken. I was expecting a word of recognition from the school administrators was wrong. There was no appreciation or thanks either orally or in writing from any of the two members of the administration. For other events like the musicals, teachers' names with a note of appreciation and thanks formed the highlights of the school newsletter. My consolidation came from some of the parents who were thankful and appreciative of what I did.

Being in the education system for so long, I learned that only hard and sincere effort is not enough at the job, one had to butter up people at the top. I began practicing those

'skills', just to get more acceptance. Being a visible minority person, it was next to impossible to get the same level of acceptance or recognition as my white colleague would, for the same type of work. This piece of factual information I learned the hard way. Nobody ever tells you these facts, they are learned on the job.

The deep rooted bond that I have with my father and the appreciation he showed for whatever I did, I accepted the same from my husband. I took over the responsibilities of child rearing. I tried to look after the social, emotional and educational needs of both my boys. Every task in the household I did, rationalising it was my 'duty' being a mother and a housewife. There was hardly ever a word of thanks or appreciation, that would help keep me motivated. Often times when I yearned for some kind of approval, I would remind my husband about some positive enforcement. It was in vain and still is. I took to yelling to get my point across. This effected my physical health. It was not a good strategy. Over the years, I learned to do things at my own pace and liking. It was a new level of awareness where, I had adapted myself, psychologically, to the needs and demands of my psyche and physical health. In other words, there had been a 'personality breakdown' (Sharp, 1988:11), with the purpose of doing things not to please others, but, because they were rational, and I get personal satisfaction doing them. I did them at my own pace and liking. I see that both my boys are very stable adults, and my efforts have paid off. One aspect of my boys' life where my husband paid the most attention, was the religious training, which played a big part in disciplining them.

Asserting myself I learned from my dad, forcing myself to stay quiet was also taught to me by my dad when my mom would rage and throw her usual temper tantrums. I was

considered talkative by my teachers at school. I was outspoken when it came to expressing opinions, when I witnessed, or personally experienced, some wrong doings. I lacked good choice of words and the refined tone to express my opinion. I still am outspoken, and have become better with the rhetoric I use. I had also learned to wait for the appropriate time to have an impact of what I wanted to say. This skill I learned mostly at my job, working with my Canadian colleagues. I learned that, I had to smile and present myself as a friendly and social person, even though I may be mad as hell inside. While growing up in Pakistan, I was taught to say how I felt, in simple straight forward manner. This I learned from my mother. She said, it was 'hypocray' to feel one way, and to say things and act in a different way. So a composite of what I have in me, is to speak up, choosing the appropriate time. This is sometimes coupled with, a restraint on my feelings no matter how I feel inside. This is done keeping in mind, that I have to appear to be part of the majority around me. The latter part usually comes into function at my work. The context is vital. This learning has been slow in developing, and came with self-tutoring. Over the years, I learned to say as much as the authority or the controlling figure would take, without losing the disposition.

During my childhood, everything I said was well taken, especially by my father. One may call it being over-protective. My father sided with me, and provided reasoning as to what I said had good intentions, and that I was brave enough to portray my true feelings. I got the recognition for being out spoken and 'intelligent'. And this cognizance was the result of my academic achievements. Since I was good at school, I was a model for other siblings and relatives, and whatever I said was worthwhile. However, I was

labelled a 'tom boy,' as I spent my spare time playing cricket, gulli danda (a 6" wooden piece pointed on both ends, is hit with a longer, about 4' stick, to throw it to the longest distance), and marbles with my 3 younger brothers.

My mom spent most of her time at home looking after her 8 children. this meant her social activities were restricted. She was a devout Muslim who got her inner peace by praying 5 to 6 times a day, and reciting the Holy Quran in the early morning. I did not get much exposure at the social level, and being a girl I was not allowed to go out with friends after school hours. Sitting among a group of people and carrying on a conversation was not something I was good at. At times, I did not have anything to talk about, no matter how hard I tried. It was embarrassing. To some I was arrogant, for others I was the quiet type. I felt compelled to improve upon this skill, especially when I started to supply teach in Canada in 1986. I was most uncomfortable among staff at lunch time, when I found almost everyone contributing something orally. Same was the situation, when I started taking courses for my master's level at Brock University, in early eighties. I was also faced with the dilemma of being not confident in the use of spoken English, that further hampered my ability to speak for the fear of making errors. I would say a sentence, improve its syntax, repeat it in my mind before uttering it in the classroom. This situation arose only if the teacher had asked me to try the answer. Social get togethers were the toughest time of all. I still do not feel comfortable in these gatherings for the fear of being ignored, or may be I am not good in conversing. Sometimes the socials seem very superficial. I have to join in the laughter of the group whether I like the joke or not, or whether I agree with the said view point. This complication arises because I grew up in

one culture, have been in another for over 2 decades, so I see things differently.

There is a tendency among staff overall to assume the worst, specially when it comes to dealing with the ethnic students. An East Indian student in grade one in my school, fractured her leg that was in a cast for several weeks. The child needed help for dressing up and going to the washroom. The child's mom kept her at home not realising that the T.A (teacher's aid), in the classroom would look after the child. Moreover, she did not have the language or the courage to call and ask if she could send the child to school. The teacher assumed that the mother was pampering the child by keeping her home. The matter got resolved when I called and explained to the mother in her first language, about T.A's help. The child came to school the following day.

'Apples don't fall very far from the tree', (jeering at minority parents' ability), scorning ethnic names, ridiculing parents' line of work, 'by working as a bank teller, she thinks she is a big shot', are some of the many remarks made by the educators. This is hurtful, depressing and oppressing for me. A lack of intrinsic respect and deceny towards the visible minority, from some of the educators of the Canadian Society breaks my heart. I do not play double roles, I am the same person in and outside of me, and expect the same from my colleagues. I cannot be a friend, or enjoy the company of a person who has two faces. I work well with honest and open minded people.

The Structure and Control

The role of structure and control in my life is very important. Having to emulate a role model in my father, and to grow up in a strictly regimented British system of education, I

feel more comfortable, and am at ease, when there is a structure in situation at hand. Improvisation on the spot also plays a significant role to make things more interesting. However, the structure at large keeps things intact and I feel in control and perform well.

Having a Day Plan for teaching, helps me to tune in to day's activities. Interesting questions or 'spur of the moment' teaching, leads to improvisation, or a bit of modification of the plan already laid. I expect students, and my two boys, to have the same structure and organization in day to day activities. When I started teaching in the mid 1980s, losing control in the classroom, meant losing my temper, which I was using as a weapon to be in control. I came home exhausted and depressed. Over the years I have tried to explore my emotional terrain, and have come to this conclusion. In lieu of being mad or angry, the matter at hand can be dealt with by reasoning at a normal tone of voice. Talking loud and losing temper to get the needed attention, especially from my husband. I learned from my mom. I also remember the unpleasant effects that yelling had on my health. That perhaps, has helped me to change my strategy from being loud to reasoning in a quiet tone. This does not mean it works all the time, but it works better than being angry in a blaring voice.

During my school years in Pakistan, we, the students, were not allowed to even whisper in the classroom. If one disobeyed, it meant a slap on the face, or some other form of corporal punishment. Teachers were like gods to us. It was an honour for a student to do little chores for them. Standing up and greeting the teacher as soon as she walked in the classroom, was a daily ritual. The parents had no say in our schooling. Whatever the teacher (s) said, was the final word. No one ever challenged, or dared to

question a teacher's authority. When I started teaching in Canada, my expectations of a class environment were that of having very quiet and respecting students. If anything of mine, like a pencil or a pen, ever rolled to the floor from my desk, or if I dropped a book, I expected the students to pick it up for me. This was what I did during my school days, and felt good about it. After I started teaching in the Canadian School System, I learned that I would have to carry my own chair if need be. If I was sitting on a student's chair momentarily, I would have to get up and vacate it as soon as the students came for it. I expected to have a very quiet and obedient class who would do only what was asked. The seating arrangement was such that students would sit in rows and columns, and not in groups. This was to compliment what I expected of the students' behavior in the classroom. Sitting in groups encouraged talking, and I for one would not have that in my classroom. About five or ten minutes every morning were set aside to talk to individual students, one on one, who would want to confide, or share an experience. This sometimes was followed by group discussion. This session was open with no agenda, students were allowed to share anything they wanted to. This helped me to establish a repertoire with my students, and to have structure and control in the classroom. A positive feedback from the parents was an approval of my work with the children. This provided me a personal satisfaction and pleasure, for being remembered for beneficial and gratifying abilities. My wanting to have control in the classroom, indicated the need for concentration so that the students understood the concepts or the lessons taught. And that in a way, contributed to discipline and orderliness in the classroom. The situation, reader might think must be tense, but it was not so because of our one on one and open group

discussions every morning. A combination of control and relaxation, I bring in from my upbringing. The structure and discipline from my British schooling, closeness, confiding and respect, I bring from my relationship with my dad. Keeping my calm, which I have learned over the years, is perhaps the dream my father had for my mother, and I for myself.

When I got married in Pakistan in March of 1973, I came to my husband's uncle's inner city home. I felt enclosed. It was an old and small house in a small town, which was about 50 kilometers from the big city I had grown and lived in. The floors of this three room house were not even paved with cement, and the washrooms were old fashioned without proper drainage system. There was however, some structure and control when it came to my husband's auntie's daily chores, that included looking after her eight children. Her husband, i.e. my husband's uncle, was seen only twice a day, once for breakfast and then late at night. In her, I found the capacity for spontaneous self-disclosure. After a few days of my marriage, she started sharing information about herself and the family. I found some solace by knowing as much as I could, about their family. I just had to sit and listen to her stories, that meant I had no responsibility at hand at least for a few days which I enjoyed. Soon, however, I imposed a structure for her school going children regarding their homework and TV time etc. I could not stay there for more than 10 days. I stayed with my parents for 6 months after getting married. Then, I proceeded to England being pregnant with my first boy. All immigration formalities were completed in England, so was the birth of my first child, before I joined my husband in Canada, in October of 1974.

The Peril

I am not a risk taker. A disposition for a structure in life perhaps contributes to this congeniality. But, there were exceptions to this congeniality while still in school as a student in Pakistan. I took part in dramas, almost all kinds of sports, was elected as a school prefect in grade 10, recited excerpts of the Bible (being in a Catholic school), on stage for the whole school for Christmas assemblies. This participation continued on, in college and university life. Academia overall, was the most known area in which I excelled. Sports, reading and other subjects, all had the element of structure to them. Rules of the games I knew, lines for my part in a school performance were memorized in advance. I did my homework every evening with my father who watched and encouraged me, and that's how I did well in exams. There was no such thing as problem solving, trying alternatives or a different approach to a situation at hand. It was a linear approach in whatever we did at school, as students. One question had only one right answer, and that too had to be reproduced in the same way by all students.

I had a few good friends, acquaintances many. I could not bring myself around trusting many people. I still am very selective in making friends. I am dubious to take the risk of knowing people. People have to approach me to be my friend. My husband does not feel comfortable among people, he would rather be by himself doing whatever he likes. This did not help me in any way to become a risk taker, as a matter of fact it further limited my efforts to improve upon in this trait. I feel comfortable speaking to an audience on the stage providing I know the content, or I know in advance what I have to say. My most challenging situation is sitting among a group of colleagues or peers in a

study course, where the discussion is extempore. Over the years I have tried to improve upon this limitation. I do presentations in the staff room, but again, I have to prepare myself in advance as to what I want to say. Open discussions I participate little, but over the years I have improved upon this skill.

The Religious Training

An individual has as many roles to play as the number of groups s/he belongs to. From this membership comes a set of duties and obligations, the performance and fulfillment of which constitute the role which the person has to play. Some of these roles are inherited, like the position in the family of birth, and some are acquired like the status at work. Other roles are the individual's position in the domestic unit, like being a husband, father, a mother, a wife or a child.

It is important for me to be performing my duties as a mother, as a housewife, as a teacher to the best I can. This many a times, has involved a tremendous amount of sacrifice and adjustment on my part, in order to provide a smooth living. At times, I failed for an efficient operation, having too much to handle. I continued rationalizing, that, being a mother and a wife, it is incumbent upon me to carry on my duties the best way I could. These are what my teachings were, on top of fulfilling the daily religious rituals. For me, the religion is a combination of the mandatory and the required, being member of a certain group. So, I thrive upon variance and commitment in whatever role I have to play, and expect the same from my spouse. Non-commitment is a cause for agitation.

I am a person who takes her obligations and commitments very serious,

the teachings that were passed on to me by my parents, my father in particular. The religion has played an important role. Performing to achieve the best and not giving up in the worst of times, is the real test of my endurance. I am proud of my strengths, and am beginning to take healthy criticism positively to improve upon my social, emotional and religious traits. It outrages me to see women being downgraded, in whatever shape or form. I have learned to put up with discrimination in my own way. I choose to stay away, or deal very little if I have to, with the people I suspect of being racist. My dealings with them are totally on different lines than my dealings with the open minded people. I am reserved and to the point. I laugh with people if I have to, but, I try to get out of the situation as soon as possible, if it is a superficial laugh.

Surprises I am not keen on. I need to prepare myself in advance when dealing with the authority figure. I have to be in control to be successful. Teaching and working with children I enjoy the most in a friendly, caring, stressless and aesthetically pleasing environment. I am a firm believer in establishing close, interpersonal relations with my students. Dealing with difficult parents is the challenge I cherish. I am thrilled when I see a positive change or growth in my students, and the new immigrant parents. there is so much they need to know. I feel honored when friends see my two boys as role model for their children.

My religion plays a vital part when it comes to fulfilling my duties. I am improving upon the trait of becoming a more practicing Muslim when it comes to being intimate with God, and praying a certain number of times every day.

The writing of this thesis has been enlightening. I am hoping that the reader would

relate to some if not many aspects of my life story. The understanding of the self, is a life-long process which shall continue as long as I shall live.

Summary

Chapter 8 is the reflection of the whole process of thesis writing, explaining, why I chose to work on my personal biography. Moreover, while storying and interpreting the life stories of myself and my participants, what did we learn. What are the implications for others, specially the visible minority women. How do the children of the first generation Canadians differ from their parents, having lived in one culture and taught ways and traditions of the culture of their parents.

This last part is the personal reflection of who I am, taking into account different strands of my personality.

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