

***COMING IN FROM THE  
MARGINS: MIGRANT VOICES,  
COMMUNITY BROADCASTING  
AND SOCIAL INCLUSION***

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements of Nottingham Trent University for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis describes an investigation into worldviews of the people whose cultural identity and socio-economic status mark them as minorities, and who live in deprived inner city areas in the UK. This study provides fresh insights into the process of social exclusion by comparing it with the discourse of developmentalism to offer a wider theoretical understanding of the issues related to marginalisation and powerlessness.

The study argues that people experiencing exclusion from the social and economic processes are further left out in a media environment largely biased against minorities, driven by commercial considerations and protected by tight regulatory regimes. As an alternative to this media situation, the thesis explores the role of small-scale and community-based media in developing a contextual approach to communication that can help to validate marginalised points of view, and develop a dynamic link between people's experiences and expression.

These arguments are illustrated through a participatory action research project, using an interdisciplinary framework informed by a variety of emancipatory, spiritual and critical perspectives.

Looking specifically at the pertinent issue of inequalities in health faced by the members of the Mirpuri community in the UK, the thesis examined the role of Radio *Ramzan*, a faith-based community broadcasting initiative, in facilitating a communicative interaction during a multi-agency health education campaign.

The study established that peoples' reference to cultural practices and experiential knowledge empowers them to counter their situated, stigmatized and essentialised existences. Within this discourse, the study demonstrated that a community radio station can provide a socio-cultural context to develop and promote a holistic approach to deal with exclusion.

## **Author's Declaration**

I declare that the work in this dissertation is mine and was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the Nottingham Trent University. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the Nottingham Trent University.

The dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Signed:

Date:

## *DEDICATION*

*This thesis is dedicated to the loving memory of my  
grandmother Ayesha Begum who taught me the  
values of experiential knowledge at a very young age.*

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This study has benefited immensely from thousands of known and unknown listeners and participants of Radio *Ramzan* in Nottingham whose lives and worldviews have inspired me to write this thesis. I am indebted to their struggles and politics. I am grateful to Dr. Musharraf Hussain, a great optimist, who encouraged me to volunteer, work, study, and be patient at the same time. His unique approach in relating the social to the spiritual, and vice versa, has greatly influenced my work and me.

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My parents have been the real source of inspiration for me. Their supplications and constant support helped me to carry on despite many odds. My father and my teacher Malik Ghulam Mohammad kept me constantly focused and motivated. Without his reminders and reassurances, I would have not been able to complete this study.

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# INTRODUCTION

This study is the result of the coming together of many perspectives and practices, including my own experiences and politics, to challenge the presumed universality of Western knowledge and to explore the possibilities of validating alternative ways of knowing and doing things. This quest is influenced by the contemporary desire for more pluralistic and egalitarian practices for fighting the inequalities faced by various excluded groups and communities.

Within these practices, the study explores the role of various forms of cultural expression in foregrounding marginalised worldviews as part of a process to facilitate the participation of people in individual and community empowerment. The study benefits from the case study of Radio *Ramzan*, a faith-based radio station in Nottingham, in finding out how this community initiative can offer a common frame of reference for the communicative interaction based on worldviews of marginalized people.

This locally owned and managed community initiative, run during the month of Ramadan of the Islamic calendar, provides a socio-cultural context to the spiritual life of the members of the Mirpuri community, who largely live in clusters in and around the Forest Fields area of Nottingham. The study examines how people can fight social exclusion by drawing support from their cultural practices and experiences, looking specifically at their efforts to address the issues emanating from the inequalities in health which characterise the life in many deprived areas of the post industrialized cities in the UK.

The study specifically chronicles a month-long health education campaign engaging the social aspects of life with the spiritual to develop a unique health promotion programme. The Health Education Awareness Project (HEAP) run on Radio *Ramzan* is delivered within a religious ethos to make the messages culturally sensitive and socially relevant to the listeners of this radio station. The



members of the Muslim communities enter into debates and discussions about their position and situation to develop initiatives for empowerment through critical reflection and collective action.

The HEAP project develops a dynamic partnership between the statutory and community organisations within a familiar environment on the one hand, and on the other uses local resources and voices to bring proximity and legitimacy to the health promotion programmes. In this process, the legitimization of subjectivity becomes epistemologically and methodologically critical, as marginalized voices and experiences enter into the research.

This approach of 'privileging' the experiences, raising awareness and conceptualising multiplicity of subject positions through 'creolised insights', is influenced by a number of critical, emancipatory and liberation theology perspectives (Harding, 1998, Hill, 2000; Brah, 1992; Davis 1993; Freire, 1972). Such a framework also share epistemological plurality with many contemporary social and political movements like women's, environment, 'Third World', human rights, anti-racism, anti-capitalism and anti-war campaigns which emphasize emancipation from all levels of oppression and inequalities.

The primary focus of this study is on the members of the Mirpuri community living in Nottingham who face many disadvantages and live in the deprived inner city areas. These areas are characterized by a higher rate of unemployment, low educational achievements and health inequalities. Among the disadvantaged minority ethnic communities, the Mirpuri/Pakistani and Sylhet/Bangladeshi people suffer stark inequalities in health, wealth and influence. People belonging to these groups show higher rates of Coronary heart diseases, Diabetes, and asthma, and have a higher number of smokers (Adams, 1995; Kawachi et al., 1997; James, 2000; McKenzie 2003).

The complex relationship between the social condition, geographic location and the ethnic and racial background is well established (Townsend, 1979; Power and Wilson, 2000; Hardill et al., 2001; Wilkinson, 1996; Macpherson, 1999). The situation is further complicated by the essentialised and unproblematic conceptualization of the community that suppresses the diversity of human life and brackets people together into fixed categories (Eade, 1989; Shaw, 1988, Shah, 1998). So an important part of the process of restoring people's knowledge and experience is to challenge the fixed notion of community, and to develop a sustained critique of Western knowledge and institutions for dismissing the worldviews of the victims of the process of modernisation.

In Chapter One, the thesis draws parallels between the discourses of developmentalism and social exclusions to illustrate the influence of Western knowledge and its socio-scientific principles, especially that of modernisation as a process and ideology in constructing the 'Third World' and the inner city. The assumed link between the 'beneficiaries' of aid in the East and the welfare benefits in the West brings the concept of 'Third World' closer to the construct of the inner city where generations of immigrant communities are caught up in a vicious circle of disadvantage and discrimination. The majority of the efforts to fight the inequalities are believed to be based on the foundations of modernisation which are argued to fail to take account of the faith, culture and traditions of these people. The chapter looks ahead to find ways and means within the participatory and liberatory movements to re-conceptualise development according to the worldviews of marginalised people. The study examines how power can shift from institutions and structures to 'individuals and communities' (Wang and Dissanayake, 1984a; Melkote and Steeves 2001).

The study in Chapter Two engages, at length, with various emancipatory and critical perspectives including feminism, poststructuralism and liberation theology to explore questions of subjectivity and power, on the one hand, and liberation

theology on the other to learn how social and spiritual experiences can help in the recovery and validation of marginalized knowledge. Recognising that such dynamic framework is not possible within conventional research rigidities, the study develops a non-essentialist interdisciplinary methodology that approaches the issues of participation and empowerment from the intersection of various disciplines including communication studies, human geography, cultural studies and social anthropology.

This inquiry influenced by feminist poststructural approach with multiple positions (Lather, 1991), reveals complicated, many-sided and often unstable conceptions of ethnicity, community and identity. This approach, challenging the 'established' disciplinary practice, leaves the thesis vulnerable to criticism from many quarters. However, the study is influenced by the practice of experiential and contextual learning which encourages a democratic relationship between the knower and known and, at the same time, rejects false dualisms (Stacey, 1988). Exploring such a dynamic framework within Foucauldian analysis of power relation opens up possibilities of looking at things from a variety of perspectives and standpoints, especially in situations where mono-theoretical frameworks are ineffective.

My position is critical to this study as I bring my own practice, experiences and politics into this work which influences the research question and agenda of this study. This position favours subjective analysis and provides an epistemological privilege to counter the notions of objectivity and overcome the concept of detached research practice. Through this process, the study envisions multiple concepts of community and self, in order to walk away from the fixed and essentialised notions. My position in the research as a Muslim, Indian controlled Kashmiri', Urdu speaking, 'educated' and at the same time an immigrant, coloured and 'different' create some interesting challenges, which I try to engage with through the dynamic framework which embraces various subjective positions. The rhetorical approach in this chapter helps to locate me clearly in the

research and reveals my intentions of explicit subjectivity to offer a situated and partial version of knowledge and knowing. This research practice demands a holistic approach to put observations and interview data into a larger perspective to understand the study both as a process and a product (Agar 1980).

In Chapter Three, the study problematises the often 'taken for granted' view of the community as a homogenous mass of similar people. In order to move away from this essentialised understanding of the community, the Chapter maps the heterogeneities, diversities and fragmentation within the concept of the community to examine a more strategic and tactical concept wherein the community remains a flux of changing loyalties, interests and concerns. These arguments learn from the juxtaposition of Muslim, Mirpuri and minority concepts to highlight the kaleidoscopic nature of community where spiritual, political and social aspects of life blend and break, depending on the situation and context.

The Chapter Four engages with the debates around inequalities and exclusion to reveal the often racialised discourses and the modernisation-led interventions that characterise the social policy in most of the Western world. The chapter, particularly, examines the social policies of New Labour, including the communitarian concepts of social capital, to draw attention on 'healthism' and 'manageriality' in the National Health Services (NHS) in the UK. The chapter, in consistency with the main arguments made in Chapter One, evaluates the holistic approach to health and well-being, and explores the role of the cultural practices and experiences of the victims of health inequalities in fighting exclusion.

The Chapter Five finally tests these arguments through the case study of Radio *Ramzan*, a community radio station in Nottingham. Specifically examining a multi-agency health campaign, Health Education Awareness Project (HEAP) run on the radio station, the chapter brings together the perspectives of place, faith

and media to look at how a community-based approach can offer an equitable and effective approach in dealing with inequalities in health.

In this whole journey, the study engages with some very difficult issues to look at both, an over-arching *Ummatic* concept of community, and a very local Mirpuri-speaking immigrant community in Nottingham. The issue also led me to question the unopposed legitimacy of some institutions and mosques to represent all shades of Muslim opinion, and to explore the gendered nature of community and faith-based organisations including Radio *Ramzan*.

This research project was bound by a particular time limitation. It refers to a specific time period of July 1997- July 2001 and has thus intentionally omitted the discussions and debates on 9/11 and 7/7. The time period of this research, however, witnessed growing debates on institutional racism, discrimination, assertiveness and social divide. The Stephen Lawrence case and subsequent report on it by Lord McPherson (1999), along with the Cantle and the Ousley report (2001) into the disturbances in northern towns in England, revealed the dimension of racism and the extent of social deprivation faced by the people belonging to the black and minority ethnic group, along with a very small number of white groups who shared the same excluded geography. This was also the period when the British Muslim communities were still angry about the wars in Bosnia and Chechnya and were ever-passionate about the situations in Palestine and Kashmir.

In the light of these arguments, it is worth mentioning here that before and during the time frame of this research project, the Muslim communities felt excluded both socially and politically and saw themselves as the target of negative perception and images. While the post 9/11 discussion falls outside the time frame of this study, it can be suggested that the post 9/11 and 7/7 scenarios had a historical and social continuity with things happening in the past.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

# **Developmentalism and Social Exclusion: Some Key Common Perspectives**

*There will be more than one dominant way of being human, of being free, and  
there will be more than one way to develop'. (Ziauddin Sardar)*

The objectives of this chapter are:

- To explore the commonalities between the discourse of developmentalism as practiced in the 'Third World'<sup>1</sup> and the discourse of social exclusion as practiced the 'First World'.
- Drawing support from alternative perspectives and methodologies, critique the process of modernisation and dominant knowledge system.
- To examine the role of religion in generating the holistic approach to increase community participation in addressing issues of exclusion.

A run through the literature on issues surrounding social exclusion in the 'first world' (Levitas 1999; Hardill et al., 2001) and the debate on the developmentalism in the 'Third-World' (Golding, 1974; Rogers, 1976; Escobar 1992) shows interesting similarities. Both talk about the poor, though there is a change in the lexicon: in the backyards of the West, poverty has been replaced by exclusion, development by inclusion and intervention by partnership. No doubt, the poverty in the West is different from poverty in the East, but in both situations the consequences of poverty remain the same: powerlessness.

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1. Labeling and terminology is problematic in the development discourse. The term 'Third World' has evolved historically. In the current context, the term is used to refer to industrially and technologically less developed countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Although the economic and technological situations in some of these countries have changed the labels have not. The use of 'Third World' and 'First World' in this thesis is deliberate to highlight the binary divisions created by modernism which still continue to dominate academic discourses. The thesis, however, does not subscribe to this classification and throughout this thesis, keeps these labels within inverted commas.

Both these discourses have been criticised for adopting the top- down and centralised managerial approach, and having a socio-scientific bias along with a contextual bankruptcy (Gutierrez, 1992; Nandy, 1992; Escobar, 1995). The discourse of social exclusion is seen to be the continuation of the modernisation inspired developmentalism project (Hardill et al., 2001).

In both discourses, the superiority of the Western knowledge dwarfs the knowledge and experience of disadvantaged people. Another striking feature of this comparison is the fact that the majority of people caught in the circle of social exclusion in the West have a direct link with the areas in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, which have been the focus of relentless developmentalism practiced by Western governments, development agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Some scholars see the 'Third World' being produced, managed and organised by the powerful countries and institutions for ideological and political-economic motives (Esteva, 1992; Crush, 1995). Similarly, the discourse of social exclusion is seen to be managed by bureaucracies and regimes to problematise 'otherness' and abnormalize spaces (Levitas, 1998, Shah, 1998).

In the context of poverty in the 'Third World', the following definition of poverty by the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development, sums up this dispossession:

...Lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social and cultural life. (IISD 1995:57)

This definition holds good not only for the villages in the 'Third World' but can be applied to any inner city area in the first world, where many people live marginalized lives. In the UK, migrant communities inhabit some of the most deprived inner city areas. These spaces are characterised by poor health, poor housing, higher unemployment and low educational attainments, increased discrimination and racism (Nazroo, 1997; Werbner et al., 1997; Macpherson report, 1999; Abbas, 2005).

While these conditions may not contribute to absolute poverty, a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs (IISD, 1995:57), they are very close to the definition of relative poverty provided by the European Economic Community (EEC) now known as the European Union:

The poor shall be taken to mean persons, families and groups of persons whose resources (material, cultural and social) are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life of the member states in which they live. (European Community, 1985)

In the UK many neighbourhoods can easily fit into this category as generations of people live in the areas which score very low on 'minimum acceptance of life'. The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) of the government accepts the disproportionate representation of people from minority ethnic groups in poor urban areas:

People from minority ethnic communities are disproportionately represented in deprived areas. Fifty-six per cent live in the 44 most deprived local authorities in the country. And those 44 most deprived local authority areas contain proportionately four times as many people from minority ethnic groups as other areas. (SEU June, 2000)

As per the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, by the end of 1999 a quarter (26 per cent) of the British population was living in relative poverty. The study suggests that Britain now is the most unequal country in the developed world after New Zealand, with a wealth gap between the richest and poorest in society wider than in Ethiopia or Ghana (JRF, 2000). The 2001 Census figures show that there are about 1.8 million Muslims living in Britain. Although, the Muslim community in the UK is very diverse, representing various lingual, ethnic and racial backgrounds, over two thirds of this population originates from the Indian sub-continent. More than fifty per cent of British Muslims are born in Britain and a similar proportion is aged less than 25 years. The Muslim Council of Britain<sup>2</sup> (MCB), an umbrella organization of various mosques and Islamic institutions, quoting various government figures, says that the Muslim population has a poorer than average socio-economic profile with many people living in some of the most deprived areas. Their housing conditions, health indicators and educational attainments are considerably below national averages. The number of Muslims in the prison population is proportionately thrice their numbers in relation to the national population. These disadvantages lead to 'alienation and social exclusion' (MCB: 2003).

Tahir Abbas (2005:13) finds the government policies towards Muslim communities in the UK 'at best inconsistent, at worst patchy' when it comes to addressing issues in employment, housing and health. He, however, acknowledges some 'positives' within the race equality policy and practice like the provisions for *Halal (Permissible)* meals and permission for wearing *Hijab* (headscarf), but admits that members of Muslim communities remain disadvantaged at the local, regional and national level.

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<sup>2</sup> MCB represents the interest of various Muslim organizations in the UK. It was founded in 1997. For details visit: [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

Although this analysis is carried out in the context of 9/11 (which remains outside the scope of this thesis), nonetheless the study throws light on the social and economic deprivation faced by Muslims before 9/11. And, that precisely is the focus of this thesis, particularly the socio-economic conditions of the Mirpuri and Syelhetti (Bangladeshi) people who make the majority of South Asian Muslims living in the UK. Tahir Abbas argues that with the decline in the manufacturing industry and the internationalization of capital and labour, these people are left at the 'bottom of the society' (2005: 13).

While the policy and strategies of governments fail to address the issues related to economic deprivation and social exclusion, in many instances, the state and its apparatuses blame victims rather than their own policies for this failure. The rhetoric of social exclusion/inclusion in the inner city areas of UK in many instances follows the pattern of 'ghetto formation' in the black neighbourhoods in the USA as reported by former US senator and sociologist Daniel Patrick Moynihan (Moynihan, 1965). This report highlighted how the causes of poverty were being attributed to the behaviour and cultural practices of the poor and not the social factors people live in (Williams, 1976). In the built up areas in Birmingham, Bradford, London and many small towns in the UK, where minority ethnic people live both as geographic communities and the communities of interest', the discourses of social exclusion 'problematise' and 'abnormalise' people and the spaces they live in. This is followed by creating regimes of bureaucracies to 'solve' problems and 'normalize' deviations (Levitas, 1998; Shah, 1998). This is not very different from what aid agencies, non-governmental and government organizations did decades ago in poor parts of the world. The cultural practices, beliefs and customs of the poor were held responsible for 'their plight' (Sachs 1992; Escobar 1992, 1995).

Although there is not enough literature available on the comparisons and contrasts, efforts have been made to find common theoretical perspectives between the discourse of development in the 'Third World' and the discourse of social exclusion in the first world. International Development Studies at the University of Sussex first looked at this possibility when a seminar was organised in 1997 to explore 'insights from the South that can enrich debate in the North.'

The seminar concluded that whether you call it 'poverty' or 'social exclusion', the debate on deprivation was entering new territory, bringing in issues like access, personal security, vulnerability and self-esteem on the agenda in both North and South. The seminar also took note of the fact that there was a convergence in theory and practice between the North and the South, and globalisation was facilitating these connections. The seminar also highlighted the worries about groups who might find themselves marginalized in a society where others set the conditions for inclusion (O'Brien et al., 1997).

No doubt, with the gap between rich and poor widening in the West and many sections of the society being increasingly marginalized, the debate is entering new areas. But many scholars in the West are of the opinion that not much has been learnt from the failed development project, as many policies and schemes for fighting social exclusion are thought to show the same socio-scientific rationale of economic betterment as was obvious in the modernisation led developmentalism process. Ruth Levitas sees social exclusion reflecting a 'new Durkheimian hegemony' in which the poverty and disadvantage is seen a 'pathological deviation' from what is assumed to be 'essentially a fair social organisation' (Levitas, 1999: 211).

Since the Labour Party came to power in 1997, many policies and schemes have been formulated to end 'inner city deprivation'. In fact, the inner city has become the target of endless programmes and strategies. Through rhetorical political debate on the issue, New Labour has created huge bureaucracies and an industry has now developed that promises to 'help the new poor'. But this discourse is not new.

As the debate on developmentalism shows, the business-like approach in dealing with the poor and poverty has always taken the initiative away from victims and given it to politicians and technocrats. After the communal rioting in some northern towns of England in the autumn of 2001, the government commissioned an inquiry into the causes of these disturbances, which reported that government efforts to tackle the issues of social deprivation were disorganised, repetitive and often led to 'institutionalisation of problems'.

Unfortunately, the programmes devised to tackle the needs of many disadvantaged and disaffected groups, whilst being well intentioned and sometimes inspirational, often seemed to institutionalize the problems. The plethora of initiatives and programmes, with their baffling array of outcomes, boundaries, timescales and other conditions, seemed to ensure divisiveness and a perception of unfairness in virtually every section of the communities we visited (Cantle Report, 2001).

This repetitive and muddled approach in addressing issues related to poverty is nothing new. There's a fund of literature available about the critique of the centralised approaches of dealing with the issues of 'underdevelopment' in poor countries of the world. But the following explanation by Escobar (1995) written in the context of the 'Third World', sums up the current discourse of social exclusion in the UK:

... everywhere one looked, one found the busy, repetitive reality of development: government designing ambitious development plans, institutions carrying out development programmes in cities and countryside alike, experts studying development problems and producing theories ad nauseam, foreign experts everywhere, and development colonised reality, it became a reality. (Escobar, 1995:225)

Traditionally, the debate on development has remained confined to the 'Third World'. A quick run through the literature shows that development discourse has essentially been associated with the poverty beyond the shores of Western Europe and North America. While the "experts and expertise" to deal with this poverty was emerging from the West, most of the "poor and poverty" was somewhere else. But with the emergence of the deprived inner city pockets, inhabited disproportionately by people of non-white and minority ethnic origin, surrounded by affluent suburbs, the poverty and social exclusion looks real.

The class division and inequality are nothing new to the West, but with the spatialisation of poverty, the problem is more topical and immediate now.

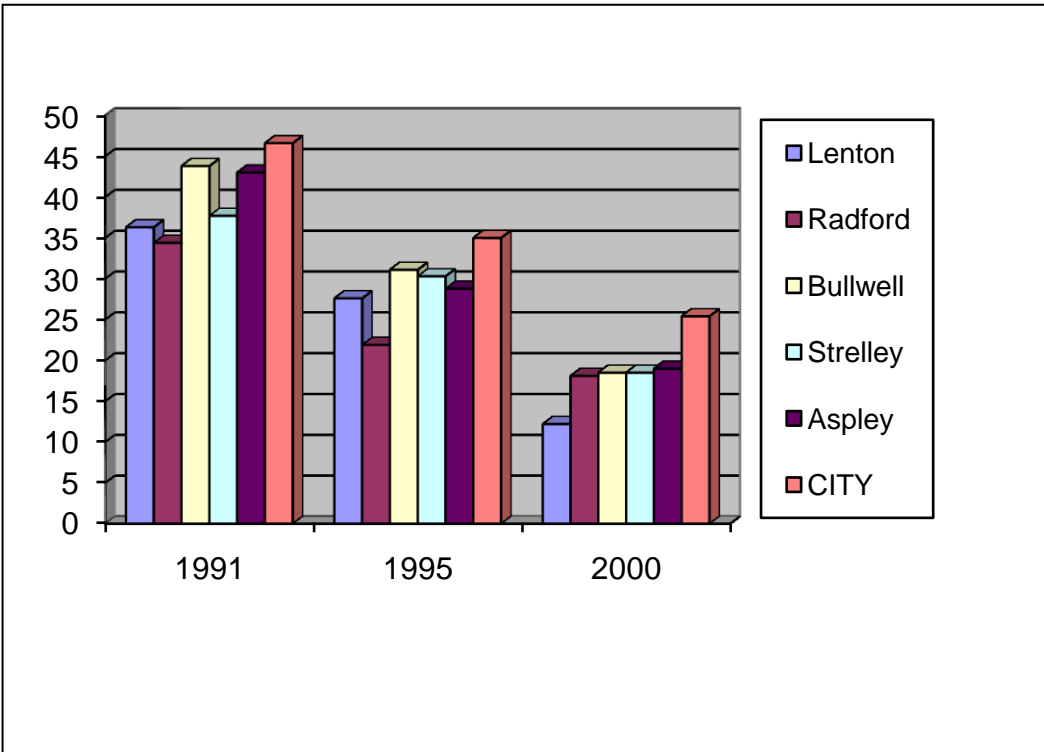
For instance, the literacy rates, health statistics, crime, unemployment figures, housing conditions, leisure and community services, dependence on social security among some of minority ethnic groups living in inner city areas in the UK (Nazroo, 1997; Modood, 1997) are as dramatic as among the people living in the slums and villages of many poor countries in the world. The situation for people living as minorities in the inner city areas of the West is further compounded by discrimination and racism, which is now being acknowledged to be institutional as well (MacPherson, 1999).

Due to the combination of these factors, many people belonging to minority ethnic groups feel excluded and alienated from the mainstream. The electoral data from Nottingham shows this disillusionment on the increase, as the



turnout figures in the City elections fell considerably from an average of 46.6 percent in 1991 to 35 percent in 1995, to just 25.4 per cent in 2000 (Poverty in Nottingham, 2001). The figures for 1997 have been discounted due to the significant skew caused by the General Election.

Although the election turnout is not an absolute yardstick to judge alienation and exclusion, it indicates the lack of participation in public life and decision making at the local level. The low turnout was observed higher in the areas inhabited by the members of minority ethnic groups. For example, Lenton with highest Muslim population in Nottingham showed a decline in turn out to 12.2 percent in 2000 from 36.6 percent in 1991.



**Table 1:** Election Turnout by Ward –1991 to 2000

Source: Nottingham City Council, 2000

These figures clearly indicate that all areas experienced a considerable decline in the numbers of people who voted, but this decline is more profound in Lenton, with the higher concentration of people belonging to minority ethnic groups, especially the members of the Mirpuri community. These areas are also among the most deprived areas in the city.

Another striking feature of the areas with high proportions of ethnic minority communities is that these areas also record high levels of racially aggravated crime. According to the Nottinghamshire Police (2000) the number of such incidents is on the increase in Forest and Radford areas, but more worrying is the fact that areas with relatively lesser concentration of such minorities also show an upward trend in recorded cases of racism. This is seen to increase the sense of exclusion and fear amongst minority ethnic groups in these neighbourhoods.

Before we go into the details of the discourse of social exclusion, let us first engage with the debate on developmentalism which is thought to have influenced the social policies in the deprived pockets of the West.

## **Modernisation and Developmentalism**

Development discourse, or developmentalism, traditionally associated with the process of modernisation, has been unable to engage with the non-material aspects of human need. The dependence on Western knowledge, mostly scientific, has largely ignored the perspectives of marginalized groups in this discourse. Many scholars share the critical stance against established scientific knowledge, interest in local autonomy, culture and knowledge and the defense of localised, pluralistic grass roots movements (Esteva, 1987; Kothari, 1998; Sachs, 1992, Escobar, 1995).

Different theories, standpoints and scholarships have also been associated with this journey of developmentalism since 1945. These arguments, borrowed from a wide range of disciplines, have been used to support, scrutinise and oppose the concept and process of development at different stages of its journey. In the process, development studies, cutting across the disciplinary boundaries, has created its own set of theories.

The most significant concept that defined development for over five decades is that of modernisation. Theories associated with modernisation came to be known as the dominant paradigm, which still preoccupies most of the debate on development, though some scholars think this paradigm has passed. Modernisation is based on the neo-classical economic theory promoting and supporting the capitalist mode of production.

As an influential paradigm, with far reaching consequences, modernisation as a set of theories and concepts has its beginning in the evolutionary explanation of social change (Giddens, 1991). It has been used to create the development model for the 'Third World' countries, articulating a common set of assumptions about the nature of Western society and its ability to change a non Western world which is considered 'deficient' both materially and culturally (Latham, 2000).

Historically, there is a vast amount of literature available on development and the various arguments that surround this discourse (Learner, 1958; Scharmm, 1964; Weber, 1964; Singer, 1972; Rogers, 1976). Since the emergence of multi-lateral development assistance after the Second World War, we have seen the concept of 'Third Worldism' grow in the decade of the 1950s, followed by the period of great optimism in the sixties, which was defined by centralised economic planning, and the dominance of powerful mass media. The decade of the seventies is largely seen as a period of pessimism, as the debate on

underdevelopment and exploitation started the critique of the dominant paradigm. This period also saw counter arguments gaining currency. People's participation, women's role and basic needs became more important for the voiceless poor than capital-intensive technology and powerful channels of mass media. The decade of the 80s is considered as a lost decade of development in which global recession brought problems in both poor and richer countries.

From 1990 onwards, a new shift and focus on development emerged. Sustainability and environmental protection, human rights and social welfare entered into development debate in a big way, emphasising the need for the people-centred participatory approaches, using critical consciousness and empowerment strategies in the process of development. This decade also marked the trend towards the globalisation of media, fashion and lifestyles, along with increased migration of people. Emerging from the West after World War II, modernization theory saw the modern nation resembling 'Western industrialized nation in all areas of society, including political, economic behavior and institutions, attitudes towards technology and science, and cultural mores' (Melkote and Steeves, 2001: 100). In many ways, development within the dominant paradigm meant development initiated, inspired and influenced by modernisation as a socio-economic process to influence change through scientific and technological innovation, increased industrialized production, mass consumption and rapid urbanization. In the course of time, modernisation has become a discourse- a set of words, symbols and processes that have supported all other structures and processes of promoting the Western concept of social change. It is seen as more than an economic theory and model of social evolution as the shift from religious to secular ideologies and transition from subsistence to technology-intensive economies are believed to be brought about through modernisation (Tipps, 1973).

As a process that encompasses overlapping concepts of westernization, rationalization and development, modernisation is 'reflected in – and reflective of – discourse, ideology and culture with a goal of replacing non-Western ideological, cultural' and even language system with Western systems; in essence 'reshaping the reality of the people in the 'Third World'' (Melkote and Steeves, 2001: 91-92). It promoted and supported economic development based on neo-classical economic theory, thus served as a vehicle for capitalist market economy.

Since modernisation is often associated with economic development, and many earlier proponents of modernisation saw it as incompatible with the traditions and customs of people. These scholars thought that breaking from the traditions was a prerequisite to economic progress. Using the economic system, Rostow (1960), identified sequential and linear stages as the pathway to modernisation. Others went further to link modernisation and economic 'progress' with the democracy, good governance and efficiency (Apter, 1965) while McClelland (1967) argued that the importance of innovation, success and free enterprise was critical in changing a society from traditional to a modern one. Inkeles (1974) from a socio-psychological point of view justified modernisation for an independent, rational and modern outlook. Consequently, as a process, modernisation is seen as means of social life or organization which emerged in Europe and became a worldwide phenomenon (Giddens, 1991).

Modernisation has also been distinguished by the notion of superiority of secular, materialistic and Western individualistic culture (Lerner, 1958; Schramm, 1964) dismissing cultural practices particularly faith and religion, as obstacles to progress (Bellah 1965). The influence of Comte and Marxism led to the questioning of the role of faith, tradition and culture in the social life, which eventually meant a progressive rationalization and secularization of society and the dominance of science over traditional beliefs (Dallmayr, 1993).

These arguments point towards similarities in the construction of the discourse of developmentalism in the 'Third World' and that of the social exclusion in the West, as both processes use modernisation as a conceptual tool for selection and rejection. While in the poor countries, the yardstick of modernity, progress and economic betterment is used to dismiss people's faith, tradition and cultural practices as the bottleneck to development, in the West similar tools are applied in 'othering' and eventually marginalising people.

Modernisation theories generally seen to be the offshoot of the theories of social evolution which saw human societies seeking to increase their survival chances like the neo-Darwinian concepts of natural selection. Influenced by Spencer and Durkheim, modernisation theorists argued that societies and cultures develop over time like a living organism, making progress through several stages. At the macro level, the social evolution influenced the way development was conceived and practiced, leading to important concepts in sociology of development, especially bipolar theories of modernization, which in turn distinguished societies in terms of traditional versus modern.

Most communication practices and scholarship in the development literature reflect the overarching dominance of modernisation as the process and goal of social change. Three distinct phases of the role of communication, especially mass media in the process of development can be identified. In the first phase, after the World War II mass media was seen to support economic development through diffusion of technical and social innovations and prepare the human mind to change from a traditional to a modern outlook (McQuail, 2000). In the second phase which emerged from critical theory, modernisation was criticized as a Western cultural and economic imperialism or dominance (Schiller, 1976). The last phase has been mainly concerned about the contradictions in the

modernisation process and the consequences of information and communication technologies on individuals in contemporary society (Giddens, 1991).

Many critical scholars, especially those from the 'Third World', ethnic, feminist and indigenous persuasions, supported by some Western scholars have criticized modernisation for its internal theoretical inconsistencies and its built-in asymmetry and political-economic inequity (Dallmayr, 1993). Majid Rahnema went further to argue that the scarcities attributed to the traditional societies were not due to the lack of their productive capacities, but to adherence to a completely different 'philosophy of being and relating with each other where people tried to make the 'best of what God or Nature had given them, than to divert all their energies to producing and making more money'. Highly critical of the modernisation process, Rahnema writes that the rationale of modernisation creates 'modernized poverty' which, he argues, incapacitates people by increasing the gap between the 'socially induced needs' and their 'inability to meet those needs' (2001:3).

In a detailed critique of modernisation, Tariq Banuri (1990) writes that the process of modernisation disenfranchises people and takes people's focus away from their own worldviews to the dominant worldview of the West:

...the project of modernisation has been deleterious to the welfare of 'Third World' population not because of bad policy advice or malicious intent of the advisers, nor because of the disregard of neo-classical wisdom, but rather because the project has constantly forced indigenous people to divert their energies from the positive pursuit of indigenously defined social change, to the negative goal of resisting cultural, political and economic domination of the West. (1990:66)

The dominant paradigm of development was instrumental in the formulation of development communication theory and practice. Everett Rogers (1976b: 121) observed, "this concept of development grew out of historical events such as Industrial Revolution in Europe and United States, the colonial experience in Latin America, Africa and Asia, the quantitative empiricism of North American social sciences, and capitalist economic/political philosophy."

Obviously, anything traditional was seen as incompatible with modernity. Culture and faith were seen as impediments to change. Weber (1964), one of the proponents of modernity as a pre requisite for change, particularly, saw Oriental values and religions without a Protestant ethic to be a bottleneck to industrial capitalism(Singer 1972).

These views render the non-Western world inferior and unfit for change. The Muslim world, in particular, is seen stagnant, and the practices, experiences and institutions of people living under varied social, cultural, political and economic conditions in this 'world' are essentialised as a consequence of Islam itself and 'not as a result of specific political or socio-economic situations'. (Munoz, 2002, *The Imperial Imagery*. Para, 6). Against this backdrop, the stereotypical images of Muslim women are often used to endorse and project preconceived notions about Islam in the West. Munoz further writes:

By contrast, the values of the West are presented as a unique paradigm applicable to the whole of humanity, so that cultural diversity is experienced, not as a variety of options of equal value, but as a hierarchical structure in the scale modernisation backwardness. This ethnocentric cosmopolitanism, which exclusively attributes to itself the paradigm of rationality and progress, tends to define the Muslim world as remote from modernity (Ibid).



This process dialectically supports processes of modernisation by making words more important than objects. Many poststructuralism influenced scholars like Sach (1991), Crush (1995) and Escobar (1992, 1995) believe that it is this discourse of developmentalism that created the 'Third World' along with the processes and institutions to manage it. Steeve and Melkote (2001: 92), examining the modernisation discourse, argue that the goal from the beginning was to change the non-Western way of life with the Western one to 'reshape the reality of people in the 'Third World'. Consequently, the Western conception of progress and development took over the 'knowledge system' and 'existential reality' of the people.

In the context of the 'Third World', the experiential knowledge of people was made to follow the scientific pursuits, as their lives were considered to be laden with problems that could only be resolved by becoming modern. This also paved the way for agencies and institutions to intervene. Escobar (1992: 22) observes that this construction of social problems through the process of modernisation forced individuals to imagine their 'underdevelopment', and visualize there was something wrong with their way of life.

Not far from this discursive practice, through the spatial reach of discursive power, the 'inner city' is constructed in the UK. Within this space, the bi-polar theories of modernisation are once again used. The traditional/modern debate is repeated through exclusion/inclusion. The inner city is the 'Third World' of the 'First world', and people who live in these spaces are reduced to problems that need to be solved. In the both the academic and policy debate, the inner city and marginalized existences are intertwined into labels like degeneration, deprivation, disadvantage and so on.

Although many disadvantaged people manage their lives and seek support from within the communities they live in, their ability and capacity to deal with exclusion on the basis of their experience and faith is not recognized. Pierson (2004: 191) argues that behind the numbers and figures which link people belonging to minority ethnic communities to exclusion, 'there are people with strengths, skills and resilience for dealing with adverse conditions'. These strengths often emerge from Biradaris (kinship networks), religious affiliations and social relationships.

During my observation, I found some people living in Forest Fields, Hyson Green, Radford, Lenten and Sneinton in Nottingham relying on these communal networks for help and support. One popular way used by the members of the ethnic minority communities, especially by the Mirpuri and Bengali people, to help each other, is what is known locally as 'committee' - type of an informal and unregulated credit union. The members of the 'committee' make weekly contributions and help those people in financial difficulty. Although the beneficiary has to be a member, he/she gets a loan amount interest free without any paper work and guarantee. This way people who need startup capital for buying a taxi or starting small grocery or a 'take-away' are given a loan which they reimburse through small weekly installments. These 'committees' are run purely on trust and reciprocity which is more common among the closely knit communities. In most of the cases, such committees' are operated by women who run small boutiques, tailoring or book shops in the area. This arrangement works well within minority groups, mostly concentrated in particular areas of the city where the mainstream banks and other financial institutions have limited presence. According to Kempson and Claire (1999), some minority ethnic groups - 'particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshi households - make limited use of financial products due to language barriers, religious beliefs and lack of knowledge'. Within these circumstances the networks based on kinship and faith work well.

The research into the relationship between faith and development in the UK is sporadic, but more often it has been observed that within the marginalised communities, especially in the poorest neighbourhoods, religious groups 'maintain some voice', providing an 'incredible source of energy' to empower people (Pierson, 2004: 184). The faith-based institutions, churches, mosques, gurdawaras and temples have become proactive in working with statutory organisations to address the issues of health inequalities. For example, smoking cessation campaigns like the QUIT and the 'New Leaf' have successfully worked with mosques in Nottingham to raise awareness about giving up smoking. Similarly, the vaccination against the spread of contagious diseases during the annual Hajj pilgrimage has become very successful in the UK by involving religious institutions and mosques in this process. Many mosques and community centres are now running healthy living centres for women and old people from minority ethnic groups to provide services within culturally sensitive environment. (For more details see, MCB and Muslim Health Networks websites)

Tariq Modood (1999), argues that ethno-religious groups, which are an important part of the minority identity and culture, are absent from social policy debate. He regrets an important source of 'renewal of community', which can provide 'compassion, fairness, justice and public morality' is hardly present in both the theory and practice of fighting social exclusion in the UK. Instead the numbers both at local and national level replace experience as institutions and processes are created to intervene, and progress is measured through quantitative number crunching<sup>3</sup>.

Within the dominant paradigm, mass media are generally attributed an uncritical role in development. Some communication and development scholars believed

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<sup>3</sup> New Labour's obsession with targets, numbers and deadlines is the proof of this phenomenon as figures, measurements and league tables have become an integral part of its fight against social exclusion.

that an increased exposure to mass media, especially television, can increase the process of modernisation (Rogers 1969, Learner 1958 Scharmm 1964). As this dominant paradigm started coming under the scrutiny of critical and liberatory perspectives, the power of mass media in transforming people from 'traditional to modern' was also questioned.

Central to the scheme of modernisation has been the socio-scientific foundation of communication, which has over-emphasized the role of mass media through effects, modernisation and the diffusion of innovation approach along with social marketing. The current use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) also falls within this paradigm. All these approaches have, in one way or another, paid no heed to the spatio-temporal realities in which people live. In other words, the context in which people live, their culture and tradition has been made redundant and irrelevant to the process of their development. Whether these communication models had Western bias, innovation bias, effects bias, source bias or increased the knowledge gap, these approaches did not bring any qualitative change in the lives of people (Tichenor et al., 1970; Beltran 1976; Diaz Bordenave 1977; Heek 1999). Daniel Lerner (1958) argued that the social, economic and political development was proportional to the manifestation of mass media, implying that such media were the mediator as well as a yardstick for measuring the development.

By the 1970's it was becoming clear that the process of development was not straight forward, and in Latin America and Asia it was seen that social and economic constraints were too big and powerful to be changed by mass media (Rogers 1976b). Similarly, the diffusion of innovations approach, which used persuasion and technology to 'bring change', was criticized for its 'pro innovation', 'pro-content' and 'one-way flow bias'. It was found that this approach actually widens the information and material gaps among the farmers in the 'Third World'.

The diffusion of innovation practice was seen more of a quantitative approach that did not give qualitative insights into respondents (Golding 1974).

Other practices, like social marketing, and now the much-publicised use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) have not had much impact on development. While the former is seen a tool for the elite and government for 'social engineering', the impact of the latter is yet to be ascertained. There is a growing concern over the possibility of ICT leading to 'knowledge gap', as not many poor people have means and access to technology to use it to overcome the social, cultural and economic hurdles they face (Heeks 1999:15). There are, however, some case studies in the 'Third World' where ICT is proving beneficial in rural development (Grameen Telecommunication Project in Bangladesh, National Association of Software Services Companies NASSCOM in Mumbai), but these are sporadic cases and the real benefit of such technology can only be assessed when people have universal access, skills and means to use technology.

The decade of the 90's witnessed a major shift in traditional thinking about development and social change, bringing in the people-centred perspective, which took into cognizance the context in which development takes place. First there was debate on sustainable development, which brought issues of the environment following the Rio de Janeiro conference in 1992. Similarly respect for human life and concern for human rights was brought into the development debate following the Human Rights Conference in Vienna in 1993. After 1995 there was a renewed discussion on basic needs orientation, focusing on participatory approaches in communication and strengthening of critical consciousness and greater emphasis on community. This approach has led to the formulation of empowerment strategies. These debates took place at a time when postmodernism, post-structuralism and feminist scholarship challenged the logocentric and ethno-centric views and models. Questions were asked about the

universal truths and notions of objective social reality. Understanding diversity, dissension, and sensitivity towards ethnic issues became part of the wider debate. All this, finally brought the ethical dimension to the development discourse, stressing self-reliant, participatory and empowerment-related outcomes, in which tradition and culture are not seen as bottlenecks.

Although the dominant paradigm is said have passed, power relations within new models do not seem to be displaced as participation is often induced, directed, and co-opted. (Melkote and Steeves 2001:339). The bottom-up strategies have thus turned out to be clichés devoid of any substance.

Despite the wide ranging critique of developmentalism emerging from the post colonial, post structural, feminist and other critical perspectives, the discourse of development, influenced mainly by the process of modernisation, continued to shape the national and international policies on change, progress and growth. Many substitutes, in the shape of anti -development, market-friendly development, autonomous development, sustainable development and so on, have failed to provide a model that can conceptualise development outside the 'normalised' discourse of 'development'. For decades, development has remained confined within developmentalism.

Much of today's academic work in development support communication is premised on pluralistic and participatory approaches as opposed to the top to bottom perspective transmission models of the past but, even now, many of the frameworks offered today do not significantly differ from the dominant paradigm. The structure of elite domination has not changed. Bordenave (1980) noted that in these new approaches the sources and change agents often direct that participation. It is believed that marginalized people are often co-opted in

activities whose results are pre-determined to increase agricultural production, improving education or increasing consumption.

There is a parallel between these approaches and the way the socially excluded are further marginalized by the media discourse in the West. Minorities, whether defined by language, religion, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientations, are pushed to the margins by the mainstream media. With corporate and state use of communication being seen further making media out of bounds for social gain (Wasko and Mosco, 1992), locally organised media are increasingly becoming the 'voice' of the voice-less. Many critical scholars have underlined the importance of small-scale media in alternative communication. Hollander and Stappers (1992) believe this type of communication serves as a frame of reference for shared interpretation of the topics communicated within the community.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this thesis, while using a number of perspectives to examine the social policy vis-à-vis fighting exclusion draws on the lessons learnt from a community radio station in Nottingham in contextualising people-centred efforts in this regard.

Radio *Ramzan* caters to the community of South Asian immigrants, mostly from the Mirpuri district of the Pakistan Administered Kashmir, although there are other Muslims from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh and some from the Middle East living in Nottingham. The Mirpuri community has created its own spaces in the UK by living in clusters mostly in inner city areas. The Nottingham inner city has a significant presence of this community, which suffers from a wide range of social, economic, cultural and political problems.

## **Social exclusion in the West**

Despite unclear definitions, social exclusion dominates the social policy debate in the UK. The policy documents that determine government thinking show that explanation of social exclusion is ambiguous and imprecise (Byrne 1999; Atkinson & Davoudi 2000). This does not stop politicians and policy makers use and abuse the term. Its frequent use in social policy, academia, media and political rhetoric has created a discourse of social exclusion very similar to the discourse of developmentalism in the "Third World", but whether the concept helps to explain deprivation and inequality is debatable. Power and Wilson (2001), however, find one common theme in various explanations of the term: Social exclusion is about the inability of our society to keep all groups and individuals within reach of what we expect as a society. (2000: 1)

In the UK various government policies highlight the growing importance given to fighting social exclusion by promising to include all its citizens in the social and economic prosperity, and providing an equal opportunity to all (SEU, 2000; 2001). The term may be new to the UK but it has been in use in France for over three decades where it denoted 'people and places' that society had 'left behind' and 'cut off' from the mainstream national life (Hardill et al., 2001). Others see it a 'deprivation that is primary economic' (Bowring 2000) and some even suggest that focus on social exclusion means 'return to the politics of social justice' (Hague et al., 1999).

With this vagueness, some say that social exclusion can cover anyone or anything (Saunders & Tsumori 2002). Many scholars have warned about the fuzziness of the concept, and the carelessness about its use (Madanipour et al., 1998). Social scientists find the rhetorical use of social exclusion as a reason for giving it such a high profile within social policy especially since social exclusion was introduced in



the European Community policy in 1980 (Berghman 1995; Levitas 1998; Marsh & Mullins 1998).

Levitas not only finds the definition of social exclusion problematic but also its measurement tricky:

In an ideal world, definition precedes decisions about measurement, or where direct measurement is impossible, choice of proxy indicators. Part of the difficulty of finding indicators of social exclusion is that there is no agreed definition either of the phenomenon itself or of its main causes. (Levitas 1999: 16)

Finding the current work on social exclusion inadequate and lacking clarity, Levitas argues that this inadequacy only helps politicians 'pick and mix' among indicators, and to justify preferred policies to avoid confronting the growth of poverty and income inequality. The conflicting explanations of social exclusion coming from a variety of disciplines and political persuasions make the concept very adaptable; consequently the concept is understood differently in different parts of the world.

Silver (1994) classified social exclusion within national conceptions of what should keep society together. He advocated the solidarity perspective in France, depicting loss of social bonds, the spatialisation perspective in the US, denoting discrimination and segregation, and the monopoly perspective in the Western Europe, showing exclusion as a result of group domination. This classification points to the multi-dimensional conceptualisation of the term, which many scholars find close to notions of social integration in different parts of the world.

At the same time, the fluidity of the concept and its multi-dimensional use is seen to be useful in explaining the diversity of causes and consequences of social

exclusion (Madanipour et al., 1998). These scholars emphasise the concept's usefulness in highlighting everyday life situations where inequalities arise. They also emphasise the importance of making links across these dimensions.

Whatever the precise definition, social exclusion in the UK is thought to be a result of the fall-out from the globalisation of labour, production and finance. Evidence indicates that the 'Thatcher project' has helped particular sections of British society to gain financially. Globalisation, which gained currency in the early nineties, further facilitated this gain for the few at the expense of the majority of the poor. While the privileged are benefiting, the less privileged are being excluded, living marginal lives away from the glamour of the new economic reality. Many among the underprivileged are people belonging to ethnic minorities. The decline of the manufacturing industry, where most of the South Asian first generation migrants worked, forced them into a spiral of poverty and deprivation.

But how do the policy makers define social exclusion? The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) in its report, 'Minority ethnic issues in social exclusion and neighbourhood renewal (2000) says that social exclusion includes 'poverty and low income', but is broader and addresses some of the wider causes and consequences of poverty. The unit defines social exclusion as:

a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown.

(SEU, 2000).

The government strategy has come under heavy criticism from various quarters. First and foremost, the policy sees an economic rationale in including those

excluded. This approach does not look at non-material aspects of life and experience. Scholars dismiss the number-crunching explanation of exclusion and argue for a wider concept that looks at the context of social exclusion. In her pioneering discourse analysis, Levitas (1999) argues that there are at least three ways of looking at the issue:

- Moral Underclass Discourse (MUD), which puts blame for exclusion on those being excluded by playing down the inequalities inherent in society. Within this discourse, those seeking state help are demonised as an 'underclass'.
- Social Integrationist Discourse (SID) where the route to inclusion is through paid work and those not in jobs are seen having 'no morals'.
- Radical Egalitarian Discourse (RED): Here the structural inequalities as a result of market capitalism lead to proposals for a redistribution agenda for change.

Levitas thinks that the Labour government's social policy revolves around these three discourses. However, there seems to be a transition from a RED perspective to the SID perspective, which is increasingly becoming part of the European policy as well (1999: 22). Levitas sees a pattern in the shift of focus to SID and MUD from RED as New Labours' attempt to de-link social exclusion from poverty and justify actions that do not necessarily address the issues of redistribution of material goods. There is also a contrast between the political rhetoric and actual policy, which can be gauged from this transition. The Labour government's approach in dealing with social exclusion is also believed to take a simplistic view of those being excluded by ignoring the cultural diversity and social complexity which defines contemporary inner city areas.

Another feature of social exclusion discourse is its conceptual softness, which New Labour exploits to use to show off in dealing with some of the very high profile social issues. Burchardt, et al., (2002a) argue that policy makers have concentrated on the most visible and extreme issues which are likely to capture the attention of the wider public, such as street homelessness, teenage mothers, drug related crime, and policies to reduce anti-social behaviour.

The structural flaws are also blamed for the failures in the past to promote inclusion and equality along with lack of consistent national approach, which implies that services have often worked in parallel, not in a 'joined-up' way (Social Exclusion Unit 2000). So, the 'joined-up' services and organisations, agencies and local businesses working in partnership, became the new buzzword in the development of the government's social policies. But this 'joined-up' mantra has been criticised for creating mega bureaucracies to deal with the localised complex social issues. Levitas (1999) and Bowring (2000), argue that the emphasis on joined up government makes accountability harder to enforce, as it is difficult to trace specific policies and their effects.

The government department responsible for fighting social exclusion accepts the deficiency in recognizing this complexity. The socially excluded people are disproportionately concentrated in deprived areas and suffer all the problems that affect other people in these areas, but people from minority ethnic communities also suffer the consequences of:

Overt and inadvertent racial discrimination – individual and institutional, an inadequate recognition and understanding of the complexities of minority ethnic groups, and hence services that fail to reach them or meet their needs; and additional barriers like language, cultural and religious differences but in practice very little is done to address the problem.

(SEU 2000)

One set of reasons cannot hold good for every individual and group. This implies a relational understanding of the concept in which presence/absence of links connections and networks play a greater role in explaining exclusion than structural processes that were believed to be responsible for inequality. Room (1995) thinks that social exclusion can be better understood by putting greater emphasis on relational processes that keep people away from participating in social and economic activities.

However, the connection between relational factors and material deprivation is not a new concept. Townsend (1979:31) writes that poverty is a process where people are 'being excluded from ordinary living patterns customs and activities'. This definition is not very different from present discourse on social exclusion. But what is new is the way the agency and capacity in combating social exclusion have been appropriated into this discourse.

Creation of managerial strategies to deal with 'social disorder' is not a new thing. Cowen and Shenton (1995) observe that idea of development was in vogue in Europe in the 19th century as it was used to sort out social chaos caused as a result of poverty, unemployment and rapid urbanization.

The riots in Burnley, Bradford and other northern towns of England echoed this chaos in the summer of 2001. These riots revealed the extent of social division on one hand and on the other showed levels of deprivation experienced by the people living in these areas (Cantle report 2001). These disturbances, which shook the foundations of multiculturalism and the notion of equality in the UK, took place despite the government's claims to be spending millions to address the issues of perennial disaffection experienced by people living in the run-down city areas.

The then Home Secretary established a review team, led by Ted Cante, to seek the views of local residents and community leaders in the affected towns and in other parts of England in order to bring about social cohesion and also to identify good practice in the handling of these issues at the local level. The Cante report, which was published in December 2001, revealed the physical segregation of housing estates and inner city areas and the depth of polarisation in British towns and cities. The report coined the famous phrase 'parallel lives' to focus on the physical divisions between communities compounded by separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks.

The report remarked that the whole 'equalities' agenda has become heavily associated with black and ethnic minority groups despite efforts to promote a more inclusive agenda' (2001:10). This report suggested that such approach leads to an assumption that 'black and ethnic minority groups are in need, and that they are seen as recipients'. Although the Cante report mostly looked at the consequences of this segregation, at some places it revealed the extent of disadvantage faced by the people belonging to minority ethnic groups.

We recognised that some communities felt particularly disadvantaged and that the lack of hope and the frustration borne out of poverty and deprivation all around them meant that disaffection would grow. Yet they were not always well targeted, nor even identified. For example, some black and ethnic minorities felt that they were always identified without sufficient differentiation and 'problematised' as a result. Similarly, some poorer white communities also felt left out completely like the members of the black and minority ethnic groups. (Cante: 2001: 11)

Racism in the form of Islamophobia was also identified as a problem in the areas, and for 'some young people was part of their daily experience'. The report suggested that these young people felt that there were 'being socially excluded because of their faith'. While problematising communities are part of the discourse that creates inner city ghettos, efforts to address the issues of poverty and discrimination were seen to 'institutionalise the problems'.

The plethora of initiatives and programmes, with their baffling array of outcomes, boundaries, timescales and other conditions, seemed to ensure divisiveness and a perception of unfairness in virtually every section of the communities we visited...The most consistent and vocal concern was expressed about the damaging impact of different communities bidding against each other and the difficulty of being able to convince them about the fairness of the present approach...Reference was constantly made to the fact that new initiatives are constantly being introduced, even before old ones have been completed; that national schemes, with national derived targets and priorities, disempower local communities; and that the complexity of bidding and funding arrangements take up disproportionate amounts of time. (2001: 25)

The Cattle report did not specifically look at the role of media in the riots, but recorded complaints about the local media for its bias and misrepresentation.

A number of respondents blamed the press and media for stirring up racial tension in order to titillate readers and sell more papers. They called for measures to make the press and media more accountable and responsible. The importance of local press and media was also emphasised. In the recent disturbances, it was suggested that a number of local editors were particularly irresponsible in their selection of letters for publication. (2001:64 )

The inquiry into the causes and consequences of these riots has demonstrated that assimilation and integration models have not worked. Consequently, the model of social cohesion based on the 'European Social Model' which acknowledges the existence of disparities within and between groups was suggested. This model emphasising 'mutual support' and 'shared social goals', nonetheless faces a number of questions. With the debate on immigration and multiculturalism becoming one of the major political issues in the Europe, minority groups are demanding social justice as 'different equals.' Against this background, the Cattle report has been criticised for its 'insensitivity' towards the difference and has been lamented for putting the blame for deprivation on the victims of deprivation. The report has focused attention on social isolation, which is an outcome of the exclusion. There are push factors like racism, lack of culturally sensitive provisions and facilities, and there are some pull factors like, strong family connections, cultural practices and lack of exposure responsible for this phenomenon. Discrimination, both at individual and institutional level, is recognised as one of the main reasons for social exclusion, but it is also the lack of voice, stereotyping which force people to look inwards for help and support.

The literature explains how 'symbolic boundaries arise between racially constructed categories (Hall 1992:255) and how these representations are generalized, perpetuated and legitimised through the media and official discourses. The differences of religion, custom and cultures among the racially constructed groups are exploited by the media, which leads to hostility and suspicion between the groups. A close examination of the situation reveals that official, political and media discourses work hand in hand to demonise difference for their individual and sometimes mutual interest. Calling the process of managing people's lives a discourse of 'governmentality', Clarke et al., (2000: 110) from a Foucauldian analysis, argue that activation, empowerment, responsabilization and abandonment constitute four dynamics of the process of



governmentality, of which New Labour appear as exemplary practitioner. Through this process, Clarke et al., (Ibid) write that citizens are transformed into subjects who understand themselves as responsible and independent agents.

These scholars find the 'revelatory style' of Foucauldian analysis helpful in uncovering the complex and subtle workings of power. Production of self-regulating subjects as job seekers, marginalised, inner city dwellers, illegal immigrants, hard working families, socially excluded, and so on, are categories used to manage diversity. Such an approach not only serves as a convenient means of categorisation which essentialises difference but is also used as a pretext to pass the blame of exclusion, underachievement in education, higher unemployment and poor health to the victims of inequality. The official discourse for its own bureaucratic and administrative convenience uses categories<sup>4</sup> like 'disaffected', 'disenfranchised', 'low achievers', 'low skilled', 'less healthy', 'discriminated' and so on to refer to people and spaces which exist outside the 'normal' West. These categories enter into political discourse where terminology changes but meanings remain the same.

The symbols become very important, as 'immigrant', 'refugees', 'asylum seekers', 'ethnic minorities', 'non-white', 'coloured', 'black', 'faith based' are used indiscriminately by politicians to grab headlines and catch the attention of the voters. And the media, especially the tabloid press, further sensationalise the difference by demonising the 'other '. So the headlines like 'swamping of our schools and hospitals', 'Terrorists in the neighbourhood', 'Parallel Lives' and 'Forced marriages' enter into the public domain. The media in the UK has used immigration and asylum on many occasions to do scaremongering, and politicians use these headlines to score points. The issue has got so muddled up that it is

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<sup>4</sup> The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) documents are littered with these labels. To access these documents, visit: [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/publications.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/publications.aspx)

very difficult to make a distinction between a foreign worker, an immigrant, a refugee, an asylum seeker and so on. Immigration in itself has emerged as a serious discourse in European politics in the Post War era, and in the UK this discourse has taken centre stage in defining national and local policies vis-à-vis this discourse. Many studies and reports into the issues of social exclusion have indicated this relationship as the proportion of minority ethnic groups mostly belonging to the generation of immigrant communities are disproportionately caught in the cycles of unemployment, poor health, poor housing, low educational achievement and higher incidents of racism and higher dependence on benefits (MacPherson Report, 1999; Cantle Report 2001).

<b>WARD</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>WHITE</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Non-White</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Largest Non-White Group</b>
Berridge	16.100	11.150	69%	4.950	31%	Pakistani
Arboretum	10.300	7.450	72%	2.850	28%	Pakistani
Radford and Park	14.550	10.600	73%	3.950	27%	Pakistani
Bridge	9.100	6.950	76%	2.150	24%	Pakistani
Dunkirk and Lenton	9.950	7.700	78%	2.200	22%	Indian
Leen Valley	9.200	7.150	78%	2.050	22%	Pakistani
St. Ann's	13.250	10.350	78%	2.900	22%	Caribbean
Wollaton Est & Lenton Aby.	9.050	7.250	80%	1.800	20%	Chinese
Dales	13.850	11.300	82%	2.550	18%	Pakistani
Wollaton West	14.200	12.250	86%	2.000	14%	Indian
Basford	15.100	13.100	87%	2.050	13%	Caribbean
Mapperley	14.100	12.300	87%	1.800	13%	Caribbean
Sherwood	15.150	13.200	87%	1.900	13%	Caribbean
Bulwell Forest	13.800	12.600	91%	1.250	9%	Caribbean
Aspley	15.700	14.350	91%	1.350	9%	Mixed origins
Bestwood	15.300	14.050	92%	1.250	8%	Caribbean
Bilborough	16.050	14.750	92%	1.250	8%	Caribbean
Bulwell	15.750	14.700	93%	1.050	7%	Caribbean
Clifton North	12.800	12.250	96%	550	4%	Indian
Clifton South	13.650	13.200	97%	450	3%	Mixed origins
<b>Nottingham</b>	<b>267.0</b>	<b>226.7</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15%</b>	

**Table II: Black and Asian population in Nottingham** (ONS: 2001)

Clustering of minority groups in poor neighbourhoods is a fact. For social and cultural reasons people belonging to various minorities (ethnic, religious, and immigrant) prefer to live together in the same locality or even on the same

street. In Nottingham, for example, the majority of the Muslim community is living in the Hyson Green, Lenton and Sneinton areas of the city. These areas with established facilities like mosques, specialised groceries, take-aways', cloth - shops and charities, have for long provided people a network and support to live together. A similar pattern can be seen in all major towns of the UK where minorities, especially Pakistani/ Mirpuri can be seen living together. In fact, the largest population of Mirpuris outside the Mirpur in Azad Kashmir is believed to be in Birmingham (150,000). Various explanations have been given for this phenomenon including the support network, fear of racism, convenience etc (Lewis, 1994).

But these spaces have become the focus of many studies, as these areas reveal notable deprivation, and people living in these areas are disadvantaged in many ways. There is a sense of rejection and exclusion among the people from the mainstream, but at the same time there is a strong desire to live together as a community, though a multiplicity of ambiguities and differences exists between and within the groups of people. The idea of the community provides a refuge from the hostile environment and a platform to contest these hostilities. Jeffery (1976:182) highlights this pull factor by referring to studies that suggest and support the idea that 'conscious re-assertion of Pakistani-ness is a probable response to such 'rejection' by the indigenous population.

Whether inspirational or real, the idea of communal living gives rise to particularities, which are used to assert the identity. Raghuram sees this revival of religion as an expression of socio-cultural particularism against the universalizing tendencies of globalisation, though she thinks this distinction is unstable (Raghuram, 1999).

Most of the work carried out on the theme of faith and regeneration explores the role faith communities play in urban development. Farnell writes that the majority of the research undertaken in this area involves the faith communities themselves, usually in an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of current activity. In the early 1990's a study of the community impact of the Church Urban Fund was published, funded in part by the central government. 'Hope in the City' drew conclusions about the Fund's impact in Manchester, Birmingham and Southwark (Farnell et al., 1994). Recommendations were made which have subsequently influenced an agenda for the fund's development.

Papers stemming from this work were published in community empowerment, community organizing and community initiatives in relation to state urban policy. 'Faith in the city' and the Church Urban Fund have been the focus of a number of higher degree dissertation on Church engagement in community development. However, it is argued that regeneration is a signifier of profound change in many religious traditions and political ideologies, both radical and conservative (Furbey 1999). According to Musgrave (1999), only a few community based initiative within News deal for communities project have shown the positive outcomes faith can play in neighbourhood renewal.

Taking account of the role faith can play in regeneration; the government has included in its policy the input from the Inner City Religious Council (ICRC) to make a lasting impact on the lives of people who live in these areas. Since its creation in 1992 the Inner City Religious Council (ICRC), has included representatives of five of the largest faith communities in England: Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs. It is chaired by a government minister and provides a forum where they and the government can work together on urban renewal and social inclusion. The ICRC is part of the Urban Policy Unit - formed to take forward the agenda of the Urban White Paper published in November 2000.

But the role of the ICRC is only consultative, while the actual implementation of projects is carried out with 'tested' and trusted means and practices, where numbers and not experiences are counted.

In fact, the New Labour government was criticised for being too managerial in its approach in dealing with perennial social problems. The emergence of the 'managerial state', a businesslike organising, which counts efficiency through setting of targets and hiring of more managers (Clarke et al., 2000), is believed to ignore the holistic, contextual approach. This approach can be best demonstrated the way New Labour has been managing the National Health Service (NHS).

## **Faith, place and exclusion**

Traditionally, the process of development based on the Western worldview, sees religion and other forms of faith in conflict with 'progress and change'. Literature within this discourse suggests that non-material variables only become important when they are perceived as problems and 'stigmatized as inferior in culture, religion or race' (Friberg and Hettne, 1985). Non-Western faiths like Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism are especially seen to create barriers for progress (Melkote and Steeves, 2001).

But with the growing criticism of the developmentalism, coinciding with the growth in alternative movements, there is a heightened consciousness about the importance of religion and culture in contextualizing development as a people-centred endeavour (Wang and Dissanayake, 1984a; Servaes 1999).

Within the cultural practice of the marginalized communities, identity as a worldview shaped by unique epistemology, historiography and philosophy of life is seen by many scholars to play a significant role in the re-conceptualisation of

development to displace the Western world-view. Sardar, indicating the 'power shift towards non-Western ways of doing things', argues that 'there will be more than one dominant way of being human, of being free, and there will be more than one way to develop' (Sardar 1997:47).

Liberation theology, which evolved from Latin America, supports development as a 'process of personal and communal liberation', where 'empowerment and self-reliance' should be the goal of such development. It suggests emancipatory communication, where interpersonal and group strategies lead to 'expanded consciousness' consistent with the 'spiritual practice' and faith of people. Under this perspective power shifts from external factors to 'individuals, organizations, and communities over social and economic conditions, over political processes and over their own stories' (Melkote and Steeves, 2001:366).

However, the relationship between religion and development is not well researched. Exploring this area (Raghuram, 1999), writes that literature on the relationship between religion and development is patchy, although 'economic development is often viewed as being essentially secular' (Raghuram 1999: 238).

Exploring the implicit and explicit ways in which religion and development contest, Raghuram (ibid) concludes that 'religion and development are interlinking processes, which engage with each other to produce change.' Citing the example of emphasis in the Protestant tradition on individualism, she explains how this reformist movement promoted capitalist economic development. At the same time, she writes about the static nature of other faiths like Islam and Confucianism to impede development. Thus, she remarks that religion can be a seedbed for development while development can instigate religious change.

The static/dynamic nature of faiths is debatable. Religions in pure form have brought sea changes. Whether the Hinduism-inspired Sarvodaya movement in India or the Islamic concept of *Zakat* (obligatory charity) or Protestant inspired

Capitalism, faiths have changed the course of the world and continue to influence and shape the spiritual, social, cultural and political life of millions of people. However, in many parts of the world, religions have adapted to local social and cultural situations, and the 'stagnation', which the religion has widely been accused of, could be part of that local variation or misinterpretation of the religions.

Islam, for example, puts explicit emphasis on change and seeking change: "Allah does not change the condition of any nation unless it strives in that direction." (Qur'an, 13/11: 8/53). *Ilm* (Knowledge) is the seedbed for such a change. Allah is *Aleem* (most knowledgeable) and seeking knowledge is made mandatory for both men and women. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH<sup>5</sup>) reinforced this message by saying in one of his *Hadith* that knowledge should be sought even if one has to go to China. This stress on seeking knowledge is not just the revealed but also the acquired knowledge, which Choudury (1993: 60) describes as 'an evolutionary process embracing interactive intelligence and experience gained in all sub-systems of the universe.'

Historically, Islam in its simple message has been committed to the liberation of the poor and encouraging pluralism. From the early days of Islam when Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was establishing the first community of Muslims in Medina, the inner dynamism of Islam started unfolding. This theology of liberation was actually put in practice by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) when he, through his own word and action, challenged ignorance, oppression and injustice. Asghar Ali Engineer, a renowned scholar from the Indian subcontinent argues that such dignified ideals not only inspire and encourage, but also lead to purposeful action:

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<sup>5</sup> PBUH: (Peace Be Upon Him) is used by the majority of Muslims with the name of Prophet Muhammad as a prayer and a mark of respect.

Also, Muhammad worked for the liberation of the oppressed, the poor and the needy and the ignorant. He was, in this project of liberation, not only a teacher and philosopher, but also an activist, participant and fighter. Under his inspiration, the Arabs not only liberated themselves but also sought to liberate others by shattering the two greatest oppressive empires of the world then i.e. the Roman and the Sassanid. Their stormy victories were ensured, as they were seen by the oppressed of these mighty empires as liberators (Engineer, 2000).

The empowerment led liberation perspective, which 'prioritizes personal and communal liberation from oppression', is seen to make faith central to self-reliance and human emancipation. The concept of development as liberation as propagated by the Brazilian educator Paolo Freire (1972) is influenced by the Christian Liberation Theology<sup>6</sup> which Gustavo Gutierrez, a Peruvian priest and theologian describes as being active on behalf of the poor, studying the Bible and praying. Steeve and Melkote (2001), quoting Gutierrez, believe that the liberation theology is based on the following tenets:

- That God is very close to humanity,
- That we encounter God via commitment to justice to all,
- That a spirituality of liberation is inseparable from the work of liberation.

(2001: 277-278)

These tenets of Christian theology resonate in all major religions. Islam in particular, being an Ibrahim religion, has a similar set of guidelines regarding care, equality and social action.

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<sup>6</sup> For specific quotes from the Bible see Good News Bible, Today's English Version (1992)



The concept of liberation within Islamic literature is not well researched, though many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars would argue that whole philosophy of Islam is based on human liberation, dignity and justice (Smith, 1959; Esack, 1997; Engineer 2000). Commentators like Merryl Wyn Davies (2002), have even gone to the extent to argue that Europe has learnt the art of reasoning from Islam. Davies (2002) argues that 'Islam taught Europe the very idea of reason as well as how to reason' (Shared Cultures section, Para. 2)

Wilfred Cantwell Smith's knowledge of the Orient helped him not only to do research in primary sources of Islam, but also enabled him to have first-hand interaction with Islamic 'ulama' (scholars). Smith's (1959) work in understanding Islam's role, particularly in socio-spiritual development, led him to criticise the Christian association with the presumed political and technological superiority of the West. Having studied a wide range of Muslim communities in the Arab world, Turkey, Pakistan, India, and Indonesia, Smith commented that the 'religion is alive and dynamic.' (1959: 297). Although a Christian missionary and seen by many in the Muslim world as an Orientalist, Smith's contribution to the liberatory aspects of Islam is believed to be convincing.

However, it was Farid Esack (1997) who put forward Quranic tenets of Islamic liberation theology, though this hermeneutics of liberation is in the context of South Africa. He writes:

- Allah is constantly involved in the affairs of humankind,
- Allah is concerned with justice for oppressed,
- A full understanding of the Quran support for the oppressed requires full commitment to and engagement in the struggle for liberation.

But the liberation standpoint within Islamic thought has been criticised by traditionalists who see it as a philosophy to appropriate religion to fit liberal

paradigms. It is argued that Esack's conceptualisation of Islamic liberation theology is driven by praxis and not an abstract encounter with God and revelation. Murad (1998), as one of the vociferous critics of Esack, argues that Esack is following the footsteps of another modernist, Ameer Ali, 'who nearly a century ago re-examined the Qur'an to discover in its pages the entire moral code of Victorian England' (1998. Para, 2). Esack who is thought to have borrowed the ideas from the liberation theology of Gutierrez, was very active against apartheid in South Africa, and this association has become the focus of criticism for 'his admirable willingness to cooperate with Christian opponents of apartheid' (Murad, Ibid, Para9).

From a puritan point of view, encounters with God, revelations and the life (*Sunnah and Hadith*) of Prophet (PBUH) are not only indispensable part of one's faith, but also the guiding principles for dealing with the material world. Within this view, Esack's humanistic approach in dealing with inequality, oppression and discrimination is bound to invite criticism, especially from those who subscribe to the Saudi sponsored *Wahabi* and *Salafi* schools of thought. But Esack himself is not deviating from the basic principles of Islam. It is the way he interprets the verses of Quran and quotes the *Hadith* and *Sunnah* to relate religion to the contemporary social issues. Another issue that has generated criticism of Farid Esack's conceptualization of liberation theology is the way his ideas have been labeled and made to look divorced from the basic tenets of Islam. Many Western scholars and media have called his work as 'progressive' which is seen by many dovetailing with liberal values (Murad, Ibid).

Islam, in theory, is considered to be a practical religion with no boundaries between the political, social and the spiritual aspects of life, but in practice, the social realities of many of its followers are distant from their spiritual experiences. After 9/11, there has been a surge in the debate about the political aspects of

Islam, especially the relation between Islam and the West, but the debates about the democracy, equality and social justice within Muslim societies have not picked up. Although Islam itself is not responsible for this social inertia, it is used by many to stifle the debate. Many scholars (Ishaq, 1997; Sardar 2002; Engineer, 2007) are calling for *Ijtihad*<sup>7</sup> to narrow the gap between the social and spiritual in Islam. Esack's work, though controversial, is the beginning of this process where religion and liberation are not seen in conflict but complimenting to create a humane, just and equal society.

Looking at the growth of Islam and its capacity to bring various tribes, factions, ethnicities and nationalities together indicates the humanistic values of this religion. Islam's power to galvanise movements against tyrannies and injustices show its innate nature to support the oppressed. It has appealed to a variety of people in various situations and has provided the spiritual and political stimulation for many contemporary social and political movements in the world.

Malcolm X in the 1960's, preached and practised a form of Islamic liberation theology during the Civil Rights Movement in the USA, which attracted millions of Black Americans. Similarly, Farid Esack propagated the Quranic hermeneutic of liberation in the context of the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa. The Iranian revolution, which ousted the autocratic Shah, led to a resurgence of Islamic movements against oppressive regimes in many other parts of the world. But at the same time, some extremist political and religious movements like the Taliban claim to be an Islamic movement, using Islam to promote its version of social justice. The Taliban phenomenon, which started as a student movement against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in due course of time became one of

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<sup>7</sup> The independent interpretation of problems/issues, not precisely covered by the Qur'an, Hadith and scholars. In the early Muslim community, adequately qualified jurist had the right to exercise such original thinking based on personal judgment and analogical reasoning. It was abandoned from the 12th century when it was argued that *Ijtihad* can lead to errors and misinterpretation. The debate about *Itihad* has resurfaced as many Muslims struggle in resolving contemporary issues. There is a no consensus on the qualifications of a *Mujtahid* (one who can do *Ijtihad*).

the most radicalized Islamic movements. Melkote and Steeves (2001) argue that as the Bible was used historically, some Muslim groups use the Quran in the same way to justify oppression and violence to suit their own narrow vision. However, the authors believe that the majority of Muslim opinion is against this fanaticism and has a more moderate outlook which is not represented in the contemporary media discourse, which they see as responsible for creating a non-representative image of Islam in the Western world. While the media are largely seen to be responsible for promoting negative images of Islam and Muslims, many Muslim scholars blame the oppressive regimes and despotic rulers for exploiting Islam for political reasons on the one hand, and the fanatic-preachers who use their literal, and what are seen by many as out of context, interpretations of Islam to legitimize their authority (Karawan, 1992; Sardar, 2002)

Ishaq Khan thinks the malaise in Muslim societies is a result of the influence of the Western ideologies:

... Rationalism, secularism, socialism, nationalism, liberalism and fundamentalism -or in other words, various forms of Western dogmatism - are more than mere forms of man's reason to reason out problems in the realm of mind Vis-a Vis society. Although, the Western society has not been monolithic in a strict sense, yet in one respect it has shown remarkable unity of purpose in its efforts in westernising the world in the name of ideologies. The West's worldview is, therefore, worldviews in a circumscribed sense. (Khan, 1997: 12)

The arguments between various shades of reformists, modernists, traditionalists and puritans are not new. Like many other contemporary Muslim scholars, Zia Uddin Sardar (2002) thinks that Muslims are caught in a struggle between the forces of 'secular modernity' fuelled by globalization and a reactionary 'aggressive traditionalism'.

Sardar in his editorial comment, 'Islam: resistance and reform (2002) puts the blame for this malaise on the 'history, social practice and intellectual and political inertia of Muslims themselves. He argues that Muslims are not willing to reflect on the process. He believes that Muslims, on the whole, are very reluctant to look at themselves or to examine the processes that have 'transformed Islam into a suffocating and oppressive ideology'. Besides the lack of self introspection, he thinks many Muslim societies have become authoritarian and despotic due to closing down of the possibility of *Ijtihad*, and non-adherence to the principles and practices adopted by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He argues:

Consider how the idea of *ijma*, the central notion of communal life in Islam, has been reduced to the consensus of a select few. *Ijma* literally means consensus of the people. The concept dates back to the practice of Prophet Muhammad himself as leader of the original polity of Muslims. When the Prophet Muhammad wanted to reach a decision, he would call the whole Muslim community – then admittedly not very large – to the mosque. A discussion would ensue; arguments for and against would be presented. Finally, the entire gathering would reach a consensus. Thus, a democratic spirit was central to communal and political life in early Islam. But over time the clerics and religious scholars have removed the people from the equation – and reduced *ijma* to 'the consensus of the religious scholars'. Not surprisingly, authoritarianism, theocracy and despotism reigns supreme in the Muslim world (Sardar 2002, p.345).

This despondency, however, should not be associated with Islam itself. Engineer (2007) citing particular verses, argues that Quran clearly supports democratic Institutions as there are references in this holy book that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) should consult his companions in all secular matters (3:158) and all Muslims should consult each other in their affairs (42:38).

Islam as one of the largest faiths in the world is practiced by people of different colours, backgrounds and traditions in different parts of the world. Some of these countries are democratic, some autocratic while some are dictatorial, and in every setting the politicians, rulers and dictators use this religion for their own legitimacy. However, the social and political traditions of these countries and cultures are not necessarily Islamic but are pertinent to the region. There are many non-democratic Muslim countries where political institutions and democratic practices have not taken roots, but it is not because of Islam but due to the feudal structures and the tribal arrangements operational in these societies. In many Muslim countries, owing to their colonial past, dictatorships and monarchies have been traditionally supported by the Western countries, which have hampered the democratic process in these parts of the world.

However, in practice, Muslim world, as it exists today, is fragmented into sects and classes and many followers of the faith believe in their castes, clans and groups, which is a challenge to the universal concept of '*Ummah*.' This fragmentation is further aggravated by the ongoing tussle between the modernist and traditionalist interpretations. Within Western scholarship, there are some scholars who see fundamentalism part of modernisation. Turner (2003) suggests that fundamentalism is a form of modernisation. Exploring the Nietzschean, Parsonian and McLuhanian paradoxes about the place of religion in the global age, he argues that the reformist philosophy of Islam supported the rational civilization, modern capitalism and democracy. He adds that the 'correct interpretation' of the Quran shows that Islam is compatible with modern science and rational thought (2003: 407). Bryan blames the pre-Islamic practices for the corruption, which he thinks comes in between Islam and modernity, and believes that 'fundamentalism is a solution for this corruption as it is a step towards modernisation' (Turner, 2003: 414) . However, many scholars see Muslim revival movements more as a reaction to the modernisation project of 'plutocracies'

(Sayyid, 1997). What is being labelled as fundamentalism is seen by critical scholars as resistance to the universalisation of the Western knowledge as the only knowledge. Bobby Sayyid argues that through the orchestration of the 'Islamic way, Muslims voice an alternate subjectivity' in which Muslim identity encompasses all other identities, and where the 'language of Islamic metaphor is used to seek political destinies in a fragmented world' (1997:157).

Although Sayyid's (1997:73-74) analysis is more at a macro level, revealing many dimensions of the Islamic perspective vis-à-vis the West's modernisation project using Kemal Atta Turk's Turkey (Kemalist) and Khomeini's Iran as examples, this analysis is very relevant at a micro level when one explores the tensions and differences in the backyards of the West where a growing Muslim community is trying to define its existence on its own terms. Many second and third generation Muslims born and brought up in the UK foreground the Muslim identity in their political practice to demand state-funded Islamic schools, Muslim chaplaincy, *Halal* meals, Muslim media etc. Sayyid cites many reasons, including the domination of secular elites, the authoritarian nature of post-colonial regimes, uneven economic development, etc for the emergence of Islamism. The common denominator for colonization, secularization and developmentalism is seen to be the continuity of the 'West' as the only knowledge. The limit of Europe comes when groups of people begin to articulate their position on the basis of the rejection of Europe's claims to copyright (Sayyid, 1997: 17).

But the process of modernisation is not only criticized from the Islamic point of view. Many contemporary critical and emancipatory perspectives which argue for validation of other knowledges see modernisation as being racist, sexist and ignorant. Instead, faith, gender, ethnicity, sexualities and difference are seen as valid levels of analysis in exploring diversity of knowledge and the way(s) of living outside the notion of 'the knowledge' within the alternative scholarship (Melkote

and Steeve, 2001). The pedagogic turn in development studies, often referred to as post development, is seen as very controversial by some academics who ridicule its simplistic explanations and 'lack of scholarship' (Corbridge, 1998). But this body of scholarship, nevertheless, has opened up the development discourse to a new level of analysis, which offers a variety of possibilities and potentialities of understanding why the development process has failed to engage with the people it was supposed to help.

With a renewed assertiveness among the minority ethnic groups, especially within the Muslim communities in UK gaining momentum, so is the desire among these groups to develop strategies and actions based on their experience and knowledge. Many such grassroots level social action programmes have become the focus of academic investigation. Many religious institutions including mosques are more proactive now to develop programs and strategies to help local people to improve health, education and employment in inner city areas. The Muslim Council of Britain (MBC) is currently involved in building the capacity of smaller community groups and mosques to access various streams of local, national and European funding for community development and fighting exclusion (MBC Website).

Although the role faith and cultural practices can play in helping people fight exclusion is not well researched, anecdotal evidence from poor parts of the world shows that the development strategies used within the context of faith have proved successful by increasing the participation of people and bringing qualitative changes in the lives of people (Esack: 1997). In the UK, political mobilization of ethnic minorities has largely remained confined around race relations. This mobilization, promoted on the principle of racial equality, has come under criticism for failing to understand the complexity of race and ignoring the spatio-temporal realities in which marginalized groups live. Difference, religion



and ethnic origin have become the important areas of contestation and consensus within minorities. The focus is now shifting from a more generalised ethnic identity to a more specific religious identity.

The demands for equality and opportunity are not just made within broader racial categories, but within religious orientation, ethnic origin and nationality as well (Paul Statham, 1999). Tariq Modood, acknowledging the importance of religion in contemporary multicultural Britain, says that religious assertiveness among the South Asians is giving Britishness a new significance 'out of step with native trends', which he finds diversifying rather than segregating (Modood, 2004, TES). However, the conceptualization of faith-based interventions is meaningless unless such efforts take into consideration other critical perspectives that have, for different reasons and through different analyses, questioned the modernisation-inspired project of development. The critical scholarship may not agree on everything with the liberation perspectives, but all these standpoints seek pluralistic and egalitarian practices for the restoration of people's knowledge and capacity.

Although it is beyond the scope of this work to compare and contrast critical and liberatory standpoints, it is crucial to explore the common ground between these theories where emancipatory outcomes of my thesis can be grounded. Conceptualising such multi-perspective and multi-disciplinary framework is in conformity with the broader political agenda of this thesis.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

# **Politics of Methodology**

*People cannot be liberated by a consciousness and knowledge other than their own.*  
(Fals-Borda)

This chapter attempts to fulfil the following objectives:

- *Situate the overall aims of this study within the perspectives and movements which challenge the presumed universality of Western knowledge.*

*Examine the methodological possibilities that can help explore marginalized knowledge and experience.*

- *Conceptualise a multi-perspective and inter-disciplinary framework to analyse fieldwork within the broader political agenda of the thesis.*
- *Critique this framework and problematise my position within the project to understand how this position affects the research, and in turn gets affected by it.*

The preceding discussions in Chapter One highlighted the fact that the process of exclusion and marginalisation is a complex discourse of overlapping power relations, politics and subjectivities. This complexity cannot be explained and understood through a static mono-theoretical framework but will require a dynamic multi-disciplinary and multi-perspective methodology. The causes and consequences of social exclusion as charted in chapter one demand a political and pedagogical approach to empower people. So, the references to feminism and liberation theology are deliberate.

The research question of this study which deals with exclusion, voice and agency, demands a strategic intersection of emancipatory, critical and spiritual perspectives to provide a non essentialist outline to analyse the power relations and structures responsible for marginalisation on the one hand, and on the other offers ways of fighting back for the validation of the marginalised knowledge. The social exclusion of the Mirpuri community, which is the focus of this study, is not due to a single action, but is the result of a complex process of racialization, stereotyping, silence, victim blame and discrimination wherein the labels like black, non-white, ethnic, immigrant, disadvantaged, Asian, unemployed, unhealthy, low achieving are used uncritically and, at times, interchangeably (Shah, 1998; Abbas, 2005).

However, bringing faith, feminism and philosophy together is an audacious task. Allegiance to any one of these concepts can inhibit commitment to others (Groenhout, 2002). Philosophy is generally seen to be contrary to religious faith while the faith itself is believed to be averse to feminism. And feminism, by and large, has been against the male dominated philosophy. So where is a meeting point for these seemingly divergent concepts? Groenhout (Ibid), engaging with this difficult task, says that there is no single answer to how these, apparently differing, strands may come together, but she sees the range of approaches in addressing this dilemma leading to a framework which can, on the one hand, recognise the 'creative potential the tension between these allegiances may generate' and on the other, acknowledge the potential for 'creating mutually supportive coherence' out of these loyalties' (2002:11).

The conceptual, positional and methodological 'superiority' of Western knowledge has been contested from a variety of critical, feminist, indigenous, racial, and communitarian perspectives, which argue for the validation of 'other' knowledge and 'other' ways of knowing (Stacey, 1988; Kobayashi 1994; Stanfield II 1994;

Smith, 1999; Servaes 1999, Tehranian 1994, Sardar, 2002). These perspectives have long been demanding changes in existing frameworks, values and systems to bring marginalized experiences to the centre. I draw support from these arguments in exploring the methodological possibilities that will guide me through the maze of literature on feminism, post-structuralism and liberation theology to develop a non-essentialist framework. This seems an uncertain outline but this work is not about certainties. The study is a challenge to formal and accepted foundations, which demands a high degree of reflexivity and strong political commitment. Lather (1991) argues that engaging within an uncertain framework emerges as the 'hallmark of liberatory praxis in a time marked by the dissolution of authoritative foundations of knowledge' (1991, p. 13). Adopting this approach to work through this methodological intricacy opens up ways for thinking outside the disciplinary rigidities and essentialist reading of various perspectives to develop productive philosophical reflections.

As we have seen in the first chapter of this thesis, the actions taken to address the process of social exclusion are not very different from the process of developmentalism used in the 'Third World'. One striking features of these discourses is the disregard shown to local knowledge and experience (Melkote and Steeves, 2001). The modernisation inspired model of pumping money and reliance on technology has not brought much qualitative change in many poor parts of the world.

This study underlines the importance of experiential learning, supported by the cultural practices of the marginalized people. The concept of increasing the individual's awareness of oppression and accompanying it with actions as suggested by Freire (1974), links the social aspects of life with the spiritual and vice versa. In doing so, the framework disproves the belief that social research is an objective, clinical and the value-free way of understanding humans, their

relations and realities. Lather (1991) locates this framework at the 'conjunction of the feminisms, neo-Marxism and poststructuralism', to see how research and pedagogy could be 'positioned as fruitful sites' within a 'postmodern praxis' (1991, p. 11) Critical theory, feminism and liberation theology share the reasoned perspective on existing social injustice, collective social action and outlining empowering substitutes to existing structures.

Whether interested in individual, social or communal empowerment, these perspectives critique the capitalist system. Melkote and Steeves (2001) bring three perspectives closer by defining development within liberation theology as a 'process of liberation from injustice, discrimination and oppression'. Despite some similarities, there is a resistance to collaboration between these areas. Rejection of religion, call to revolution and the emphasis on institutions rather individuals in Marxist thinking are some of the major disagreements it has with liberation theology (Turner 1999, Zweig 1991).

As was discussed at some length in Chapter One, modernization-led discourse sees 'progress' as a process of secularization, and the 'unspoken assumption is that economic aid addresses material needs, whereas religion speaks primarily to spiritual needs that may be in conflict with material gain' (Melkote and Steeve, 2001: 274). Marxist thought more explicitly sees religion as more problematic, "opiate of the masses", blinding people to material inequalities and injustice.

With more interest being shown in the empowerment paradigm, especially in the local culture, knowledge and community based local grass roots movements, more emphasis is being laid on the context in which people live. Religion, culture and community life is seen as significant part of this context. This new paradigm of development tries to overcome old barriers between secular and profane and

where various conflicting perspectives come together in a creative way to address issues of marginalisation, oppression and dispossession.

John H. Stanfield, writing from an Afro-American experience, seeks to de-Europeanise approaches in order to develop ethnic models of qualitative research. Stanfield argues that the 'ethnic modeling in qualitative research must involve questioning the knowledge' that researchers of European descent have been legitimising and calls for serious critique of Western methods and methodologies in order to develop alternative ways of knowing and doing things (1994:183). The need for liberating methodologies is more particularly urgent because 'colonization of knowledge' is seen not only as domination by the West over knowledge but also the ways and means to acquire and claim it.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith, exploring the intersections of imperialism, knowledge and research, writes that 'the West has assumed the role of "an archive of knowledge and systems, rules and values" to determine research agendas, models and criteria' (1999: 42-43). Quoting Stuart Hall's analysis of 'the West' as a process of classification, a system of representation, a model of comparison and a criterion of evaluation, she argues that Western research is more than just research that is located in a positivist tradition (Hall, 1992:259). Melkote and Steeves (2001: 198) quoting Braidotti (1994) sympathise with the alternative vision and share a common theme in critiquing the Western development discourse for the 'violence inflicted upon local, non-Western indigenous way of life and call for the recovery of dominated people's subjugated knowledge'.

Coinciding with the demands for reconceptualisation of knowledge-gathering ways is the change taking place in the area of humanities as the accepted boundary between disciplines and their recognised methods are also being

contested. Concepts such as race, gender and sexuality that have emerged as a result of this transformation have encouraged interdisciplinary approaches.

David Lloyd (1999: 3) attributes this change to 'the philosophical and theoretical critique of Western culture from within' and the return of 'social types and cultures' that were subjugated by the modernity project. He underlines the importance of decolonizing and other social movements in this process:

Consequently, the conjunction and intersection of immanent and returning critical movements have posed a profound intellectual challenge to the presumed universality of Western knowledge and deployed alternative theoretical approaches that can no longer be disavowed or looked down upon. In general, the new formations of knowledge that have arisen out of these conjunctions require interdisciplinary approaches and take for their objects phenomena which do not easily belong within the purview of traditional disciplinary terrains. In fact, they are usually not to be defined by a specific object at all but by their study of the processes of object construction – gendering, radicalization, cultural formations, for example – as these take place at the intersections of disciplines and social practices. This emphasis on the processes of representation and contestation in the construction of cultures and subjects puts in question the possibility and status of universal validity as a goal of the human as well as the natural sciences. (Lloyd, 1999: 3-4)

This shift in social practice along with a contemporary desire for a less centralised and more participatory society is taking place at a time when people especially religious, ethnic and linguistic groups living as minorities in different parts of the world are becoming more assertive about who they are, and demanding a legitimacy of their way of life (Samad, 2004). This change has encouraged an overlapping of theories and perspectives where certainties and rigidities are

constantly being eroded by possibilities and flexibilities. Many Muslim scholars influenced by critical theory are now talking about a new hegemony questioning both Marxism and religious bigotry (Sardar, 2002). A deviation can also be seen within Marxism and feminism as many followers of these standpoints do at times differ from their peers to recognise the importance of religion and spirituality in confronting racial, gender and class discrimination. In her thought provoking study on the education of Muslim girls, Kaye Haw, illustrates this multiplicity of feminism and sympathises with the religious needs of the girls to be taught in Islamic schools (Haw, 1998). Thus, despite the differences across different perspectives, there are shared concerns and solidarities that can lead to co-operations and reciprocal impression, in which scholars like Kellner (2001:3) see a possibility of 'productive synthesis' of critical theory and philosophy of liberation.

The overall tone of this work demands an analysis that engages with, and challenges the types of social organization through a sustained inquiry into the relationships between language, subjectivity and power which bring feminism and poststructuralism closer. Weedon (1997: 20) suggests the framework of 'feminist poststructuralism' for articulating a 'particular position and method' which addresses the 'question of how social power is exercised and how social relations of gender, class and race might be transformed'.

Influenced by Michael Foucault's concern with history and his work on discourse and power, Weedon (Ibid) sees subjectivity and consciousness as critical for change:

Through a concept of discourse which is seen as a structuring principle of society , in social institutions, modes of thought and individual subjectivity, feminist poststructuralism is able, in detailed, historically specific analysis , to explain the working of power on behalf of specific



interests and to analyse the opportunities of resistance to it. It is a theory which decenters the rational, self-present subject of humanism, seeing subjectivity and consciousness socially produced in language, as sites of struggle and potential change. Language is not transparent as in humanist discourse; it is not expressive and does not label a 'real' world. Meanings do not exist prior to their articulation in language and language is not abstract system, but is always socially and historically located in discourses. Discourses represent political interests and in consequence are constantly vying for status and power. The site of this battle for power is the subjectivity of the individual and it is a battle in which the individual is an active but not sovereign protagonist. (1997: 40)

Feminism and poststructuralism, however, are neither singular concept nor do they collapse, irreversibly, into a homogenous theory. These perspectives tactically intersect and create spaces for understanding the composite effects of the interaction between self, gender, race and class (King 1988). By engaging in 'social critical power' (Fraser and Nicholson, 1993: 428) of feminism, poststructuralism not only brings theory closer to practice, but also offers unique insights into the area of social exclusion and marginalisation which is the primary concern of this thesis. Through this intersection, the framework helps to analyse the construction of meaning, power relationships, and the social and historical role of language on the debate on social exclusion/inclusion. This way the framework offers the means through which marginalization of particular groups can be uncovered by delving into the hierarchies of power that construct our realities (Kamler et al., 1994). Similarly, a body of scholarship is emerging from the intersection of religious studies and new perspectives in feminism, offering new frameworks grounded in experiential knowledge gathered in different social, cultural and spiritual contexts. Feminism is adapting to more pluralistic meanings and is in creative dialogue with other perspectives to engage with wider issues

and injustices in the society. Poststructural feminism, postmodern feminism, post-feminism, along with feminist theology are some of the ways feminism is now engaging with other streams of scholarship to address the issues of racism, classism, colonialism and militarism, besides patriarchy which remains its core concern. Also, the concept of praxis in liberation theology and experience in feminism brings these two perspectives even closer as both believe in the inseparability of theory from practice (Bjorkgren: 2004).

Feminism, as one of the most vociferous supporters of learning from experience, especially of those marginalized, advocates an integrative, trans-disciplinary approach to knowledge which grounds theory contextually in the concrete realm of women's everyday lives (Stacey 1988: 21). This empathy with the experiences of the marginalized is shared by racial, ethnic, communitarian and libertarian theories, which not only overcome the duality and positivism but offer framework(s) that ground marginalized experience as a valid counter to the hegemonic paradigm.

## **Feminist Perspectives**

Feminist scholars believe that the world is socially constructed and they reject the value-free nature of research (Haig, 1997). The research model of feminist inquiry is critical and emancipatory, and it recognises reality, science and research within this context (Stanley and Wise, 1993). These scholars argue that traditional research has failed to engage with the life and experience of women, marginalizing many aspects of their existence. The inability of the quantitative methods to reflect the experiences of women has led feminists to support qualitative research, which is understood to facilitate a fuller expression of experiences. Jayartne and Stewart say that methods must permit respondents to describe the world as they experience it:

We must not do away with them by taking advantage of our privileged speaking to construct a sociological version, which we then impose upon them as their reality. We may not rewrite the other's world or impose upon it a conceptual framework, which extracts from it what fits ours. Our conceptual procedures should be capable of explicating and analysing the properties of their experienced world rather than administering it. Their reality, their varieties of experience must be an unconditioned datum. (1991: 93).

This approach of making methodology and methods integral parts of knowledge creation through increased participation of stakeholders is fundamental not only to feminism but to a variety of other critical and liberation perspectives, which also support the validation of 'subjective knowledge', and underline the importance of overcoming 'dichotomies in theory and practice'. Feminism is widely accepted to have made a major contribution to research methodology through its critique of neo-positivism. Feminism questioned the divide between object and subject and displaced positivist rigidities to create space for the 'personal'. Raghuram et al.,(1998) go further to suggest that present day critical research owes a great deal to the insightful reviews of empirical and interpretive knowledges influenced by the perspectives of feminism.

Believed to be a politics to fight injustice and inequality as well as a set of theories to understand patriarchy and the possibilities of change, feminism generally sees theory and practice as one. Theory informs the feminist practice and the practice helps to develop theories of understanding voice, subjectivity and power relations. Weedon (1997) explaining this process from the feminist poststructuralism point of view says:

Most feminists assume an integral relationship between theory and practice. Starting from the politics of the personal, in which women's subjectivities and experiences of everyday life become the site of the

redefinition of patriarchal meanings and values of resistance to them. Feminism generates new theoretical perspectives from which the dominant can be criticized and new possibilities envisaged. (1997: 5)

This study finds resonance with feminist criticism of conventional methodology as simplistic (Farrow, 1974), racist (Unger 1983), exploitative (Stanley and Wise, 1993) and positivist (England, 1993). This approach problematises the concept of community as unstable and unpredictable (Katz 1994) and deconstructs the 'essentialist and universalist notion of race and femininity' (Kobayashi 1994), and in place of conventional methodology, it recognizes contextual methodologies, open to the emotions and experiences of the marginalized (Nielsen, 1990: 6). Feminist research has been influenced by and has influenced many different branches of scholarship. The post-modern and poststructuralist questioning of universal truths and arguments which claim that knowledge is constructed, situated, partial and historically specific has further stimulated the debate, which is suspicious of objective foundations of knowledge. Patti Lather (1991), accepting these influences, has coined the word post-positivist to describe the alternative, emancipatory and subjective research practice.

Western feminism itself has fragmented and transformed mainly due its critique by women from poor countries and women of colour who argue that it 'discursively colonizes the material and historical heterogeneities of lives in the "Third World" countries' by taking a taking a 'monolithic notion of patriarchy' (Mohanty, 2003:19) and simplistic understanding of non-Western women as 'composite singular "Third World" woman' (Melkote & Steeves 2001: 53). Feminists from the "Third World" have criticised such assumptions as 'ethnocentric, even racist and irrelevant to their concerns' Spivak 1988. Similarly, Fraser and Nicholson (1990), arguing that questions of racism and classism are not addressed within Western feminism, write:

In recent years, poor and working-class women, women of colour, and lesbians have finally won a wider hearing for their objections to feminist theories which fail to illuminate their lives and address their problems. They have exposed the earlier quasi-meta-narratives, with their assumptions of universal female dependence and confinement to the domestic sphere, as false extrapolations from the experience of the white, middle-class, heterosexual women who dominated the beginnings of the second wave. (1990: 33)

This critique has led to debates over 'voice', 'visibility', 'silence' and so on as non-Western women, particularly from the "Third World" countries, felt that disempowerment and dispossession can be felt by those who experience them. The resulting feminist epistemologies which stress the importance of situated knowledge and the coherence of feminist experience have, however, come under attack from postmodern feminists, who question the concrete women's experience on which the knowledge can be built on (Benhabib, 1995). As a result of this critique, many feminists accept a more relational standpoint, rather than one based exclusively on women's experiences (Andermahr et al., 1997). The existence of multiple experiences and other forms of subjugation, stress the need to look at the discrimination of women in a wider context of other systems and structures of domination, including racism, homophobia and colonialism (Hill, 2000).

These critiques, realizations and subsequent engagements within emancipatory perspectives have led to the theorising emancipatory potential of social research. Within these perspectives the positivist paradigm is questioned and alternative methodologies and epistemologies are developed which help to explore alternative ways of knowing and doing (See Stanley and Wise, 1993). These challenges and changes have led to the recognition of more than one way and

level of analysis within this scholarship. We now talk about feminism(s) in the plural illustrating multiplicity in meanings and interpretations. This has also brought concepts of reflexivity, self-awareness and self-criticism into the area and acceptance of plurality and diversity within this scholarship. Reflecting upon its own notions, many scholars within feminism accept that there is no one feminist position.

These scholars have also ridiculed the idea of gender or class having a 'universalizing approach' with a 'meta-narrative' within a 'totalizing discourse'. These scholars propose a historically contextualised and critical theory that recognises the cultural diversities and differences between women. These scholars, seen as postmodernist or poststructuralist feminists, highlight the need to move away from an essentialist concept of self to a complexly constructed and dynamic self (Fraser, 1995; Weedon, 1997; Johnson, 2002). Despite these self-reflections, criticism and strategic coalitions with other scholarship, gender and gendered relations remain the main focus of feminism(s). The debates have made a significant impact on the way the counter discourse understands and validates the struggles of minorities, indigenous people and subjugated groups in relation to the powerful majority, institutionalised mainstream and hegemonic elite. Some scholars working within a communitarian perspective stress the need to learn from the diversity of women's experiences and build coalitions as a 'political tool for interventions and action' based on 'common context of struggles against the oppression by gender, class, race, ethnicity, and nation, including colonisation' (Steeves, 1993; 222). Standpoint feminism, which argues that the practice of feminism should reflect the standpoint of women (Hill, 2000) invites many scholars and students outside the perspective of feminism to draw support to their perspectives from feminism. Standpoint feminism helps them to theorise subjective knowledge by engaging in critical thought, action and reflection about experience, knowledge and relationship with social and political structures.

Although much of feminist thought shows solidarity with marginal people, their subjugated knowledge and experiences, it is the feminist geographers' analysis of space and place which helps to analyse the discourse of social exclusion within inner-city areas. This is important for this study because of its focus on the immigrant community from South Asia who live in large clusters within the inner city Nottingham.

This spatial significance brings with it debates on social deprivation and economic disadvantage on the one hand, and communal solidarity and cultural advantage on the other. Quoting Heidi Nast's work on the contributions feminist geographers have made in highlighting the importance of place in everyday construction of gender, recognition of difference among women and redefining of research field as a dynamic subjective space, Madge et al. (1997: 86) write that there are certain key characteristics in 'ways of knowing, ways of asking, ways of interpreting and ways of writing' which are central to feminist methodologies.

They argue that these approaches are not 'exclusive' or 'discrete' but create a process which is 'open to critique, reflection and debate.' The argument that women's own interpretation of identities, experiences and power relations is crucial lends support to my argument that the knowledge and experience of marginalized minorities can offer a valid analysis of their situation. Harding (1991, 1998) argues that this positional advantage, which marginalized groups use to experience things differently, can help in raising a new set of research questions though she stresses one need not to be part of a marginalized group to raise such questions. Within my study, this 'epistemic privilege' is crucial to me as a researcher and the people I work with. I am both a participant and subject while people in the community set the agenda for my research. This arrangement is only possible within a dynamic and flexible position. It helps me to immerse myself in the life of the community and for the community to validate their

subjective experience. I see myself in all these roles all the time. I am a presenter on Radio *Ramzan*, a listener to debates about inequality, an investigator asking questions and an observer of a process. It would be difficult to be all these in the absence of the 'privilege' which this framework offers me.

## **Poststructuralist Perspectives**

It is important for a theory to be useful to explain how social power is used and how this power is structured around gender, class and race. Poststructuralism influenced by the structural linguistics, theory of difference, deconstruction theory, concept of ideology, psychoanalytical theories and discourse of power, shares some basic notions about 'language, meaning and subjectivity' (Weedon, 1997:13). It focuses on the primacy of theory, decentering of the subject, and the importance of the reader over the text to highlight the multiplicity and rearrangement of meaning (Sarup, 1988).

For my study this approach lends support to an analysis of the construct of social exclusion as an overlapping discourse of politics, bureaucracy, media and academic study and how those problematised are initiated into a counter-discourse informed by their own knowledge, experience and world-view to offset the discourse of the dominant. Within this counter discourse, peoples' reference to faith, culture and their experiences of immigration and racism are evaluated as a set of discursive practices. The thesis draws support from the arguments that knowledge about the social world is created through shifting patterns of discourses in which and through which meanings are shaped (Hollway, 1984; Davis, 1993).



Foucault sees discourse as the site and contestation of power in which processes, regulations, and structures, along with resistances and oppositions interplay to shape meaning and represent the 'normal'. Power is central to the Foucauldian concept of discourse. He sees power as relational and not 'simply repressive' and suggests that power can only be said to 'create an effect if the object of power has the ability to resist'(Sheridan, 1980: 217). This way Foucault provides a tool which can explain how power is exercised through discourse and how resistance is possible against this exercise. Foucault's work on homosexuality and femininity illustrates how problematization incites discourse which leads to counter discourse: as homosexuality stands up and speaks on its own to demand its legitimacy and naturality. So these problematizations create hurdles, which are contested and resisted. Similarly, in the context of the use of the female body, Foucault argued that the process of the sexual exploitation of women led feminist movements to define and legitimise their own worldview by reinventing their 'own type of existence, political, economic and cultural'(Kristman, 1990: 115).

Escobar (1992, 1995) has taken up the Foucauldian turn in development studies, identifying development discourse as a series of statements and 'visibilities' linked together as a chart of power. Development within this perspective is seen as the cartography of power and knowledge.

Along these lines, the understanding of power is the overarching theme of this work. In order to analyse the complexity and interrelatedness of power relations, this framework allows me as a researcher to engage with the discourses through review and self-critique to appreciate the correlation of power-sensitive perspectives. Foucault's discourse analysis also lends support to theorizing the highly complex construct of community as a series of discursive relationships consisting of a number of shifting perspectives of race, ethnicity, religion, politics and immigration. There are voices within the voiceless as there are peripheries

and centres among the marginalized. This study accepts the differences and similarities and acknowledges the inequalities within the unequal as a set of discursive relationships. While the minority ethnic groups may be discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity, minority status, immigration status, colour of the skin, nevertheless within these discriminated groups, women, disabled people and homosexuals are also treated unequally.

This dynamic conceptualisation of subject positions lends support to my theorisation of community as a fluid and strategic positioning of various subjectivities. As is explained in detail in Chapter Three of this thesis, the members of Mirpuri community become black, ethnic, minority, immigrant and non-white on one hand and Muslim, Pakistani, Kashmiri, Sunnis, *Barailves* etc on the other. This way some labels and subject positions are used tactically and those subjectified became part of the process of subjectification. This complexity of 'field', (discussed in detail in Chapter Three), cannot be explained through one perspective at all times, since the study embraces all the differences and commonalities which define a community.

This recognition of fragmentations and diversity within the research field highlights the need to take the different contexts and participants' multiple, shifting and contradictory discourses and subjectivities into account when we construct the marginalized. On the whole, this study engages with a multifaceted network of relationships, associations and contestations, which demonstrate varying levels of power, influence and impact. This power is not fixed but changes as situations and contexts change. Within the structure of Radio *Ramzan*, the power of the management committee over scheduling and topics, the power of listeners to walk into the studio and make their point and above all their power to turn the radio off, combined with the power of the presenter to make, influence and challenge opinions and public perceptions, the power of the Radio Authority

to monitor the content and set guidelines, and the power of sponsors to support the radio, all form a myriad of power relations.

Within the community, power relations between various tribes, kinships, various shades of religious thought, country of origin, status, age, and gender all create a maze of power relations. These relations are very dynamic and come into play in different ways, and can prove as enablement as well as constraint; productive as well negative (Lukes 1974; Foucault 1972, 1979). This subjectivity as theorised within the poststructuralist thought is a constantly changing positioning related with others (Davies, 1993), and it opens up the possibility of accepting or rejecting from a number of different subject positions within different discourses and contexts. This subjectivity is not always self-proclaimed, but can also be the result of how the individual is positioned and subjectified by others. Hence subjectivity is a dynamic process in which the individual becomes an active agent (Lowe, 1998). Another aspect of power is the relationship between the researcher and the researched, and how this relationship becomes part of deriving meanings out of daily living experiences.

In this study, this aspect is very critical. My research question, my position, my objectives from this study, my background all create another set of discursive perspectives which become a 'producer of meaning' along with the perspectives of the researched in a collaborative process (Haw, 1998). The adaptation of a discursive framework is consistent with the epistemological position taken in this study, which walks away from simplicities, certainties and rigidities. Weedon (1997) argues that the feminist poststructuralist perspectives help to analyse the nature of power and subjective identity created through a variety of discourses to develop an alternate knowledge base. Barrett (1991), contextualising Foucault's work, suggests that the concept of discourse as an alternate theoretical model is based on the relational and dynamic concept of power, and not an absolute or static understanding of power.

## **Liberation Theology Perspective**

As a third component of this analysis, the liberation theology perspective helps to create awareness about the voicelessness and how it can be addressed through what can be done about it by consciousness raising, reflection and action. The liberation point of view links 'spiritual growth and empowerment with material needs', and prefers 'cultural and spiritual practices' in the process of empowerment. (Melkote and Steeve, 2001: 296). By adopting a methodology in favour of the powerless and marginalized, the thesis creates a commonality with liberation theology. Knitter (1987), arguing for social and economic justice through the institutions of faith, writes:

If the religions of the world can recognise poverty and oppression as a common problem, if they share a common commitment to remove such evils; they will have a basis for reaching across their incommensurabilities and differences in order to hear and understand each other and possibly be transformed in the process (1987:186).

Liberation theology argues that the hope of surviving the conditions of disenfranchisement and marginalisation of people can be found within their own faith. This point of view makes the basic tenets of the Christian liberation theology which took root in Latin America in the early 1960's and preferred practice over doctrine ( orthopraxis over orthodoxies) and favoured 'preferential option for the poor' (Gutiérrez, 1988). The Brazilian scholar Paulo Freire (1972) calls this process 'conscientization'. Freire, who brought concepts of empowerment and freedom from oppression into development discourse highlighting the role of human agency in the growth and progress of communities, introduced the notion of emancipatory development. This standpoint envisages a shift in power from external factors to 'individuals,

organizations, and communities over social and economic conditions, over political processes and over their own stories' (Melkote and Steeves, 2001:366).

Liberation perspectives are close to the goals of this thesis, which explore the role cultural practices and faith can play in generating critical dialogue within a religious minority. Radio *Ramzan*, the community based radio station run within the religious ethos is used as a case study in this exploration. Liberation theology as theorized within the development communication scholarship foregrounds 'emancipatory communication' that could help people break free from existing models and structures to determine their own future. This means a dialogue rather a monologue, a horizontal, rather than vertical flow of communication, where the communicators and listeners change their roles. These dialogic processes are seen to 'enable participants to identify and explore issues' (Ibid: 365).

Looking at the existing structure of media regulation in the UK, it reveals a strict duopoly, dominated by the commercial media on the one hand and public service the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). The critique of the public service broadcasting and the BBC's centrality in the current regulatory arrangement is well documented (Negrine, 1989). The current broadcasting scenario has come under scathing attacks and its 'traditionally established relationship with politics, culture and the audience', 'as a kind of domestic diplomatic service, representing the British - or what has been projected 'as the best of the British', at a time when 'middle class Britain is 'seen at odds with divided Britain' (Lewis and Booth, 1989: 69). The current media structure is seen to have failed to represent this varied spectrum and tended to exclude or marginalize all those who stayed outside accepted central boundaries of political argument.

Here a Freirian analysis helps to theorise a community-based communal media that can give voice and platform for interaction and engagement. When used in conjunction with feminist and poststructural analysis, this framework opens up such possibilities. The methods of Participatory Action Research (PAR), which this thesis adopts to map the fieldwork, challenges practices that separate the researcher from the researched, promotes the forging of a partnership between researchers and the people under study. Both researcher and participant become actors in the investigative process, influencing the flow, interpreting the content, and sharing options for action.

The process of participatory research is seen as itself empowering because it forges togetherness, signifies context, legitimizes experience and transforms living knowledge into action. Thus participatory research reflects goal-oriented, experiential learning, and transformative pedagogy (Dewey, 1938; Mead, 1934; Freire, 1974).

Within the alternative scholarship, there is a common ground emerging between various perspectives, which might have opposing principles but share a strategic position that allows them to engage creatively in addressing bigger challenges. Melkote and Steeves (2001) identifying these common grounds where liberation theology, feminism and Marxism can tactically meet, argue:

Just as Liberation theologies challenge religious traditions that emphasize spirituality without social awareness, many who identify with Marxism and Feminism deviate from their anti-religious peers by acknowledging the importance of spirituality as a resource for challenging class, gender, and other forms of oppression. (2001: 293)

Black feminist theologians argue that liberation theology can become a dynamic process when it engages with feminism to address issues of marginality. These theologians base their arguments on their experience of finding the 'vernacular reading' of biblical texts, through the art of story-telling, empowering for the *Dalits* (low caste) women in India (Melanchthon: 2005). Though facing multiple discriminations as low caste poor Christian women in a cast-ridden, patriarchal and mainly Hindu nation, *Dalit* women are considered to be 'concerned not just for their own welfare, but for the welfare of their entire communities, their men, their sons and their daughters' (Ibid: 220).

This specific feminist hermeneutics practiced by the low caste Christian women in India is very different from the mainstream reading of the biblical texts, and these non-formal methods, emerging from the local culture and communication processes, help women to 'release themselves from andocentric interpretative processes, placing them side by side with their own experiences and identities' (Rebera 1997:94). This way, when the oppressed understand scriptures through their own experiences and not through the eyes of their oppressors, the narrative of spirituality engages with the life stories of the oppressed, leading to a challenge to the oppression (Barton: 2005).

The act of sharing spiritual thoughts personally, consciously and politically through the medium of stories can help the marginalized subjects to understand their position and develop agency to fight back through their own faith and cultural practices. For many excluded people who are discriminated against because of their background and social status, the use of such empowering and imaginative 'learning by doing' approach gives them both voice and power over their own stories. This approach is promoted within all types of feminisms and also forms the basis of Freire's concept of liberation theology.

## **Treading the uncertain path**

By developing a methodology supported by various, at times conflicting, perspectives and approaches, the study seeks epistemological plurality to discover 'representational meaning', rather than to 'find explanations' through the deconstruction of the dominant ideology, acceptance of multiple meanings and strengthening consciousness' (Servaes 1999, Tehranian 1994). So the thesis envisions processes that include exploration into social and cultural studies approaches to race, immigration and identity; development and policy studies approach to poverty and exclusion; and communication and theological approaches to empowerment and participation. These approaches, however, are not mutually exclusive but overlap and inter-weave as happens in real life. The growing interest in how emancipatory perspectives can create a contextual understanding of marginalised points of view has led to the discourse of 'hear the voice' to bring the marginal subject to the centre and give socially silenced group a voice which has otherwise remained stifled. These processes are seen more as forms of 'recognition' and not redistribution of materials resources (Fraser, 1995).

However, by conceptualizing agency and structure as interdependent and interacting, the actions do impact on institutions. 'Agency' here means the faculty of individuals to act and do things that could affect the social relationships while 'structure' refers to the social institutions and provisions individuals find themselves in. While the structure-agency dualism dominates the social and political debate, this study goes beyond this dualism to suggest that action and structures are interdependent, and at times converge and overlap (Giddens, 1976). This thesis puts agency at the centre of the analysis to suggest how the members of the Mirpuri community can make a difference by validating their points of view through participation, reflection and action. This approach highlights the transformative capacity of power of the agency to affect the



institutional power (Giddenes, 1987). Agency, however, does not mean that power can shift altogether from the centre to peripheries but opens up the possibility of recognizing other realities where the marginalized can have an alternative vision of who they are. The thesis sees this vision as a process through which individuals, organisations and communities engage with their social and economic conditions and participate in their communal activities to take control over their stories.

Although feminism does not see agency and structure this way, it helps to expose the conditions that contribute to exploitation and patriarchy. This approach of feminist research lends support to my study in conceptualizing the community radio among the marginalized Mirpuri community as a platform upon which to act and reflect. This way of privileging marginalized experiences into actions through a variety of emancipating and liberating methods, helps their 'voice' enter into the research text. This is closer to the feminist standpoint theories of knowledge which highlight the proposition that women, due to their personal and social experience as females, are in a better position to understand their world (Stacey, 1988; Hill 2000, Harding, 1998). Some scholars, however, argue that there are a variety of standpoints based on class, ethnicity, race, culture and education, but the supporters of standpoint theory believe that some common criteria guide theory and research in this context (Harding, 1998). Such a research approach helps to overcome the research/ researched and theory / practice divide. Through the prolonged action and interaction, the researcher and participants jointly construct this discourse.

By approaching the study in this subjective way, I am aware that I invite many questions on my position, the methodology and any claims I make. The study is very explicit about being subjective in order to explore worldviews of those who remain marginalized. This approach, as argued earlier in this chapter draws

support from feminism, poststructuralism and liberation theology to validate the experiential knowledge of the excluded people in a bid to facilitate the empowerment of these people from their own cultural practices. By engaging with these issues from the very beginning, I acknowledge the significance of the context in which this work is carried out. It clarifies that any assertions and observations I make are situated and partial. But this does not mean the arguments put forward in this study lack thoroughness and the framework adopted to analyze these arguments is invalid. What I want to make clear is that there is no boundary between my field of research and my own surroundings. I do not switch on and off, and there is no '9-5' in this work. It does not start and stop. This is an ongoing process. In this process, theory and practice blend into the living experience.

So when I look at the fieldwork, I look at certain aspects of my own life and at information gathered in certain ways. For example, I do not invite the community members into office and give them closed questionnaires to fill in, but I have a chat with them while in the queue at the ASDA stores or while waiting for groceries at the Khan's *Halal* meat shop or before and after prayers in the local mosque. This way of generating/gathering exploring knowledge in my case is the natural, open and liberating way. This approach is central to egalitarian practices and many non-hegemonic perspectives. Since such approaches see knowledge as experiential and contextual, many feminist scholars have found it appropriate for research from their standpoint because it encourages democratic relationship between the knower and known and rejects positivism's false dualisms (Stacey, 1988). The discursive rules and regulations of academia apply to me and my work which eventually make me a researcher and eventually a writer. This process cannot be said to be impartial or neutral (Usher, 1996). By accepting 'reflexivity' in my research, I acknowledge that my position is implicated in a discursive practice.

## **Dynamic framework**

The perspectives of feminism, post-structuralism and liberation theology, though different, share epistemological plurality and critique the modernism-influenced positivist research. These perspectives, as explained in earlier sections of this chapter, 'privilege' de-centered subjects through 'action and reflection', highlight the role of 'voice' and critical consciousness, question the 'essentialist concept of truth and knowledge' by offering possibilities 'other way of knowing and doing' and examine of the relation between 'other' and 'self' (Freire, 1972, Lather, 1991; Davis, 1993; Sardar, 1997; Haw, 1998; Kobayashi, 1994; Melkote & Steeves 2001).

This study embraces all the differences and commonalities which define the community and understands community more as a position rather than organic entity. Such a conceptualisation demands a framework which is non-deterministic and flexible enough to accommodate the diversity and dynamism of the field. However, bringing differing perspectives together can be problematic, but as mentioned before, this type of framework is closer to the broader aims of this thesis to question the pigeonholing of knowledge and compartmentalization of academic inquiry. The thesis draws support from the work of other scholars who have analysed complex social and cultural issues with the help of multi-perspective and inter-disciplinary approaches.

Kaye Haw (1998) analyzing contemporary discourses of race, religion, ethnicity, class and gender within a Muslim community over the issues of education within the state school system in Britain finds the feminist poststructuralist analysis attractive: It provides a useful analytical tool capable of illuminating and revealing how power is exercised through discourse, how oppression works and how resistance might be possible. Also this is of direct relevance to the

relationship between the researcher and the participants in any piece of research, allowing as it does for an understanding that both researcher and participants are active producers of meaning so that this has to be critically explored and placed within the text (1998:12).

In order to understand the politics of difference and commonality, Avtar Brah (1992) stresses working through the multiple configurations of power like gender, race, ethnicity, nationalism, generation and sexuality which she thinks signify the special type of power relations through which a variety of economic, political and cultural practices are articulated. Such study needs a multi-disciplinary approach in which paradigms, frameworks and insights enter into an engagement to create what she calls a 'creolised' envisioning (1992: 143).

With regard to my research these perspectives and my own position provide a kaleidoscope in which various points of view shift, compete, co-exist and change meaning so that experiences of community could be seen as a set of discursive relationships comprising various sometimes contradictory discourse such as race, culture, religion and media. The dynamism within feminism, Post-structuralism and the empowerment objectives of Liberation theology lends support to this framework but does not mean there is an absolute consistency within these perspectives. This argument runs parallel with the epistemology that the way to empathize with this subjective knowledge is to experience it. Since this is a dynamic process of creating, interpreting and living, it can best be observed rather than discovered in terms of empirical evidence. So methodologically, this demands moving out of laboratories into the real world to touch, feel and live this knowledge. In order to know it, one has to get involved. So in line with this epistemology, non-empirical methods of action research like participant observation can enhance this quality of meaning, interpretation and experience.

I argue that this approach is vital in building space for marginalized voices which otherwise remain stifled within institutionalized spaces and processes. Working, participating and living with minority groups and experiencing a marginalized existence, I am a victim, a witness and observer of a discourse which excludes people by 'othering' them their way of life, their knowledge, and at times, putting the blame of disadvantage on the disadvantaged. But I am also witness to a counter discourse through which marginalized people engage in communicative interaction, draw strength from their culture and create communal spaces of resistance to assert their way of life. My first hand experience is central to both these processes.

Marilyn Nisaam Sabat (2002) in a moving autobiographical account of her experience mentions how she explored the dimensions of political activism, feminism, philosophy and spirituality to understand the process of victim blaming in the US:

As I have developed in the decades since all of these dimensions have become central to my existence, I have at the same time felt more and more deeply disturbed by the continuance and intensification of anti-black and other racisms, including anti-Semitism, backlash against women, gays, and immigrants in this country and elsewhere in the world, and by the growing dominance of global capital. In my struggle to comprehend these things, I have come to see that victim-blaming is one of the most significant, if not the most significant, mechanism perpetuating our failure to create a more just, humane environment for all people. (Victim-blaming includes blame by perpetrators, self-blame by victims, and blame by public opinion.) For as long as victim-blaming pervades our lives, for so long we will be deflected from focusing on understanding the origins of the unnecessary suffering we inflict on ourselves and others. But that is not all. In addition, we will be deflected from doing anything constructive even

where the origins of suffering are identified. In my struggle to understand victim-blaming, a phenomenon everywhere in evidence yet profoundly difficult to comprehend, I have found it necessary to try to develop a synthesis of feminist, philosophical, and spiritual resources (2002: 270).

In feminism, self-reflexivity and empathy with the subjects is used to validate subjectivity. Within one of the earliest definitions of feminist social research: on, by and for women, formulated by Liz Stanley and Sue Wise (1993), it is argued that the subject position of the researcher, or producer of knowledge, produces better knowledge if she is politically committed. Maria Mies (1999) argues that feminist perspectives replace the value-free research of neutrality and indifference towards the research objects by conscious partiality. Although the thesis does not exclusively adopt a feminist methodological approach, it has many objectives which are very close to feminist critical aims.

The thesis adopts the characteristics of feminist methods in exploring discourses of social exclusion within the Mirpuri community, which comprises men, women and children. Raghuram et al., (1998) underline the important features of feminist research as those having emancipatory goals, validating the notion of subjectivity, being aware of ethics and being self-reflexive. Along with these commonalities with feminist research, my project is also informed by the post-structural understanding of relational power and discourse.

This lends support to me to provide an insider's account of how this radio station provides a context for communicative interaction among the marginalized people to organise and engage in practices that help them to define their own worldview. Similarly, Liberation theology through the process of conscientization (Freire 1974) revitalizes the local knowledge base by reviving indigenous and marginalized existence. These perspectives recognise faith, culture and tradition

by acknowledging the role of spirituality in empowering people. Such empowerment based on a way of life is seen to increase the effectiveness within grass roots movements. With its focus on the Mirpuri community living in inner city Nottingham, the study is built on the epistemological ground that life experience structures one's understanding of life. This worldview is seen by many scholars to play a significant role in the re-conceptualization of knowledge and development to displace the Western worldview, although it is in itself by no means unproblematic. Sardar, indicating the 'power shift towards a non-Western way of doing things' argues that 'there will be more than one dominant way of being human, of being free, and there will be more than one way to develop' (Sardar 1997:47).

This study particularly looks at how, through communal interaction on the community- based radio, the kinship networks, religious customs, and cultural practices help in increasing the participation and empowerment of individuals and the community as a whole. The study is carried out as participatory action research actively involved in knowledge production through 'engagement, education, communication, action and reflection' (Finn, 1994: 27). This approach lends support to an analysis which challenges the institutionalized mass media from small-scale community-based initiatives. The initiatives that are grass roots based and which encourage horizontal rather than vertical patterns of mass media. This framework makes it possible to actively involve myself to increase the participation of community members in the radio project which facilitates a two-dimensional communication in which sender and receiver are involved in a 'dynamic process' that could lead to social action (MacQuail 1994).

## **The shifting patterns of my position**

This project is an outcome of interaction between a number of perspectives, which include my story, my experience and my politics. My position, though central to the study, nevertheless raises many questions.

Before I go on to explore how I am positioned in this study, it is worth mentioning here that I do not see 'myself' as a monolithic and coherent entity. My gender, age, profession, background, language, knowledge and perceptions create 'conflicting tensions and knowledge claims' In order to carry out this study, I need to explore how these multiple concepts of self engage with various dimensions of this study, especially the subjects who also are many things at many times.

Living, working and researching within the community gives me an insight into it but I cannot claim that there are no barriers or inhibitions, as 'complete participation in the situation is impossible; such immersion would risk going native, and so a degree of marginality in the situation is needed to do research' (Walsh, 2000: 233). The community is a highly complex and problematic concept, and I see my relationship with the heterogeneous community as dynamic. By declaring my politics and intentions, I share the space and sentiment for the validation of knowledge, giving a voice and raising awareness. For these reasons the methodological and epistemological questions are of paramount importance and are deeply connected. This relationship can be best explained through participatory action research. However, I do not claim the knowledge generated and recorded through the methodology is the only knowledge but I accept it as one of the realities in the multiplicity of realities that determine the 'other'.

I am conscious of the fact that my thesis engages with a fund of literature from feminist perspectives, which demands a greater level of reflexivity on my part



and the need to be self-critical. As a heterosexual man, working in a male dominated environment, I should be conscious of the fact not to pick and choose concepts but to engage with different shades and opinions within the feminist discourse. From the research question to my preferred methodology and methods, this study is naturally attracted towards emancipatory perspectives, especially the perspective of women and their politics. Although this study is not a feminist project as such, feminism offers a variety of ways of looking at things that guide me through the theorising the marginalisation of the members of the Mirpuri community.

Feminist research emphasizes that different positions and situations give different meanings to the understanding of the world, and different realities between the researcher and researched need to be explicated as part of research analysis. Raghuram, Madge and Skelton (1998:39) emphasize this relationship by arguing that 'Researchers are part of the social world and their positions within this world, their experiences and their ethical commitments inform both their work and their research'. While gender has been the primary basis for feminist critiques of epistemological and methodological practices, there has been a growing emphasis upon how racial and ethnic difference shapes the relationship between the researcher and the researched. For me, working and living in the community was an advantage and, secondly, my work was directly related with the community development. Radio *Ramzan* the community-based communication project was an integral part of this process, and I was associated with the licensing, setting up and programming of this station. However, to declare myself as a researcher doing 'research within my own community' has been a very difficult decision. Being an action research project, my 'activeness' in the project is both a hurdle and a potential. There are hundreds of questions, doubts and confusions I have to go through to come to this stage to claim my own work. There are pulls and pressures from within and outside that raise these doubts.

Although through my initial discussions with supervisors and my academic peers, I was told this is the normal process of building arguments and 'doing research', as I went through this process it became more and more complicated. Fauzia Ahmad (2003: 49), going through similar dilemmas, writes that concerns about 'insider knowledge is not good enough', perceptions about the motives of our research by the members of the community we work within and the professional (academic) validation of the work, force a researcher to think many times whether to 'locate ourselves as active subjects within the community.' The biggest moral dilemma however, is the worry that members of the community we work within feel that we have exploited the trust and faith that they had in us by reporting and disseminating the knowledge gathered. This becomes a pressing issue when we talk about sensitive issues we encounter in the field. While I will get a university degree at the end of this process, what will my community get? I'm not the first, and perhaps not the last, to come to do research while nothing changes for them. So should I report, write and publish something that is not going to help them. This is a heavy moral question which took me ages to come in terms with. I found this question intricately connected with the questions the academy raises about my involvement in the community. While they see my work as too involved and defensive, my community feels I research to get a job and 'write what gets a job'.

This predicament does not stop there. As we bring our field notes and analysis back to the academy from the field, there are verbal and at times non-verbal comments and gestures rejecting authenticity, and our 'work is marked' with footnotes and explanations. Ahmad argues that our work is seen as 'too involved', 'defensive', 'apologetic' or 'anecdotal or incidental' (Ibid: 55).

With these dilemmas in mind, I own this research as a subjective view of the world I lived in. The framework for analysis of fieldwork uses a methodology

which is dynamic and one evolved from multiple disciplines. This multi-disciplinary approach involves competing standpoints to look at fieldwork from multiple visions. These visions are vital in studying the diversity of the 'field' since the research space is an arena of differences and similarities. The 'field' of study is the community in which I live, work and experience marginalisation and struggles to overcome it. This space is not a neutral or homogenous area but a social and political construct where similarities and diversities co-exist. The people in question are a Muslim population comprised mostly of the people of Pakistani/Mirpuri origin living in inner city Nottingham. People themselves take control of the process of emancipation, which recognizes the importance of Participatory Action Research (PAR) in initiating collaborative social action. Having ownership of the process, the methodology itself is empowering for local knowledge as participants develop their own methods of raising consciousness followed by reflection, leading to participatory social action.

First I would like to highlight the fact that my fundamental reason for being in Nottingham is not for the research. My association with the community in Nottingham dates back to 1997 when I came to take up a job here. I work for a community consortium working towards the empowerment of community through community-based regeneration initiatives. While education, training and health remain priorities of this job, developing community-based radio stations under the restricted service licence (RSL) scheme has given a new dimension to use community radio to complement the regeneration work. Since 1998, I have been actively involved in four such stations, which were run for a month round the clock each year coinciding with the month of Ramadan. Since I came to work in Nottingham in 1997, my job has changed and evolved. I have taken different roles and responsibilities, though the focus of my work has remained around community development. This job has enriched my experience, as I have seen

myself as different from the distanced worker who comes and works in a community and leaves and goes back to his/her world.

The community actually has become my world. I had no escape from this. The 'working' became a living experience. By providing a detailed account of my association with the community in the following chapters, I explicate the researcher/researched relationship and highlight the variegated nature of different levels and contexts of this relationship which include how I position myself and how my various subjectivities are positioned by the members of the Mirpuri community. My own background becomes an integral part of this positioning. The fact that I was born and brought up in Kashmir has a direct relationship with the 'imagined' Kashmir of many first and second generation Mirpuris, but this relationship is not simple. Various hyphenated and bracketed labels of Kashmir add to the complexity of my relationship with the subjects of this research project. The Indian-occupied Kashmir, Indian-controlled Kashmir, Pakistani-Administered Kashmir, Pakistani -Occupied Kashmir, (Azad) Kashmir, (real ) Kashmir are some of the ways the discourse on Kashmir changes meanings and contexts.

My background from Kashmir, which has been a theatre of conflict for a long time, gives me a privilege, but not being able to speak the Mirpuri language leaves me outside the centre. All these complications and complexities underline the importance of self-reflexivity in my position as researcher in respect of research outcomes, especially when I use my position to validate subjective knowledge. I remain committed to a non-hegemonic epistemological position.

I consciously take a particular epistemological position, where I accept fieldwork as situated and partial. But this situatedness is explicit and partiality is conscious, highlighting the fact that knowledge and power relations influence this study. The

critique of modernisation and its Western, white, masculine agenda has foregrounded the debate about who researches whom and with what agenda. Many black analysts including Carby (1982) and Collins (1990) argue that issues around race have been neglected by white researchers, and that the findings by white researchers may not apply to ethnic minority groups or may misrepresent them. By writing about my own experience, my position becomes an integral part of this study. I make clear in the research questions that the thesis is a subjective appraisal based on my interpretation. This interpretation is not one based on detached data analysis in a controlled laboratory situation but an engaged experiential real life understanding.

The research takes into account not just what transpires in conversations but explores the contexts in which these conversations take place. When I talk to a taxi driver, the conversation takes place in a taxi, and I can identify with some of the experiences of the driver. My detailed radio listening as part of participant observation in the taxi of Qari Ashraf<sup>8</sup>, while he is waiting for passengers at the Nottingham train station, exposes me to unique perspectives which are only accessible by a position that overcomes the researcher/researched divide. Similarly, having a meal at the Royal Sweets shop on Gregory Boulevard in Hyson Green makes me feel part of an extended family where everyone knows everyone else. With the evening show of the radio in the background, eating with friends helps me to get a feedback which is spontaneous and immediate. Understanding daily living experiences of the members of Mirpuri community, and exploring the impact of these experiences on their social, cultural and spiritual life forms an essential part of my engagement. The research, therefore, is directed at the understanding as well as the transformation of social realities of these people, and Radio *Ramzan* provides a dynamic context for such insights and the

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<sup>8</sup> Qari Ashraf would often drive me home via the train station and give me, at times, unsolicited feedback on radio shows, and share his views on 'community politics'.

participatory research helps to integrate 'knowledge and purposeful action' (Smith 1990: 181).

The fact that I am writing this work in a set format and following some discipline makes it obvious there is personal benefit in this work. But I believe an academic degree is some sort of recognition of marginalised points of view which otherwise fails to make to the policy discourse. However, I am academizing this work; researching, reflecting and writing in a set discipline. This impacts my community work, and creates another dimension to my relationship with the subjects to whom the academic world generally remains irrelevant. But my presence in these two worlds creates a vital link between the community and academy. The work and study become intrinsically linked.

## **Exploring experiences through PAR**

Participatory action research (PAR), which evolved out of the liberationist ideas of Paulo Freire, is explicitly political in nature with the overt objectives of restoring oppressed peoples' ability to create knowledge and practice in their own interests.

As a process of exploring subjugated knowledge, PAR facilitates dialogue to 'empower, motivate, increase self-esteem, and develop community solidarity' (Becker and Bryman, 2004: 118). These objectives can be located in various critical and emancipatory perspectives which emphasise 'enabling', 'empowerment' and 'giving voice' to the marginalised, putting research capabilities in their hands so that they can identify themselves as knowing actors; defining reality, shaping identity, naming history and transforming lives (Callaway, 1981; Fernandes & Tandon, 1981; Humphries & Truman, 1994; Stanley & Wise, 1993). Without going into grand theories to provide universal

analysis, the participatory perspectives have their focus on people, an endogenous vision of development and attention to issues of power and equality.

Participatory action research thus brings the theoretical framework developed in the earlier part of this chapter into life by offering the means to realize the objectives of this thesis in a non-essentialist and the non-positivist way. When applied to Radio *Ramzan*, PAR helps to open debates and facilitate participation of stakeholders by providing a platform to 'identify issues; to reclaim a sense of community and emphasize the potential for liberation; and to make sense of information collected' (Reason, 1994: 239). By way of summary we would emphasize that action research is not a methodology but an orientation that shapes methodological practices. There are no right answers, rather lots of choices, and the quality of inquiry is shaped by the appropriateness of these choices and the way they are made (Becker & Bryman, 2004: 118).

So, instead of conceptualising research as detached discovery and empirical verification of generalizable patterns in community practice, the study explores research methodologies through which community practitioners mobilize information and knowledge resources, as one part of their broader strategies for community empowerment. This approach explores emancipatory methodologies under a political research agenda to validate, share and learn from experiences. The study demands a holistic approach, which puts observations and interview data into a larger perspective wherein human behaviour could be understood within the context of human life.

Ethnography relies on personal experience and 'possible participation, not just observation' and using a variety of 'historical, observational, and interview methods', creating a 'narrative description of emerging and shifting research problems, perspectives, and theories' (Genzuck, 2003:1). Usually members of the

group observed or studied have a strong sense of solidarity with each other, based on common factors of language, residence, social relationship, and religious and political beliefs and practices. This commonality facilitates the in-depth understanding of group dynamics, especially when the group is a minority and living or aspiring to live differently from the majority. The study argues that marginalised people are in a better position to identify and discuss their problems and have the capacity to address these problems. Participatory Action Research (PAR) evolved as a reaction to the intellectual domination of Western social research over the development process and this participatory and inclusive means empowers disadvantaged people to find answers within their community, taking cognizance of their social and cultural realities (Fals-Borda, 1979, Freire, 1972).

The study is based on a dynamic relationship between researcher and subjects, and it works towards the recovery of unity in research and practice. There are multiple collaborators and influences that have shaped this work. The primary collaborators of this process are the listeners (predominantly the members of Mirpuri community) of Radio *Ramzan* in Nottingham. As a participatory project, the influence of these people is of paramount importance in developing a holistic and qualitative description of their worldviews. The thesis has revolved around their experiences, practices and perspectives. While exploring these worldviews, the thesis has changed in focus, shape and design to allow the subjects to influence its content, conjecture and conclusions. Besides these known and unknown listeners of Radio *Ramzan*, the study has learnt from the daily interactions with five Mirpuri volunteers (presenters/producers) of Radio *Ramzan* whose hopes and fears, aspirations and realities are reflected throughout this thesis. Their take on the social, political, cultural and spiritual issues pertinent to their 'marginalised lives' has made substantial part of this work. Besides these volunteers, the presence of a Mirpuri speaking, British-born, and highly political



health worker on the HEAP Project has helped in putting in practice the various theories of health promotion and empowerment. Her consistent support and critical reflections on debates and discussions have helped in the introspection and evaluation of this work.

In this regard, Chambers (1997, 2001) stresses the enabling of rural people to plan and enact solutions to problems by analysing their own knowledge of local conditions. This approach argued by some critical anthropologists to be borrowed from social anthropology, explicates participatory research methodologies as flexible art.

Participation is believed to have an inherent value for participants, particularly in addressing the issues of marginalisation and powerlessness, and it helps to adopt local/indigenous knowledge and experiences to address these issues. However, many argue that participation is not an absolute concept, and scholars have put forward a nuanced pattern of participation, ranging from passive participation to self-mobilization. Although the term participation is understood to be in the development discourse since 1950s (Rahnema 1992), it gained currency when participatory research methods were used to enhance the role for local people and their knowledge in various development initiatives.

Chambers' work on participatory rural appraisal is thought to have gained increasing relevance as people with little skills were encouraged to express their knowledge and use their experience. But this approach and its tools have been mostly used within the positivist paradigm. The later use of participatory action research (PAR), which was developed against the notion of the neutrality of research (Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991), led to community- driven development (CCD) to put the communities and the stakeholders in control of the development

initiatives. All these efforts, however have neglected the dialogic use of communication necessary for making these initiatives successful.

Freire, as a practitioner and scholar, actually developed the idea of empowerment through awareness of 'conscientization' to raise the awareness among the powerless about their conditions through an active process of reflection, action and dialog.

For my study which in itself is a communication project, 'empowered dialogue' as conceptualized by Freire (1972, 1974) works at various levels. It is not only facilitating people to come on to the radio and get involved in a community wide debate but it also works beyond the radio station in the community. My role in this participatory action research project demands a constant dialogue.

This project is an outcome of interaction between a number of perspectives, and I draw upon a combination of written, oral and nonverbal communication, emanating from a variety of interpersonal and group communications in the design, implementation and documentation of the research. The fieldwork, thus, draws upon various social research methods: unstructured in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, observation, archival and library research, and historical investigation, using documents and personal history, narratives and storytelling. Within this approach, Park believes learning goes beyond data analysis to sharing, speaking and exchanging actions against the background of common experience, tradition, history and culture (Park, 1993). Since the nature of the study is such, I did not use 'laboratory situations' to see how knowledge can be created. The project is about living experience, which cannot be compartmentalised or quantified. It is an ongoing process dictated by the subjects and not by me as researcher. In the process, I become part of the subjects.

My fieldwork mainly consists of informal dialogue with people within their own circumstances and environments. These discussions have taken place in shops (Berridge Road), in Mosques (*Karimia*), at weddings (Kashmir conference centre) and funerals (Islamic Centre St. Anns.) There are also more formal interviews that I have conducted with stakeholders, community activists and a sample of participants. These interviews are open-ended and have been recorded over a period of time. Since this is a participatory action research project, the thesis looks at how community-based media can facilitate an exchange and could help in forging or strengthening identity and communal feeling, and can counterbalance the institutionalised, centralized and professionalised mass media (Hollanders and Stappers, 1992).

Therefore, a major theme of this thesis is to explore emancipatory research methodologies through which I try to mobilize knowledge resources as part of community empowerment. Although community participation and empowerment are often development goals in themselves, the focus of this study is on the relationship between community participation and communication for development; an engaged interaction of liberating and celebrating communal knowledge.

However, there is a risk of using participatory approaches for administrative convenience or inspirational activism. The uncritical adoption of participatory methods can be counterproductive to those who this methodology is trying to empower as it can lead to exploitation of disadvantaged people and oversimplification of complex issues and relationships. Scholars argue that multi-national companies, aid agencies and non-governmental organizations use PAR for 'co-opted participation', especially in poor countries.

Cook and Kothari (2001) argue that such participation has only symbolic rather than the real value to make 'public statement about participants' intentions, legitimising decision already made' (2001:23). They call this type of participation a tyranny and instead propose a Foucauldian approach to understand power as something which circulates rather than something that divides between those who have it and those who do not (Ibid).

The main theme of this study is to understand the ways through which various power-sensitive perspectives, emerging from a number of conflicting realities and multiplicities, operate and constitute subjectivities. For such an understanding, power needs to be seen as relational and dynamic, and not something that is absolute and static. This way the thesis works with the circulatory model of power, something which is not attached to the structures, but circulates continuously in social relations. This conceptualization sees power not just repressive and constraining but productive and enabling wherein individuals 'simultaneously undergo and exercise power' (Foucault, 1980).

The circulatory model of power is used consistently in this thesis to:

- Develop counter arguments to the presumed universality of the Western knowledge.
- Draw attention to the spatial reach of discursive power in creating and maintaining the construct of the inner city.
- Reveal the processes through which ethnicity, race and community are constructed discursively and historically.
- Explore a non-essentialist concept of community where various interests and loyalties are played tactically to develop dynamic associations and alliances in a flux of power relations.
- Locate the centres and peripheries within the marginalised groups by unmasking the gendered and fragmented nature of such communities.

- Reflect on the perspectives emerging from my own position, background, academy and activism that affect this thesis.
- Analyse the situated dealings of public services to understand how the concepts like 'governmentality' and 'medicalisation' are discursively used in the delivery of health services.
- Evaluate the productive aspects of relational power in empowering the powerless.

## **Criticism of methodology**

By situating the framework of this study within the political and contested perspectives of feminism, post-structuralism and liberation theology the research could itself become a victim of 'politics'. All critical and emancipatory perspectives are laden with overt and covert political beliefs like 'voice', 'validation', 'power', 'subjectivity', 'position', 'resistance' 'critical consciousness' and 'oppressions'. While these concepts are important in critiquing the dominant discourse of knowledge and exploring alternative worldviews, uncritical and unquestioned use of this framework can render this study into a series of slogans and intransigent activism.

The discourse of social exclusion, which is the combination of many social, cultural and economic conditions, is impossible to explore from a monolithic standpoint. This analysis demands a framework that recognizes social exclusion as a discourse of various relationships, positions and situations. Within such a framework, one perspective one tool to fit all is not tenable.

Arguments against using a multi-perspective and multi-disciplinary approach mostly emanate from the positivist research tradition which sees life and

experience as neat concepts which can be easily put into compartments. This compartmentalization of human experiences cannot explain the 'messiness' of existence. Rather than viewing research as a series of hermetic stages, modern methodology conceives research as process: 'It does not follow a neat pattern but is a messy interaction between the research problem, the design of the research and data collection and analysis' (Brewer, 2000: 102).

Another criticism of this methodology is an inherent conflict between three theoretical perspectives: feminism, poststructuralism and liberation theology, used to develop this framework. There are common apprehensions and shared interest that bring these perspectives closer to offer epistemological plurality needed to map out possibilities. This process is facilitated by adopting a non-conventional framework, and learning from various disciplines, including cultural studies, sociology, theology and human geography. The study accepts the fact that these disciplines and approaches are not mutually exclusive but overlap and inter-weave as happens in real life. We also need to walk away from the monolithic conception of feminism as a singular body of knowledge to understand patriarchy or a single action to correct the injustices and inequalities. Many feminists, especially the postmodern and black feminists, argue that there is no concrete "women's experience" from which to construct knowledge, and that the diversity of women's experiences cannot be generalised (Narayan, 1989; Benhabib, 1995). Similarly, liberation theology is not one single way of relating social aspects of life with the spiritual. The liberation theology as practised in Latin America is different from that practised in North America, which is again different from Europe. While the ordained priesthood and parts of the Roman Catholic Church remain opposed to liberation theology, at the grassroots many practitioners are making spirituality relevant to the lives of marginalized people. Liberation theology, however, is fragmented in the way it is practised by feminist theologians, black theologians and so on.

These multiple meanings and understandings of feminism, poststructuralism, and liberation theology offer enough space to look at the common concerns and interests within these positions to develop shared strategies. Thus the methodology, I am developing for this study is actually this productive 'coming together' of these apparently differing perspectives. But this is not a synthetic process but a creative way of looking at things differently. The study does not claim to create the body of knowledge by using this framework but, as has been mentioned before, a way of looking at issues differently within a range possibilities.

Weedon (1997) maintains that the least 'a feminist poststructuralism can do is explain the assumptions underlying the questions asked and answered by other forms of feminist theory, making their political assumptions explicit' (1997:20). My framework draws support from this intersection of feminism and poststructuralism to address questions about social power and relations are structured around gender, class and race. Weedon says that the historical perspective present in Michel Foucault's work is very relevant in such analysis (ibid). One of the key preoccupations of feminism is gender relations which cannot be seen in isolation from other social relations and power like racism, homophobia, disability and ageism. This research project is not a feminist project in the sense that it exclusively looks at gender, but the marginalisation of women is a contributory factor that helps to understand other injustices and inequalities. One more risk in this approach is the possibility of a 'pick and choose' approach and an over-emphasis on qualitative methods, which in turn can lead to over-enthusiasm – a new 'orthodoxy' to replace an existing orthodoxy.

Choosing one method or methodological approach to deal with complex social and cultural issues is untenable with this research project, partly due to the fact that

the thesis is rooted in an epistemology that claims there are various possibilities in knowing and living. Secondly, the study walks away from the positivist approach and rejects the socio-scientific concept of one problem, one method, one solution, as no one method and methodological approach can be always correct in all situations. Looking at various tools available to gather and analyze the field information, PAR may have some technical lacunae, but its advantage in experiencing and validation is worth the risk rather than adopting a technically sound positivist and essentialist method rooted in quantitative research, which is diametrically opposite to the objectives and goals of this study.

It has been argued earlier that the objectives and context of this study demand a more emancipatory methodology where 'conscious subjectivity' is favoured over 'assumed objectivity' and where theory and practice operate within the same discursive space. I draw support from the critical feminist methodologies which prefer 'conscious partiality' over 'detached objectivity'. This is vital in the study of marginalised groups who are voiceless. But this approach poses not only the methodological problems but also ethical issues like 'using and abusing' the trust and the possible harm the publication of research findings can cause to those researched.

By making my research objectives explicit, the fieldwork is drawn from day to day living experiences, and I do not divorce my living experiences from those I try to explore. Raghuram et al., (1998), identifying emancipatory goals and stressing awareness about ethics and self-reflexivity of feminist methodologies, provide a justification for this validation. Secondly, the Freirian principle of conscientization lends support to actions that enhance the critical consciousness of the oppressed; a framework that is dialectical and engages with oppressive social structures (Harvey, 1990).



However, my position and the political agenda for this research could incline me towards over-enthusiasm and simplification. I have explicated my situation, and how I negotiate my way through the moral, ethical and professional maze this study presents. I write the thesis in the first person. This helps the reader to easily locate me within the text. This is both a methodological and epistemological requirement of this work because my position and the way I observe the field is crucial to understanding this work. Writing in the first person also removes the doubts about the objectivity in fieldwork.

The study is rooted in my deep commitment to empowerment of the powerless, and shares the epistemological position that the world we live in is shaped by the relations of power and that the only way to make change is to change the equilibrium of these relations. Developing an organic framework, which brings together emancipatory perspectives and applying it through Participatory Action Research is the closest we can get to challenge hegemony and create 'chaos in authority' and acknowledge other worldviews (Gramsci, 1971).

The study is an insider's account of how people reflect on situations, debate issues and engage in actions, and being there and being part of this whole process adds to the subjective account the study intends to offer. This familiarity implies a greater intimacy with people and their lives but also has a greater chance of manipulation and misuse. Stacey (1988) argues that ethnographic methods could expose the researched to a greater risk of exploitation and betrayal than through positivist research.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, my research is an ongoing process, which is not switched on and off. This research project is not just a vocation but also a passion. This does bring the dangers of exploitation, betrayals and misrepresentation. So how do I deal with this dilemma? First of all I do not

pretend to be reporting, but the way I am involved in the study, I am constructing a world of self as well as the other. (A detailed discussion on these dilemmas and concerns is included in a separate section: 'My Position' in this chapter).

However, declaring my position and politics is not enough. For exploring and validating subjective experiences, there has to be a consistent questioning and reflection to avoid self-indulgence and naivety. As an action research project, questioning and reflections, in essence, characterize this study. The questioning and inquiring run at different levels of this study to scrutinize and develop consistent arguments without getting carried away by the politics associated with various perspectives used in:

- Generation of research questions
- Structuring of arguments
- Developing methodology
- Positioning of self in the field
- Mapping experiences

The participatory action research which shares many facets of critical and emancipatory paradigms cannot be adopted uncritically. One of the main criticisms against this method is 'increased threat to the objectivity' founded in unsystematic gathering of data, reliance on subjective measurement, and possible observer effects (observation may distort the observed behaviour). Secondly, participation is a form of investment of time, energy, and self, and as such it raises obvious questions of possible bias. Other criticism levelled against PAR is about the 'blurring' of lines between academics and activism. The researcher is thought to be in a dilemma whether he/she is an academician or activist. Participation as such is highly contested notion, which some critical scholars have called an empty signifier (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) and they

underline the need to make a distinction between the real and false participation to critically understand power, control, access, understandings and outcomes of participation (Servaes, 1999; White, 1994).

I keep on questioning my research objectives, my motives and reasons for being in the middle of all this. This questioning is quite taxing to my work, and me, and on many occasions the questioning leads to self-doubt. But every bout of questioning is followed by reflections, which helps me to change, transform and adapt in the process of reacting to these questions. Overall, my belief in seeing knowledge and experience through a multitude of possibilities and a commitment to validation of other ways of living keeps me going through various stages of questioning and reasoning.

Participatory action research (PAR) seeks empowerment of subjects by incorporating them in the identification of problems, information-gathering and analysis. Other methods and methodologies, in contrast, keep the researched at distance from the researcher. So by not giving the subjects the opportunity to explore, collect, evaluate and decide, such methods reinforce orthodoxies. As an action research project, this study, however, is in the hands of the subjects of this work. I see my role more as a facilitator to enable radio broadcasting as a platform for discussion, reflection and action.

Traditionally academicians are seen as outsiders, living in ivory towers- far from the living experiences of people. In academy, activists are seen as enthusiasts who try to over-simplify complex situations and issues. Being in both these situation, I find these concerns stemming from the tendency to separate theory from practice. In my role as community worker and in my responsibility as an academician, I constantly try to overcome the researcher –researched divide, and let theory learn from practice and vice versa.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

## **CONSTRUCT OF COMMUNITY**

*So carry your homeland wherever you go,  
and be a narcissist if need be/  
The outside world is exile,  
exile is the world inside.  
And what are you between the two?  
(Mahmoud Darwish)*

The objectives of this chapter are to:

- Problematize the concept of community.
- Explore commonalities and contrasts across various conceptualisations of community by juxtaposing the Islamic, communitarian and immigrant minority notions of community.
- Theorize a non-essentialist and dynamic hypothesis for exploring a strategic and positional concept of community among the *Mirpuri* population living in inner city Nottingham.

The study is about the 'worldviews' of the people of South Asian origin (*Mirpuri/Pakistani*)<sup>9</sup>, living in inner city Nottingham (Radford, Hyson Green, Forest Fields, Sneinton), sharing locally the social, economic and political aspects of being a 'coloured' minority. Both epistemologically and methodologically, the concept of community is central to this study. The study acknowledges and accepts the heterogeneities and diversities embedded and performed within this

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<sup>9</sup> *Mirpuri/Kashmir/Pakistani* label is itself contested as it is being used interchangeably in both academic and policy documents. The use of this label is to do with the geo-politics of South Asia which is reflected in many ways within the South Asian communities in the UK.

community. It is as much about differences as it is about similarity and identity (Gilroy, 1982). As envisioned in the previous chapter, the thesis takes a non-essential, multi-perspective and multi-disciplinary approach in learning from the experiences, which may be local and specific to a context, but can also become apparent across ethnicities, geographies and identities.

The thesis revolves around the community radio station, Radio *Ramzan*<sup>10</sup>, studying its role in facilitating communicative interaction between members of its audience. The station, broadcasting in Mirpuri, Urdu and English languages during the month of Ramadan (month of fasting in the Islamic calendar), provides a platform for debating and reflecting on issues and strategies for 'expanded consciousness' (Freire 1972) crucial to 'democratic participation and empowerment' (Zimmerman and Rappaport 1988). Looking inwards for help and support is critical for people who are disadvantaged. Anwar (1979) argues that within Pakistani community, 'Kinship networks' are a crucial element in the evolution of Pakistani community. The togetherness demanded by internal and external factors creates situations where living in physical and psychological proximity leads to 'encapsulation', a psychologically assuring sense of belongingness to a group used tactically at times (Anwar, 1979; Shah, 1998).

The reliance and dependency on *Biradari*<sup>11</sup> (kinship) has lead many first generation immigrants to live in the same area, even on the same street. This living in a pattern of 'home communities' as 'concentration from particular villages' leads to 'clustering of people' on the same streets as a tendency to 'gravitate towards shared culture' (Anwar,1979; Desai 1963). Many scholars,

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<sup>10</sup> The word *Ramzan* is the Urdu derivative of the Arabic word Ramadan (fasting month in the Islamic Calendar). By naming this community project as Radio *Ramzan*, the people make a statement about the '*Barailve*' school of thought they belong to. This is known for its Sufi influence and strong affiliation to the South Asian culture and tradition.

<sup>11</sup> Literally translated, *Biradari* means Kinship but in the *Mirpuri* politics it denotes the clan system- a social hierarchy that classifies people by their family professions... something very similar to the caste system among the Hindus living in South Asia.

though, contest the concept of community and identity, raising the question about the 'legitimacy of such constructs as Pakistani community'. These scholars emphasize that the notion of the community can 'suppress difference' and highlight the lack of homogeneity and presence of multiple identities within what is perceived from outside and often experienced from within a single community (Young, 1990; Eade, 1989; Shaw, 1988). Iris Young (1990), while stressing the need to acknowledge 'difference', argues for a differentiated citizenship and group representation instead of a conception that suppresses difference. She sees supporters of both individualism and community doing harm to otherness. She argues:

Liberal individualism denies difference by posting the self as a solid, self-sufficient unity...Proponents of community, on the other hand, deny difference by posting fusion rather than separation on the social ideal. They perceive the social subject as a relation of unity or mutuality composed by identification and symmetry among individuals within a totality. Communitarianism represents an urge to see persons in unity with one another in a shared whole. (Young, 1990:229).

In reality, however, community is not just the communal union of people. It is also about shared understanding of social justice and myriad relationships between people within a group (Little: 2002). Young has been criticized for failing to appreciate the emancipatory role of community and for looking at community from a one-dimensional 'Gemeinschaft' perspective. However, Young's politics of difference helps to understand the concept of community in new ways. This requires rejecting her 'reductionist' critique of community and acknowledging her theorization of social justice based on diversity (Little, 2002: 46). In terms of the Mirpuri community, this means acknowledging their differences and allowing commonalities to flourish.

There is a risk of imagining and perpetuating labels based on prejudice, ignorance and sheer generalisations. The literature on the subject shows that there is a tendency to construct and disseminate inaccurate labels about people (Hall, 1997), particularly about sub groups within communities. The unproblematic creation of the notion of the Pakistani community is one example of this generalisation, which often ignores the diversity within these groups in terms of class, religion, gender, caste as well as the range of geographical and historical contingencies (Brah, 1996). The diversity within Muslim populations, as well as among the South Asians and what is constructed as the Pakistani community, has repeatedly been emphasised in ethnographic studies (Shaw, 1988; Modood et al., 1997).

The fixed notion of community is seen incompatible with the complex spatial and historical contexts in which they are experienced and negotiated. Solomos and Back (1995) have cast doubt on the unproblematic use of the notion of community, culture and identity. Amit and Rapport (2002) argue that with the dislocation of the conventional connection between individuals and collectives in a global system of production, labour, law and political identity in which political, economic and cultural connections are ever increasing, the very ontology of community as a mobilised social group is uncertain.

Despite uncertainties, the concept of community continues to remain a basis for 'collective class action' (Harvey 1973; Castells 1983), 'a source of identity, of moral and social stability', (Revill 1993), 'difference and unity' (Day and Murdoch, 1993), both in terms of 'aspiration and principle' (Warburton, 1998) and a 'place of amity, mutual support, and homeliness' (Bauman 2000). Community is also seen as 'strategic, situational and fluid' (Massey 1991; Laclau 1994), highly 'political and action orientated' (Gilroy 1982, Hall and Jefferson 1977), forging affiliations through symbols, language, roots, citizenship etc. (Modood, 1994).

Alongside these positive descriptions, the concept is also seen to justify exercising social control, restraining dissent (Taylor, 1997), and used as a site for social engineering (Forrest and Kearns, 1999). These descriptions, explanations and application of the concept show a variety of analyses and help to reflect on the ambiguity and ambivalence the concept entails.

So, how do I deal with this paradox, especially when my arguments draw support from critical, poststructuralist and feminist perspectives, which reject generalisations, uniformities and universalities? There is no single definition of community which can encompass everything a community can or cannot achieve. Neither is there a universal explanation of this concept that can fit in all situations at all times. However, this does not negate the possibility of people sharing certain aspects of culture and experience as they face similar sets of problems (racism, discrimination and cultural disadvantage). Differences are part of human life, and living together means accepting difference and finding ways of working with them. Such an association expresses the members' commitment to the continuity and perpetuation of the group (Werbner, 2005).

On the other hand, a complex discourse of being non-white, represented as culturally different (Hall, 1997) and being from former British colonies (Barrera 1979:194) create multiple disadvantages for the immigrant communities within the unfavourable deprived urban areas where they are concentrated. This discourse creates a culture of exclusion, which is further aggravated by the barriers to access and participation (Hardill et al., 2001). As a result of this exclusion, people gravitate towards a community which provides both a refuge and means to contest exclusion. Jeffery (1976:182) highlights this attraction towards a collectivity as a 'conscious re-assertion of Pakistani-ness'. As in the case of other groups and communities, there is no doubt about the diversity



within the South Asian Diaspora, but there are also striking similarities within these groups, particularly in the patterns of immigration and settlement between various Asian communities in the UK.

Avtar Brah chronicles the various stages of the settlement of Asian community in Post war Britain as; 'coming to *Vilayat* (1950s to 1960s), 'a home away from home' (1960s to 1970s) and 'here to stay' (1970s to 1980s). The Mirpuri/Pakistani community's chain migration, which has allowed village and kin networks to be reproduced in the UK, is well documented (Anwar, 1979, Dayha, 1974). The kin network in the form of Biradari facilitates living in extended and joint families in proximity to each other.

In sociological terms ethnic groups are understood to share the belief in their common origin and heritage. Bacal (1990) relates this shared belief to historical memories of colonisation and migration. These experiences, Bacal stresses, are essential for the 'propagation of the group'. On the basis of common origin and similar experience, ethnic groups have been distinguished from others in cultural terms like language, religion, tribe, nationality and race (Stavenhagen 1986). Members of this group share some 'phenotypic, cultural, linguistic, religious, national features or combination of some of these or all of these factors' (Bacal 1990:80).

Alongside these internal dynamics, a range of outside influences also pull these people together, although this coming together is not permanent and never complete. The official, political, media and academic discourses group non-white groups together in various categories ranging from Black to immigrant to disadvantaged to faith-based, for their own convenience and purpose. The

discourse of social exclusion is seen to reduce people to labels and numbers without looking into the contextual and structural issues, which disempower people. When mixed with other racial categories like Asian, Black, coloured, non white, the process not only stigmatises the marginality but also puts the blame of exclusion on the victims of exclusion. It is not just the racism but a populist discourse based on tabloid press and street politics that gives credence to these labels, and eventually brings them into the administrative processes. Often in literature and policy documents, it is seen that the membership of the ethnic minority and various forms of disadvantage like dependence on social benefits, lifestyle led health issues, higher rates of unemployment, poor levels of participation, forced marriages, parallel lives, etc., are used interchangeably to give the impression of a problematic underclass. (More discussion on this process is included in Chapter One of this thesis)

Although the race and poverty is more abundant in literature, many authors see it ideological rather than empirical. Paul Spicker (2002) emphatically argues that poverty is an economic risk that can affect everyone and not a moral or social problem. This process of 'othering', is seen to be the result of racism and discrimination and even ignorance. This process is understood leading to a 'refused identity and identification within the majority nation, having to find some other roots on which to stand on' (Hall, 1991:52). The media feed on this categorization and perpetuate it further, giving a public legitimacy to this terminology. The state machinery in the shape of public services promote these images further.

Saeeda Shah (1998) argues these images come from the situated dealings and interaction of public services like health, education and social services:

Across ambiguities, misunderstandings and misconceptions, images are constructed which highlight the differences and increase distances. The

atmosphere of uncertainty, coupled with exclusion, leads to the 'encapsulation' of immigrant groups, and subsequently develops and strengthens the sense of group belongingness round a concept of community which can be at times politically useful and psychologically satisfying. (Shah, 1998: 51)

## **Unpacking Community**

The thesis acknowledges the slipperiness of the concept of the community, but it does not accept the explanation of extreme individualisation, complete breakdown of relationships and irrelevance of identity on the basis that we live in a globalised, post-modern times. I believe that with the growing insecurities of the present times and fears about the future, there is a renewed interest in collectiveness, which is deliberate and considered. The growing influence of civil society, global anti-capitalist movements, anti-war lobbies and more specifically, the increasing influence of Islamic revivalist movements based on an *Ummatic* concept of unity within Muslims, illustrates the fact that globalisation does not only break affiliations but in certain cases facilitates new associations.

These new associations might not be a self-sustaining village communities but more interdependent widely scattered groups who share a common interest. At the same time, at a very local level, people discover ways and means to find strength in communal relationship when their identity. One of the Radio *Ramzan* Volunteers (IK) Said:

*I was not going to mosque regularly. It was only on Fridays and special Occasions, like Eid when I went to mosque, but after graduating I go more often, and it has become the focus of both private and public life. It was the place where I pray and reflect on and at the same time I get involved in other social*

*and cultural activities. Having completed degree two years ago, I was not doing anything serious. Now at Mosque I help young people in Math and English. These kids are lucky to have this facility at the mosque....it stops them from hanging on the streets and also gives them a chance to keep up with the home work. Their parents are not educated enough or do not care to provide them the support they need. Well for me it is very rewarding than working for a company where I will have no time to pray and do things I want to. My Dad is not very happy with what I do with my life, but I am sure, Insha'Allah, he will realise one day money is not everything. (Excerpts from an interview with Radio Ramzan Volunteer IK, 2000)*

With the significance of faith-based institutions growing and a desire to use these institutions to complement social and cultural development, more young people are getting attracted toward identity politics. In the case of the Muslim community, especially the Mirpuri community, the institution of the mosque adds more value to this collectivity. While for the elderly people it remains the focus of their worship, the younger generations find it a dynamic social space as well.

The *Karimia Mosque* at the heart of the community in Forest Fields has opened up the possibility for young people to get involved in sports, recreation activities, and homework clubs in a faith-based environment, which mainstream activities cannot provide. Besides, being a place for worship, it has pool tables, table tennis facilities, computers, and also organises trips and sports. A charity named 'Muslim Hands' was also started from the premises of this mosque. This charity is now one of the largest Muslim charities in the UK, raising around four million pounds every years and it employs about 15 local young people (Muslim Hands, 2001). But this is just one mosque normally used by the *Barailve* followers of Islam. There are other mosques and institutions in Nottingham offering a wide range of activities, and are popular among their followers. In line with these

arguments, the thesis understands community as a dynamic discursive space. This explanation of community finds resonance in Werbner who emphasises that, 'rather than denying the existence of community, one should theorise its diversity: its ideological, political, cultural and social divisions, on the one hand, and its situationally changing boundaries, on the other' (2002:5).

This observation lends support to my conceptualisation of the Mirpuri community in which I find political and cultural identities around race and ethnicity in flux. Categories of religion, minoritism, race, locality, and gender are included and excluded as part of a strategy to position itself differently in different situations and under different circumstances. This strategic approach thus helps to engage with myriad power relations which characterize community politics.

The study works through a maze of relations and associations, which change as situations and contexts change. Many critical anthropologists challenge the 'territorialized notion of culture' and argue that 'perceptions of locality and community are discursively and historically constructed' (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997: 6-7). This can be best demonstrated by the fact that the concept of community is very unstable, and it changes tactically and strategically. The Mirpuri community which is the primary focus of this work becomes a Black minority when the Stephen Lawrence issue dogs race relations, they become part of *Ummah* when Salman Rushdie writes the Satanic Verses, they become Pakistanis when India tests Nuclear weapons, they become Kashmiris to highlight the disputed nature of Jammu and Kashmir between India and Pakistan, they become Mirpuris to protest against Pakistan on the Mangle Dam extension and they fragment into *Jats, Bains, Rajas and Sudans*<sup>12</sup> when 'family honour' is at stake. In this flux of loyalties and labels, relationships change and so does the power between and within these relations.

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<sup>12</sup> These are four major Mirpuri clans settled in the UK. The clan system is very influential in the community politics among the Mirpuri population in the UK.

## Concept of community in Islam

Islam aims at establishing a social order wherein people live together in a fraternity or *Ummah*, which stimulates an 'egalitarian and cooperative environment with universal and not parochial preference' (Al-Ahsan, 1992). The word *Ummah* occurs 64 times in the Quran, underlining its importance in social and political conduct. Al-Ahsan says that the standard understanding of the word is 'community' and its root word in Arabic language is 'umm', which means 'mother'. In Quran (2/143), Ummat or community or nation of Islam is described as the 'median' among the peoples and nations implying stability and harmony. However, there are a number of interpretations of this description ranging from political and ideological influence (Al Faruqi: 1988) to more of a spiritual and social force (Khan 1997).

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who established the first community of Muslims in Medina after he fled the persecution in Makkah, stresses the importance of Community. According to a *Hadith* (saying of Prophet), narrated by *Al Bukhari*<sup>13</sup> (vol. I, 291), the Prophet said: 'the Muslim community is like a body if one part hurts, the whole body feels the pain.'

On the basis of the importance given to the concept of community in Islam, aspiration to live as a community is stronger among Muslims. Islam is followed in many parts of the world, and Muslims tend to live in communities giving local colours and flavours to a universal message. It is important to emphasise that the message of Islam no doubt is universal, but it does not prescribe a monolithic universal community to practice this message. In the context of the Quran, humanity is pluralistic but behind this pluralism is the unifying force of *Rabb Al Alameen* (God of Worlds). The stress on the plural (worlds and not world) stands

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<sup>13</sup> Sahih al\_bukari, as it is commonly known, is one of the six canonical Prophetic traditions (*Hadith*). These were collected by the Muslim scholar, Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari (810-870) and compiled during his life time. Most Sunni Muslim view this as the most trusted collection of *Hadith* and the authentic source after the Qur'an.

testimony to the fact that Islam does not believe in a homogenous and undifferentiated community but encourages diversity. Contrary to the common belief that the Muslim community is a universal concept that does not take into account regional and local variations, the Quran emphasises unity in diversity:

*O' mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female, and made you into Nations and tribes, that may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. (Quran, 49:13)*

In Islam there is a powerful concern for community with '*Ummah*' seen like a triangle with three angles representing history, religion and culture (Denny, 1985). The concept of community has certain attributes to give it a sense of purpose. *Al-adl* (Justice), fundamental to the Islamic concept of socio-economic justice puts all aspects of life in proper perspective and balance. *Ihsan* (beneficence) means to be cordial, compassionate and selflessness. *Ihsan* enables a society to become a community through fraternity and fellow feeling (Khan, 1997). These attributes along with the centrality of the mosque in the social organisation of the community and the importance of congregational prayers, concept of *Zakah* (obligatory charity) brings Islamic concept of community nearer to the communitarian thinking.

However, a hermeneutic approach to religion is disputed by many sociologists. In his influential social analysis of religion, Bryan S Turner (1991:17) argues that such an approach focuses too much on 'social action ignoring social structures that can shape action', and fails to develop the notion of the importance of ideology in social life'. Turner argues that the religion serves as an 'institutional link between economic and human reproduction'. He further writes that reformist philosophy of Islam supported rational civilization, modern capitalism and

democracy. He adds that the 'correct interpretation of the Quran shows that Islam is compatible with modern science and rational thought' (Ibid: 407).

The processes of developmentalism and social exclusion, which are seen as a corrective measure to normalize the aberrations among the non Western, very much operates within Orientalism. Within this discourse, religion and other forms of cultural practice are seen as part of the aberration. Citing missionary and evangelistic activities within Abrahamic religions (Islam, Judaism and Christianity), Parvati Raghuram (1999) argues that these religions are linked to modernisation theory but accepts the fact that liberation theology as practiced in Latin America emphasises equity and empowerment goals. Raghuram is of the opinion that since the ultimate goal of both religion and development is change, the two must be interlinked:

These processes may be contradicting or may be mutually supportive. Ultimately, both religion and development remain implicit and explicit narrative with the power to alter the lives of people around the globe (Raghuram, 1999:9-10).

In another article, Raghuram (1999) envisions the revival of religion as an expression of socio-cultural particularism against the universalising tendencies of globalization, though she thinks this distinction is unstable. While the community shares one faith, their responses to issues are local, temporal and strategic. The contemporary tensions between many Islamic societies and the 'West' are seen by many scholars as the result of historical processes.

While the Crusades are seen as the culmination of religious conflicts between Muslims and Christian, the historical process of 'Orientalism' is recognized as a discourse which 'divides the globe into Occident and Orient', the latter is



essentially seen as 'strange, exotic and mysterious, but also sensual, irrational and potentially dangerous' (Turner, 1991: 31). Turner, influenced by the seminal work on Orientalism by Edward Said (1978) sees Western cultural appropriation of Islam based on geo-political struggles between Europe and the Middle East.

The literature shows that the cultural appropriation, mainly practiced within British colonies was assigned the task of controlling Muslims as colonial subjects and to strengthen their loyalty to the colonial administration. Muhammad Sami Umar (2006) looking at the British colonial discourse in Nigeria argues that the cultural appropriation seen as British patronage of Islam was simply an administrative control mechanism:

As they took ownership of Islam and assigned to it important task of control it was necessary for the British to protect that ownership, and to promote Islam to the extent necessary for the efficient control of Muslims, hence lending credence to the theory of British support for Islam (Umar, 2006: 27).

Muslims of South Asian origin constitute almost three quarters of the adherents of Islam in Britain (ONS, UK). The census of 2001 shows the largest number of Muslims in Britain originates from Pakistan (687,592) followed by Bangladesh (261,833) and India (133,783). There are also sizeable groups from the Middle East, North Africa, the Far East and Eastern Europe. Though the theory of Orientalism has universal applications, it can be best understood in the contexts of former colonies. Colonialism, which marked the start of the decline of the Muslim empire in many parts of the world, had a huge influence on the Muslim psyche. This decline leads to a process of Islamic revivals and reform. This process, in turn, gave birth to a number of variations in Islam (Francis Robinson, 1988). Over a period of time, as the immigrants from South Asia became more settled in Britain, Islamic movements of South Asia also became visible here. Francis Robinson (1988: 2) writes that these different movements, ways of being

Muslim and the relationships between these movements is often 'abrasive'. He writes that the origins and orientations of the groups are important in understanding their behaviour in British society.

There is the irony too, that those Islamic ideas, developed by movements which aimed to escape the consequences of British rule and Western civilisation, have since Independence been carried by these movements to the very heart of Britain and the West (Robinson, 1988: 2-3).

After influencing social and political life in South Asia, these movements of variation in Islam have spread to other parts of the world. The contemporary Muslim society in the UK, which mostly comprises of South Asian Muslims, exhibits these forms of Islam in a more defined way. The *Deobandi* variation is a reformist movement with emphasis on reading revealed sciences and close adherence to *Sharia* (Islamic law). Robinson (1988) is of the view that the *Deobandi* version of Islam is 'scriptural' with individual human conscience at the centre of both worldly and spiritual development.

*Barailve* is the most popular movement both in South Asia and among the Muslim communities in the UK. In this custom-laden movement, the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is central to understanding and practising Islam. Most of the mosques in the UK have a direct or spiritual link with the *Barailve* school of thought. Historically, *Barailves* have been pro-British and resisted the anti-British *Khilafat* non-co-operation movement in the early part of the nineteenth century (Robinson, 1988).

Among the puritanical versions is that of *Ahle-Hadith*, whose adherents are considered more sectarian and more intense in their commitment. *Ahle- Hadith*, which is the South Asian version of Saudi Arabian *Wahabism* places immense significance on the implementation of *Sharia* (Islamic law), and in doing so, they

reject the influential medieval schools of *Hanfi* and *Maliki* and make direct use of the Quran and the *Hadith*. Due to their proximity with *Wahabism* and the Saudi political elite, many schools and institutions get financial support from the regime.

*Jamaat Islami*, a highly political version of Islam is seen as a parallel movement with the Islamic Brotherhood of Egypt and the Iranian revolution. This party aims at addressing wider and bigger issues facing the Islamic *Ummah*, especially the position of Islam in comparison with civilization and modernisation. It is highly organised in the UK with its research institution the Islamic Foundation in Leicester and a network of mosques and *madrassas* through the network of the UK Islamic Mission.

*Tableghi Jamaat* is one of the fastest growing reformist movements in the world, which focuses on missionary zeal in the 'renewal of faith' (Robinson, 1988, p.10-11) This group avoids religious controversy. In the UK, it has a massive Centre in Dewsbury in Leeds, which attracts thousands of young people in training and carrying out Dawa (religious propagation work).

Although, the *Barailve* movement is popular among the first generation immigrants, especially those who came from the villages of Mirpur and adjoining areas, other variations of Islam are now taking roots among the second and third generation British Muslims born and brought up in the UK. Exposed to a variety of literature, media and mosques, the younger generation is more open about which route of Islam they want to take. The influence of the Ayatollah's revolution (Iran) and movements like the Islamic brotherhood (Egypt) and *Jamaat Islami* (Pakistan) have attracted the younger generation through its attractive political message for young people especially students in universities.

Though there is no disagreement on the fundamental principles of Islam between different variations and interpretations of Islam, there are many aspects of religious practice where these groups differ. Some of the differences are dealt with internally, but a few differences are untreatable and are manifested socially, affecting every member of the community. One of the most critical differences of opinion socially is controversy over the sighting of the moon.

Since the Islamic Calendar is based on the movement of the moon, the sighting of the moon is very crucial in determining the start of the month of Ramadan and the day of Eid. While in the Muslim countries including Pakistan, there is a national committee of religious scholars who, despite differences, agree on the sighting of the moon but in the UK in the absence of a national institution, religious leaders disagree. As a result of these disagreements, it has been observed that the celebration of Eid and the start of the month of Ramadan are not observed on the same day by many Muslims in the UK. The city of Nottingham has always been at the centre of this controversy, as religious leaders from *Ahle Sunnat wa Jama'at* (*Barailve* version) and the Deobandhis (closer to Saudi influenced *Wahabism*) never agree on one day. This conflict is reflected on the streets and even within families. Despite many meetings and promises, the two groups do not agree on one date. While the *Deobandis* follow Saudi Arabia blindly, the *Barailves* claim to take a more logical approach by looking into local weather conditions and the meteorological reports. Sighting of the moon has become one of the most contentious issues among the Muslim community in the UK, and even the umbrella group of Muslim organisations, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), has taken a more ambivalent approach in dealing with this issue. The MCB lets Imams decide at the local level to take decisions on this issue.

The issue is both serious and sensitive, and it is beyond the scope of this study to go into the theological and meteorological explanations of the rival claims. Radio *Ramzan*, which offers a space for discussing these contentious issues, came into the picture in December of 1998, when two mosques tried to reach a consensus by debating the issue of moon sighting live on air.

While this episode demonstrated the power of public debate, at the same time it took the lid off the myth about unity and consensus within the community. Differences and conflicts have been part and parcel of Muslim life from the start. A quick run through the history of Islam shows serious differences and divisions, which even led to wars, despite following one God, one Prophet and one Book. Perhaps, the only ideal community was the one established by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Medina. This multi-ethnic and multi-cultural community lived in harmony with equal rights and responsibilities for every member of the community. The Charter of Medina, which laid the foundation for this community, brought tribes, pagans, Christians, Jews and Muslims together.

But such idealistic communities do not exist today even in the countries where Islamic *Sharia* (law) is followed. Aburrahman Wahid (2001), a modernist, says that since being prescribed and practiced as a local egalitarian concept by the Prophet (PBUH) in Medina, the concept has changed and transformed. Muslim communities have gone through many upheavals and changes with the passage of time. The transformation of the concept of community and its variegated definitions and application used in an overlapping way resulting in many misunderstandings among fellow Muslims ` (Khan, 1997: 14).

Another problem with the idea of community is the choices and preferences of identities and labels used in describing people from various countries and origins. These preferences/labels have pan- Islamic, nationalistic, localised, and at times

linguistic and cultural overtones. We often hear labels and proclamations like 'Iranian revolutionary' or 'Indonesian nationalist' or 'Arab socialist' or 'Turkish Liberal' or 'Pakistani fundamentalist' or Indian Sufi, 'rich sheikhs' or Palestinian fighters, Afghan Mujahedeen, Kashmir freedom fighter and so on. From a puritan point of view, this plurality within identity risks diluting the 'purity' of an imagined Islamic identity which seeks a seamless *Ummatic* community.

Adhering to a puritan Islamic identity risks alienation from the mainstream, which can lead to exclusion and separatism? This is the predicament many Muslim communities face. There are obvious tensions between imagining an ideal puritan and 'seamless *Ummah*' and living in a fragmented and profane world. The responses to this dilemma are varied and, at times, confusing. Abdurrahman Wahid says:

The challenge at this time is to find an identity that will both develop a sense of belonging to Islam while also retaining a sense of belonging to a larger and wider network of groups motivated by world ideologies, other faiths, and global concerns (Wahid 2001: 55).

This modernising agenda is lost in the 'publicly orchestrated confrontation' with the West and Western values through which younger generations are lured into an ideology' to create a 'political version of *Ummah*' (Khan; 1997). While at the global level these new politically motivated identities are manifesting in different forms of protest against their own governments and regimes in the Western countries with sizable Muslim minorities, there seems to be a generational shift in identity among the young who are finding Britishness and being Muslim less conflicting. In this shift, Muslims 'retain some notions of community' to justify their antagonistic stance against the police and white gangs, whose 'modes of violence tend to be individualistic' (Samad 2004:22).

Analysing the riots in northern towns of England in 2001, Samad finds connections between the concept of community and territoriality by arguing that rival Muslim groups suppressed their differences and resisted attacks by White youth who were inspired by the far right British National Party. The clear difference that emerges between Muslim youth and their white counterparts is that while 'both present fractured and disarticulated politics of marginality the Pakistani/Bangladeshi youth have still some notion of the community to mobilize around' (Samad, 2004: 19).

International issues like Palestine and Kashmir have always generated passions within the Muslim minority in the UK, but it is the recent US-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq which have mobilised Muslim opinion in the UK. However, perhaps the highest point in assertiveness of British Muslim came during the 'Satanic Verses' crisis, which is considered a watershed in Muslim political mobilisation in the UK. It led to unity Muslim organisation became visible on the ground, and made 'Islamic identity a metaphor and idiom for social discontent' (Samad, 2004:13).

The 'discontent' transcended all divisions and variations at that time and has since re-emerged whenever local, national or international events have affected the identity that these Muslims adopt as part of a wider strategy. Muslim groups in Nottingham have been part of this process and during the Rushdie protest which erupted in 1988, became part of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) - a loose confederation of various social and political groups. More recently the Muslim community in Nottingham has taken an active part in the anti-war demonstrations and has been part of the anti-war coalition and now has permanent membership on the Muslim Council of Britain.

The 2001 census has illustrated many interesting characteristics of the Muslim

population in the UK. Compared with the white population, the Muslim population in Britain is very young, comprising 33.8 per cent 0-15 years and 50 per cent less than 25 years. This population also has fewer older people. Another feature of this population is that large numbers are concentrated in a few urban areas like London, Birmingham, Bradford and Leicester. The concentration of Muslim communities in mostly urban areas adds one more dimension to the concept of community. Living in proximity and sharing a faith, along with 'back-home' family connections and an alienation from the mainstream society, forges a sense of closeness, which is then reflected as identity. This is close to three definitions of community: a geographical locality, a local social system and a sense of identity (Newby 1980:3). In theory, 'community' ultimately embraces all the believers, regardless of their gender, colour, nationality or any other such variation. Strong emphasis is placed on family, kinship, and neighbours. In order to feel secure, religion is used like a shield. Certain aspects of the pivotal teachings of Islam receive particular emphasis in the interplay with regional subcultures. In the South Asian community Islamic teaching and injunctions regarding immediate and extended family and neighbours and other Muslims are reinforced by the local patterns of behaviour concerning the family and the Biradari (clan/tribe).

These real and imagined factors of physical and psychological proximities have strengthened communal bonds of togetherness which Anwar thinks lead to 'encapsulation' (Anwar: 1979). Desai makes the observation that the clustering of immigrants in streets of some areas points to the tendency to gravitate towards shared culture (Desai 1963:22). Stuart Hall argues strongly that the formulation of an ethnic identity 'is essentially a politically and culturally constructed category' (Hall, 1992, p. 259), and draws attention to the 'issues of representation' and 'ambivalence of identification and desire in his discussion of 'new ethnicities' (1992: 255).



The group identity becomes more assertive during the fasting month of Ramadan when Radio *Ramzan* complements the celebration of faith (the ritual of fasting). In a local situation, the radio helps to forge that communal feeling by organizing communal activities and serving as a community-wide loudspeaker to inform and engage in debates and discussions that touch the lives of Muslims. Radio *Ramzan* has grown within a variety of other Muslim media, side by side with the political mobilisation and cultural assertiveness among the minority ethnic groups. Establishing its own media has been part of the strategy to counter Islamophobia (Runnymede Trust, 1997) and present a more balanced point of view. These media have also provided new social spaces for young Muslims.

A number of new publications are being used to find new ways of expressing their conviction to faith and creating spaces where aspects of being Muslim, Mirpuri, Pakistani and British are engaged in an eclectic dialogue. One of the fastest growing sectors of Muslim media is the community Radio station. The number of stations has grown phenomenally during the last 10 years. Apart from complementing the religious rituals, these stations articulate an alternative point of view which otherwise is not possible.

In Islam, the individual has a responsibility towards the common welfare and for the prosperity of his community. This duty is not only to the society in which one lives but also to God, so that the individual works with social mindedness and a feeling for fellow humans. Similarly, the society is also responsible to God for the welfare of the individual. So duties and rights correspond harmoniously. This constructive interaction between the individual and the society is also the fundamental principle of communitarian thinking.

## **Community and social capital**

Communitarian thinking sees unity, support and mutuality as natural outcomes of an ethical and moral communion of people, providing a safety net through sharing and mutual care (Etzioni 1995, Bauman 2000). These scholars argue that moral aspects of community-building should guide the policies of family responsibilities and maintaining civility in the society.

Amatai Etzioni (1993: 9), highlighting the balance between order and freedom possible within a communitarian perspective, says that 'between individuals who champion autonomy, and social conservatives, who champion social order, lies communitarianism, which characterises a good society as one that achieves balance between social order and autonomy' (Cited in Arthur 2003:80).

Writing from a critical feminist point of view, Fraser and Nicholson emphasise 'the embedded and embodied status of the individual' in communitarian thinking in contrast with the individual in liberal theory, which they find 'an abstract individual' (1993: 2). Tehranian (1994), signifying the role of human agency within communitarian thought, however, argues that 'culture and cultural construction of reality' are central to emancipatory projects within communitarian movements. Communitarian thinking puts community at the heart of the common good - an emancipatory space devoid of oppressive structures and external dependencies (Steeves and Melkote 2001). This ideal concept is also the goal of various feminists, liberation and "Third World" movements, though they would adopt different ways and means to achieve this. Within communitarianism, however, the role of establishing virtues and values are given to the state, which makes this concept the focus of criticism. Communitarian thinking is also criticised for taking a very simplistic view of the complexities of the community, making it a 'rosy' place to live in. Within this concept, community is seen as stable and facilitator of progress and harmoniser of communal and social

complications (Taylor, 1997). So it represses dissent and manages conflict in the name of social order, for example, giving politicians and government the excuse to put the blame for poverty on victims of poverty (Miller and Ahmad, 1998).

Similarly, by attributing high moral value to the community and using it as an exclusive reference to those holding those values and attributes, the concept is seen to create myths of superiority. Communitarianism underlines the balance between 'rights and responsibilities' with strong moral connotations. Some scholars like Haraway (1991) and Steeves (1993) stress to evolve a common front as a 'political tool for intervention and action' based on common context of struggles against the oppression by gender, class, race, ethnicity, and nation, including colonisation'.

An influential form of communitarianism exemplified by Tony Blair's 'third way' (Lund, 1999) has become now part of political rhetoric surrounding welfare reform the UK. This rhetoric, seen by many as 'moral authoritarianism', has to a large extent, influenced the government policy under New Labour of dealing with social exclusion and urban regeneration (Leadbeater, 1996) through community participation, empowerment and capacity building. At a NCVO conference in January 1999, Tony Blair underlined the importance of communitarian thinking on his social policy: ...'the first ten years of the new millennium, the 'decade of community' (at the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) annual conference in January 1999).

*But there is a big idea left in politics. It goes under a variety of names – stake holding, one nation, inclusion, community – but it is quite simple. It is that no society can ever prosper unless we live up to the ambition to create a society where the community works for the good of every individual and every individual works for the good of the community.*

*(Blair. 1996. My Vision of a Young Country. p. VI)*

But behind the rhetoric, this policy underlines the fact that people living in 'communities' are themselves responsible for most of the problems in urban neighbourhoods. This way, the politicians and the growing bureaucracy shrug off their responsibility and accountability, and instead they advise relentless strategies to enforce community obedience. In this new policy environment, much attention is paid to 'inclusion and exclusion', implying that poverty and deprivation are outcomes of a lack of moral and communal responsibility. It has been argued that through this approach a 'moral underclass', expected to be self-reliant, honest and connected with other, (Levitas, 1999; Rose, 1999) is created.

Communitarianism or 'Third Way', as has been popularised by the New Labour Project in the UK, is seen as a compromise between capitalism and socialism.

Associated closely with communitarian thinking is the concept of social capital, which is defined as the capacity to 'participate in the local community networks' (Bourdieu, 1986), a concept related to cultural and human capital (James Coleman, 1988a) and a trust to facilitate cooperation between the members of a community (Putnam, 1993). Minority groups share some of the characteristics that are inherited by the immigrant communities as they come from the rural areas of the developing countries where sense of community and co-operation is very strong. These groups also develop some of these characteristics as a strategy for surviving as a community in a new country. This phenomenon has been documented by Dayha (1974) and Ballard (2002) as they explain how within the Mirpuri community new entrants to the UK are provided with both financial and moral support by a network of relatives and acquaintances from 'back home'. This form of social capital is not only seen among the first generation Mirpuris but second and third generation British-born people also exhibit a higher degree of willingness to be part of the community.

Asghar Mehmood's father moved to Forest Fields in Nottingham from Derby in 1968 to live near to his uncle who had migrated in the early 60's. AM has most of

his relatives living in the same area. He admits of a better job prospects outside Nottingham but cannot move because the support he gets from his extended family in Nottingham. He said:

*I do at times feel I should resist this pressure and move out of Nottingham but there are many advantages of living close to relatives. My wife is a housewife and she goes to her mum's house while I am at work. My elder brother did an extension of the house to create room for his two growing sons and the whole family was there to help him. It would not have been possible if we were scattered over the UK (AM<sup>14</sup>, Dec 1999).*

This material and emotional advantage has formed strong communities of these people in areas which are not very attractive to live in otherwise. In the report, Poverty in Nottingham, Stuart Young writes that Forest Fields despite being one of the most deprived areas in Nottingham (Young, 2001); the benefits of staying together outweigh the attraction of moving out.

However, the support and help Asghar gets is different in nature from the concept of social capital, as it is his extended family, clan system and belonging to the *Barailve* school of thought that keeps him glued to the area. His interactions are mostly within his own family and friends. Living together in one geographic area is no evidence of higher social capital among members of this community. It also needs to be mentioned here that social capital's importance has been overplayed and that other structural and class-related political factors are generally missing from the discussion on social capital, especially in public health discourse. Putnam's communitarianism approach has come under severe criticism for making power and politics absent and re-valorisation of social relationships in political discourse in an attempt to reintroduce a social dimension to capitalism

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<sup>14</sup> Asghar Mehmood was one of the dedicated volunteers of the Radio *Ramzan*, and his IT background proved beneficial to the setting up and maintaining the radio station (Excerpts from the interview. Dec 1999).

(Schuller et al., 2001). This depoliticization of his analysis is seen remarkable as the 'consequence of the supposed triumph of capitalism', which the critics argue reduces the 'purpose of all social action to accumulating more capital so that the individual can compete better' (Navarro, 2002:427). More severe criticism has been attracted by Francis Fukuyama's general declaration of the end of the welfare state and that liberal democracy was the only legitimate ideology left.

The over-reliance on social capital as the only way of surviving has been called 'compassionate conservatism'. This compassion, however, has failed to address the issues of power and conflict, especially in areas characterised by the social and economic inequalities, divisions and exclusions that act as barriers to trustful and co-operative interactions. (Jack & Jordan, 1999: 244). The Cattle report into the disturbances in Burnley and Bradford in 2001 reinforced the fact that inequalities and lack of trust had forced people to live 'parallel lives' in deprived areas in inner city areas.

## **Being a Mirpuri Muslim in Nottingham**

The Muslim population in Britain is very diverse. According to the 2001 Census, the people of Pakistani descent make up the largest group of Muslims in the UK, of which about two thirds are from the Mirpur and Kotli district of 'Azad Kashmir', who are increasing rapidly in size, 'because of fertility rate' and as a result of ongoing 'processes of family reunion' (Ballard 2002). These people, having both British and Pakistani nationalities, are also called Mirpuris/Kashmiris.

Mirpur was culturally and linguistically part of the pre-partition Punjab, but geopolitically it has been a part of the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir - an autonomous entity under the British Raj. After the British left, and the subcontinent was partitioned into India and Pakistan along communal lines, the

fate of Jammu and Kashmir, along with a few other such entities, was left unclear. Both India and Pakistan made claims over the territory of Jammu and Kashmir, and in the confusion and chaos that followed the partition, the state got divided between two newborn countries in the war they fought in the first three months of their infancy. Since then the two countries have fought three more wars, as this dispute remains a major issue between India and Pakistan. China also took a part (Aksai Chin) of Jammu and Kashmir during the 1962 war with India, and another part was given to China by Pakistan. Consequently, Kashmir has become the most militarised region of the world and a potential nuclear flashpoint as both India and Pakistan now possess nuclear weapons.

The part of Jammu and Kashmir which came under the control of Pakistan is called 'Azad Kashmir' (Free Kashmir) with the northern areas of Gilgit and Baltistan directly incorporated into Pakistan, or Pakistani Controlled Kashmir or Pakistani Administered Kashmir, and the part which India has is called Indian Occupied Kashmir, Indian Controlled Kashmir or Indian Administered Kashmir depending on who one is listening to.

Writing about the intractability of the dispute, Prof Sumantra Bose (1999) identifies the 'maximalist claim to Kashmir by India and Pakistan' as a major external factor that drives the conflict. Bose observes that the 'positioning of Kashmir has been made central to their national ideologies - secular nationalism for India and Muslim nationalism in the case of Pakistan' (Bose, 1999: 153).

But there are a number of internal dynamics that make the Kashmir issue one of the oldest disputes on the UN agenda. Bose writes that formidable internal forces make resolution very difficult:

Not only is it (Jammu and Kashmir) composed of several distinct Geographical regions (Kashmir valley, Jammu and Ladakh in India, the

Azad Kashmir districts plus Gilgit and Bultistan in Pakistan) but its population is divided into a bewildering multiplicity of religions, ethnic, linguistic and caste groups (1999: 153).

The issue of Kashmir is a complex one, and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore these complexities (For a detailed discussion on the Kashmir problem, see Lamb, 1991; Schofield, 1996; Ganguly, 1997).

The immigration pattern of people from 'Azad Kashmir' is well documented (Dayha 1974, Saifullah-Khan 1976, Ballard, 1991). Mirpuris (most of these immigrants originate from Mirpur district of Pakistan- Administered Kashmir) have been working with the British merchant navy since before the Second World War. During the war, these people worked in South Shields, where they facilitated the arrival of more from their villages. After the war, British factories- mainly cotton industries- needed manpower, and Mirpuris fulfilled this demand. Ballard (1991) believes this was the start of the chain-migration as large numbers of relations and friends joined them in the UK. Later, the World Bank financed Mangla Dam in the heart of Mirpur, which displaced thousands of people who used the compensation money to immigrate to Britain. After settling down in the UK, flows of remittances back to the villages of origin encouraged more to come.

There are almost 400,000 Mirpuris living in the U.K, another 100,000 in the rest of Europe and the U.S. Almost all political parties and religious organizations of the Pakistani side of Kashmir are represented in the U.K. The Mipuri population in the UK has tried to use its strength in number especially the voting power, in some of the constituencies to garner UK support for their 'version' of resolving the issue of Kashmir. The community though very emotional about Kashmir is entrenched in the party politics of 'Azad Kashmir' and Pakistan. Every political



party of 'Azad Kashmir'<sup>15</sup> and Pakistan has its satellite in the UK, which divides the community on the basis of political loyalty 'back home'. While 'back home politics' is determined by Biradari, in the UK this community has traditionally supported the Labour Party because of their strong ties with the trade unions.

Besides being Labour voters, support for the 'freedom struggle' in Kashmir transcends political and social divisions. While Kashmir is a very strong influence in the way the Mirpuri community project and represent them, it is also Muslim and Pakistaniness which describes this community. Stuart Hall argues that the formulation of an ethnic identity 'is essentially a politically and culturally constructed category' and draws attention to the 'issues of representation' and 'ambivalence of identification and desire' (Hall,1997). Mirpuri/ Kashmiri/ Pakistani identity which many of these people prefer is part of this uncertainty about Kashmir and their strong emotional links with the dispute. They call themselves differently in different situations. Mirpuri identity is linguistic and cultural, Kashmiri identity is emotional and aspirational, and Pakistani identity is practical, while the Muslim identity encompasses all these identities.

There is no clear link between poverty and race, but the available data confirms that some groups experience a more disproportionate disadvantage and social exclusion than others. However, the minority ethnic communities are more likely to experience poverty, unemployment, lower educational qualifications, suffer ill health, and live in poorer quality housing. Furthermore, they may also be subject to racial harassment and racist crime (SEU, 2000).

Employment is generally lower for all minority ethnic groups, and the lowest rates are found among Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Women's employment rates are

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<sup>15</sup> Pakistani Administered Kashmir (Azad Kashmir) has a huge interest in its big Diaspora in the UK. Besides, remitting money and getting their sons and daughters married 'back home'; these people are also active in back home politics. All major political parties like Nawaz Sharief's 'Muslim League', Benazir's 'Peoples Party', religious groups like *Jamat-e-Islami* and local and regional parties active in Kashmiri politics have their branches in the UK. The regional Assembly of 'Azad Kashmir' has a sitting member from the UK Diaspora.

far lower than men with only 28 percent of Pakistani women and 23 per cent of Bangladeshi women economically active, compared with 73 percent of Pakistani men and 69 percent of Bangladeshi men. The proportion of self-employment among Muslim groups is diverse with it being relatively high for Pakistanis at 22 percent and around 13 percent and 12 percent for Indians and Bangladeshi, which is near the rates found for White British 11 percent (Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey, 2001/02).

Similarly in England, members of particular black and minority ethnic groups, particular the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and African-Caribbean groups suffer the poorest health (Nazroo, 1997). Scholars argue that greater emphasis on ethnic identity and culture, racial discrimination, and people's participation are important factors in removing health inequalities (Nazroo, 1998; Williams et al., 1997). (A detailed discussion on health inequalities is carried out in Chapter V of this thesis)

The Race/discrimination/exclusion is the most important discourse within the meta-discourse of multiculturalism that affects minorities in the UK. Although these perspectives are not similar, the reason to keep them together is the inescapable interrelation and interdependence of this experience.

After the Second World War when immigration became a big debate, issues of structural inequality and cultural adaptation dominated the social policy debate (Bacal, 1993). Political, bureaucratic and academic responses came in various shapes and forms of assimilation: one-way hegemonic conformity, melting pot and interaction assimilation, which either stressed conformity to existing 'hegemonic practices' or dissolving into a new mixture or reduction in social distances (Shibutani, 1986). There has been a severe criticism of assimilation for its failure to understand group identity and unchecked rejection of the minority by the majority population. Instead, ethnic membership was seen as the potent

source of identification and affiliation for ethnic minorities (Glazer and Monahan 1963). In the UK, it was assumed that the children of migrants could integrate in the mainstream culture in schools where English language and the way of life would distance them from their culture.

When this did not materialise, ethnic diversity was recognised in the social policy, and multiculturalism provided a framework for this policy, which stressed respect for different cultures. However, this has been severely criticised for its failure to address inequalities of power and resources between the majority and the minority populations. The political process was seen to determine the identity of non-white people who in many instances were lumped together as Black or Asian, showing blindness to the diversity within each group and community. From the late 1970s and into the mid 1980s, it was criticised by members of minority ethnic communities, who equated it with paternalism. They see explicit discrimination against cultural minority groups and an implicit discrimination being practiced under social cohesion. However, critics of multiculturalism often charge multiculturalists with practicing cultural relativism, and warn special treatment that might violate the principle of equality before the law. The Race Relation Act 1976 which incorporated earlier Acts of 1965 and 1968 to prevent discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, and nationality, ethnic and national origin has more or less successfully protected the interests of minorities in the UK despite being criticised rigorously. In 2003 additional regulations made certain forms of discrimination due to religious belief illegal also.

Although the political mobilization of ethnic minorities in the UK is well documented most of the debate has remained confined around race relations. Every new policy and perspective has emerged as a result of a major problem. The brand of cultural pluralism promoted by British Race Relations –on the principle of racial equality- has come under severe criticism for failing to

understand the complexity of race and ignoring the spatio-temporal realities in which marginalized groups live. Diversity, difference, religion and ethnic origin have become important seats of contestation and consensus within minorities.

Bikhu Parekh (2000) sees multiculturalist perspective as a creative interplay between the cultural embeddedness of humans, different visions of culture and plurality within each culture. But this theorisation has been criticised for 'legitimising inequality' and leading to rejection of those cultures which do not correspond to the nation state (Samad, 2004).

But some scholars think multiculturalism is very relevant to the contemporary politics of race and identity. One of the foremost theorists of British multiculturalism, Tariq Modood (TES, 2004), acknowledging the importance of religion in contemporary multicultural Britain, says that religious assertiveness among the South Asians is giving Britishness a new significance 'out of step with native trends, which he finds diversifying rather than segregating.

At a time when demands for equality and opportunity are not only made within broader racial categories, but within religious orientation, ethnic origin and nationality (Paul Statham, 1999), one can see the erosion in multiculturalism, which bundled all non-white categories together for political and administrative correctness. Whether we agree with the relevance of multiculturalism or not, we cannot deny the fact that ethnic/minority/racial assertiveness is not just a demand for equal opportunity or equal rights on the basis of ethnicity, colour or race alone but faith, tradition and identity are becoming part of a new emphasis by 'others' who demand respect for otherness. This renewed assertiveness is not exclusive to ethnic or minority politics alone, but many more areas including sexuality and feminism, have been arguing for long that 'equality is not enough'. Demanding emancipation and the transformation of society, these movements want liberation from existing frameworks, values and systems.

There are various theories which explain ethnic/racial inequality: The deficiency theory sees 'backwardness', inferior intelligence and low moral attribute (Jenson 1969, 1973). The socio-cultural deficiency approach blames deficiencies in social and cultural organisation (Lewis 1959). It is argued that the sources of inequality lie in the prejudice, discrimination and racial ideologies practiced by majority groups (Barrera 1979), and the social-structural theories believe the division is on the basis of class, race, ethnicity and gender and the privileged position of dominant groups (Cox, 1948; 1970).

Racism in different forms and guises has been recognized as a major prejudice against the people of non-white colour. But when such prejudice becomes part of official and political discourse, it discriminates against and marginalizes people. In 1999, institutional racism was acknowledged to be present within organizations and institutions of British society. Sir William McPherson in the report, *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry* (1999) defined institutional racism as:

The collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people. (Macpherson report, 1999)

Many scholars identify the legacy of colonialism and the growing influence of capitalism as a reason for sustained racism in British society (Wallerstein, 1974 ; Bacal 1991). The colonial legacy and its mindset are believed to be playing a big part in the way immigrant communities are understood and treated in the Western democracies. With more and more people from former colonies coming to the UK for work and family reasons, an 'internal colonialism' is seen to be defining 'geographies of the metropolis' (Barrera 1979). On similar lines, Bacal (1991) argues that the colonial heritage is responsible for complicating the class

with race and ethnicity within the colony and the colonial metropolis. He writes:

This ascriptive process as a relative social condition implies a psychological pressure experienced by ethnic group members, to define themselves with ethnic attributes, namely, in terms of an 'ethnic identity' (Bacal: 1991: 66).

Whatever the claims and theoretical explanation, ethnic identities in various multi-cultural societies have not vanished. There is, in fact, a resurgence of ethnic and racial identities, and minorities are becoming more conscious of their rights and position in multi-cultural societies. Minority cultures and identities have survived both the forces of modernisation and the coercion of totalitarianism. But that does not mean that structural imbalances are not there anymore. Social inequality, racism and discrimination continue to suppress the subordinate ethnic groups (McPherson, 1999).

Social inequality is not the only issue that affects the day to day living of minority groups. The fixed and situated categorisation of these groups by academia and media creates and reinforces discourses in which and through which difference is demonised. Writing about the representation of South Asian Muslim women in the West, Fauzia Ahmad (2003) stresses that much of the research on South Asian communities is focused on the objectified and situated gendered, racialised, religious and colonial discourses through which debate revolves round the same old themes of Biradaris (family clans), female focused concept of *Izzat* (Family honour), generational conflicts, links with country of origin, and structural disadvantages. Although Fauzia Ahmad acknowledges that issues of identity, hybridity and agency influenced by feminism and post-structuralism are becoming part of the debate, especially when looking at the second and third generation of the Muslim women born and brought up in the UK, she argues that arranged marriages, Hijab (Veil), and 'honour' killings remain the central point of these studies which trivialise and essentialise South Asian Muslim women. These

situated discourses also inform the state policies and become part of the political rhetoric. As a consequence of this discourse, the 'victimhood' of Muslim women' has become part of both the foreign and domestic policies in the UK.

Citing some personal examples of her academic and professional life, Fauzia Ahmad(2003) argues that both the White and Black feminists contribute to 'othering' Muslim women out of context and overlooking the centrality of regulative and patriarchal frames of reference. Many Muslim and non Muslim scholars believe that the breach in women's rights has more to do with power, patriarchy, and misuse of religion as a political weapon than with religion properly understood as individual faith (Afkhami, 1999). However, the over emphasis on arranged marriages and use of veil used interchangeably with Islam does essentialise the lives of Muslim women, particularly of South Asian origin.

While Muslim women can be easily be seen as objectified within these discourses, the plight of the South Asian Muslim community on a whole is not very different. These people are seen and stereotyped on the basis of situated categories and associations, which emerge from the vicious circle of media, academia and politics. Consequently, labels and myths of fundamentalism, terrorism, domestic violence, illegal immigration, troubles in the Middle East are associated with the Muslim community. However, the group consciousness among the immigrants varies from generation to generation. While the first generation South Asians shared a deep rooted homeland consciousness which defined their individual and collective social, cultural and political life in Britain, for the second and third generation born and brought up here, the consciousness is more a result of the struggle between personal identity which they develop in wider society (especially in schools) and that which they acquire at home (dominated by parents). Modood et al., (1994:59) see this struggle culminating in 'ethnic pride', which comes from the affirmation of roots and impressions from the contemporary society, which looks down at their 'ethnicity with inferiority'. He adds that religion is considered

a 'distinctive heritage and ethnic identity' of this consciousness. Highlighting this changing nature of a group, Michael Banton says that groups, whether based on ethnicity, nationality, religion or race, are always changing in a 'triangular web of structure, process and consciousness' (Banton, 1997:117). These arguments illustrate the strategic and tactical positioning of the community to deal with both internal and external dynamics. This re-conceptualisation of community is also fuelled by the change from essentialised 'Black politics' to a wider perspective where political and social mobilisation of different ethnic groups is privileged (Hall, 1988; Solmos and Back 1995, Modood 1998). Writing about the 'embodied' nature of social and cultural rituals of South Asian migrants, Werbner (2005) argues that such representation are 'substantiated in objects, food and substances that inscribe and transform the person and constitute his or her felt subjectivity'. In her study of the Pakistani community in the UK, she finds the religious rituals, cultural practices, and social events becoming a 'mode of transaction, relatedness and embodiment (2005:11-12).

However, Michael Banton (1997) emphasises that it is the collective action and purpose of individuals in a group that fosters the sense of community. Quoting Max Weber's description of associational and communal collective action, Banton (1997: 117) argues that 'an association of persons sharing common ethnic origin would appeal to a consciousness of shared experience and would therefore be communal from the outset' as group support and collective action becomes indispensable for such consciousness. British Muslims have exhibited overt political mobilisation during the Salman Rushdie crisis and more recently during the war on Iraq by uniting tactically despite differences, and forming wider coalitions with socialists, Christians, anti-war activists, liberals, as a strategy to show their displeasure with government policy on Afghanistan and Iraq. Though this dissatisfaction, which relates directly to religion and ethnicity, it rarely conflicted with Muslims' Britishness and their belonging to British society.



At the local level, however, such politics takes a different turn when local power struggles, competition for resources, and fragmented identities become more important than national alliances and international solidarities. Here, broader categories start breaking into smaller and more specific identities and definitions. It becomes black versus brown, Muslim versus non-Muslims and Indian versus Pakistani, and even Pakistani versus Mirpuri. Some examples of this phenomenon are competition for council and other regeneration funding on the basis of Afro-Caribbean or South Asian origin, control of community festivals like the Council-funded *Melas*, Diwali and Eid. The Asian Arts council in Nottingham has been the centre of controversy as Pakistani and Indian groups have for long fought over its ownership and influence.

While the tensions between Indian and Pakistani groups is understood, but within Muslim and Pakistani groups, tensions and conflicts arise as power relations change at the local level. The Mirpuri community has always been seen together with the people of Pakistani origin, but now there is a demand for creating a separate category for Kashmiris in all policy documents and people should be given a choice to tick the Kashmir box and not Pakistani when defining themselves. And, within the Mirpuri population divisions and differences become obvious when social (clan, kinship), political (affiliations with various political parties) and religious (subscription to schools of thought within Islam) points of reference are at stake. But these differences are strategically downplayed and commonness in *Ummatic* connection, immigration experience, minoritism, blackness and social exclusion are exaggerated depending on the situation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Health, Healthism and Health Inequalities**

*Health is but one element of life, and cannot be complete unless the other major elements are provided, including: freedom, security, justice, education, work, self-sufficiency, food, water, clothing, housing, marriage and environmental health.*

(Amman Declaration on Health Promotion)

This chapter has the following objectives:

- To engage with the debate on racialisation of health by unpacking the concepts of race, ethnicity and community as used in the discourse of 'healthism'.
- To challenge the fixed notion of inequality.
- To examine the concept of social capital as used in public health policy and practice.
- To take a critical look at the processes of 'governmentality' and 'medicalisation' of health and well being as used discursively in the delivery of health services.
- To argue for a contextual approach in addressing health inequalities.

Fighting inequalities in health is one of the biggest challenges faced by the government's public health strategy. Among array of approaches being adopted, the social approach which fits in with New Labour's ideological proximity with the concept of social capital in dealing with these disparities is widely being recognized (Wilkinson, 1996; Purdy, 1999; Schuller et al., 2001). Research suggests that whether measured in terms of mortality, life expectancy or health status, there are inequalities in health in the UK, making it one of the most

unequal societies in the developed world (Wilkinson, 1996). These inequalities categorised by socio-economic measures and ethnic group or gender, have also been linked with the areas people live in, and their racial, minority and immigration status (Adams, 1995; Kawachi et al., 1997). Within the official discourse, the government documents also acknowledge this link between ethnicity, poverty and poor health. Along with low achievement in education, higher unemployment, poor housing and higher rate of crime, poor health is also disproportionately prevalent among minority ethnic groups. When seen in combination with racism and discrimination, the racial background of people is seen contributing to the illness (McKenzie 2003).

However, the relationship between health and ethnicity is not a simple one. Like any other group living in poor neighbourhoods, the white population in these areas shares the inequalities in health. There are certain health issues which have a direct correlation with the customs and cultural practices<sup>16</sup> of people. So it is not only the ethnicity which is linked to health disparities but the social, economic and cultural aspects are also critical in exploring health inequalities. The complexity within the concept of ethnicity, entailing more intricate notions like community and identity, further obscure this relationship. Differences in terms of class, religion, language and family kinships characterize the dynamism of ethnic identities. Critical scholars writing about the tendency towards essentialising on the basis of ethnicity and community argue for looking beyond an ethnicity mindset to appreciate the diversity within the concept. The unproblematic creation of the notion of the Pakistani community is one example of this generalisation, which often ignores the diversity within these groups in terms of class, religion, gender, caste as well as the range of geographical and historical contingencies (Brah, 1996).

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<sup>16</sup> The custom of cousin marriage, common among the Mirpuri/Pakistani community is one of such issue which is believed to lead to genetic and hereditary health problems.

Suman Fernando (1991) dealing with issues of race in health says that race, culture and ethnicity can help in group identity like the post-slavery shaping of black consciousness in the US and the cultural revival of West Indian consciousness extending to other non-white groups living in the inner city ghettos of the UK as a result of 'internal colonialism' (Pryce, 1979, Hall et al., 1978). Being together is thus necessitated by the fact that a complex discourse of being non-white and being represented differently (Hall, 1997), originating from former British colonies (Barrera 1979:194), create a discourse of racialisation and 'othering' people. This discourse creates a culture of exclusion which is further aggravated by the barriers to access and participation (Hardill et al., 2001). These experiences take people towards community, which provides both a refuge and means to contest exclusion (Jeffery 1976:182). But as discussed at some length in Chapter Three of this thesis, community is a highly complex construct, and this study sees it more as a position and strategy to negotiate commonalities and differences.

## **Racialisation of health**

The tendency to assign people to groups based on race and ethnicity puts labels on them which, in turn, takes away the individuality, suppresses difference and renders them as carriers of traits considered essential to that group (Eade, 1989; Shaw, 1988). This process ignores the fact that people within a racial or ethnic group are different, and the differences within a group can be, at times, more critical than commonalities. The discussion on race, ethnicity and community in Chapter Three of this thesis argues for race and ethnicity to be seen as positions than as biological or social categories. Barth (1969) writes that ethnic groups are more a matter of their boundaries rather than the cultural context. Highlighting the differences within a group, he however, maintains that boundaries continue

to be made along ethnic lines, which implies that the boundaries may be dynamic but remain constitutive for the collectivity. The official, political, media and academic discourses reinforce the processes of racialisation by stereotyping and attributing symbolic images to people seen as 'different'.

Saeeda Shah (1998:51) argues these images come from the situated dealings and interaction of public service like health, education and social services. Within the health services, the discourse of racialisation is well documented as the group is discursively constructed on the basis race and ethnicity implying immutable cultural differences. Fernando (1991) dealing with questions of race, culture and ethnicity in health argues that race is primarily physical, culture is sociological and ethnicity is psychological:

In a multiracial and multicultural society the concept of ethnicity, identified by a sense of belonging emerges through various pressures, social, political, economic etc. as well as cultural toes and perception of racial identity, the strength of which too may be influenced by these pressures. Among the social forces in many societies is the pressure arising from racism that drives together people perceived as being racially similar to each other...This is the ethnicity that is of practical importance in most communities where there is racial and cultural diversity. However, if, in any such society, the significance of racism diminishes, cultural difference is likely to achieve increasing importance in determining ethnicity. But while racism continues, as it does in most Western societies, racial difference plays an important part in determining ethnicity (1991: 15I).

Scholars argue that the majority of research into the health of immigrant communities refers to specific illnesses in specific ethnic groups, with illnesses ranging from psychological and mental health issues (Callan, 1996; Williams and Hunt, 1999) to more specific problems such as dermatitis, cancer, liver problems,

cardiac illness and HIV/AIDS (Sabatier, 1988; Haworth, Raleigh and Balarajan, 1999). The main groups covered are Asian or South Asian, and more specifically Bangladeshi, Pakistani, (Bedi, 1995; Williams, Hunt and Bhatt, 1997) Afro-Caribbean (Harrison et al., 1997); although there is also some research on Chinese (Chan, 2000), one on Turkish (Hoggart et al., 2000), on Jewish (Marks and Hilder, 1997), and on the Irish group (Walsh and McGrath, 2000).

Arguing for a holistic approach in understanding the dynamics of health inequalities, Nazroo and Karlsen write:

We have shown that ethnic identity is formed in relation to a number of dimensions: self-description, being 'traditional', participation in the 'ethnic community', and racialisation. So, rather than being something based solely on country of origin, as would be suggested by definitions of ethnicity used in earlier studies, ethnic identity can be seen to be influenced by the wider social structure. These analyses suggest that the relationship between ethnicity and health is also mediated by structural factors, explored here in terms of socio-economic position, and racial harassment and discrimination. This would suggest that while traditional measures of ethnic group can allow us to recognise the existence of ethnic inequalities in health, in order to fully investigate the relationship between ethnicity and health, we require a more sophisticated assessment of ethnicity, which can both adequately account for the different forms of social disadvantage experienced by ethnic minority groups and the various ways in which racism itself can impact on physical and mental health. Racism and its accompanying social disadvantage are important aspects of the lives of people from ethnic minority groups, and this must be incorporated into strategies to address ethnic inequalities in health. (Nazroo and Karlsen, 2001:3)

But most of the epidemiological work focuses on the social, overlooking the cultural and political aspects of life. It fails to appreciate the knowledge and experience of the people living on the margins. That perhaps is the reason, despite much of the epidemiological evidence, there is the lack of 'truly local data on health inequalities relating to ethnicities'. The health inequality strategy has failed to 'translate policies into practice' (Rodrigues, 2000). Even the work of Richard G Wilkinson (1996), considered seminal in explaining health inequalities in the developed world, fails to engage with issues such as identity, faith and tradition in linking ethnicity with health and well-being. Writing about the social links between health and inequality he draws attention to the fact that social, rather than material, factors are the limiting component in the quality of life in developed societies. Using examples from USA, Japan, Britain and Eastern Europe, he argues that there is a critical relationship between equality and health. He adds, 'the message that comes through clearly in each case is that the healthy, egalitarian countries have or had a sense of social cohesion and public spiritedness' (Wilkinson, 1996: 8). He argues that egalitarian societies with little disparities in income show lesser inequalities in health, while economically unequal societies are less stable socially with poor interaction, which reduced the health and well being. But there seems an inherent difficulty in mapping the ethnic epidemiological categories onto policy recommendations on the basis of complex 'psycho-social and community-level phenomena and processes such as social identity and participation' (Campbell, McLean, 2003).

Inequality thus is not a fixed one-dimensional phenomenon, but a dynamic process involving power relations exercised through social, economic, cultural, and psychological processes. Health inequality, as one of the most debated social disparities in the UK, has become an important feature of 'governmentality' (Clarke, A. 1992), as a strategy of the 'medicalisation' of health (Michael Purdy 1999) and as a process of creating 'subjectivities' (Lupton 1995). Whatever the

arguments, the debate on health inequalities dominates social policy issues. Feminist, poststructuralist and communitarian perspectives, which lend support to the analytical framework of this thesis, agree on the interplay of power and culture within the discourse of 'healthism' which has been described as an ideological construct wherein the responsibility of health is shifted from the individual to the state linking the public objectives of good health with the desire of an individual to stay well (Rose, 1999).

The concept has entered into the social policy debate in the UK as many practitioners and academics increasingly see the New Labour's approach of 'managerialism' in health services a part of growing healthism which takes a very mechanistic view of inequalities in health. These critical and emancipatory perspectives argue for a holistic approach in addressing inequalities. The intersectionality theory focuses attention on the interconnectedness of inequalities characterized by oppression and discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, and class. These markers interrelate instead of operating independently with the assumption that each system needs the others in order to function (Collins 1991: 222).

The intersectionality debate questions the essentialised labelling which masks the intra-group differences for racialised and ethnicised people and argues that models and processes of oppression including race/ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, class, and disability are interrelated to create a system where various forms of discrimination intersect (Hooks, 1984). Intersectionality has become one of the important perspectives in sociological and cultural inquiries. This theory lends support to conceptualise the racialization of minorities by looking at the number of ways in which various structures, processes and ideas together 'abnormalise' difference. Proponents of this theory argue that in social policy, whether dealing with women's issues or ethnic



minorities or disabled, should take into account the intersectionality in order to provide a holistic approach in dealing with inequality and discrimination. This theory helps to explain the multiple positions like how people adapt to different situations and also makes one understand the methodological complexities associated with such explanations (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992; Brah 1992).

For this thesis, it is important to unpack such overarching categories as ethnic, racial, black and non-white, and show how these categories, essentialised through various discourses, mask the differences and tensions between and within different groups on the basis of age, gender, religion, status, country of origin and so on. This unproblematic use of concepts and labels makes very intricate social and cultural issues look very simple. The process of exclusion/inclusion is a dynamic one and not one-way traffic. People excluded from one process or group become included in another process and group. Exclusion is not always involuntary but at times people exclude themselves by choice. So there is a role for the agency in both exclusion and inclusion. Similarly, difference, variations both physical and in culture, have long been used for maintaining boundaries, and this process is relational and involves social contestation, inclusion and exclusion (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992).

## **Inequality and '*Govern-mentality*'**

In the first chapter of this thesis, we explored how the discourse of social exclusion is managed by bureaucracies and regimes which problematise 'otherness' and abnormalize spaces (Levitas, 1998, Shah, 1998). This 'managed' conceptualisation of disadvantage and deprivation has led to the emergence of a 'managerial state'- a businesslike organising, providing and delivery of welfare by increasing efficiency through setting of targets and hiring more managers

(Clarke, A. 1992). The government strategies to 'manage' the dynamics of internal diversity are seen by many scholars as part of the New Labour's shift from welfare to a more neo-liberal agenda. The obsession with marketisation, audits and targets has been criticised for being too managerial, centralised and serving the interests of capital (Penna 2004). These scholars find the Labour government's public service reform characterised by the rhetoric of choice, voice, responsibility and empowerment, continuation of the Thatcherite project of abandonment of the citizen through the dismantling of the protections constructed in post-war welfare capitalism against the vagaries, demands and inequities of the market and the unconstrained powers of capital (2004: 450).

In the name of efficiency, effectiveness and performance, many areas of public life, especially services are becoming increasingly the subject of managerial hegemony. Phrases such as 'medical' and 'governance' have become an integral part of the health policy, illustrating New Labour's obsession with a narrow clinical understanding of health and well-being, on the one hand, and an increased reliance on the processes of 'managing' health on the other. The official definition of clinical governance is given in the NHS circular, Clinical Governance: Quality in the New NHS<sup>17</sup>. Michael Purdy (1999) argues that the central feature of the strategy to endorse the medical view of health is to make individuals, families and communities responsible for their health/ ill health. He says that this process of shifting responsibility makes people 'police themselves and declare their membership of the nation, through their healthy life styles', making health a 'component of citizenship'. Looking at the Conservative government's strategy (The Health of the Nation DOH 1992) and the Labour government's (Our Healthier Nation, DOH 1998), Purdy contextualises these policies within the neo-liberal and neo-conservative perspectives and finds many similarities between the two. This is not, however, in health policy alone, the shifting of political positions,

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<sup>17</sup> A framework through which NHS organizations are accountable for continuously improving the quality of their services and safeguarding high standards of care by creating an environment in which excellence in clinical care will flourish.

claims and counter claims over policies and principles, are redefining the traditional political divide between the parties.

The Labour government policy documents acknowledge the social, economic and environmental causes of ill health, which it thinks require partnership between governments, communities and individuals to deal with. However, Purdy (1999), remarks that despite the government's desire to 'narrow the health gap', New Labour's strategy has not made the fight against health inequalities part of the national priority. He argues that by 'emphasising the socially 'responsible choice', New Labour echoes and endorses the neo-conservative theme of the individual's responsibility to society. He believes that 'healthism', which can exclude those who need public health measures most, focuses more on health policies related to 'lifestyle management'. This process he sees marginalizing those who, due to a variety of social, economic and cultural reasons, suffer from poor health. The discourse of healthism, linking health with citizenship and emphasizing lifestyle management and the responsible behaviour of people, is believed to create subjectivities (Lupton 1995), which are governed through 'new forms of social regulation' (Bunton 1992). Health promotion thus becomes a tool of such regulation as it is used to raise awareness about 'guarding the self' as a responsible citizen:

In effect the health promotion strategies such as the Health of the Nation (1992) and our Healthier Nation (1998) construct health in such way as to exclude sections of the population... The risk there is that different and minority lifestyles that do not fit cleanly into the 'healthy norm' may become seen as deviant, undesirable and even dangerous. Moreover, the privileging of health as a cultural norm and its equating with rational behaviour denies the cultural validity of alternative discourses to that of health promotion. (Bunton, 1992: 72-73).

Sue Penna (2004) takes this debate further by suggesting that it is 'unhelpful to see policy formulation in purely national terms' against the backdrop of the UK's increased involvement in regional, international and global networks of governance and regulatory framework, which create a 'new legal regime' with a of 'neo-liberal policy agenda'. Citing the examples of the UK membership of the European Union (EU), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organisation (WTO), Penna argues that these regimes define the 'the parameters for domestic policy in important ways' and produce much of the social exclusion it purports to address by keeping social welfare out of the policy discourses (2004:2).

Calling the process of managing people's lives a discourse of 'governmentality', Clarke, J. (2005: 453) from a Foucauldian analysis, argues that this process 'seeks to transform citizens into subjects' who understand themselves as responsible and independent agents. He adds that activation, empowerment, responsabilization and abandonment constitute four dynamics of the process of governmentality, of which 'New Labour appears as exemplary practitioners'. Clarke finds the 'revelatory style' of Foucauldian analysis helpful in uncovering the complex and subtle workings of power. The production of self-regulating subjects as job seekers, marginalised, inner city dwellers, illegal immigrants, hard working families, socially excluded and so on are categories used to manage diversity (2005: 454).

Such an approach not only serves as a convenient means of categorisation which essentialise difference, but is also used as a pretext to pass the blame of exclusion on to the victims of inequality. A variety of rhetoric has become a part of New Labour's strategy to be seen as 'doing something', which includes 'listening, enabling, activating and making people responsible for their actions and their duties. Clarke (2005) analyses this approach and finds the participatory

governance 'structurally, rarely integrated with other governance institutions or processes and often disconnected from consequences or outcomes'

This analysis further finds out that activation is a process of making people into 'market-ready' workers, empowerment a mask to conceal the 'systematic stripping of forms of power and protection' of welfare embodied in social citizenship, and responsibility a smokescreen to hide the responsibilities of state. Clarke argues that the only real thing in New Labour's rhetoric of change and reform is the abandonment of citizens to the 'advantage of capital in its global and local forms' (Ibid: 453).

The abandonment of social justice by New Labour in favour of markets makes many commentators believe that the NHS has a dangerous future under it. Purdy and Banks (1999) believe that New Labour's 'third way' – promising a continuity with neo-conservatism but distancing itself from neo-liberal individualism, will abandon principles of equity and universal coverage by the health service and thereby extend the experience of exclusion. The third way emphasis on local consultation and partnerships to decentralise control could also mean that central government is abdicating its responsibility (Purdy and Banks, 1999: 16-19). While many government discourses talk about empowerment to fight exclusion and give people opportunity to take control, in reality the process of empowerment is not that simple. Empowerment is more than social change, it is a process of undoing internalized oppression (Nagar and Raju, 2003).

The notion of empowerment is linked to the condition of disempowerment and refers to a process of change by which people acquire the ability to make choices. It demands both an agency and structural approach to emphasis both education and addressing power inequalities, the ownership of which can change the structural inequalities (Kabeer, 1999). The abuse of the structural, institutional

and professional power, which has made people silent and dependent, cannot be simply changed by asking excluded people to fill in the form and tick boxes. The provider-lead models can work only so far as people are co-opted into managerial exercises.

Embedded in this process of governmentality, health is linked not only to the well-being but to citizenship and nationhood. In the health policy discourse, such phrases and terms as 'responsible citizens', 'healthy people making good choices' and 'our healthier nation' reinforce this process of activation and responsabilisation. For Clarke et al., (2000:110) these citizens are, as a growing body of Foucauldian scholarship indicates, the subjects of practices of governmental constitution. In particular, they are not just 'responsible'; they are the product of processes of responsabilization'. Part of this managerial practice consists of borrowing concepts and ideas and adapting them in a way to put gloss and spin on the government's failure to deal with structural reasons that lead to inequalities. Paul Bagguley and Yasmin Hussain (2003) illustrate this phenomenon by examining the discourse of community cohesion and segregation used in three Home office sponsored reports (Cantle, Denham and Ritchie) on the 2001 riots in the northern English towns of Bradford, Burnley and Oldham. They argue that these reports were written within a general context in which the discourses of the community were sought in support of government goals.

So, how significant is the concept of social capital in government policies and strategies? And, if the concept does influence official interventions, how it can be used to improve the health and living conditions of people being racialised and left behind by the processes and policies of the government?

## **Managerialism and health services**

The Department of Health has put health promotion as the centerpiece of its public health policy with emphasis on mobilising communities and facilitating people's participation in health initiatives. The concept of social capital is increasingly being popularised in the health discourse, both as a policy and practice, to further the social approaches in dealing with health inequalities.

Whether inequalities in health are due to socio-economic or cultural reasons or due to ethnicity or a combination of all these factors, much of the policy emphasis is placed on the significance of increasing the participation of excluded groups in local health initiatives to reduce discrepancies in health between various groups, with government seen as playing an enabling role (DOH, 1999; SEU, 2000). The idea of working in partnership with the people, enabling them to take an active role and creating networks of trust and mutuality, is seen to enhance people's health and well being. Social interaction and integration, defined as social capital is believed to gel people together into communities for mutual benefit (Putnam 1993). Robert Putnam, who is considered to have influenced both the US and the UK social policies with his conceptualisation of social capital, defines the concept in terms of social organisation encompassing networks, norms and trust. Many scholars have associated social capital directly with the health outcomes. Research in this area has demonstrated that the lower the trust among citizens, the higher the average mortality rate (Wilkinson 1996, Kawachi et al., 1997).

Although there is a deficiency in qualitative research into the direct link between health and social capital, Cooper et al., (1999) drawing on existing health survey data suggest that deprived areas exhibit low levels of social capital and Gilles et al., (1998) reinforce this by arguing that building social capital through social regeneration should complement economic regeneration to improve health. Trust,

reciprocity and networking are some of the key indicators of social capital are now widely being used in health education and information and in health care delivery. Cox (1995), stressing the need for building social capital between the public, market and community sectors, argues that people seek health advice/information from someone they trust. One of the earliest proponents of social capital, Bourdieu (1986), explains the concept as 'participation in local community networks, and suggests that unequal distribution of social capital is one of the key mechanisms whereby social inequalities are perpetuated. In contemporary debates on social exclusion, the idea of social capital emerges as one of the significant concepts which dominate the government and academic discourses alike. This concept is high on New Labour's policy agenda for fighting inequalities, regenerating urban areas and making safer communities. The use of social capital as a policy and practice to increase people's participation in 'public good', especially in health and well-being of people underpins the government approach in dealing with social disparities (Lomas, 1998; Kawachi et al., 1997; Social Exclusion Unit, 1998; 2000). Arguing for an egalitarian understating of the idea, Jack and Jordan (1999), conceptualise social capital as 'cultural practice', 'trust, 'team work' and 'expectation' that creates a community wherein people 'interact', 'function', 'participate' and are 'friendly and reciprocal towards their neighbour'. They, however, point out that social capital can be lost when inequalities, divisions and exclusions stop people from participating and interacting.

Among the minority ethnic groups in the UK, Dayha (1974) and Ballard (2002) have documented the traits of immigrants in living as communities as a strategy for surviving in a new country. The financial and moral support through a network of relatives and acquaintances from 'back home' is a form of social capital, which people of Mirpuri/Pakistani origin produce. The younger people of this community, born and brought up in the UK, also show this characteristic. Bringing the state to



the centre of building and fostering social capital, Putnam (1993) argues that levels of social capital are likely to be higher where there is a strong working relationship between the community and the state. However, the relevance of social capital theory to the concept of community comes from the fact that indicators like mutual help, reciprocity and cooperation which are the basis of civic engagement can lead to collective action informed by dialogue and trust. But there are problems with the idea of participation and the concept of social capital. The partnership is not something which can be infused or forced. One has to look at the context in which partnership is needed or facilitated and also the conditions of participation.

Bourdieu (1986) first acknowledged social capital along with other forms of capital like cultural, economic and human capital embedded in the local geographic and community contexts but later explained it as a collectively owned capital emerging from the network of institutionalised relationships (1997:5). But the problem with the conceptualization of social capital is that this analysis of togetherness and participation is seen by many scholars to lack the political purpose, having a capitalist agenda and essentialising groups (Navarro, 2002; Schuller et al., 2001; Portes, 1998). Putnam (2000) and others have responded to this criticism by suggesting that social capital is not an alternative but a complement to egalitarian practices and policies.

In practice, however, the concept faces considerable challenges in being accepted as a legitimate tool to address inequalities and exclusions. In the area of community development, which takes a holistic approach in dealing with exclusion, the concept of social capital remains irrelevant, as it does not help to explain the issues of power and difference between and within groups. From their micro study in Luton, Campbell and McLean (2001) found high levels of mobility, instability and plurality within communities. Differences in the community in

terms of age, gender, economic status and ethnic difference are important and Campbell and McLean (2001) argue that difference is a crucial aspect of community, and a very significant one for those 'seeking to develop health promotional policies and practices aiming to enhance levels of social capital in local communities' (Campbell and McLean, 2001. p 16-17).

This reliance on local networks for representing excluded groups is problematic. Questions about the diversity of these groups and who represents them are vital. Campbell and McLean (2003: 247-262) looking at the issue of social capital and local community participation, argue that the diversities within minority ethnic groups and inherent complexities and identity formation mean that 'epidemiological categories cannot be mapped out onto policy recommendations'. While acknowledging the importance of participation in reducing exclusion of marginalized groups, they see over-reliance on local voluntary and faith groups representing diverse minority groups as problematic. Campbell and McLean find dialectic of unity and difference' as common denominators in people's description of their ethnic identities (2003: 24-26). They discover that people of Pakistani /Kashmiri background like to assert their identity as a key resource in the inter-personal and professional spheres.

They argue that such an ethnically-defined common identity could be used for promoting community level action for health, building on the epidemiological evidence which suggest ethnicity as a major reason for inequality in health. However, these authors highlight the fact that despite strong allegiance to their Pakistaniness/Kashmiriness, people make sense of these identities differently under different factors such as age, gender, education, language and marital status. Campbell and McLean (2001) admit that 'social capital fills important gaps in our understanding of the interface between health and social relations', but acknowledge the fact that there is an immediate need for 'conceptual

development and empirical research into community level determinants of health' (Ibid: 17-18). (Detailed discussion on social capital is included in Chapter Three of this thesis).

The discussions on various aspects of social capital illustrate that one cannot ignore the social and communal contexts in which people live while trying to address the issues of health inequalities. Social capital may not be the medicine for all social problems, but the indicators like networks, mutuality and trust can provide the context for developing participatory policies that can enable and enhance health and well-being of people.

The 1986 Ottawa Charter of the World Health Organisation (WHO) defined health promotion as the 'process of enabling people to increase control over and to improve their health'. This 'empowerment' approach in enabling and facilitating people's participation in health improvement with a focus on increased awareness, self-responsibility and adopting healthy life styles has become a mantra of all public health policies. The empowerment strategies of the National Health Services in the UK have long been advocated for addressing health inequalities especially for vulnerable and 'powerless' groups of people, mostly minority ethnic groups.

In all health promotion strategies, the fundamental focus has been on providing the relevant information about services, rights and responsibilities through appropriate means with respect to cultural sensitivities of people. What remains to be seen is if in reality people, especially those who live on the margins of society, are involved in decisions about their health and well-being and if are able to exercise informed choices. Liz Kendall (2001) argues for a more participatory health care system:

For too long, healthcare systems have treated patients as passive recipients and given them little information or say regarding how and by

whom they are cared for. Although health system reformers have rightly sought to expand patient choice, they have not given the same weight to what patients should be expected to do in return. Good health is the responsibility not just of governments, doctors, and nurses, but also of people themselves. To improve health, we must go beyond merely treating disease, to transforming the relationship among doctors, patients, and their health services. We must move from a purely consumerist model of healthcare to a citizenship model in which patients have more rights and choices, but in which they also take on greater responsibility (Kendall, 2001: 58-59).

Kendall, obviously, echoes the Labour government's emphasis on communitarian approach, which has come under severe criticism for shifting responsibilities to the victims of inequalities and exclusion. Many studies have, however, highlighted the fact that initiatives for empowering people in marginalized communities should understand and address the complexity of social and cultural experiences and attitudes in these communities (Zimmerman and Rapport, 1988; Beeker et al., 1998). These communities, however, are not homogenous but show heterogeneity and variations based on caste, village loyalty and family kinship. It is debated that among the dynamics affecting the efficiency and outcomes of health promotion is the relevance and appropriateness of the person's community and cultural background. Many research projects (Fernando, 1993) especially within ethnic, indigenous and aboriginal groups the world over, suggest that the Western approaches to the health of marginalized people need refocusing and restructuring to accommodate appropriate approaches which complement faith, tradition and the way of life of these groups. Identity, ethnicity and spirituality are too important dimensions of life of minority groups to be ignored in any health promotion and intervention.

In the UK, the wider marginalisation of non-white people by the public institutions and services is also true in the case of health services. Although the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 place responsibilities on service providers to eradicate discriminatory procedures and practice, the DoH acknowledges the inequitable variation in use of health care services between ethnic groups. (Acheson, 1998; Department of Health, 2000). Similarly, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) places a duty on public authorities to actively promote race equality and it requires that listed organizations have a race equality scheme. Health and social care agencies have a statutory duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to demonstrate evidence such as monitoring the effects of policies on ethnic minority groups, training and setting race equality objectives. In his editorial comment, Richard Smith (1999: 90), quoting Tudor Hart's famous paper on "the inverse care law", argues that medicine fails the marginalized. Hart's law suggests that those who need medical care the most are the least likely to get it. It is not just the stark disparities in health between the poor living in the developed and developing world, but that, as Smith argues, 'evidence continues to accumulate that the law applies everywhere, and things are probably getting worse not better'. Looking at the health inequalities, it can be said that health services in the UK, no doubt are the best in the world, fail poor, vulnerable and those who are marginalized. Smith cites possible reasons for this failure such as 'combination of ignorance, fear, and prejudice plus a feeling that they should adapt to the services rather than the other way around' (1999 :1589-1590).

The public health discourse operates within the rhetoric of community context, participation and empowerment, but being applied in isolation from major causes of inequality and exclusion like poverty, unemployment, poor housing, racism and discrimination, health promotion becomes rhetoric, which only suits the managerial procedures and the institutional practices of the government.

## Healthism and health promotion

The growing managerialism in the National Health Services is perceived by many as evidence of the shift of from Socialism to laissez-faire thinking where the role of the market is seen central to the health policy, changing it from service to power (Greener, 1999). The role of the NHS is in conflict with the public beliefs of what service is about and how it should work. Learmonth (1997), surveying the public attitudes towards managerialism in the NHS, writes managers' 'attempt to control' organisations to make them 'efficient', is seen as a neo-Taylorist response to 'perceived failures in the service' and justified as part of 'New Right ideology'. The obsession 'with value for money' and setting targets to achieve it is perceived by the general public as being in conflict with a 'service for individual care' (Ibid: 215).

This growth in managerialism, characterised by efficiency, target setting, rewards and penalties has created an environment in which every health professional is feeling under pressure to perform to the standards set by managers. Within this environment, every member of staff becomes a tool to deliver. He/She loses the human touch. The cultural, social and other background of staff becomes immaterial as one is sucked into this new culture of managerialism.

A general practitioner, Zahoor Khan, working in the Hyson Green area of Nottingham, having a large number of South Asians on his list, finds it hard to balance between the meeting targets set by NHS managers and meeting the expectations of his patients. During a discussion on Radio *Ramzan*, Dr Khan complained that the 'efficiency targets' and a qualitative service do not necessarily go well together. (A detailed discussion on these issues is included in the Chapter Five).

The National Health Service (NHS) operates in a very difficult situation, and one cannot overlook the issues of under-funding and higher public expectations, but adding layers of bureaucracies do not help either. There are many who argue that the NHS needs to acknowledge a holistic approach in dealing with inequalities.

In this regard the lack of awareness and knowledge of the culture and how to deal with respect and dignity impacts on the health of those the NHS wants to help. Racial prejudice and discrimination affect people directly and the health services in many areas are inappropriate and insensitive to the culture and beliefs of patients (Balarajan 1995; Smaje 1995; Acheson 1998; Modood, 1997; Nazroo 1997). The NHS focus on tailoring services to perceived needs does not take into account a patient's health beliefs and knowledge. Free & McKee (1998) highlight this cultural inadequacy in service provision when it comes to serving non-white minority groups.

The Health Survey for England conducted by the National Centre for Social Research and the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at the Royal Free and University College Medical School in 1999, it was found that among the adult male population of minority ethnic groups, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Irish, limiting longstanding illness was 30 to 65 per cent higher than for men in the general population (Erens, Primresta and Prior, 1999). Pakistani and Bangladeshi men and women were seen as three to four times more likely than the general population to rate their own health as bad or very bad. The psychosocial health of Bangladeshi and Pakistani men and women was seen as scoring high on the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ12) (A high score on this is indicator of possible psychiatric morbidity). The general practitioner (GP) consultations were observed to be higher for South Asian and Afro-Caribbean men (Erens, Primresta and Prior, 1999).

It is interesting to look at the pattern of the response from the health services to address this issue. Overall, the response has been to offer interpreters, translators and provide for the religious and cultural needs of non-white population, e.g. the display leaflets in Hindi/Urdu, Punjabi at surgeries. This attitude of creating specialised services does not help in mainstreaming services. This approach, coupled with using the concept of social capital in improving the health of minority ethnic groups, is in a way asking service users to change and adapt to the way of service providers (Mocroft et al., 1999). However, the NHS is not a homogenous organisation. There are people from different racial backgrounds, nationalities and ethnicities working for this organization, making it one of the most racially diverse services in the UK, employing more than 1.3 million staff, the largest employer in Europe serving over 50 million people in England alone. The NHS claims to have equality and diversity are at the heart of its strategy by investing in the NHS workforce to deliver a better service and improve patient care. This is very critical for an organisation, which serves over 50 million people in England. This richness within the NHS is seen as an asset and potential for addressing the health needs of the diverse people it serves.

A large number of doctors, nurses and other ancillary staff of South Asian origin work in the NHS. These people, despite many difficulties, have provided the necessary workforce of the NHS at times of crisis. There are many who will argue that as these doctors, especially the general practitioner (GP's) and nurses working in the NHS are from a non-white background are aware of the health inequalities and can addresses them better, but working in a highly institutionalised organisation like the NHS means accepting the norms and customs and rules of the organisation, which leaves little room for innovation and freedom to perform. These people in a way become tools of the organisation as they follow the written and unwritten constitution of the NHS which becomes the normative rules for engagement.



The institutionalisation of staff happens against the backdrop of the 'managerial practice' with its own 'rules of engagement'. One of the assumption of this practice is bringing in non-whites can address the issues of inequality. The presence of non-white staff in the NHS does not mean that all such staff is born in the UK and who have gone through education and work here. As mentioned earlier, most of the staff come from the developing world where the concepts of equality and diversity are perceived in a different way.

## **Mirpuri community and NHS**

In Nottingham, a number of research projects, mainly commissioned by the Nottingham Health Authority, have raised policy, structural and procedural issues that contribute to the health service's inadequacy in dealing with the health needs of minority ethnic groups, especially, the Mirpuri community which is the largest ethnic group in Nottingham (Nerwal, 1997; Rodrigues, 2000; Nazroo, 2000).

A common theme emerging from most of these reports is that there is a clear link between the incidence of poor health and multiple deprivation, as health deprivation is seen to be concentrated in those wards that suffer from other forms of social and economic deprivation, and that there is a strong correlation between poverty, ethnicity and poorer health (Wilkinson 1996).

A detailed survey to explore ways of reaching this hard-to-reach group and addressing the issues of health inequality faced by the Mirpuri community was undertaken by the Health Education Authority in association with the Nottingham Education Authority, Nottingham Community Trust and Nottingham Borough and the County Councils as a national-local partnership. This three year survey, which started in 1997, is seen as one of the most comprehensive action research projects to explore the issues of access, reach and inequality in health in Forest Fields, Lenton, Radford and Trent - four wards of Nottingham city. The survey,

among other underlying issues, explored the fact that health services traditionally fail to deal adequately with the health needs of ethnic minorities and to reduce their inequitable access to health and related services. The survey acknowledged the fact that attempts to redress this imbalance have most often taken the form of project-based initiatives, and at the end of the projects there is little evidence to show that the resultant service implications become funded through the primary commissioning and planning processes of agencies (Rodrigues, 2000).

The research which forms the foundation of health promotion initiatives in Nottingham recommended that instead of ghettoising services by creating specialised services for non-white population, positive action should be taken to mainstream the services for ethnic minorities (Rodrigues, 2000). The report suggested training mainstream service providers about the cultural and social issues of minority groups and sensitising them to the needs and fears of this group. The report also pointed out those short-term, ad hoc and token gestures by Health services worsen the health inequalities and suggested an ongoing sustained policy and better means of communication and raising awareness through multi-agency information delivery which could empower those who are marginalized to take control of their health (Rodrigues, 2000). One of the striking features of this report was the recommendation of using action research as both a delivery and evaluation tool in addressing inequalities.

A Health Needs Assessment (HNA) carried out by the Nottingham Health Authority in 1996 provided some basic information on the nature, extent and causes of health inequality related to ethnicity in Nottingham. Harjinder Nerwal, who worked as a social worker on black and minority ethnic health issues, found that cultural beliefs and language were the major barriers for people of minority origin to access services, and that lack of cultural sensitivity by the service providers added to the helplessness of these people.

The report (Nerwal, 1997) specifically pointed out the lack or reluctance of providing information on specific and general services, including the availability of female doctors, facilities for male circumcision. Prejudice towards non-English speaking people and the lack of recreational facilities, community transport, along with poor housing, and the isolation within which older members of this community, especially women, lived were also highlighted in this report. The report suggested that people of minority ethnic origin should be empowered in terms of how services should be provided, keeping in view their social needs and cultural sensitivities. The report recommended that communication was crucial in such empowerment and information should be available in verbal and written formats about health issues within the community setting, via Asian health professionals, workshops, seminars, and Asian Radio Programmes as well as leaflets and posters (Nerwal, 1997, p. 46).

On the basis of these reports, recommendations and general policy interventions, a number of initiatives have been taken to improve the health of people living in deprived city areas and address the wider issue of inequality in health. The introduction of multi-agency initiatives, including 'Sure Start', Health Action Zone (HAZ), Healthy Living Centres (HLCs) and Health Improvement Programme (HimP) are some of these projects. The New Public Health agenda which is seen to highlight protection of health through organised interventions (DoH, 1998, Harrison; 1998) directed at the public or at the community level. But does this shift in the way health services are provided make any difference on the ground? While the long term impact of these initiatives is yet to be evaluated, anecdotal evidence shows that such actions are good only for the service providers, as they can tick boxes and meet their targets, but for people who suffer inequality in health such projects do not bring any qualitative change in their lives. My interviewee AB whose daughter suffers from a chronic ailment and frequently has

to access health services confirms that health inequalities need to be seen in the wider context:

*We have not been able to take a broader and wider approach....the social exclusion entails economic deprivation, cultural barriers and forms of symbolic disadvantage like discrimination and racism. By setting projects and taking initiatives away from these realities, we reduce the chances of people's participation in health improving plans (Radio Listener AB<sup>18</sup>).*

Addressing health issues through the action zone has emerged as one the key characteristics of New Labour's approach. This may be part of the New Labour third way approach, but many of the unresolved problems have resurfaced, as has the debate on whether health inequality can be dealt at the place level or the people level? (Moon and Powell, 2001: 43)

As a result, there is greater willingness to involve community/voluntary sector in activities mainly to do with the health of black and minority ethnic groups. Mocroft et al., (1999) observes a number of activities wherein this sector is used for service delivery, translation, interpretation, information provision, education, and advocacy services, besides the outreach support, local research into needs, community development and informal counseling services. But the use of community and voluntary groups in health promotion can be problematic due to lack of their capacity to deal with complex issues, non-representative character, lack of funding and resources (Sue 1999). But the biggest problem in such initiatives is sustainability, as government still adopts an ad hoc approach (Mocroft et al., 1999).

That is not the only issue in increasing the participation of minority groups in delivery of health services. As has been learnt from the discourse of developmentalism and social exclusion, in many instances participation can

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<sup>18</sup> AB lives in the Sneinton area of Nottingham. (excerpts from the interview Dec ,1999)

become part of coercion, tyranny or false alliance to demonstrate the success of external interventions (Cook and Kothari, 2001). The participation and partnership can become meaningful when it is between equals. But within the contemporary discourse of healthism characterized by fixed notion of inequality, clinical understanding of health and managerial approach in delivery does not give enough room for a participation that is empowering and equal.

## **Community empowerment approach**

Involvement in, and ownership of, health initiatives have long been advocated for empowering communities to express and address their health needs. Wallerstein (1992) sees empowerment as a strategy for 'improving a population's health' and powerlessness as a 'risk factor for disease.'

Most of the communitarian arguments, drawing support from the World Health Organization (WHO) policy, take a holistic rather than a 'narrow clinical approach' to health promotion which is seen as a shift from educationist bio-medical models of avoiding ill-health and taking personal responsibility to a more emancipatory view of health and its determinants (Whitehead 1987).

Although health promotion through participatory action research has been used for some time in the developing world, especially in India and among the aboriginals, indigenous and minority groups in Australia, New Zealand and Canada (Bhandari et al., 2003; Flemming and Parker, 2001), there is very little evidence of such an approach being used within Europe and the UK.

In a world of renewed interest in civil society and individual empowerment, health is seen as more than a disease-free condition. Self-determination and human rights have entered into the domain of health and the influence of cultural, social

and philosophical aspects including the spiritual dimensions - meaning and purpose of life and the quality of relationships are seen as the key determinant in health and well being (Ryff & Singer, 1998). But many scientists find such a connection absurd. The research into the role of spirituality in health is argued to be methodologically weak, with a deficiency in data and often biased. Much of the literature in faith and health is based on the theosomatic principle that the religious affiliation and membership benefit health by promoting healthy behavior and lifestyles. If this principle is convincing enough to help people stay healthy, then does this mean people should get the membership of a religious group to be healthier? But people do not become religious to stay healthy; People have different reasons, motivations and conviction to practice religion (Levin, 2001).

Among the Mirpuri community, which is predominantly Muslim, the issue of faith and spirituality is an important dimension of their identity. Among these people it has been observed that the family kinships, community life and spiritual experience play important part in day to day existence. So, 'well-being' entails the interplay of social and cultural relationships, and acknowledgement of these factors is indispensable for any health promotion. An understanding and appreciation of the subjective experience of minority ethnic people, particularly their relationship with spirituality, will help in more effective and empowering ways of encouraging people to take control and make more informed choices about their health and well-being.

There has not been any systematic research done into the role faith and cultural practices can play in health education, but anecdotal evidence suggests that many mosques and community centres in the UK are becoming more proactive in addressing issues of health inequality. The NHS has been working with religious groups in inner city areas to help people give up smoking. But there are issues

around sustainability as the NHS is not institutionally getting involved with faith groups on long term basis in addressing the issues of health inequality.

However, the private sector in certain instances has already made some inroads into the Muslim community through mosques. The Roche HealthCare Company worked with London's Islamic Cultural Centre to raise awareness about a variety of health concerns, such as type 2 Diabetes, Coronary heart disease and other obesity-related illnesses, specifically targeting London's Muslim community. About 700 people attended the three-day event (Muslim Council of Britain). Dr Shuja Shafi, Consultant Microbiologist, Health Protection Agency Collaborating Laboratory, North West London Hospitals NHS Trust and Chairman of Health & Medical Committee of the Muslim Council of Britain commented:

The Government is addressing Diabetes and Coronary heart disease through National Service Frameworks which aim to improve health and reduce inequalities, but there is a lot the Muslim community can do for themselves to increase awareness, educate and empower people to make informed decisions about their lifestyle and health. A focused event such as this one, held in collaboration between the Mosque and a healthcare company provides an excellent example of what can be achieved to reach the diverse Muslim community comprising different ethnic groups. (MCB, 2003)

The role of spirituality especially the Islamic concept of Health and well being is not well understood within the Eurocentric literature. Many epidemiological studies to see if there is a religious factor in health have shown that there is very little appreciation of religion and spirituality in health and disease management (Levin & Schiller 1987). The view from the community is that the government is ignoring the experiences and knowledge of those it tries to improve. With a general disregard for non-Western points of view, the attitude of health professionals and their managers is seen not sensitive and appropriate, as is clearly explained by one of the interviewees Haji Ishaq (HI):

Prayers have a powerful effect on one's health. Our daily life and routine is dictated by praying...it gives me strength in old age. But do these health people accept this...No I do not think so. They try to find medical reason and remedy for everything, but we see illness and recovery part of our fate and test of our endurance. (HI<sup>19</sup>, 1999)

Emphasizing the cross-cultural conception of illness, Fernando (1993) argues that Western tradition has excluded many non-Western ways of understanding illness. Quoting Kleinman's (1978) distinction of disease from illness, Young's (1986) externalising/internalising dichotomy, Fernando finds Western biomedical concepts of illness inadequate in view of non-Western worldviews, which see disease and illness beyond biological etiology. Alternative conceptions of illness are important in settings where cultural differences take the shape of racism.

In the UK, the pre-conceived notions, prejudices and stereotyping of non-white people taint the way their illness is understood and treated. The lifestyle and cultural practices of these people are often seen as an aberration to the 'norm', and in many cases the disease is racialised. In the process, anything non-Western is inferior and the scientific system is better than the traditional ways. Fernando finds this attitude of excluding non-Western culture type of a 'cultural blindness' resulting from a 'racist arrogance'. He further says that Western conceptions of illness are rooted in the scientific reasoning which sees a person in isolation from his social, cultural and environmental factors, thereby rejecting the non-scientific dimensions of faith and knowledge that are integral to human experience.

The Cartesian-Newtonian framework on which the Western biomedical conception of health and illness is grounded has a strong secular bias because of its scientificity and the body-mind dualism. Writing against the backdrop of criticism

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<sup>19</sup> HI is an elderly Mirpuri retired factory worker, living in Forest Fields. (Excerpts from the interview Dec:1999)



of the Western mechanistic view of life, Fernando (1991), relying on Capra's (1982) systems approach to health and health care, argues for a holistic way consistent with cultural heritage and not necessarily averse to the spiritual traditions. This approach advocated by Freire (1972) stresses pedagogy through which one creates his reality from the circumstances from daily existence. Using the concept of banking education, he says that the 'more passive people are, the more they will adapt, the more their creativity will diminish and their naivety increase, which creates the conditions necessary for the oppressors to emerge as generous benefactors.

This paradigm of empowerment lends support to the study in exploring how marginalized groups can use culture and tradition as a resource for empowerment. This process of realizing local and communal strengths and using them to promote people centered initiatives can make peoples' participation real and meaningful (Fals-Borda, 1979, Freire, 1972). Religion, culture and community life become the significant part of this process and various conflicting perspectives come together in a creative way to address issues of marginalisation.

## **Chapter Five**

# **A Contextual Approach to Fighting Exclusion**

Local media can create a coherent narrative of a region's development and help people formulate goals and plans for how to improve their situation. The media can help contextualize national development programs within community frameworks and bring these goals closer to their intended beneficiaries. (UNESCO)

The objectives of this chapter are:

- To map the debates on the role of community media in developing and validating alternative visions of participation, power and action.
- To explore the relationship between faith, place and media through the case study of Radio *Ramzan* - a faith-based community radio station in inner city Nottingham.
- To evaluate the Health Education Awareness Project (HEAP) in promoting health and well-being among the members of the Mirpuri community based on their cultural practices and way of life.

Although identity formation is a contested and highly debated concept, it is very much associated with peoples' rituals, cultural practices and traditions. Werbner (2005:19) sees this association as a 'mode of the transaction and relatedness', as well as a 'discursive imaginary of selfhood, identity, subjectivity and moral virtue'. Whether identity formation is the capacity to draw attention to the issues of 'representation' (Hall, 1997), or the tendency to gravitate towards a 'shared culture' (Desai, 1963) or an expression of 'socio-cultural particularism' (Raghuram, 1999), it needs tangible spaces and contexts where people can express their group and collective aspirations. For members of Muslim communities, while mosque provides a spiritual and social space, the festivals like

Ramadan (month of fasting) provide the context for Muslims to formulate, practice and express their way of life.

On the 29th of December 1997 when Radio *Ramzan*<sup>20</sup> Nottingham started broadcasting on 97.5 FM, it became the fourth such station to be awarded a license to broadcast during the month of Ramadan in the UK. The station was allowed to broadcast under the Restricted Service License (RSL<sup>21</sup>) scheme run by the Radio Authority<sup>22</sup> (now Ofcom). The *Karimia Mosque* obtained the license on behalf of the Muslim community in Nottingham, and owing to its central position among Nottingham's *Barailve* Muslim population, it mobilised the human and material resources to support this project. The station was established on Radford Road in Forest Field, the heart of the Mirpuri community in Nottingham, and soon different voices and points of views could be heard on this radio station.

The emancipatory use of media is believed to help in 'collective mobilization' through a decentralized and interactive process (Enzensberger 1974) with emphasis on 'communication' rather than on 'distribution system' (Brecht 1983: 169). Within this framework, community based media are seen to harness the 'cultural identity' of local people, and facilitate their 'participation' (Servaes 1999: 88). This approach allows the possibility of 'context based approaches' depending on 'felt needs, and the empowerment of the most oppressed sectors of various societies at divergent levels' (Ibid: 271). Many scholars, mostly coming from critical perspectives, have underlined the importance of small-scale media that 'give voice' to voiceless, and help facilitate an informed debate. Historically, these

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<sup>20</sup> The station is named Radio *Ramzan* (Urdu version of Ramadan) to give it a South Asian flavour and to keep it within the *Barailve* tradition, where the Arabic letter (ض) 'Da' is pronounced with the 'Z' sound while in the Arab world this letter is pronounced with 'D' sound. For the sake of authenticity, I will use *Ramzan* for Radio and Ramadan for the month of fasting.

<sup>21</sup> The Radio Authority (now OfCom) in the UK would allow community and special interest groups to broadcast on FM and AM for a limited period of time to celebrate festivals and events. This limited licensing would be normally for a period of one month and was called Restricted Service License or RSL.

<sup>22</sup> The Radio Authority was responsible for licensing and regulating Independent Radio in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Broadcasting Acts 1990 and 1996. It plans frequencies, awards licences, regulates programming and advertising, and plays an active role in the discussion and formulation of policies which affect the Independent Radio industry and its listeners.

media have evolved from the critique of the state and the corporate uses of communication (Wasko and Mosco, 1992).

Although the convoluted debate on the role of communication in development has for long stressed the need for the context, access and participation, the use of Western models and over-reliance on technology is thought to have taken focus away from the structural, institutional and cultural determinants that breed and reinforce inequality and exclusion (Escobar, 1995; Melkote and Stevees 2001).

The debates over the role of communication in development has moved from understanding communication as a 'linear information transmission/diffusion process' to support modernisation (Shannon and Weaver, 1949, Lerner, 1958; Schramm 1964) to conceptualising communication as a process of 'shared meaning' that is inseparable from the context; a process of resistance, empowerment and freedom (Boderave 1977; Zimmerman and Rapport, 1988; Crush 1995). The dialogic process as advocated by Paolo Freire (1972) and others is thought to be key to such emancipatory communication, which 'enables participants to identify and explore issues that a common meaning for them' (Steeve and Melkote, 2001: 39).

## **Community media - a common frame of reference**

The study of media with community rather than communication as the focus has taken place against the background of the 'theoretical shift from a persuasion model to one based on cultural democracy, from a transmission to an empowerment process, and from a linear to a two-dimensional model (Dagron 2001; McQuail 1994). Putting forward the democratic theory of communication, McQuail explains that the shift in our understanding of the communication process is taking place when new communication technologies are challenging the

standardized, commercialised and professionalised mass media. In the wake of these developments, he envisages small-scale local, non-profit making, media engages sender and receiver into a meaningful process where the horizontal pattern of communication is preferred over a linear model. McQuail placed the media in both the developed and developing world under this criticism to favour small-scale media for facilitating horizontal patterns of interaction (McQuail 1994: 132).

Under this framework and operating within spiritual ethos, Radio *Ramzan* in *Nottingham* intended to provide a platform to develop a community-wide discussion on social, cultural and political issues confronting the Muslim communities in Nottingham. Being a community radio using a variety of South Asian languages especially Mirpuri/Punjabi, the station generated a fair amount of interest in Nottingham, particularly among the Mirpuri population. Since Muslims have an obligation to fast, pray and give charity during this month, the Radio helped members of the community to focus on more communal issues and highlight their cultural practices. The fact that people could hear Adhan (call for prayers) in their homes, cars, shops and businesses five times a day added a new cultural dimension to the organization of daily life.

Radio *Ramzan* did not come into existence all of a sudden. There is a whole context against which this radio station evolved. The exclusion and disadvantage faced by the members of Mirpuri community, and being left out by the mainstream media (see Chapters 1 and 3) had long left this community disillusioned. The need for cultural and social support to overcome exclusion led the members of this community to look inwards for support. While mosques and other community institutions were offering a space to engage with communal and local issues, the radio station was seen a community-wide platform to raise

awareness and generate debates to support faith-based initiatives to fight exclusion.

This vision of decentralized and reformed media has also found expression in international documents such as the report of UNESCO's general conference held in Nairobi:

In the past the role of communication in human society was seen essentially as to inform and influence people, it is now being proposed that communication should be understood as a process of social inter-reaction through a balanced exchange of information and experience. This shift in perception implies the predominance of dialogue over monologue. The aim is to achieve a system of horizontal communication based upon an equitable distribution of resources and facilities enabling all persons to send as well as receive messages. (UNESCO, 1980)

Scholars influenced by political economy have developed a comprehensive and consistent critique of the commercial use of media, which they believe reduces choice and concentrates power into fewer hands. In the famous book *Manufacturing Consent* Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky take a detailed look at the propaganda model of mass media, arguing that the rich and powerful, including governments and special interest groups, influence the news agenda through ownership, advertising, public relations, disciplining and anti-communism (1998:2).

The small scale media, like community and other forms of alternative media, are thought to be a vital counterbalance to this media situation. While at the global level the powerful trans-national media networks, using financial muscle and new technologies, create global audiences, (world-wide audience of channels like MTV, CNN, and BBC), at a very local level, people who feel the need to raise and

discuss their very local issues, find use local networks and cultural practices to debate and disseminate information relevant to them. There are numerous examples of the phenomenon where people develop their own media rather than people being made into passive audiences. In the developing world, there is a strong tradition of folk media, which along with puppetry, theatre, poetry and religious songs have been used over centuries for communicative interaction within small groups. And, more recently audio/video cassettes, cameras, newsletters and low power radio stations and Internet are being used to 'voice' marginalised concerns and opinions.

The veteran South American academic Luis Ramiro Beltran (1993) chronicles dozens of alternative and community media initiatives including the Radio *Sutatenza* in Colombia, the Mining Worker's Union's radio in Bolivia, the Rural Cassette Forum in Uruguay, *Prensa Nanica* Press in Brazil as means of fighting inequalities. Similarly, in Asia many examples of the grassroots media initiatives like the Women's Video Project in Nepal, Puppetry show *Wayabg Kulit* in Indonesia and the Mahaweli Community Radio in Sri Lanka (Valbuena, 1988) along with the Radio in a Brief Case and religious ballads like *Jatra* and *Yakshagana* (Kumar, 2000) in India demonstrate how people use their cultural resources to combat the onslaught of globalisation and promote their own point of view. These media are believed to perform a dual function; insulating people from commercialised and non-local culture and also help them to gel together (Lewis and Booth, 1989). Thus, alternative media entail a radical change in the creation, production, distribution and the whole process of the communication practice with a focus on empowerment and action (Couldry, 1999; Atton, 2001; 2002).

Within this approach, it is argued that the lines between producers and users of information blur as audiences take a more proactive role, creating a mutual

relationship between alternative media and the social movements (Downing 2003a). This also gives disenfranchised and marginalized communities 'presence' and 'agency' to democratize the media (Downing 2001:5-6). The group dialogue is seen by many critical scholars as crucial in communication strategies for liberation to advance empowerment and solidarity. Atton (2002) sees these practices working alongside the reflexive practices that emerge from owning, establishing and producing alternative visions of participation, power and action.

Many alternative media movements draw inspiration from the Gramscian concept of counter-hegemony to 'generate alternatives in public debate' and to oppose the 'agency of domination'. The 'common sense' and 'taken for granted' view of hegemony, which legitimizes the interest of the bourgeoisie as 'natural' is disrupted and questioned by the very presence of alternative points of view (Downing 2001: 15-16) The defiance to the dominant through counter-hegemony is analysed by Downing in his seminal work on new social movements and alternative media. He stresses the 'dialectical' relationship and 'interdependence' of New Social Movements (NSM) and radical media, arguing that both 'represent dynamic expressions of resistance' (Ibid: 23-24).

This is not to suggest that the grassroots/community radio mode is not without its inconsistencies and contradictions. It is believed that alternative use of media could easily be subverted and co-opted from its democratic origins to become another monopoly of knowledge. In embracing local cultures and indigenous knowledge systems, there is a danger that community radio can perpetuate hidden forms of violence such as the continued exploitation of women or destruction of the natural environment in the guise of being inherently good because it is an alternative to the dominant model.



There are a number of examples from the developing world where the emancipatory media, especially the community based media, have been exploited by mainstream media, international aid agencies and multi-national companies to further their agendas. In American Samoa, an education TV for local people introduced in 1977 now serves as a channel for broadcasting the US entertainment shows (Melkote and Steeve, 2001).

Similarly, many folk and traditional media are being used by multinational companies to reach hard-to-reach groups to persuade them to buy more. Likewise, in defending a local knowledge system against the dominant knowledge system, the reductionist arguments used by Western science for the superiority and the universality of Western values can equally be used to advance similar claims for the local knowledge system. The skills and knowledge acquired to use communication technologies like radio can be monopolized by a few, contrary to the spirit of democratisation. Access to resources can also act as a barrier to participatory practices.

There is a danger that in the struggle to create new forms of participatory communications, the same pattern of inequalities and injustices of the dominant model are replicated. Downing (2001:34) warns that an uncritical populist way of referring to community as a 'seamless social tissue that is local and, therefore, healthy' could lead to making 'idiotic assumptions about the absence of class and other serious rifts within the local tissue'. Accepting the fuzziness that shrouds the concept, Downing (2001), however, cannot think of any alternatives that can represent all that the concept encompasses:

It is, therefore, exceptionally hard to give the term community a lucid and exact sense. Yet when the word is used as convenient verbal shorthand for the spectrum of the relatively dispossessed or local realities, it is hard to think of a replacement (Ibid: 39).

Whatever shape debate on the concept of the community takes, one cannot escape the fact that media at the local /communal level are seen as institutions expressing demands and priorities from below, from those excluded and those who are powerless. Inherent to these arguments is the idealistic notion of such media as egalitarian or democratic. However, they can create the local replica of corporate power and serve as instruments of the very hegemonic structures and processes they are seen as opposed to, or give more voice to already vocal local elite, which can further stifle the voiceless.

Downing warns that such media 'may easily conceal more than they reveal'. (2001: 40). However, one cannot deny the power of such media in helping local communities in fostering and facilitating dialogue and building their capacity to fight the institutions and processes that dis-empower and exclude them. Local and community based media are an effective means in acting as loudspeakers, but there are more important and effective webs of interpersonal communication networks that have a role in and outside the public sphere. Downing (2001) recognizes the role of such networks as essential both to such media and to the social and political movements.

Acknowledging that these networks can operate independently of the media, he says they can be fed by, or can feed into, alternative media. Within the context of social movements, public sphere, communication networks and alternative media, he argues that the usefulness of communication networks is that they help to 'get away from the notion of audiences as atomized, composed simply of individuals or households and underscores the internal connectivity of social movements'. He further argues that within this conceptualization the public sphere is more than an idealized platform but more a space for mutual communication at various levels and points. Quoting the work of Mohammadi and Srenerny-Mohammadi in Iran, Downing highlights the role of religious networks in the distribution and

circulation of audiocassettes with anti-establishment material in energizing movement against the Shah. Downing argues that these networks gave 'cohesion and sanction to the movement in Iran, but warns against seeing the 'relevance of communication network to radical media in social movements as uniquely a religious phenomenon' (2001: 34). Within the gamut of alternative media, one of the most cost-effective means that has been used for decades in poor parts of the world, and is now getting popular among the marginalized communities in the West is the community radio.

As Hartley (2000:153) puts it, 'radio continues to be used in a variety of community-building developmental situations, providing remote, marginal and disenfranchised communities with low-cost, low-tech public space'. Many scholars see community based radio playing a critical role in making communication a two-way process that can empower, increase participation and encourage local ownership of media (Barlow 1988, McQuail 1994, Couldry 1999). Community radio is envisaged to provide a ground of 'communicative interaction' and serve as a 'frame of reference for shared interpretation' within a community (Hollander and Stappers, 1992: 8).

The first 'community' stations began broadcasting over fifty years ago in Latin America. This sector of broadcasting has developed steadily since in various parts of the world. The community radio exists in a wide variety of forms throughout the world<sup>23</sup>. Barlow (1988, 83-84), highlights two sources of community radio's

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<sup>23</sup> *Latin America*: There has been a huge variety of radio stations in Latin America since the medium first arrived on the continent. The church, trade unions, and indigenous groups run their own radio stations. Other groups produce programmes that are broadcast on larger, mainstream stations. Some 'community radio' stations literally use a loudspeaker to 'broadcast' to the immediate neighbourhood. Latin America probably has the most dynamic radio sector in the world.

*Africa and Asia*: Traditionally have not had true 'community' radio. Most radio in these regions are government controlled. But recently, there have been developments towards a community radio sector. There are some community stations opening up throughout Africa, with a very dynamic community radio network developing in South Africa. In Asia, there are some rural radio projects, and educational radio projects operating in The Philippines and a number of quite independent community stations in Vietnam.

*Australia*: The first community radio licenses were given out in the mid-70s. There are now over 100 community stations. They're not allowed to advertise and raise their budgets in a variety of ways. Their licenses demand that

origins – opposition to the repressive climate of the Cold War; and, the emergence of ethnic-orientated stations. There are different terms for what is here collectively referred as 'community radio' ranging from alternative radio to radical radio to micro radio to access radio, minority radio and so on<sup>24</sup>.

The variety in names and definitions of these means of communication are 'not only due to linguistic differences but are also based on ideological and conceptual distinctions' (Prehn 1992, 256). There are many common strands in these media. All such media are small scale in operation, mostly non-profit making with politically or ideologically committed editorial policy and action-oriented focus. These radios have a shared interest in representing and promoting marginalised points of view.

In the UK the government started experimenting with community broadcasting in 1985. The Green paper published in this regard stated: "community radio should be introduced throughout the UK, finding its place side by side with the existing local commercial station". Despite the Minister of State's pledges to provide 200-300 additional local radio services, the Broadcasting Act of 1990 made no specific provision for community radio. The Act provided for Restricted Service Licenses (RSL's) for radio, allowing services 'for a particular establishment or other defined location, or a particular event, in the UK'. However, the Radio Authority, the

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they either broadcast to a specific interest group - e.g. ethnic or language group; classical music; education - or provide programmes for sections of the community not properly catered for by Government and Commercial stations.

*USA/Canada:* The first station was given a license in 1949, and there are now over 300. Many of these targets the indigenous communities...in the north of Canada there are over 100 tiny stations that serve a range of functions keeping the local people in touch with events and each other. The large urban stations tend to serve interest groups not served by the mainstream - e.g. ethnic; gay; feminist; language; trade unionists etc. The rural stations tend to fit more closely with the mainstream culture locally (which isn't well served by the urban-based mainstream stations). In North America, the growth small scale radio station, commonly known as micro radios, lead to a media activism which has been equated with the environmental, anti nuclear and anti war movements of 1960's and 70's<sup>41</sup> (Opel 2004).

*Europe:* This varies greatly from country to country. There was a huge 'free radio' movement in the 1970s, when thousands of 'pirate' stations were set up. Nearly all west European countries now have some legal form of community radio. It's fairly well established in Holland, Scandinavia, France and Italy. Britain is developing a strong community radio sector, although there's very little distinction between 'community' licenses and those given to local commercial stations.

<sup>24</sup> Since this thesis shares the political and epistemological position with alternative communication, the thesis accepts various forms of this communication. Consequently, various names of alternative media are used liberally in this thesis.

governing body for radio, imposed a 28-day limit on this category of license. From 1991 till the end of 1999, the Radio Authority now (Ofcom) had issued 2,585 such licenses to various groups and people in different parts of the UK<sup>25</sup>.

Community broadcasting has since organized better in the UK with many groups and members of civil society lending support to the idea of creating a third tier of broadcasting in the country. One of the influential pressure groups that have been spearheading a campaign for community based radio in the UK is the 'Community Media Association', which has now developed into a one window shop for supporting and building capacity of community organizations interested in using radio for community development<sup>26</sup>. The surge in the demand for radio broadcasting licences from community, religious and non-governmental organisations is a clear indication of the need and demand for a broadcasting structure outside the mainstream provisions. Among the Restricted Service Licence (RSL) is a growing number of Radio Ramadan's which broadcast during the month of Ramadan in the Islamic calendar. The number of such station was six in 1994 which reached to 18 in 2000. While the main focus of these stations remains complementing religious duties during the month of fasting, an aim to provide an alternative vision of life and politics drives most of these stations.

It is within these perspectives that this study makes an effort to develop a framework that could ground the participatory and empowerment perspectives in fighting social exclusion in the deprived pockets in the West. But before we go into the details of Radio *Ramzan* and how it provided a platform for community wide health awareness campaign, let us first look at the context in which this radio station evolved.

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<sup>25</sup> Airflash, CMA, Hansard 1996, 1990 RSL's 1999 annual report, Radio Authority.

<sup>26</sup> The Community Radio Association (CMA) is the umbrella organisation of many broadcasters, activists, academicians, social workers and community workers joining hands to mobilize public opinion in favour of decentralisation of broadcasting through establishment of community based radio stations that increase participation and involvement at local level. The Community Media Association (CMA), formerly known as the community radio association was founded in 1983. The CMA is a membership organisation open to individuals and organisation.

## **Forest Fields - a world within a town**

With its pre-1920 terraced houses and a high concentration of people of minority ethnic origin, Forest Fields is a well-known multi-cultural area situated northwest of Nottingham city centre. To the north, the area houses numerous small-scale industrial units, which are mostly derelict now. This area is known as New Basford. From the east the wealthy suburbs of Mapperley Park overlook Forest Fields, and from the West the area has extended into Aspley, which is mixed neighborhood housing with a large council estate and some affluent streets with detached properties and gardens. Most people of ethnic minority origin live in these areas of Nottingham city, making inner city Nottingham one of the most multi-ethnic areas, having dozens of mosques, Hindu temples and gurdwara's, besides many churches and synagogues.

The 2001 Census was the first to contain a question on religion. The question was optional and in Nottingham city around 9.8% chose not to answer it. The number of people who classed themselves as Christian was 57.7 per cent, although this was significantly lower than the England figure (71.7 per cent). Muslim (4.6 per cent) and Sikh (1.2 per cent) were the next most popular responses. About 24.8 per cent said they had no religion, which was much higher than the England figure (4.6 per cent). The Muslim population of the UK comprising mostly Pakistanis (which includes Mirpuris), has a younger age profile, and almost half of them are born and brought up in the UK (ONS, 2001).

While the majority of the Mirpuri community in Nottingham lives in Hyson Green, Radford and Basford area with the highest concentration in the Forest Fields area, some members of this community have now moved to Aspley, Wollaton, Mapperley and other richer areas of the city. But Forest Fields, with its mosques, special food shops, bookshops, boutiques and restaurants, has remained the focal point for the Mirpuri social and cultural life. Moreover, the extended family

structure of this community means that people gravitate back, as the second and third generation Mirpuris who move out of the area often visit their parents and grandparents who prefer to live a gregarious life in the inner city.

A year after his marriage Asghar Mehmood (AM), an IT engineer, who moved out to live in Aspley, visits his parents almost every day. He explains this bond:

*This is almost a ritual I cannot do without. Since the Esha prayers are late in the evening, I end up at my parents' house around the dinnertime, which is a stones' throw away from the Karimia. My wife, who happens to be my cousin as well, is already in my parent's house. She does not want to be alone in Aspley. We end up having dinner at my parents on most of the weekdays. Our house in Aspley has become almost a bed and breakfast. To be honest, I like this... besides seeing my parents, and I also bump into my mates in Forest Fields (AM, 1999)*

Asghar is not the only person of Mirpuri origin to go through this process, as Dr Deborah Philips (2001) asserts that some members of the 'Muslim population are trapped in poor areas by their economic circumstances' and that moving away from these clusters is not seen as an 'attractive alternative'. This is true in inner city Nottingham as 'clustering' is facilitated by 'positive community links, traditions and a sense of ethnic identity'. The fear of racial harassment and isolation adds to this clustering (Philips, 2001:5). Over a period of time, Forest Fields has become the hub of the South Asian, especially Mirpuri community, in Nottingham. When I first arrived in Nottingham in the autumn of 1997, I found it like a town in South Asia. There were young boys walking in lines towards the mosques with skullcaps and clutching Qurans to their tiny chests. The aromas and colours of South Asian life were all over the place.

Many scholars have highlighted the relationship between place, social status and poverty (Levitas 1998; Hardill et al., 2001). There are many deprived urban areas

which house some of the most disadvantaged communities in the UK. The link between social conditions and geographic situation often results in the negative stereotyping of areas and people who live in these areas. Nottingham, characterized by high population density, also has image problem:

The area suffers from a poor reputation, although the main shopping road is not unduly run down. There also seems to be a strong sense of community, helping out, lift-giving etc. However people do not want to move there, businesses do not want to be based there and employers do not want to employ people from there. There have apparently been previous attempts at regeneration initiatives within the area (DoT, 2001).

As in many other 'deprived' urban areas, inner city Nottingham has been the focus of many local, regional, national and European regeneration schemes. While the long term impact of these schemes and programmes is yet to be realized, there seems to be very little tangible change in the prevailing social and economic conditions of the people excluded socially. There is 'considerable local skepticism about earlier regeneration programmes', and people living in these areas have found such schemes 'ineffective, or at best cosmetic, imposed from outside with little consultation or involvement of local people' (JRF 999: 489).

## ***Karimia Mosque in Forest Fields***

When I first visited the *Karimia*<sup>27</sup> Mosque, it a busy place; attended by the young people in the area, who had the opportunity to play a game of pool after the prayers or organize a charity event on weekends. I found this mosque different from the rest of such places as one could hear sermons in English. This was a contrast from other mosques where sermons were read in Arabic and Urdu (South Asian language spoken by Pakistanis), which young people could hardly follow. But this was not the only contrast. The *Karimia Mosque* had a Western

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<sup>27</sup> Although it's known as the *Karimia* Institute within the discourse of social exclusion, majority of people, especially from older generation, call it *Karimia Mosque*. For this reason, the study uses *Karimia Mosque* in this thesis.



educated Imam, Dr Musharraf Hussain<sup>28</sup> who made the mosque accessible to health workers, police and housing officers, along with Christians, Jews and Sikhs from interfaith groups who would be invited to talk to members of the Muslim communities. While praying and teaching the Quran were main activities at the *Karimia*, it was also the focus of the social and cultural life of the Muslim communities living in and around the Forest Fields area of Nottingham. The place was mostly open, and there was a buzz about the place. This was other big difference I noticed as most of the other places of worship would be only used for praying and would remain locked before and after the prayer times. While these activities attracted many young people to the mosque, many elders, especially the first generation Mirpuris, did not seem to be pleased with this approach. For some of these people, the mosque was a place of worship and anything beyond this role was seen as unacceptable. But the management committee of the *Karimia Mosque*, least concerned about this criticism, re-branded *Karimia Mosque* as *Karimia Institute* to increase its scope and functionality from a mere place of worship to a centre of community development. MB<sup>29</sup> is a member of the management committee of the *Karimia Mosque*. He explained the re-branding this way:

*One of the aims of this re-branding was to invite funding from various statutory and non-statutory organizations; as such organizations would not normally fund a mosque to carry out community development work and secondly, the mosque would not accept certain types of funding like lottery money'. (MB, Dec: 1999)*

This thesis interchangeably refers to this place as *Karimia Mosque*, *Karimia Institute* and just *Karimia* to reflect the flexibility of this organization to fit into

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<sup>28</sup> Dr Musharraf Hussain was born in Jhelum district of Lahore in Pakistan. At a very young age, he joined his brother in the UK who was working as a postman in Yorkshire. Dr Musharraf grew up in Halifax, where he memorised the Quran. He studied biochemistry at Aston University in Birmingham and worked as Scientist at the Nottingham University before he left the laboratory to 'dedicate' his life to the religion. Initially he studied under the guidance of Justice Pir Muhammad Karam Shah A leading *Barailve* scholar and judge in Pakistan) and later at al-Azhar University in Cairo. Dr Musharraf settled in Nottingham in early 90's when he established and worked as head teacher of the first Muslim boarding school in Retford area. In 1995, he set up a small mosque in a two bedroom terraced house on crowded Berridge Road in the Forest Fields. He named this Mosque *Karimia*.

<sup>29</sup> MB is the acronym of the name of a management committee of the *Karimia* who did not want to be identified. This thesis respects the confidentiality of the interviewee. (These are the excerpts of the interview: Dec 1999)

various situations and categories. While for the worshipers it was only *Karimia Mosque*, for the outside organizations (mainly funding and statutory bodies), it was *Karimia* Institute, while for the young people it was just *Karimia* to keep it away from both religious orthodoxy and secular convenience. The *Karimia* was not, however, the only Muslim institution in Nottingham.

At least six other mosques existed at that time in Nottingham including the Islamic Centre St. Anns, *Madani* Mosque in Forest Fields, Lenton Muslim Centre, *Jamia Sultania* Sneinton, along with two temporary mosques in the University of Nottingham and the Nottingham Trent University. Among these mosques the Islamic Centre on the Curzon Road in the St. Anns area is the first purpose-built mosque in Nottingham. There was an established Mirpuri community living in this area before changes in demography and housing provisions in this part of the city. The Islamic Centre lost its significance as the Mirpuri community living in St. Anns moved to Forest Fields and the Radford areas of Nottingham. Haji Ishaq, one of the early Mirpuris to settle down in Nottingham said, 'In early eighties, many people of Afro-Caribbean origin settled in this area in the newly built council flats, and the majority of Mirpuris left the area for good'. The other reason for this shift is thought to be the fact that Mirpuris were not used to living in flats and, as a result, moved to terraced and semi detached properties in Hyson Green area. This shift increased the concentration of the Muslim community in Forest Fields, which is about two kilometers from St Anns. With this distance, people could not attend the Islamic centre five times a day, which made *Karimia* a popular mosque among the *Barailves* living in Forest Fields. The Madni Mosques in Forest Fields and the Bilal Mosque in Lenton were managed by the people belonging to the *Deobandi* school of thought. The *Deobandi* is a puritanical group with origin in South Asia, but the majority of people living in the Forest Fields area subscribe to a more liberal Sufi tradition – the *Barailve* School. A detailed discussion on various schools of thought within the tradition of Sunni Muslims is

included in chapter three of this thesis. As the population of Muslim community grew in Nottingham so did the number of mosques.

The number of mosques in Nottingham has increased to 14 from just 4 in 1992. A detailed list of Mosques in Nottingham is included in the Appendix A. The *Karimia Mosque* is generally supported by the *Barailve* followers. Due to its more open approach of attracting young people through recreation and educational activities, it is seen as more accommodating than traditional mosques. The openness at *Karimia* has made it more accessible to young people, particularly those born and brought up in the UK. These young people could not make sense of the factional politics of their parents and grandparents as they depend less on imported traditions of South Asia. The MCB reports on its website (2003):

*By the mid-1990s, the Muslim generation that had grown up in Britain, had reached university in sufficient numbers to form viable religiously active Islamic societies on campus. Here for the first time they were away from the ethnic divisions, factions and mother-country traditions of their parents. They also mixed with Muslim overseas students from the Middle East and Africa and found great disparities in their various practices, which they resolved by rejecting traditional Islamic scholarship in favour of their own searching of original sources. Thus Salafi-ism, returning to the notional roots, the salaf, of Islam, became popular among younger Muslims who then found themselves in conflict with their elders that were holding tight control of the suburban and textile town British Masjids. As the new student generation dispersed from universities, and as Arab-language communities, e.g. Algerians, Moroccans and Somalis began to settle, new Salafi and other challenging factions have started to make an impact, with increasing numbers of small Salafi masjids being set up.*

*Karimia Mosque* tried to break this mould by inviting people across the religious divide and clan loyalties. Despite, being rooted in *Barailve* tradition, it had many

young people as volunteers and members who came traditionally from *Deobandi* background. This was extraordinary, as this pattern has been in contrast to the back home arrangement where lines between mosques and schools of thought remain very clear. No doubt, the younger profile of the members of *Karimia Mosque* was critical in this approach, and it is Dr Musharraf Hussain who is believed to be the main architect for this new vision and direction. Having studies in both the East and the West, he had a clear understanding of the educational and recreational needs of young people born and brought up in the UK.

This was revolutionary, as traditionalists would not allow anything other than ritualistic praying in the mosque, and usually mosques would open only at the designated hours for praying. But at *Karimia*, there were classrooms teaching numeracy and literacy, children playing table tennis, women learning sewing, older people sipping tea and reading newspapers. The place was buzzing with activities, attracting more young people who besides doing other things prayed in congregation. Imran Khan, who was born in Nottingham, went to the local school in Forest Fields and now is a full time student said:

*For me the mosque was a strange place. With praying done in Arabic and Urdu, everything was strange to me. The place was not 'cool' for my friends and me. When we started to go there to attend tutorial classes, Mosque became more than a room for praying. I invited some of my mates... things became very interesting...we played table tennis...then at the call of Adhan, did Wadhu (ablution) and prayed with the rest of the people. After praying things were normal again, we rushed through corridors, made noise...it was just like school again. This was the school, which understood us. Our teachers were from the community, like our*

*neighbours who had played cricket with, they knew our families and we prayed together (IK<sup>30</sup>, Jan: 2000)*

With a focus on education and improving the image of Muslim community, Dr Musharraf did not shy away from accessing government and other funding including the lottery money to support education, self development and other projects in the area. This transformation in the traditional role of mosques was taking place at a time when the role of mosques and other Muslim institutions was recognised in fighting social exclusion. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report on neighbourhood images of Nottingham highlights the fact that the Mosque plays a pivotal role in social and cultural organisation in the area, especially among the Mirpuri population (JRF, 1999).

I came to Nottingham in the autumn of 1997, it had a large vision and was open to all ideas and people. Apart from the support it had from the Mistaree community, some non Mirpuri Muslim intellectuals who were not happy with the mainstream politics joined the *Karimia* project. Among them were Fazle Rabbi Khan, Prof Islam ul Haq, Javed Khan, and a group of young men who had completed education and settled in jobs. These people were coming back to help the *Karimia* on a voluntary basis.

Around 800-1000 people attended *Karimia* Institute for different services every week including the congregational Friday prayers. Besides five daily prayers and the evening Quranic classes for young people, the mosque also registered weddings, provided information on Hajj and *Ummrah* (annual pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia). The mosque also started a charity in the early nineties in response to the war in Bosnia to help Muslims in the Balkan regions. The charity, 'Muslim Hands', became very popular, as it was the first major charity organization set up by the

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<sup>30</sup> IK is one of the volunteers who lived near the Mosque (Excerpts from the Interview. Jan: 2000)

*Barailve* school. With the crisis in Bosnia at its peak, followed by the violence in Kashmir, the charity was able to collect money, clothes and medicine from the Muslim population in Nottingham and send these items to the trouble spots in the Muslim world. The charity could not be accommodated in the *Karimia Mosque* and had to be housed in a building on Radford Road. The charity still maintains a close relationship with the *Karimia* Institute, sharing management committee, trustees and some employees. 'Muslim Hands' has also supported some youth activities being carried out by the Institute.

The *Karimia Mosque* has remained forward-looking, using new technology and innovative means to reach out to more and more people. It was the first mosque to start the interfaith dialogue in Nottingham, and actively pursued a close cooperation with other faiths in the region. Starting with the after school club and tutorial classes for younger people from the community, *Karimia* has been organizing summer schools, sports and leisure activities for young, adult learning facilities, like a computer (IT), radio production, parenting skills and healthy living courses for adults.

The *Karimia* actually has been competing with half a dozen other community centres in Nottingham run on more secular and country of origin lines. These community centres have been accessing the local council funding and providing services like social welfare, immigration, health and housing advice to people of ethnic minority groups. Most of the ethnic groups living in this area have their own voluntary groups, addressing their specific interests and concerns. While mosques, temples and gurdwara's in the area serve specific South Asian religious groups, there are also community centres which cater to the needs of Indian, Pakistani and Kashmir/Mirpuri communities.

A few women's organisations have also been established, which more or less follow similar patterns with the exception of the Asian Women's project which tries to reach out to wider Asian communities of women living in the area. Besides these community centres, there are numerous other small community initiatives which try to address health, education, training, employment and housing issues pertinent to minority ethnic groups living in inner city Nottingham. Most of these groups and initiatives depend on funding from various local, regional and national funding organisations. These groups frequently operate on a citywide rather than a neighbourhood basis, and their centres may be located in other parts of the city. But since a large proportion of the ethnic minority people of South Asian origin live in the Hyson Green and Forest Fields area, the focus of these centres and projects remains these areas, where family, clan and community ties are seen to be very strong (JRF, April 1999). However, the report suggests that 'there is a positive response to the creation of more active partnerships to address local problems, although this welcome is qualified by deep suspicion about the sincerity and commitment of the public authorities to genuine partnership where some power is devolved' (JRF, 1999: 1).

Karimia had made some progress in working with some statutory, non-statutory and other community groups to broaden its scope to serve the people who accessed this mosque regularly. It worked with local colleges, Nottingham City Council, Sport England, the Local Education Authority, NHS City Central Primary Care Trust (PCT), the New Deal for Communities etc. While the activities of *Karimia* were growing, and it was being recognized locally as an effective place to reach out to the Mirpuri Muslims in Nottingham, it applied for a license to run a community radio station on restricted service during the month of Ramadan.

## **Radio *Ramzan* on 97.5 FM**

Once the license was awarded, the *Karimia* took the initiative of organising a community wide consultation with the following objectives:

- To seek public participation in running a community-wide radio station to celebrate Ramadan.
- To explore the topics, treatments and approaches in debating issues pertinent to the Mirpuri community in Nottingham.
- To find out avenues for partnerships, sponsorships and donations for the running of this station.

These consultations started with a meeting in which community groups, mosques, local businesses and local politicians along with members of some voluntary and statutory organisation were invited. Besides the invitation letters, which were posted to the organisations and institutions, leaflets were distributed at the ASDA Shopping centre in Hyson Green, Vine centre in Bobbers Mill, Nottingham Taxis offices and at local restaurants and takeaways.

There was already a murmur within the community about the license being granted to the *Karimia* to run a radio station. The outreach work (leafleting, posters, and stickers) and the invitation for the open meeting generated a huge interest within the community. One of the early volunteers who later became a member of the management committee of radio *Ramzan* Said:

This was great a news for the community...first I did not believe it. We had never thought that we could have our own Radio where we could talk in our own language and discuss our own issues without being demonised or patronised. When I saw the leaflet, I had no doubt that this is going to work...so I decided to attend. (Rehman Syed<sup>31</sup>)

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<sup>31</sup> Rehamn Syed is one of the first volunteers of Radio *Ramzan*. He has been part of the project and was interviewed many times over a period of two years from Nov 1999 till Jan 2001)



The meeting opened with the recitation of Quran, which was followed by a brief introduction to the forthcoming radio station by Dr Musharraf Hussain. He charted out the objectives of this radio station and highlighted the role it can play in communicating a positive image about the community. He requested everyone present in the meeting to contribute to this radio station by taking responsibility for producing shows and raising money to make it self-sustaining.

This was perhaps the first meeting in Nottingham among the Muslim groups, which was very well attended by people from various walks of life. Most of the community organizations, business people, councilors and representatives from various other mosques attended. After deliberation for over two hours the following decisions were made:

- The radio should be made open and involve all.
- A community-wide organising committee should be formed to give all groups and shades of opinion representation on the management of the radio station. Besides celebrating the month of Ramadan, the radio should raise social, political and economic issues pertinent to the Muslim communities in Nottingham.
- The radio station should serve as a community-wide notice board. The community events; meetings, deaths, births and weddings should be announced on the radio.
- The radio station should have representation from women and should devote time and resources to discuss women's issues.
- Young people, especially those at risk of disengagement from the community and society, need to be involved and given ownership of youth programmes.

- The Radio should actively discuss issues related to Pakistan, Kashmir and Mirpur. The radio station should produce and broadcast shows in major languages spoken by the South Asian Muslim community living in Nottingham. It was decided that main languages should be English, Mirpuri and Urdu, and in addition, shows should also be broadcast in Bengali, Gujarati and Pashto languages.
- In order to get enough resources to run this radio, all community groups should volunteer workers and helpers.
- Local businesses should support the radio through sponsorship and buying advertising time. But it was decided only *Halal* (Islamically permissible) businesses should be allowed to advertise.
- The Radio should be used to raise funds for charity.

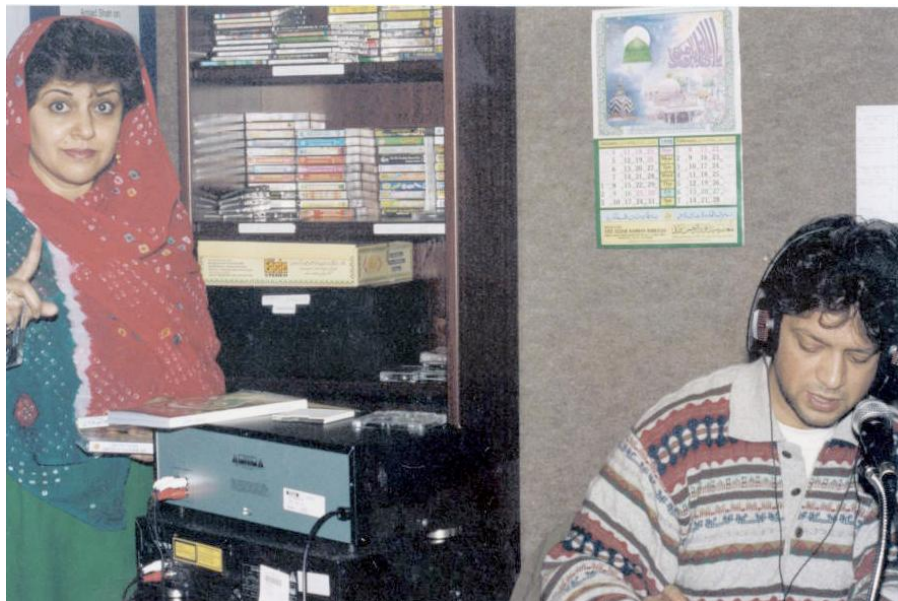
Later, a constitution for the structure, management and operations of Radio *Ramzan* was adopted. (A Copy of the constitution is enclosed in appendix C). The meeting also decided to constitute four sub committees to look after the programming, advertising, technical side and public relations for the radio station.

## **Finally *Radio Ramzan* was on air**

After all these discussions and preparations, Radio *Ramzan* became a reality when the signature tune of this station on 97.5 FM was played followed by the Fajar Adan (call for morning prayers) on Monday the 29<sup>th</sup> of December, 1997. It was the first day of fasting and people were glued to their radio sets. Weeks of publicity, especially the announcements in local mosques and the word of mouth generated a huge interest. I was with a group of volunteers listening to the

signature tune and I could see joy on the faces of everyone in the studio and instantly phones started to ring.

The radio station added significance to this special month of Ramadan as it broadcasts daily five times Adhan (calls to prayer). These timings are crucial to determine the beginning and end of fasting. This focused the attention of whole Muslim community on the radio, so it was not just in the background to fill the space, but a critical factor in time, providing a social context to the spiritual life. In a local situation the radio helped to forge that communal feeling by organizing communal activities and socially re-organises the community by providing locally relevant information. Certain differences within the community are overcome while others are acknowledged. One example of this negotiation is the programme schedule of Radio *Ramzan*, which reflects a variety of languages (Urdu, Arabic, Mirpuri, Punjabi, Bengali, Gujarati and English) and formats to suit various ethnic and sub-ethnic groups within the construct of Muslim community (Appendix I, Copy of Programme schedule, flyer).



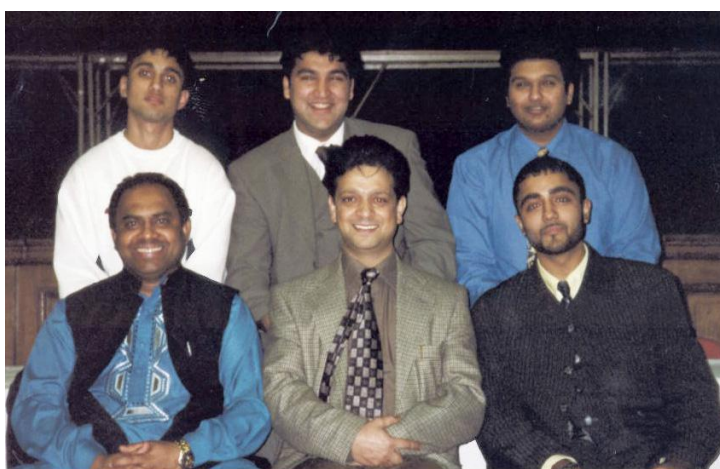
**Picture 1:** Star Presenter Farzana Khan (standing) getting ready to take over air waves as I sign-off on Radio *Ramzan* (Dec, 1999)

My role was spread over all aspects of radio broadcasting: from organizing, networking, training, programme presentation to seeking adverts and recording jingles. I was everywhere. In one moment I would be presenting a current affairs show, in the second moment I would be attending management committee meetings and stressing the need for a more liberal policy of music. It did not stop there; I would be photocopying, writing script, seeking adverts etc. This role is not something unique when one works for community/voluntary organizations. In voluntary organisation, people tend not to compartmentalise work to overcome red tape and address the issues of limited resources.

Traditionally, the community politics are ridden with divisions and differences; however, it does show tactical and strategic unity on issues of commonality through shared commitments and cooperation bringing people together. The month of Ramadan proved a common factor for various groups to support it and show an act of solidarity, but this unity did not work on every issue. As we will find out later in detail in this chapter, an open debate on the subject of sighting of the Moon led to a very awkward situation, and the live discussion on the radio had to be cut off in order to pacify the public.

While differences were seen more on philosophical and doctrinal issues among various groups, ordinary listeners were not that much bothered about the big issues. They were finding radio very useful but would not like differences to be exposed in public. A goldsmith, on Berridge Road who advertised his small business on Radio *Ramzan* said: 'To be honest, Moulvis can debate the bigger problems, we are not bothered. As far as the radio talks about me and my neighborhood I'm happy. I think they are educated people and should be careful about accusing each other. This brings a bad name to the community.'

Another positive aspects of this radio station was the enthusiasm and entrepreneurial flair of its, mostly young, volunteers. This passion kept the things moving even with limited resources and expertise. The voluntary sector with limited capacity and resources depends on volunteers and Radio *Ramzan* had no dearth of such volunteers. Fayaz manned telephones in early mornings before he went to college. He said he loved the place: 'We discuss Islam, politics and so on so freely without any fear. Tell me where is this possible? Even in Pakistan you cannot talk about all these things. You know what I mean?' The initial recruitment of volunteers and helpers came through networking, but as the radio went on air, more and more people joined in.



**Picture 2:** The Magnificent Six; The Core Volunteer Team with Author in Centre  
Picture during the HEAP Seminar/Feedback session on January 14, 2000

Khalid Mehmood (KM), who lived in Meadows area of the city, heard the radio accidentally while driving one day in the city, and rang to offer help in the programme production. Within a week, he had his own show in which he interviewed young entrepreneurs from the community. Khalid Said:

*It all happened accidentally. I was waiting to pick up my kids from the school. While waiting, I was pressing the frequency button on my car radio when I heard the Adan. I removed finger from the button and the dial was read 97.5 FM Radio Ramzan. It was unbelievable! A Muslim radio in*

*Nottingham!! I kept it on, collected my kids from the school and kept listening. It got more and more interesting. There was a Qawali (traditional Sufi singing style from South Asia, popularized by Pakistani singers) followed by a commercial break.... they were selling all familiar things...Chicken Tikka, vegetables, cheap air tickets and they were asking for charity for people in Kashmir and Afghanistan. The commercial break was followed a discussion on race. For the first time I felt engaged with something, and I wanted to be part of this. Reaching home, I asked my wife to put the radio on 97.5. It was coming closer to Magrib time (time to open fast) and everyone in the family was now listening. Later in the evening I rang and asked if I could help. I was told to come the next day. Since then I became a regular presenter and have enjoyed every bit of it. ( KM<sup>32</sup>: Jan: 2000)*

Like Khalid, many other volunteers helped this radio station in various capacities. Although this participation was very critical for the station, it also provided big opportunity for local people to take control of air-waves and share their ideas with thousands of others without going through 'gate-keeping'.

However, community being a very complex construct of competing power relations exhibits different levels and intensities of these relation as power over, power on and power to becomes critically important. The running of the radio station exposed certain power relations, which normally remain invisible. The power to say things or the concept of 'voice', is a political construct, and the condition of not having a 'voice' is seen as powerlessness.

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<sup>32</sup> Khalid Mehmood started as helper and later become one of the most popular presenters on radio *Ramzan* ( Excerpts from the interview with KM: Jan 2000)

Many people of minority ethnic origin have experienced this powerlessness as mainstream media fail to represent their voice. Within the contemporary media situation, the BBC and the commercial radio almost have copyright on what to say and what not to say. But with the coming of Radio *Ramzan*, people were realizing the power of saying things and influencing public opinion. This power in turn leads to other powers like influencing institutions, policies and individuals. The discursive aspect of power relations help to understand how an individual may be positioned or subjectified in restrictive ways by others. The positioning by the mainstream media of those who live on the margins can be understood by analyzing the process through post-structuralism.

But this process should not be seen as irreversible as within the paradigm of alternative media, this subjectification moves to a more privileged position where being on the margin is not abnormal or a deviation but another way of being. Within post-structuralism, identity or subjectivity is understood to transpire through one's positioning. This standpoint gives the individual a privilege as an active agent rather than passive object to be fashioned "according to the dominant position of the time" (Lowe 1998: 207). Looking at the example of Radio *Ramzan*, it was found that people get involved for various reasons: loyalty, compassion, conviction and so on. Emotions and feelings play a big part in such participation. The emotions, which gear individual and collective involvement, are subjective, chaotic and weak but are believed to ignite creative energy and involvement (Putnam & Mumby 1993:4). Whether one feels discriminated against or marginalized, the feelings of being not treated fairly makes people think of alternative institutions and means to resolve issues. This 'expanded consciousness' (Freire 1972) has been argued to be critical to 'democratic participation and empowerment' (Zimmerman and Rappaport 1988).

After successfully completing a month-long broadcasting during the month of Ramadan in December 1997-Jan 1998, the *Karimia Mosque* applied again for the licence for 1998-1999 and was granted it without much problem. Having learnt from the mistakes of the previous year and being more confident in involving local people, Radio *Ramzan* was launched in December 1998 from the same building in Radford Road with more or less the same workforce, mostly volunteers. The highlight of 1998 was the Empowerment through Education project which involved local people helping children in afterschool clubs and Sunday classes. The project raised enough interest through discussions, debates and phone-ins on how the educational achievements among the children of minority ethnic groups, especially Mirpuri children, can be enhanced. The debates and discussions were followed by an open day event in which members of the community were invited to raise issues and complete survey. On the basis of these results, a number of professionals from the community who were working in various organisations volunteered to help children in Maths and English in the evenings and during a special Sunday school. After these teachers were identified, the *Karimia Mosque* provided the classrooms and within the first two weeks more than fifty children enrolled for special classes. Children from as far as Sneinton, Basford, Carlton, Wollaton and Beeston came to attend these classes.

Encouraged by this response, *Karimia* approached the local regeneration budget and was able to get funding for three years from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) to support these classes. As class sizes increased, *Karimia* approached Forest School (now Djanogly City Academy) which provided class rooms for special Sunday schools. The school also benefited from this project, as most of the children who attend these classes were students of this school. The children were getting one-to one support in a culturally relevant environment. A parent whose children benefited from this project said:



*Everyone is a winner from this project. Karimia gets more members, children get help in Math and English, Forest Schools get support for its pupils and parents can keep children off the streets. This project was made possible when people made a lot noise that our kids are not doing well in education. (HA<sup>33</sup>, Dec 2000)*

But to think of Radio *Ramzan* as an absolute example of democratic participation would not be true. No initiative or project can claim to be representative of all views and shades of opinion. Radio *Ramzan*, while trying to be representative of most of the Muslims in Nottingham, cannot claim to be representing everyone. Theorizing the radio that way will be contrary to the conceptualization of community as a mass of differing and agreeing interests that take different positions as part of a strategy. Radio cannot make all the people happy all the time. Being inside the radio station most of the time, I did not always get views from the fringes of this radio. Most of the feedback we had was coming from people who were the core supporters and participants of the project. However, from secondary sources, the feedback we were getting was not positive.

The management committee was perceived as a source of the real power and its ownership and control was questioned. I first heard of this, when a caller identifying himself as MI questioned the authority of Dr Musharraf Hussain in a live broadcast. He was invited to take part in a live discussion on the radio station but he chose to talk over the phone. His views were aired and he accused the management committee of misappropriation of funds and nepotism. His specific accusations though were against the charity 'Muslim Hands', which was closely associated with the *Karimia Mosque* and Radio *Ramzan*. The radio had to invite the chairman of the Muslim Hands Charity to answer the allegation. The chairman

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<sup>33</sup> HA wanted to remain anonymous. As regular Radio listener of Radio *Ramzan* and volunteer at *Karimia Mosque*, he was one of the parents who played key role in organising these classes. (Excerpts for the Interview, Dec 1999)

being also the management committee member of the radio was not happy to react to what he called 'baseless allegation'. His presence on the radio did not, however, pacify callers as many more rang in. However, there were many in the audience who supported the Muslim Hands charity for its work in Kashmir and Pakistan.

There were off-air meeting and negotiations going on among the committee members after this live show to reflect on whether the radio station was inviting undue attention. But the majority of the committee members including Dr. Musharraf Hussain was of the opinion that these debates are good for the long term sustainability of community initiatives. There were, nonetheless, some tense and awkward moments people running the radio station had to deal with.

Another division of opinion emerged during a discussion on whether the Muslim community in Nottingham needed a separate Muslim school or whether the religious and cultural needs of Muslim pupils should be met within the mainstream schools. A discussion show was moderated by FRK, one of the management committee members of Radio *Ramzan* who was also respected across various shades and opinions in the community. The guests included Ibrahim Hewitt, chair of Muslim Schools Association, Dr Musharraf Hussain of *Karimia Mosque* Ibrahim Lawson, a Muslim teacher in a mainstream school, and Labour Councilor, Mohammed Aslam, who is also chairman of the community group, the Pakistan Centre. This discussion was an eye-opener, as panelists and listeners in a very candid debate looked at the advantages and disadvantages of having a separate Muslim school.

The supporters of a separate state-funded school like Dr Musharraf were saying that mainstream schools did not cater to the social and religious needs of the students, but those who opposed this move including Councilor Aslam, argued

that such a school will divide the community and create ghettos. The discussion was widely listened to as the show recorded 34 phone calls from listeners, some who went on air while some asked questions off air. The discussion did not find a consensus or amicable resolution of the issue, but in order to take the issue further it was decided to conduct a survey among the members of the Muslim community.

While this debate dismantled the myth that every Muslim wants a separate school, at the same time it allowed people to voice their opinions and concerns in a democratic manner. So the radio played a big part in making people's views and reservations public on important issues touching their lives. Mohammad Ibrahim, a local councillor and former Lord Mayor of Nottingham, accepts the differences but is positive about the role *Radio Ramzan* played:

*We have differences, and that is the way things are. We would hardly engage in debates to explore these differences to find some ground for collective action on issues that affected us all. Take the example of Muslim burial ground or state funded Islamic school in Nottingham. We remain divided...We still have differences of opinion but at least we're talking now. With Radio Ramzan on air, people with different affiliations and loyalties were voicing their concerns which otherwise was not possible. With nearly a dozen mosques and an even higher number of community and political groups operational in the city, it was always difficult to bring people together to talk. Consequently, everyone was working within their own circles...I have many differences with the way Karimia Mosque is run, but the radio station created a space beyond the walls of mosques and community groups, and for the time, I felt we were talking on a common ground.* (Mohammed Ibrahim, 2000)

AREA	CALLS
Forest	22
Lenton	18
Radford	17
Sneinton	20
Meadows	8
West Bridgford	3
Aspley	7
Park	5
Carlton	2
New Basford	6
Wollaton	4
Mapperley	5
St. Anns	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>121</b>

**Table III:** A log of Phone calls received at Radio *Ramzan* (Dec. 2000)

McQuail (1994) has highlighted the role of the horizontal patterns of such democratic communication necessary for social action. But it will be naive to think that this radio station can overcome all the social, political, cultural and economic disadvantages the Mirpuri community faces. Similarly, to assume that Radio *Ramzan* can represent all the shades of Muslim communities will not be only impractical but also misleading. The differences and divisions within the Muslim groups are a result of historical and doctrinal perspectives that cannot be resolved on a radio show. Although Radio *Ramzan* could be heard in the whole of Nottingham's urban areas and in some outskirts as well, its loyal audience lives in Forest Fields, Radford, Basford, Hyson Green, Lenton, Sneinton and Basford. These are the areas with the highest concentration of Muslims.

A log of the phone calls<sup>34</sup> received by the station showed 80 per cent of the calls came from these areas of the city. It can be argued that the very presence of Radio *Ramzan* in the community generated responses and debates at a larger level by opening up a space wherein people negotiate and align strategically on a common ground. During the month of Ramadan, this strategy becomes more important for Muslims due to the heightened consciousness about the 'community' which is reinforced time and again during this month through sermons, festivities and the ritual of fasting. Radio *Ramzan* mirrors this feeling on a community-wide platform. While religion remains main focus of this radio, it helps to blend the social, economic, political and spiritual of life. Through this process the community becomes a dynamic construct that creates solidarities across divisions and differences.

For example, the fight against social exclusion brings various marginalised groups together as they see themselves victims of a common discourse. The health faced by minority ethnic groups along with some of the white disadvantaged people living in deprived areas is one of the most obvious sign of the process of social exclusion. The UK is considered to be one of the most unequal societies in the world in terms of health (Wilkinson, 1996; Anderson, 2000). These inequalities, categorized by socio-economic measures or by ethnic group or gender, have also been linked with the areas people live in and their racial, minority and immigration status (Adams, 1995; Kawachi et al., 1997). The racial background of many minority ethnic groups living in poor areas becomes important part of this discourse. (A discussion on the racialisation of health is included in Chapter 4)

One of the failures of social policy in the UK is seen to be its disproportionate focus on the social while overlooking the cultural and political aspects. The official

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<sup>34</sup> These phone calls also correspond with the concentration of the Muslim population in Nottingham. The log was based on amount of calls received over a period of one week in December 2000 during the HEAP project.

discourse of social exclusion/inclusion does not engage with the knowledge and experience of marginalized people, which is seen to be one of the reasons for failure in translating policies into practice (Rodrigues, 2000). The practice of health promotion is one clear example of the lack of appreciation of the cultural practices of people in fighting inequalities in health. Health promotion is largely seen to be influenced by the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion endorsed by the WHO, 1986. This charter has come under increasing criticism for reflecting a Western, post-Cartesian value system (Davies and MacDonald, 1998). However, some scholars and practitioners now see the concept of health promotion as a practice influenced by faith and culture, and argue that health awareness is supported by Quranic texts. These scholars conceptualise an alternative vision of health promotion informed by the Islamic value system (Leeuw and Hussein, 1999). The Health Education Awareness Project, which was the highlight of Radio *Ramzan's* broadcast in 1999-2000, brought all these debates into focus by demonstrating the need to develop a contextual approach in addressing inequalities in health that recognizes the agency of culture and faith.

## **Health Education Awareness Project (HEAP)**

After completing the two monthly broadcasts (29th December 1997- 28th January, 1998 and 19th December 1998-18th January, 1999) successfully, Radio *Ramzan* was given the license for the third time in a row to broadcast during the month of Ramadan once again from 8th December 1999 to 7th January, 2000. Since Radio *Ramzan* was coming back after the gap of a year, there was a sense of anticipation and excitement within the Muslim communities living in Nottingham. The month of Ramadan, as on the previous occasion, added special significance to this radio station. The fuzzy management of the radio was a bit more organized now. A constitution was now in place with written guidelines for

the operation of this radio station. There was also a team of more confident and keen volunteers prepared to run the station once again. The two months of broadcasting during previous years had done good, as public support had peaked towards the end of the last broadcast as 'culturally relevant' content in 'local languages' presented by 'local people' within the 'religious ethos' had increased the popularity of Radio *Ramzan* (based on the feedback session<sup>35</sup> ).

The radio station being located within the heart of the Mirpuri community in the Forest Fields/ Hyson Green area, had made it part of the community calendar in Nottingham. Hence the expectations of the 1999-2000 Radio *Ramzan* from its listeners were high. There was already a section of the community who wanted a permanent station, but there were others who opposed this idea. The last two Radio *Ramzan* had raised the profile of the *Karimia Mosque* and it had attained the distinction of working on social and economic issues pertinent to the community. This experience helped Karimia to network with the Police, Housing, Health and Leisure Departments, along with the local council officials and politicians flocked to the radio. Broadcasting through this medium was proving a cost-effective way to reach out to the 'hard to reach' groups. Radio *Ramzan* also gave the legitimacy to the information provided due to its association with the *Karimia Mosque* and the fact the broadcasting was taking place in the month of Ramadan.

It was not just content but the context which was critical in this process of communication. While education and employment remained the focus of the previous two Radio *Ramzans*, the third radio series was dedicated to the issues around the health of minority ethnic groups, especially that of Mirpuri community in Nottingham. In association with the Specialist Health Promotion Service of

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<sup>35</sup> At the end of the month long radio broadcast, the listeners of Radio *Ramzan* were invited to an open day to provide the feedback on the HEAP campaign. The detailed results of this feedback sessions are included in a separate section in this chapter.

Nottingham Health Authority, *Karimia Mosque* developed a comprehensive health education project using Radio *Ramzan* as a vehicle to reach out to the community and seek their participation in developing culturally sensitive and socially relevant strategies to fight inequalities in health.

This partnership approach between public and voluntary sector has become part of a new discourse in which the concepts of community mobilization and local participation are sought to reduce health inequalities and promote good health among marginalised groups. Supported by many surveys and research findings, the participatory approach in health education and delivery is highlighted in various health policy documents (Acheson, 1998, Department of Health 1999a, 1999b, Social Exclusion Unit, 2000). This approach is also present in various international declarations supported by World Health Organisation (WHO) including Alma Ata Declaration (1978), the Ottawa Charter (1986), Amman Declaration (1996) and Jakarta Declaration (1997). However, the populist paradigm of participation has come under attack for its technical, theoretical, political and conceptual limitations. There is a range of critiques available about the populist participation approach (Bastian & Bastian, 1996; Nelson and Wright 1995). Although there are critics of this approach who question the rhetorical use of participation and demand clarification on terms, mechanism and conditions of partnerships and alliances (Cook and Kothari, 2001), the approach of involving victims of inequality to fight inequality does make sense when participation is on the terms of victims.

As discussed in Chapter Four, the inequalities in health are a combination of social, economic and political issues, and one way to deal with them is to empower people so that they understand the causes and consequences of this inequality.



Looking at the literature on the participatory approaches in dealing with health inequalities, three major models emerge:

- Management approach to Participation
- Social Capital approach to Participation
- Empowerment approach to Participation

The managerial approach to participation is seen as a top-down process often directed by the source and change agents (Bordenave, 1980). Though, in theory, this approach is about involvement of people at the strategic and operational level in the delivery of health services, in practice such participation is seen to be 'tyrannical' as people are co-opted through selection and coercion to make governments and aid agencies look good on paper (Cook and Kothari, 2001). By co-opting people and communities through granting concessions, this approach manages involvement of people to make participation less a threat for those in power (Bordenave, 1980; Rahnema 1992).

Within the social capital approach, the participation is conceptualized as a resource that increases trust, networking and cooperation among people living in close proximity (Bourdieu, 1986, Putnam, 1993). The concept has become popular within the discourse of the healthism, in which the state and its machinery are seen to make people responsible for their health and the blame for inequality is put on the victims of inequality. Purdy (1999) argues that by emphasizing the socially 'responsible choice', New Labour echoes and endorses the neo-conservative theme of the individual's responsibility to society (Purdy: 69). Scholars see the concept as an attempt to reintroduce a social dimension to capitalism (Schuller et al., 2000).

The paradigm of empowerment which has attracted the attention of theoreticians and practitioners alike advocates involvement of people and the recognition of local

knowledge and accumulated wisdom in the 'process of increasing control by groups over consequences that are important to their members and to others in the broader community' (Fawcett, et al., 1984: 146). The concept is interwoven with the egalitarian practice of democratic participation and communicative interaction (Melkote and Steeve, 2001).

## **Revisiting methodological framework**

The debate emerging from the intersection of Post-structuralism, Feminism and Liberation Theology provide an 'assumptive basis' for participatory strategies (Melkote and Steeve, 2001). This context-based paradigm sees participation-as – an end approach provides a dynamic framework for analyzing debates on participation, power and empowerment. From this perspective, Rowland (1999) argues that "empowerment is more than participation in decision-making; it must also include the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions" (1999: 14).

This conceptualization of participation and empowerment lends support the framework for exploring and evaluating the role of Radio *Ramzan* in facilitating the involvement of local people in community issues. Within this framework, the empowerment is linked to the democratic communication (for details on this framework refer to Chapter Three on Methodology of this thesis). The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) based in Canada, emphasizing the need to give people the voice in their own development, encourages the role for community radio as a vehicle for expression and participation of the community. This link between people's experiences and expression is critical among marginalised communities facing multiple disadvantage and inequalities.

According to the 2001 Census, there are 2.4 million people of South Asian origin from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, making it the largest ethnic minority group in the UK and makeup over four per cent of the UK population. Despite representing a large proportion of the UK minority ethnic population, health statistics comparing people of South Asian origin with the general population highlight significant health inequalities. Pakistani (mostly Mirpuri) and Bangladeshi (mostly Sylheti) people, predominantly Muslim, have rates of cardiovascular disease 60 per cent to 70 per cent higher than men in the general population. Similarly, the prevalence of Diabetes, Obesity and the rate of premature deaths due to Coronary heart disease are significantly higher among these people than the rest of the population. These figures, however, need to be taken with caution as disparities occur between people of various origins and between men and women among the South Asian population. Whatever may be the variables and differences with various South Asian communities, one thing is clear that these groups suffer from significant health inequalities, which also correspond with the levels of material deprivation these communities face. Social and material conditions are considered to have a direct impact on the health of people, and Mirpuri communities have been identified as suffering 50 per cent higher rates of Coronary heart disease than other comparative ethnic groups and five times the risk of developing Diabetes (Nazroo, 1997).

It will be, however, simplistic to collapse ethnicity and poverty into poor health. Issues like racism, culture, ethnic identity and factors shaping peoples' participation are also seen as valid factors in determining the health of people and communities (Nazroo, 1998; Smaje, 1996; Williams et al., 1997).

Chapter Four of this thesis explores the issues around health inequalities like racialisation of health, healthism and managerialism in health services. Part of the problem is that the discourse of healthism depends on the Western medical model of health which sees well-being as a state of the body without disease.

This clinical understanding of health ignores or dismisses the role of cultural practices and beliefs of people in improving their health and feeling well (WHO, 1988).

Against this background, Radio *Ramzan* developed a month long multi-agency intensive health education campaign bringing together health professionals, community workers, religious leaders, volunteers and statutory organizations to find a common ground to fight inequalities in health faced by the Mirpuri community living in inner city Nottingham. The project resulted from a partnership which had developed between the Specialist Health Promotion Service (SHPS), Nottingham Community Health NHS Trust, the *Karimia* Institute of Nottingham and City Central Primary Care Trust (PCT).

The project was basically a partnership project between the City Central Primary Care Trust (PCT) in Nottingham and the *Karimia*. While Dr Musharraf was the main person from the *Karimia*, Mr. Roger Williams, then Chief Executive of the City Central PC T represented the NHS in the project (a copy of the HEAP Proposal is enclosed as appendix F).

The objectives of the HEAP project included:

- Generate and share knowledge from the experiences of health from participants, which can be used as guidance for change to promote health education and mobilization for culturally relevant action.
- Develop a contextual approach in addressing some of the pertinent health issues among the Mirpuri community by acknowledging and adopting the cultural practices prevalent in this community.
- Facilitate the participation of marginalized people in local health initiatives so that they can take a more pro-active part in looking after their health and the health of others in the community.

- Raise awareness about health services in general and about rights and responsibilities of people in particular.

The details of the project were:

- Production and broadcast of 12, one hour-long interactive, radio shows on various health issues pertinent to minority ethnic groups.
- Production of Public Service Announcements (PSA) of 60 seconds duration in Mirpuri, Urdu, Bengali (Syelhetti) and English. These PSA to be played on the hourly basis round the clock during the month of Ramadan.
- A competition on health issues to keep the community involved with the project. A seminar at the end of the project to get feedback from public and evaluate the success of the HEAP.

The process of conceiving and delivering the HEAP project involved developing strategies to bridge the gulf between theory and practice. While we had the broad principles of participation and empowerment guiding us, it was the actual practice of situating these principles within the faith, culture and experiences of marginalized people that made the process meaningful. Developing, practicing and recording this project revealed a number of processes and generated many issues concerning the use of community-based media in fighting inequalities, ignorance and injustices. I am using the following sources of evidence to reveal this process.

- My own recollection and reflection (based on field notes).
- Documentary evidence such as policy documents, publicity material, minutes of meetings, agendas, reports, letters, emails, phone calls.
- Feedback from open days and comments on evaluation forms.
- Interviews with 12 people involved in the running of the HEAP project.

Some of the information is collected retrospectively over a period of time and may be influenced by my own perceptions and interpretations.

The role of voluntary organisations, including community groups, in supporting the people belonging to minority groups in education, health, housing, immigration issues and employment is well established within the discourse of community development (Mayo and Craig, 1995). The voluntary sector is known to facilitate involvement of local people in community affairs (Farnell et al., 2003).

A number of studies on the relation between religiosity and health have revealed a consistent link between the two (Levin, 1996). Within the Muslim population in the UK, the role of the mosque as a social and cultural reference is valued by Muslims. The institution of the mosque is also used by service providers to reach out to the members of the Muslim community. Islam highlights the importance of good health overtly and reminds every Muslims to look after their health and well-being as part of their religious duty. Islam views health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing. The Quran repeatedly emphasizes the importance of health with guidelines on healthy living, cleanliness and physical exercise, prohibition from intoxication and advice on food and nutrition. (Quran 2:168, 5:90, 20:80, 55:7-9).

Although Islam clearly highlights the role of health and wellbeing in a just and equitable society, not much research has been undertaken to study the relationship between Islam and health behaviour. The first major effort to recognise the role of Islam in Health was the World Health Organisations' consultation on Islamic lifestyles and their impact on health development which took place in Amman in 1996. (Copy of the declaration is attached as Appendix E) The paper on recommendations of this consultation, known as Amman Declaration, identified more than 50 aspects of health, including nutrition, food

safety, personal and community hygiene, waste disposal, sexual relationships, breast-feeding and child care, mental health, alcohol consumption and substance abuse, on which the Islamic teachings could offer guidance.

As explained earlier in this chapter, there are over 1000 purpose-built and makeshift mosques in the UK, and many of these mosques are not active in the social and cultural life of the communities they serve. However, some big mosques offer people services in issues related to culture and faith but these Mosques have now extended their role in delivering culturally sensitive interventions in health, education and employment. Besides the mosques, Muslim health professionals, including doctors have set up national organisations and institutions in the UK to educate members of the Muslim community on health issues. The Muslim Health Network (MHN) was established to play a principal role in promoting, preserving, and protecting health amongst the Muslim communities in the UK. The aim of the network is to improve the standard of health and wellbeing within the community through information, support, news, advice, events and the promotion of general health issues. Similarly the Muslim Doctors and Dentists Association (MDDA) provide consultation and support to mosques and other institutions to promote healthy living among the Muslim communities in the UK. The *Karimia Mosque*, as explained earlier in this chapter, took a wider role in community development providing services in education, recreation and health for the members of Muslim community. Consequently, the mosque has become the focus of not just the spiritual but the social life of the Muslim communities living in Nottingham.

As the third year of Radio *Ramzan* approached, the Primary Care Trust (PCT) City Central – a city focused health initiative of the National Health Service (NHS)- was introduced to address the health inequalities in the area. The role of the PCT to improve health through developing partnerships with the local community

presented a great opportunity for the *Karimia Mosque*. The PCT covering the geographical area within which the *Karimia* institute was based was City Central. When the PCT City Central was approached to formalize a partnership they were not only very keen but excited to work with the *Karimia*.

Roger Williams, then Chief Executive of the City Central PCT, sums up the keenness of the National Health Service (NHS) to work with the *Karimia* on this health education project using the unique medium of Radio *Ramzan*: There was a huge advantage to us in having a strong partnership with *Karimia* Institute. The interpretation of our health messages within an Islamic perspective added authority to what we were saying and increased the chances that listeners would take notice of what was being said. The partnership with *Karimia* institute also helped us to raise sensitive issues such as sexual health and domestic violence within an Islamic framework (Roger Williams, 2001). The subsequent project proposal which developed fitted in with the PCT City Central's objectives and priority area and offered an opportunity for the NHS to develop a stronger community partnership and develop the potential capacity building opportunities.

From the *Karimia* point of view, this was an opportunity to address the health issues and make the mosque more meaningful to the social realities of local Muslim population. This was also an opportunity to engage with service providers and give them first insight into cultural practices of people they ought to service. Dr. Musharraf Hussain, the Imam of the *Karimia Mosque*, and the architect of faith based social intervention in Nottingham, said:

Historically, mosque has played a pivotal role in Muslim societies. But due to the Western mind set, spirituality has been reduced to a private thing. *Karimia* is trying to bring Mosque back to the forefront of the public life and use this important resource in developing Muslim communities. Projects like HEAP help us to bring service providers and users together to



make interventions meaningful for those who need the services most. It helps government and other agencies to understand the cultural context of the people who they are trying to engage with. Health projects like HEAP benefit us all (Based on interview with Musharraf Hussain. Jan, 2000).

The PCT and *Karimia* made a joint steering group to develop the HEAP project. While Yesmean Khalil, a health promotion specialist (YK) from PCT and me from *Karimia* were given the responsibility to lead the project, the committee had the following members:

Roger Williams, City Central PCT

Moulana Safi Ullah, a local Imam

Dr Khan, GP at Mary Potters health centre

Sue Williams, NHS Direct

Rehman Syed, a youth worker

Tahira Khan, local teacher

The committee met twice and deliberated on the topics, structure and delivery of the HEAP project. The following topics were identified to as appropriate for the Radio shows:

- Introductory show- Health Inequalities
- Coronary Heart Disease and Diabetes
- Stroke and Physical Activity
- Smoking
- Diet and Nutrition
- Asthma
- Accident Prevention
- Sexual Health
- Mental Health
- Thalassemia
- Domestic Violence (A copy of the HEAP schedule is enclosed as Appendix G)

The following additions were made while the project was running, due to requests from various agencies and organisations to become part of the HEAP project:

- The Interpretation Service
- The Radford Visiting Scheme
- The African Caribbean Asian Forum.

The topics selected for discussion reflected both national and local policy, priorities and plans including the Health Improvement Programme and Health Action Zone. The topics also reflected pertinent issues concerning the Mirpuri/Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. While a panel of professionals, local people and a religious leader provided advice on the various aspects of this project, it was the Mirpuri-speaking health promotion specialist Yesmean Khalil who worked for the Specialist Health Promotions Scheme of the Nottingham Health Authority who proved a real asset for this project.

Yesmean Khalil is a British born second generation Mirpuri whose parents had migrated to the UK in the 1960's. She has lived all her life in Nottingham and understood the social, cultural and political aspects of ethnic minority life in Nottingham very well. She is part of an effective community worker network which proved very beneficial to the HEAP project. Her greatest asset was the understanding of the health issues, and she is very 'political' about the issues around health inequalities.

I worked closely with her to develop this project. While her background, knowledge of the subject, an impressive contact list and her position in the community were key factors that determined the course of HEAP project, my background in media, association with *Karimia Mosque* and my role as coordinator of Radio *Ramzan* helped to put things together and deliver it within a tight schedule and budget. We both shared the political views and passion that

argued for validation of marginalised perspectives and we both were very vocal and active in promoting them. Reflecting on why she chose to develop a health project this way, she said:

*Radio Ramzan was different. It was not the mainstream media...you know what I mean. It was for people who would not normally listen to the BBC or Trent FM. Radio Ramzan would give a different point of view, and everyone wanted to hear that. My favourite was the late night show...It was a fantastic current affairs prog and talked about today's issues and the challenges community faced. And all these issue whether social, political or economic are inter-related and have an impact on health. So you cannot put health in that medical box...it is all connected. Radio Ramzan helped to look at health as a whole and not just from the clinical point of view. This is important for a community that is disadvantaged and faces inequalities in health. I remember some of the issues touched in the HEAP programmes were picked up by other programmes and there was continuing debate on the following day. In fact the debates were not confined to radio only. As a community worker I know how these discussions cascaded down. The month of Ramadan added values to these debates. The shows on sex education, mental health and smoking had a better reception as the Karimia Mosque gave the health education campaign the much need cultural legitimacy and social proximity. (Yesmean Khalil, 2000, excerpts from a recorded interview)*

Yesmean provided the matrix for the HEAP project and also identified resource persons and wrote the scripts for the shows. I fronted this project by hosting the radio show and working with a team of volunteers who would be at the reception, do the technical tasks and take phone calls during the show. This small team of people knew each other and gelled together well. I had first seen Junaid

Mehmood (JM), the receptionist, in the mosque coming regularly for prayers. He later joined the *Karimia* Sunday school and played cricket with local lads. JM is the nephew of a member of the management committee member of *Karimia* Institute. His uncle Asghar Mehmood (AM) was the main person who looked after the technical side of the radio. AM worked as a network engineer at a computer company in Derby and was a regular attendee at the *Karimia Mosque*. AM and JM belonged to the local Mistaree Biradari and were very well connected in the community.

Their presence at the radio station attracted lot more young people, and in the afternoon and evenings, particularly at the time of Magrib (dusk) Radio *Ramzan* would be buzzing with activity. These young men were keen to do voice-overs, find music and tidy up the place. Having this commitment and ownership of the Radio was crucial in delivering the HEAP project which relied heavily on volunteers in outreach, production, delivery and evaluation of this health education programme on Radio *Ramzan*. While the *Karimia* and Radio *Ramzan* were lacking capacity and financial resources, though it had dependable human resources in terms of volunteers who would make things happen. The centrality of the *Karimia Mosque* in the social life of the local Mirpuri population kept these volunteers focused, and there was an incentive of 'creating our own media'.

This sense of achievement was more intense among the younger generation of Mirpuri people, born and brought up in the UK; as JM<sup>36</sup> put it:

Although I'm into reggae and stuff like that but at the end of the day I cannot be what I'm not. Do you see what I mean? I'm a Mirpuri...speak Mirpuri and love Desi life style. But the problem is we do not have a voice,

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<sup>36</sup> JM belongs to the *Mistaree* clan of Mirpuri community and he was interviewed many times during the Radio *Ramzan* project.

we are seen as outsiders though I was born here and my mates are Gora (white). Radio *Ramzan* may not be the best thing but at least something we can own and make noise about. (JM, 1999-2000, Excerpts from the informal interview)

Melkote and Steeve (2001), mapping the debates on empowerment led perspectives, argue that the cultural practices of people are detrimental for the success of community-based projects. They highlight, within the context of developing countries, the role of 'religious organisation and motivation in the fight against discrimination' and disadvantage (2001: 293). From above comments it is clear that reference to religion is not divorced from the social aspects of life. The HEAP project was conceived and delivered within this context.

## **The Studio: a place of our own**

After completing two successful stints in 1997 and 1998, the Radio Ramzan was set up in December 1999 in the second floor of a book shop on Radford Road. The access to the studio was through this book shop which was surrounded by books, CD's and Islamic artifacts. This created a unique ambiance. There were few chairs, and desk with two telephones receivers, a microphone and scores of leaflets about NHS Direct, Smoking Cessation, Diabetes control and Coronary heart diseases in various languages scattered among the with leaflets from local kebab shops, take-aways', groceries and taxi services. This created a surreal contrast. Two A3 size colour posters with verses of Quran and English translation decorate the wall of reception. One of the posters reads: 'Best among mankind is he who brings benefit to other' and the other poster read: 'Be always Just; this is closest to being God-fearing'. There was also a poster about the Race and Community Relations Award distinctly displayed in this area. A calendar published

by the Nottingham City Council showing different religious and other festivals was prominently displayed in the reception area. The walls of the studio were carpeted to make them soundproof. The walls displayed the Ramadan time table. A map of the Islamic world showed the global Muslim population in varying shades of green. Whosoever entered into this studio would find it distinctly different from the sleek studios of BBC and commercial radio.

The studio was not well organised, but there was a sense of ownership and pride among the people who worked there. Despite the ingenious sound-proofing, it could not cut the noise of the police sirens and car horns (frequent on Radford Road) and occasional football chants coming from the Hyson Green football ground situated just behind the studio. However, despite these inadequacies and deficiencies, people developed an affinity with this station, and it was seen as 'our own initiative'. Many people listening to the radio rang in, sent emails and 'sms' and even wrote letters (sample of letters included in the Appendix) to show their support and some of them came physically to the studio to help. BH, our 18-year-old regular phone receptionist, had a passion for cricket. Being a friend of sportsman like Bilal Shifayat (Former England under 19 Captain), BH wanted to play for Nottinghamshire and England one day, though he supported the Pakistan team. BH is typical of Mirpuri/Pakistani lads whose loyalty, when it comes to cricket, shifts from England to Pakistan. He mentioned his impressions:

*The best thing I like about this radio station is the buzz. I can feel part of the team here and it is not something my parents do not like. The whole family listens to radio, especially at the time of the opening the fast, and my Dad is regular Nasheed (Islamic Poetry) reader on Radio Ramzan...I suppose, other than cricket, Radio Ramzan is the something, me and my Dad have common in (BH<sup>37</sup>, Dec, 1999).*

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<sup>37</sup> BH was one of the volunteers who would be at the station very early in the morning. This excerpt is from the conversation I had with him while he was helping me out in the studio during the *Sahree* (breakfast show) on the radio.

A caller from West Bridgford, a suburb of Nottingham who complained about the quality of the sound a couple of times, volunteered to do the acoustic treatment to the studio. He brought with him polystyrene sheets and spent half a day putting them on the walls of the studio to reduce the echo. This volunteer happened to be a sound engineer who worked at the local airport. There were several other such examples where people using their own areas of expertise came to help. It was partly due to the heightened religious fervour and partly due to listening to 'our own' radio that encouraged people to join in and offer support. It is difficult to predict whether people would show the same level of commitment if the radio was run beyond the month of Ramadan. There are issues around the sustainability of community based-projects, which we will try to address towards the end of this chapter.

As it was the month of Ramadan and the community was following the ritual of fasting with a heightened spiritual and communal consciousness, the radio station supplemented this environment with talks, songs and programmes about their way of life. In this atmosphere, the HEAP project had a more focused audience, which service providers would otherwise find hard to reach through mainstream media. The HEAP programme schedule was designed in a way so that health professionals would be joined by community workers, religious leaders and bilingual link workers to make the content of these shows relevant and acceptable to a vast majority of Radio *Ramzan* listeners. This was one big change from the mainstream media which would not cater to individual groups within the broad category for ethnic minority. Programmes in Mirpuri language, Urdu and Bengali along with English made these programmes relevant to various language groups living in Nottingham, though Mirpuri remained the main focus.

The BBC, which was founded on the principle of being the guardian of 'national culture', is finding it hard to define which culture it represents as British society is

changing, transforming and accommodating and adopting various cultures, languages and ways of life. The singularity of culture associated with the BBC in reality excludes many cultures, and it is now seen as inadequate to reflect the shades of political and cultural diversity (Negrine, 1988). In contrast, community radio like Radio *Ramzan* evolves from the community and reflects its various good and not so good shades. Its nearness to people and topicality enhances the social gain necessary for helping people fight exclusion. With this epistemological privilege, HEAP set the stage for the month long debates and discussions to help people engage with the causes and consequences of inequality they faced in their daily lives.

## **The First Show**

On Thursday, the 9th of December, 1999, five panellists walked into the studio to raise the curtain on a unique multi-agency health project. The panel consisted of:

- Roger Williams, City Central PCT Chief executive,
- Helen Thomson, NHS Direct Communication and training manager
- Dr Zahoor Khan Local GP, Mirpuri Speaking,
- Dr Musharraf Hussain, *Karimia Mosque*
- Rashida Riaz, NHS bilingual worker

The show started with a health jingle (the Public Service Announcement) in Mirpuri language followed by its English rendering to set the context to the first curtain raiser for the HEAP Project. I anchored this show in which panelists introduced themselves and after the introduction to the project from Dr Musharraf, Roger Williams spelt out the aims and objectives of this month long health education campaign.



The show adopted a multi-language approach using Mirpuri, English and Urdu languages. Rashida Riaz translated and summed up from English into Mirpuri while the rest of the panelists switched between Urdu, Mirpuri and English. Dr. Zahoor Khan, a Mirpuri himself, spoke in Mirpuri and gave valuable insights into the health issues, peoples' expectations and his constraints as a General Practitioner working for a local health centre.

On a question about his experiences of being a Mirpuri doctor in an area with a large number of Mirpuri people Dr. Khan said:

*There are many people from our community who want to spend bit more time with me and talk about the issues which are not necessarily about health but have a direct impact on their well being. The isolation, family problems, cultural issues etc...but I can not. I wish I had time to do that. We are not necessarily addressing the core context, but we take a very narrow view of illness. I cannot do more than prescribe a pill. No doubt there are provisions for referring people, but the culture these people come from does not operate this way. In their culture doctor is very important. The minute we refer them to someone else they have this feeling of being ignored and not given the best advice. (Dr Zahoor Khan on Radio Ramzan, December 1999)*

When I summarized this interesting insight in English for the benefit of English-speaking panellists, Roger Williams said:

*This is the predicament. While NHS is trying its best to provide a culturally and socially appropriate service, the inadequacy of resources on one hand and expectations of service users on the other hand make it hard to strike a balance. I agree that health issues need to look at the context and develop a holistic approach, but we need to learn more and know more. The HEAP is an ideal platform to exchange ideas.*

Dr Musharraf chose to speak in English:

*This is responsibility of NHS to offer appropriate services for people of various cultural backgrounds and give them a say in the running of services for them. So far we have only seen tokenism. Things can only improve when there are long term partnerships with community groups who should be used in the delivery of services rather than being used or the sake of partnerships.*

Dr Khan intervened:

*This is a two-way process. People also have to come forward and make their views and comments heard. Community groups and Mosques like Karimia can play an important role in initiating a dialogue between service providers and users. It is not just health but in every aspect, places like Mosques are crucial. Having said that there are issues around women's participation. Mosques still remain predominantly male dominated, and we have to be imaginative to get women involved in these debates and issues.*

While these comments were being translated into English, both Roger and Helen were acknowledging the validity of these comments by nodding their heads in approval.

At this point a caller wanted to go on air to make a comment. I felt a bit nervous. This was the first show, and we were not sure what the caller wanted to say on air. On the console/mixer I could see a line flashing. I decided to take a short commercial break. The break was over a minute long. This gave us all breathing space. I immediately told the panel that there is a caller who wants to go on air. I could now see the nervousness on everybody's face, but the people at the reception desk who would transfer telephone calls into the studio

looked excited. This call was the indication that there are people out there interested in what we were talking about on the radio. We were back in a minute or so, I summarized what was being said so far and went straight to the caller and asked him to introduce himself. It was actually a female (who did not want to identify herself). She spoke in Urdu and after congratulating everyone for putting together this show and then had this comment to make:

*In our society, unfortunately, everything is decided by men even the doctor and health service. Women have many problems and going to doctor sometimes is not helpful. Women need to be culturally more appropriate places and venues where they can access the services. I'm obese, and suffering from Diabetes, I cannot go for swimming and gym in mixed places ...what I'm trying to say is we need such facilities within our community... (A caller who rang into a live radio show, Dec. 2000)*

This was translated quickly and efficiently by Rashida and panelists were looking at each other to respond. It was Roger who raised his hand:

*We do understand the sensitivities around women's issues, especially among the women of South Asian origin. We are providing language and interpretation service to address these issues but obviously we need to do more. Maybe the community will have to come forward and work with other agencies to provide services which can help people like this caller....*

At this point, Helen Thomson joined the discussion:

NHS Direct provides a confidential service where people can call 24 hours or drop in at one of our centres. Dr Musharraf of *Karimia*:

*As an Imam I understand the problems faced by our community. The women need service provisions that look at the sensitivities of being a*

*Mirpuri woman. That is why it will be appropriate for the government to develop Mosques as places where such services can be provided. At the Karimia, we have made some progress in this regard. (Discussion on Live Radio)*

Reflecting on the whole debate, I felt neither the health centre in a mosque nor having a translator at the mainstream health centre can solve the issues raised by the caller. The caller, by raising the important issue of patriarchy within the Mirpuri community, was also offering a solution by asking for community-based provisions for staying healthy. Roger's and Helen's answers were within the discourse of 'Healthism' where the problem is seen to be at the receiving end. The service of NHS Direct is not very relevant here. Even if a woman wants to go to their drop-in centre, she needs permission to get out of the house, and in many cases does not drive herself, and need a transport. Above all, the real or perceived fear of racism makes it harder for such women to venture out of their houses and access mainstream services. Unfamiliarity with procedural matters while accessing such services makes things even harder.

Dr Musharraf's assertion that mosque can fill the gap where service providers cannot reach is not a complete solution. Mosques, especially in the UK, remain a male phenomenon. Very few mosques have provisions for women, and I suspect that women who find it hard to access services at mainstream centres will be no more comfortable with using such services at mosques. My concerns were echoed by Yesmean Khalil who, herself being a Mirpuri woman, understands these issues very well. However, we agreed that an hour-long radio programme is no way near to offering solutions to the complex problem of health inequality, but the fact that these issues were being discussed on a community wide platform is in itself an achievement. It was interesting to see those who hold bureaucratic, professional and religious power being questioned

by those who these people exercise power over.

The power, temporarily though, was shifting from these powerful persons to less powerful listeners of radio who were in a position to decide what and what not to listen to and at the same time ask difficult questions making the panel answerable. Post-structuralism theory helps to understand the circularity of power relations in the production of subjectivities (Hollway 1984). Thus, the ways and means through which particular groups are marginalized can be uncovered by delving into the hierarchies of power that construct our realities (Kamler, Maclean, Reid & Simpson 1994). This way Foucault provides a tool which can explain how power is exercised through discourse and how resistance is possible against this exercise.

Generally within the health services, the authoritative power is magnified and exercised through offices, receptions, uniforms, appointments and translations. It is the territory – the office, the health centre- which makes one think of being in a powerless situation. Being ill and weak makes things even worse. Through the discourse of 'healthism' of which traditional health promotion is a big part, subjects are produced which then go through self-regulation. Foucault explains that the modern subject is the creation of 'power' and 'self'. He sees power as directing the conduct of others who through self-surveillance and normalization, become objects of control (Foucault, 1979). Foucault's metaphor of the 'Panopticon' helps to understand this power/knowledge dynamic. Radio *Ramzan* disturbs this dynamic as it takes the powerful out of their comfort zones and puts them in fuzzy, messy and real situations where the whole theory of 'responsibilisation' or acting in a certain way becomes irrelevant as people foreground their own worldviews and ways of life.

So, for a change, all these managers, doctors, nurses and professionals are not

in their traditional power territory but in the space of the community –the service users – the ordinary people, and their decisions and judgments are questioned. In a way, the space offered by Radio *Ramzan* enables a counter-discourse where people were using a reference to their faith, culture and their experiences help them change the power dynamics, temporarily. The second Radio show on the 10th of December, 1999 had the theme of Coronary heart diseases (CHD) a common ailment among the people of South Asian origin.

### **Coronary Heart Diseases**

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the UK's single biggest killer. More than 110,000 people die of heart problems each year. Around 41,000 of these deaths are premature, and most of the premature deaths due to CHD are thought to be among the people of South Asian origin. The death rate is 46 per cent higher for men and 51 per cent higher for women (BHF, 2000). While it is not completely known why South Asians suffer more from heart disease than other groups, several explanations have been suggested, like genetic susceptibilities, metabolic disorders associated with insulin resistance, and general obesity. Besides this medical explanation, it is also suggested that the disadvantaged socio-economic position of South Asians, especially people of Mirpuri and Bangladeshi origin, may be also contributing to the higher rates of CHD among these people. This is also linked to higher rates of smoking, low rates of exercise and a diet high in fat and low in fruit and vegetables. One striking findings that all these ailments and conditions tend to be diagnosed at a more advanced stage of disease among the people of South Asian origin and the survival rates seem to be poor.

With this background and statistical evidence, the CHD debate was the priority of HEAP. In the second radio show, Dr Zahoor Khan was joined by another local general practitioner Dr Packham and the Diabetes worker Shaista Taj along

with the Mirpuri bilingual worker Rashida. In the first part of the show, doctors explained the symptoms and consequences of heart problems especially CHD, in the latter part of the show Shaista discussed the necessary precautions in the lifestyle, especially food and need for physical exercise. The topic, having a higher relevance to our audience, proved very popular in terms of phone calls we had during the shows. While most of the callers were inquiring about their specific conditions, some questions raised wider issues around service provisions and the role of community in helping raise awareness about the problem. One of the callers, who did not want to be identified, spoke in English and questioned the sustainability of a project like HEAP:

*We are sick of having these one off events...which help no one. There has to be a long term planning of helping people on a long terms basis. I have been living with this problem for nearly 10 years now, and I know what the cause of this problem is. What is the government doing to address the causes? Everybody looks at how to manage the problem and NHS...just to show on paper they are reaching out to minority people do things like this. Heart problem, obesity, sugar problem are common and have been there always...so where was NHS before. It is good to have radio shows like this but the question is what happens after the month of Ramadan. The diseases do not go away. In fact, we'll start eating like before and will be even worse. (Radio Ramzan Listener who went on air to air his comments, December, 1999)*

A very valid comment with which the doctors agreed and only Shaista reacted:

*It is not completely true that there is no follow up. The Diabetes team goes to community centres...we have been to mosques and at times do home visits to help people but community should come forward and have something like, for example, Radio Ramzan to reinforce the message again and again. (Live discussion on Radio, Dec. 2000)*

Reflecting on this debate, Yesmean Khalil was of the opinion that sustainability is only possible in a stable environment. She said that no doubt the health professionals are keen to develop a long term strategy to deal with inequalities but regretted the fact that too many changes within the NHS itself throw everything out of the window.

*I would not say that commitment is not there...but I would say the constant change in health and in the public sector does not allow the sustainability...it does not allow to build on something which is good. When management structure changes, the priority changes and so does the funding and focus. We had too many changes in the Health Authority in last few years. There's no consistency.* (Yesmean Khalil, Post programme discussion to reflect on the issues raised in the first show of HEAP on Radio *Ramzan*, Jan 2000)

The issue of sustainability is indispensable to health promotion, especially about those diseases which are linked to the lifestyle of people. CHD is believed to be caused by a number of risk factors, of which many can be influenced. Evidence suggested that modifiable lifestyle factors such as smoking, lack of physical activity and poor diet all contribute to the increased risk of CHD in South Asian groups. The British Heart Foundation (2000) suggests that in order to make the strategies focusing on these risk factors effective, information needs to reach to the right people and such strategies need to take into account the language and cultural barriers and be targeted appropriately. So the medium of Radio *Ramzan* perhaps is the appropriate means to reach to the people and raise awareness about the risk factors linked to CHD, but the question is when that community does not have resources or capacity to run long term health projects, how could these campaigns be sustained, and who should fund them?



## Smoking and substance misuse

One of the major risk factors linked to cardiovascular disease and CHD is smoking, and this issue was discussed thoroughly in the third show under the HEAP programme on Radio *Ramzan*. In England alone, it is believed that about ten million people smoke– over one in four people. Stopping smoking is considered the single most important thing a smoker can do to avoid a heart attack. Overall, South Asian men continue to smoke more than the general population, although smoking levels vary widely between and within ethnic groups. About 42 per cent of Bangladeshi men are smokers compared with 27 per cent of men in the general population. (Joint Health Surveys Unit, 2001)

Being a common problem among Radio *Ramzan* listeners, the show was given a higher priority. The *Karimia Mosque* had invited smoking cessation workers and doctors to the mosque before Ramadan to help its members to give up smoking. Dr Musharraf was keen to use the medium of Radio *Ramzan* in this regard. During the month of Ramadan, members of the Muslim communities do not normally eat, drink or smoke during daylight hours. Ramadan thus gives the useful focus for raising awareness among people about the risks associated with smoking and how the habit can be given up. So on Wednesday the 15th of December, Dr Musharraf Hussain, Penny Spice, Smoking cessation-coordinator and Parween Riaz, health link worker, along with the Mirpuri bilingual worker Rashida Riaz discussed the topic. Dr Musharraf took the lead on the discussion by explaining the religious, moral and social perspectives against smoking. He referred to the Quran and quoted Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to highlight the advantages of giving up smoking. Although, there is no direct reference to smoking in the Quran, Islamic scholars have interpreted some verses in the Quran as instructing people about the social, economic and spiritual loss smoking brings.

However, at times, people have contested such interpretation and have advised Imams and health professionals to refrain from such acts. We had a listener who called into the show and asked for the proof for interpreting general verses of Quran in favour of very specific issues like smoking. Dr Musharraf Hussain, had a long justification for using Quranic verses this way.

In this connection, the following verses were mentioned to highlight the dangers and risks involved in smoking. "Do not kill (or destroy) yourselves for verily Allah (swt) has been most merciful to you" (4:29). 'And do not make your hands contribute to your destruction' (2:195). 'Do not waste (resources) extravagantly' (17:26). While the health link worker dipped in and out of the discussion talking about the services available for giving up smoking, they left it to Dr Hussain to do all the talking and allowed Islamic perspectives to take over the medical perspectives in the discussion. The health professionals were encouraged by the clear ideas of Dr Hussain on the need for giving up smoking. They, in fact, asked him to refer members of his mosque to the Smoking Cessation team for guidance and advice. While this was a unique idea, how far people will talk to a religious leader whose views on smoking are very clear remains to be seen. However, a young lady rang in to explain her frustration with helping her CHD-patient father to give up smoking. She said she would do anything to support her father even take him to Dr Hussain. She was told by the panel to seek a combination of health advice, from both medical and spiritual points of view. There is evidence of this approach working in certain cases as is reported by Muslim Health Network, QUIT (British Heart Foundation's National Smoke Free Ramadan Campaign) and other smaller smoking cessation programmes undertaken in association with the local mosques in the UK. Similarly, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) and local primary care trusts have been working together for some time to help members of Muslim communities give up the habit of smoking.

The HEAP discussions on smoking were more focused on how to support smokers to give up the habit, and social and cultural networks play a vital role in providing that help. While on the issue of helping people give up smoking, the statutory organisations like NHS and its various agencies found nothing wrong with Islam and Muslim life but on the Islamic perspective on sex education there was a clear conflict as is highlighted in the next section on sex education which proved a 'hot potato' to handle on a live radio show.

## **Sexual health and Sex education**

The first major publication in the UK about the Sex Education from Muslim points of view was authored by Mohammad Sarwar (1992). He argued that the 'majority of Muslim parents will be happy if there was no sex education at all in school' (1992:7). He found the education about contraception and abortion in conflict with the Islamic injunction which prohibits extra-marital sex. Sarwar goes further to question the secular and materialistic credentials of the British education system which he found to be ignorant about 'the spiritual and moral' aspects of life (1992: 11).

Many feel that sex education has become a lesson on the use of condoms which encourages promiscuity, resulting in abortions and sexually transmitted diseases. The government guidelines published in July 2000 warned of high rates of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases and told schools that sex education should "not encourage early sexual experimentation". Similarly, a report from the British Medical Journal (BMA, 2003) emphasized the need that schools must make greater efforts to address the growing incidence of sexually transmitted infections by including a more pro-active stance in warning about the risks of promiscuity and unprotected sex.

Many Muslim adults find sex education in schools lacking moral and ethical perspectives, and *Karimia Mosque* was no exception. The Islamic scholars often refer to the following *Hadith*: *When one of you has sex with your wife, it is a rewarded act of charity because if you had done it with a forbidden woman, it would have been counted as a sin, but if you do it in legitimacy, it is counted as charity.* (*Hadith*: saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)).

We had an initial discussion on the topic, and Yesmean was keen to open debate on sex education in the community. Through her network, she was able to find a Muslim doctor who specialized in Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD). Dr Ahmed was working as a specialist at the City Hospital in Nottingham and had strong views on people from minority ethnic groups trying to push everything under the carpet. Along with him, Shashi Niranjani, a health outreach worker, joined Dr Musharraf in the discussion which took place on the 22nd of December 1999 on Radio *Ramzan*. However, it was difficult to convince Dr Musharraf to join the discussion because he felt uncomfortable with the concept of sex education, which he felt was carried out within a secular framework. While he was not averse to the need of talking about STD and other ailments linked with the human reproductive system, he was not keen to educate people on the sex. After long discussions with Dr Musharraf Hussain and Dr Ahmed we decided that the topic itself will not be precisely about sex education but on sexual health, and if there were any inquiries from callers then Dr Hussain will respond from the Islamic perspective while Dr Ahmed will focus on the medical/clinical perspective.

This compromise was itself an achievement as a religious leader, a doctor and a health worker would take part in discussing the issues around sexual health/sex education. The show was as usual promoted for a few days before the actual broadcast. All the panellists on this show could speak either Mirpuri or Urdu and

listeners were encouraged to ask questions to the panel. The show started with Dr Musharraf Hussain explaining the Islamic perspective on sex, children and family.

Highlighting the Islamic conceptualisation of sex life, he focused more on physical and physiological aspects and asked for a shift in understanding and education on sex and sexual health. He emphasized the need to have male teacher for boys and female teacher for girls to explain the anatomy of the human body. Dr Ahmed first revealed the national and local figures about STD, followed by a medical explanation of various problems associated with sexual life. He encouraged parents to see health workers and their GP's to seek support and advice. He vehemently opposed the idea of pushing everything under the carpet:

*There is a stigma attached to the issues around sexual health but people from our community make things worse by not talking even to health professionals. There are many young men and women who are suffering in silence. They should not as there are confidential services available to people to help and support them. (Discussion on live Radio Show., Dec. 2000)*

Shashi Niranjana, the health worker, highlighted the role of health workers in signposting people to the appropriate places and persons and provided her details to encourage people to contact her. The show did not have as many callers as expected, but a few people left messages and asked questions off air. Most of the questions related to the fears and apprehensions parents had about the risks and dangers involved in sex education in mainstream schools to which both doctor and the health worker said that the parents have a choice, but Dr Ahmed at the same time said that 'children are exposed to TV, films and

Internet and they pick up things much earlier than their parents think`. He urged that if parents were not comfortable with sex education in schools they should start talking to them at home to help them avoid the risks and dangers. The debate got intense when a male caller rubbished the idea of preventing Muslim children from having sex education at a school. He argued that the number of `unwanted pregnancies among the young Asians was on the increase and their parents were hiding their heads in the sand`.

Dr Hussain asked the caller for evidence of this generalization and urged people to refrain from saying things which cannot be proved. This reaction from Dr Hussain angered the caller who accused religious leaders of `creating social problems by misleading innocent parents`. The debate went on for a while until Nilanjana intervened and asked the gentleman on the phone to contact her after the show. The caller was not satisfied and perhaps there were many more listeners like him.

While there is a case for teaching sex education in schools, but the questions many parents from the Muslim community are questioning the rationale behind such education. While the Western or mainstream point of view is to avoid underage sex, unwanted pregnancies and STD's, the fact is that the education on how to use a condom and what do after unprotected sex might encourage many young people to indulge in acts of promiscuity is something which worries many Muslim parents. This radio show at least opened an honest debate on the issue which many people do not want to hear. But we were surprised later to find out that the discussion on the topic was well received in the community. Nilanjana (health worker) was approached by many anxious parents to talk about the issues they could hardly talk to anyone else about.

## **Diabetes and Obesity**

According to the National Service Framework for Diabetes, published in 2001, it is estimated that around 500,000 Diabetes sufferers in England are from Asian community. A large proportion of these Diabetic patients (six times more than white people) have Type 2 Diabetes, where cells are not able to produce enough insulin for the body's needs. It is also believed that Diabetes has a younger onset among Asians than whites, and is increasingly manifesting itself at young ages, including in children (Chaturvedi and Fuller, 1995).

It is believed that while some risk factors for developing Diabetes (such as family history, increasing age and ethnic origin) are non-modifiable, in many cases Type 2 Diabetes can be prevented, or its onset delayed, through sustained awareness and screening for early diagnosis. Besides having higher prevalence among people of South Asian origin, Diabetes is also found to be more common in socially deprived groups. This double disadvantage for people of South Asian origin creates complications, and with little awareness about the symptoms and implication of Type 2 Diabetes, these people become part of national statistics which suggest that the morbidity from Diabetes complications is three and a half times higher amongst the poorest people in England.

The programme on Diabetes had already generated some interest in the community because of the PSA which was broadcast in four languages (Mirpuri, Urdu, Bengali and English) five times a day. Before we went on air, people were sending their questions over the phone. So the show more or less became a question and answer session where people were asking specific questions about their conditions, and health professionals Jean Pearson, Sharon Regal and Shayasta Taj answered those questions. But the issues around lifestyle especially food and exercise, were coming in different ways into the show.

The approach of putting the blame on victims is seen by many as the offshoot of communitarian philosophy in which patients are made responsible for their behaviour and asked to perform and behave in a way that their lifestyle does not contribute to their ailments. There is a fund of literature available on the discourse of managerialism and medicalisation of health and well-being (for details see Chapter Four).

From the debates on Radio *Ramzan* it was evident that instead of being on a community radio, the debate on Diabetes was taking place within a familiar framework, and in order to break this circle, Yesmean Khalil suggested the need to rethink the doctor-patient relation in which the patient is seen manifestation of illness and not a human being with a social and cultural context to his/her ailment. For example many South Asians, especially women, find it culturally inappropriate to go jogging in the public gaze, or to swimming in public baths and pools. Walking is one of the alternatives which some women of Mirpuri origin living in Forest Fields have found useful. The advice came from the show on Radio *Ramzan* which was followed up by the Mary Potter Health Centre. With the help of the Mirpuri health link workers, walking clubs were set up for the Asian community. The Forest recreation ground in Forest Fields has since become the hub for such walks which women take in groups to overcome inhibitions and fear of racial attacks due to their prominent dress.

## **Mental Health**

Research suggests that people from minority ethnic groups living in the UK are more likely to be diagnosed with a mental health problem, admitted to hospital, experience poor outcome of treatment, and disengage from mainstream mental health service. The combination of these factors, along with experiences of racism, unemployment and poor housing, can lead to social exclusion which



further deteriorates their mental health (Lloyd & Moodley, 1992, Goldberg, 1999). The statistics on the numbers of people of South Asian origin suffering from mental illness are inconsistent, though the prevalence of common mental health problems is seen as fairly similar across different ethnic groups, although rates are higher for Irish men and Pakistani women and lower for Bangladeshi women. While poverty, isolation and racism contribute to mental illness, it is believed that the mainstream mental health services often fail to understand or meet the needs of minority ethnic communities. These factors, when seen in combination with distrust of mental health services, mean that the people belonging to minority ethnic groups often seek professional help at a very late stage when their problems can be more serious. People from ethnic minority groups are six times more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act than white people (Coid et al., 2000).

Health, according to the World Health Organisation's constitution, is 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease'. The report adds:

'the health professions have largely followed a medical model, which seeks to treat patients by focusing on medicines and surgery, and gives less importance to beliefs and to faith – in healing, in the physician and in the doctor-patient relationship. This reductionism or mechanistic view of patients as being only a material body is no longer satisfactory. Patients and physicians have begun to realise the value of elements such as faith, hope and compassion in the healing process' (WHO, 1998)

Research also suggested that minority ethnic people, especially Muslims, find Western approaches to mental health treatment culturally inappropriate. While the majority of these people look for a holistic approach which takes into consideration the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual being, the

mainstream services take a scientific approach. Gary et al., (1999), arguing in favour of working with the voluntary sector, says that it is the most appropriate and least stigmatising source of help for Black patients, but the voluntary sector rarely figures in the strategic development of mental health services for Black and Asian patients in the UK. Clinicians and psychiatrists have long been stressing the conceptualisation of healing instead of cure to provide a holistic approach in dealing with mental illnesses.

Powell (2002) argues in favour of this theory in his paper 'Mental Health and Spirituality'. He says that the 'historical split between religion and science has had profound implications for the world we live in, culminating in a twentieth century culture modelled on the mechanistic, Newtonian paradigm of reality' (Powell, 2002: 1). He stresses that spiritual awareness should be the cornerstone of psychiatry along with the biological, social and psychological aspects of mental health. He argues that the spiritual dimension brings the prospect of healing (2002:10). In their important work on the issues of faith and mental health, Koenig, McCullough and Larson (2001) found that a sixty to eighty per cent correlation between religion or spirituality and better health was found in the areas of prevention, recovery and coping ability in a wide range of conditions. Faith and religious groups can offer a powerful opportunity to build positive social networks for people with mental health problems, and they can be particularly important for some ethnic minority groups. Research has shown that aspects of spirituality are linked with beneficial mental health outcomes and are consistently related to greater life satisfaction, happiness, morale and other indicators of well-being.

The social and cultural networks do offer a cushion that can help tide over the difficulties in life. The star presenter volunteer of Radio *Ramzan*, Rehman Syed turned around his life from being a 'street boy' to a Radio Jockey which

ultimately helped him to find a job in the local partnership council. Here is his story in his own words:

*I was not a brilliant student at school...dropped out and did odd jobs from selling double-glazing to mobile phone sim cards. Parents had expected me to do better. My father, a religious man, would send me to local mosque...but I did not find it stimulating there. I was confused...Radio has given me an opportunity to do something creative and at the same time serve my community and faith. When I got involved as a volunteer, I was a bit shy and could not take responsibility of presenting. I was more of a back stage support...would make tea and look after guests. With my experience from doing door to door selling, I started selling air time. I brought business for the radio station and got more and more involved. Then, I realized I could do a prog. We had Urdu background though my mother tongue is Poshtu. During one late night show, I did a bit of anchoring and liked it. There was immediate recognition which I could not get for years. Parents, friends and neighbours said it was fantastic. I had a boost to my confidence. I did more progs, and got involved in the management. I took a course at the Derby University in marketing. I was a new man. I developed contacts within the voluntary sector and became a member of the partnership council, started taking interest in wider community issues. Later a job for community outreach worker was advertised...I applied and got it. Rest is history. I am now on the management committee of the radio.*

(Excerpts from an Interview with Rehman Syed, 2000)

It should be, however, recognized that every story cannot be like that of Rehman. While Radio *Ramzan* was on there were many Mirpuri boys hanging out on the streets in the vicinity of *Karimia Mosque*. Neither the presence of the

Mosque nor Radio *Ramzan* could deter them from what they were doing. While faith and spirituality can play a part, that is only a small part, as there are other social, financial and cultural issues which exclude many people.

But for those who are isolated, elderly, and sick and who fear racial abuse, any support and comfort, from whatever source, can be helpful to overcome the agonies of mental illness. It is worth mentioning here that anecdotal evidence suggests that prevalence of higher social capital among Mirpuri/Pakistani communities is a myth and even in extended families people can feel lonely and neglected. The general attitude of health staff to exaggerate the family support in such cases reveals the lack of real insight, which is seen to be the main reason for the mainstream mental health services' failure to meet the needs of minorities' ethnic communities. As a health promotion specialist, Yesmean had a good understanding of these issues, and through her network we involved Project Awaz- Asian mental health support group in Forest Fields, working with people of South Asian origin. Project Awaz has been advocating for appropriate mental health service for minority ethnic groups, using a community development approach and had established itself as the first point of contact for people suffering from mental illness, Project Awaz had already established links with various health agencies in the area and was in the forefront of raising awareness about mental health issues. Zulf Hussain, chairman of the Awaz project was keen to develop his service further and to offer a comprehensive service for his clients in a comfortable environment in their mother tongues.

Although Zulf Hussain and his team were working for some time in Forest Fields, there was a lack of awareness among local people about the services and support offered by project Awaz. So in our first meeting I saw his enthusiasm to get involved in the HEAP project on Radio *Ramzan*.

Mental illness, being a highly stigmatized condition, is difficult to talk about, as

many people who suffer from this disease are reluctant to come forward. Another difficulty was defining the mental illness and describing the conditions that can lead to mental health problems. After a few deliberations, we decided to include conditions like stress, marital difficulties, failure, pressure, isolation/loneliness, anxiety, and fear of racism in the causes of mental illness and developed a very broad framework for the debate. Issues like cultural sensitivity, access to services and language support were also included in this framework. In the next meeting we invited Angela Kondola, a mental health worker who highlighted confidentially a number of cases studies the project Awaz was dealing with to make our show relevant and appropriate.

Finally, we went on air on the 24th of December, 1999 with other sensitive issues within the South Asian community. We also invited Rashida Riaz, Mirpuri bilingual worker and Moulana Safi Ullah, a local Imam into the show. Angela Kondola opened the discussion by explaining the broader concept of mental health problems, specific symptoms and what services are available for those suffering from these problems. We had a phone call in the first ten minutes of the show. A lady living in Lenton rang and set the mood for the debate for the rest of the show. She was living with clinical depression for a long period of time and what prompted to ring her was to let everyone know how good she was feeling listening to Radio *Ramzan*. She gave graphic details of her loneliness and how radio was filling the void in her life. Speaking in Mirpuri language, she spoke of the problems of being a woman, an immigrant, a Mirpuri and having mental health problems. Her disadvantage was manifold. Much of what she was saying could fit into the life of a woman in any part of the world, but what made her situation worse was the fact that she had no support at home, could not speak English, and above all lacked the information on where to seek help.

When she was asked by Zulf Hussian if she had heard of the project Awaz, the lady replied:

*We do not hear of these projects and even if I did it would be difficult for me to reach where you are. My man would not allow me to go anywhere and he is bed-ridden. Your project is for those who can read and write. I am illiterate, cannot do anything. For me the big favour would be to have someone to talk to. I feel better talking to you in my own language...that's what I want. (A caller on Radio Ramzan, Dec 2000)*

The show continued and a few more callers were prompted to call in after listening to this lady. A caller commented that Mirpuri men would only let woman access mental health services if they are provided by local mosques as the groups are like Awaz were seen by some as 'corrupting woman'. This assertion was supported by the anecdotal evidence which suggested that Mirpuri men control every aspect of family life, even the choice of doctor and services that can be accessed. Moulana Safi Ullah emphasised the need to seek help from faith and spirituality under these circumstances and reminded listeners of the dangers of living in a 'soulless' Western society, which he described as being shallow and selfish. He said, 'Unless we bring purpose of helping each other and being just and God fearing, we will live isolated and greedy lives'.

In the beginning of this section we highlighted the role faith can have in helping people with mental health problems, and discussion on the radio again was revolving around cultural sensitivity, social appropriateness and acceptability. Reflecting on what was discussed on the show made me wonder if mosques and other community groups which are 'acceptable' to many within the community have the necessary capacity, resources and expertise to run such specialised services. More importantly, are these places welcoming to all, or just men who anyway are wielding a lot of power in a highly male-dominated society.

## **Public Service Announcement (PSA) on Health**

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, one of the components of the HEAP project was the Public Service Announcement about the risks of CHD, Diabetes and Stroke among the South Asian population. The PSA was recorded in five languages and repeated five times a day to reinforce the message. This PSA was complementing the general discussions on these diseases and conditions.

The script of the PSA was written by a health professional but was vetted by the community and religious leaders to make it appropriate to local sensitivities, and at the end of this PSA telephone numbers of NHS Direct was given to help people contact this organisation for health needs. Although the service is believed to have been created to cut the queue time in hospitals and lessen the burden on GPs, in the case of HEAP the NHS Direct team acknowledged the health programme limitation and the inability to cover any given the subject matter in any depth other than raising awareness. However, after raising awareness, mechanisms needed to be in place which would enable more in-depth and individual support to be provided. This was made possible with the help and support of NHS Direct. This partnership was valuable both to HEAP and the NHS Direct. It provided an opportunity to NHS Direct, which is a fairly new service, to promote its service to the Asian community who are not aware of it. NHS Direct were involved in the early stages of the development of HEAP and the topics selected for the health programmes were discussed with them. This enabled the service to ensure resources and relevant translated material was available which could be posted out to people upon request. The service was promoted on a daily basis in English, Urdu, Bengali and Mirpuri and also during each health show. PSA Script:

*Asians, especially Pakistanis and Bangladeshis have about 36 per cent higher chances of dying of Coronary Heart Diseases and 3 times higher chances of dying of Diabetes than the general population. Diabetes and high blood pressure increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. So it is important to visit a doctor or practice nurse if you develop symptoms such as thirst, passing more urine more frequently, unexplained weight loss or tiredness. High blood pressure does not usually give any symptoms. It can only be diagnosed when your blood pressure is measured. If you are over 35 years and have not had your blood pressure measured in the past three years, it is worth paying a visit to your doctor or practice nurse to have it measured. If you want to know more about Diabetes, heart condition, high blood pressure or any other illness, please ring NHS Direct on 0845 4647.*

## **Health competition**

Besides broadcasting live radio shows and playing health PSA, the HEAP Project also introduced a month long competition to facilitate public involvement in the project and develop stronger community partnership. Individuals and organisations were invited to produce a 10 minute recording of a health topic of their choice, relevant to ethnic minority communities. The following cash prizes were announced for this competition:

First Prize: 300 Second Prize: 200 Third Prize: 100 Runner up Prize: 50 (A flyer for promotion of this competition is enclosed as Appendix). Publicity for this competition began weeks before the start of Radio *Ramzan* through posters and flyers being distributed at local colleges, mosques, community centres and shops ( Poster in appendix 3). The competition was also advertised on Radio



*Ramzan*. A total of top five entries were shortlisted. Four entries were a monologue and one was a role play. One entry was in Urdu, one in Mirpuri and three in English on the following topics:

- Healthy Lifestyle Mirpuri 1st Prize
- Smoking cessation English 2nd Prize
- Travelling Abroad Urdu 2nd Prize
- Eczema English 3rd Prize Diet
- Exercise English Runner Up

The winning entries were played on Radio *Ramzan*, and the names of the winners of the competition were announced on the day of Eid (festival marking the end of fasting). The prizes were given at the HEAP seminar, which took place a week after the end of the HEAP Project and end of the transmission of Radio *Ramzan*.

## **Heap seminar and feedback session**

The last and crucial part of the HEAP project was the half day seminar, which was organized with the help of *Karimia Mosque* a week after the end of Ramadan. The main aims of the seminar were to:

- Assess the impact of HEAP and gain listeners feedback
- Identify gaps and need for future health work and propose a way forward
- Provide service providers and users an opportunity for a face to face interaction.

The announcements about this event were made while the radio station was still on air and in the last week of Radio *Ramzan* a big publicity campaign was run about this event. This radio publicity was supplemented with leaflets and

posters which were distributed at the local mosques, community centres, taxi services, restaurant and take-aways in the city. The invitations to this seminar were extended to all Radio *Ramzan* listeners, contributors and guest speakers, key health policy leaders in the Health Authority and Local Authority, City Central PCT team and board members, local councillors and local community organisations. (A copy of the letter of invitation for attending the HEAP seminar is enclosed as Appendix I)

Forest High School provided the appropriate venue for this seminar as it is centrally located and well known to the members of Mirpuri community living in Nottingham. On the day, various health and community organisations were invited to display to promote their services. Besides various health agencies, Nottinghamshire Police, Fire Services and the New Deal for Communities put up their stalls and information kiosks at the venue.

The school wore a festive look as people flocked the venue. Over 150 attended the seminar including all Radio *Ramzan* volunteers, management committee members, and health professionals, members of other community organisations, local councillors and the representatives of businesses that supported the radio project.

Being a seminar on health education, the President of the Muslim Doctors and Dentists Association was invited to be the chief guest. His presence at the event added value and brought topicality to the whole project. In his speech he lauded the role of Radio *Ramzan* in bringing various health agencies and people together and making the month of Ramadan even more meaningful through a sustained health education campaign. He highlighted the role of Islam in developing the social, cultural, economic and wellbeing of the community, and urged mainstream health organisations to take full advantage of the faith-based

organisations in reaching out to the minority ethnic groups to build their capacity to fight inequalities in health.



**Picture 3:** A Volunteer of Radio *Ramzan* being awarded a certificate by the President of Muslim Doctors Association while Dr. Musharraf Hussain looks on.

The event also was unique in the sense that it offered fruits, salad and healthy snacks to the participants of the seminar which was a big contrast from the greasy and unhealthy food normally served on such occasions. After the food break, winners of the health competition were given their prizes and all the volunteers of Radio *Ramzan* were given certificates of merit for their involvement in the day to day running of the radio station.

Then came the big event of the day; the workshops to gain the audience feedback. For this purpose, four discussion groups were formed, led by a facilitator and supported with a scribe. There were two male and two female groups. All the discussions were bilingual or even trilingual using English/Urdu/Mirpuri. The turnout at the event was an indication that people liked the radio and had a sense of ownership of this community initiative. Over

150 people, mostly women, attended the seminar and took part in workshops. They were very vocal in their support for the station. Before we go into the details of the emerging themes from the focus group, I am presenting a cross section of opinions, comments, and views of people I spoke with at the seminar.

SK goes to the Claremont School in Sherwood and he thinks that Radio *Ramzan* has helped him to know more about himself:

*We never used to listen to radio in our family...it was only TV and I was also watching cartoon shows...but Radio Ramzan has created a new past-time for me. To be honest, I did not know what it was all about...yes my parents would listen to it and we would open fast when they played Adhan, but for me to listen more attentively was when they started competition and they played some different music ... now it looks like Radio Ramzan is something we need...I know more about Mirpur where my grandparents have come from. I have been there only once when I was four...but now I want to go and know more about this place. (SK<sup>38</sup>, Dec 1999)*

A middle aged woman put it this way. 'We felt we had a voice. The whole family would gather around radio, especially in the evenings. It made the month of Ramadan a real community thing'. Taking part in Radio *Ramzan* was seen as a proud moment, as people in both informal discussions and formally facilitated group discussions were reflecting on how everyone felt part of the community. The fact that the radio would relay the Adhan (call of prayers) at designated times, caught the attention of the whole community. The Adhan at dawn and dusk (start and completion of fast) was more important as it gave a sense of

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<sup>38</sup> SK who did not want to be identified is the third generation Mirpuri who was born and lives in the Basford area of Nottingham. His father is a teacher and mother volunteers for the radio. SK has been very proactive in taking part in various quizzes and competition on the radio. This excerpt is more an interview I conducted in his house as part of participant observation. I opened the fast with this family in Basford while radio was on in the month of December 1999).

place and time to community. This central role of radio in creating a point of focus for the members of the Muslim communities in Nottingham is time and again mentioned at the seminar.

An 11 year old student (SK) from New Basford said, 'My friends in Aspley and my cousin in Carlton would regularly listen to Bhajee Iffat's (Children's show presented by a popular teacher at the Forest Fields Primary School) show. Listening to the same show and calling in for competitions and reading poetry made me feel so proud. We would ring in one after another and our other friends from school would also join in. It was like one big family'. This sense of pride and being part of one big family is characteristic of small-scale localized media which people can easily relate to and feel part of. Being run in the month of Ramadan added more proximity to this station.

Javied Khan (JK) is a Maths teacher and has been a regular listener of Radio *Ramzan* from the beginning:

*It is a link, a sort of commonality...it has become a companion. It is about you and your own people ...bring Islam home. Radio has helped to gel people together at least for the listening pleasure...It has also helped me to listen to and look at other media more critically now. The discussions are best on this radio because we can hear a completely different point of view...the one which we do not normally hear on any other station. Though, about this point of views in private, radio has brought these debates into the public (based on informal interview with JK during the seminar, Jan: 2000).*

## **Emerging themes:**

### ***Issues around language and culture***

*'Generally appreciated as a much-needed effort to address language issues'.*

*'Yes language was impressive' 'It was good to hear our own language'.*

*'Guests were properly briefed about the Islamic elements' .*

*'It was good to hear Islamic scholars and doctors sitting together and talking about issues which were never discussed in public before.' '*

*Although, presenters tried best to translate English into Mirpuri and Urdu but Urdu is not our language' .*

*'Some of the issues regarding the man-woman relationship should have not been brought to public. Sometimes children were listening'.*

*'Diabetes show was good'.*

### ***Issues around timing***

*'Missed programmes...was cooking...collect kids from school Radio in kitchen...Radio in car...portable radio, it was with me'.*

*'Shows should have been repeated late night for the benefit of those who could not hear during the day time due to work.'*

### ***Issues around topics***

*'Smoking programmes were good'.*

*'Issues were relevant to the community'.*

*'Why people were not invited into the studio'.*

*'Competition was difficult...we do not know how to record radio talk'.*

*'Some people were cut off during the conversation'.*

### ***Suggestions***

*Why only Women health issues discussed.*

*Men's health also 'important' Information about local leisure facilities*

*Genetic diseases like congenial deformities*

*Obesity was not covered Make and circulate PSA's on other health issues.*

*Mental health issues were not properly addressed. There should have been question and answer sessions with local Gp's.*

*Islamic perspective on health issues make them relevant;*

*HIV/AIDS awareness need to be covered*

*Meningitis, immunization, arthritis*

*More information on how to live with a disease condition*

*Not just preventative information but illness management information*

*People should be able to cope with illness*

### **Over all issues**

*It was great to see people were making effort*

*Radio played a big role in uniting people*

*Youth involvement was great*

*The PSA were great and they repeated information in various languages.*

*Continuity of raising awareness Programmes were available for those who are not house bound like Taxi drivers, workers etc*

*Ideas to develop and build on this experience*

*Imams can carry on the message after Radio Ramzan*

*Spread word via schools*

*Invite lay people to take part in programmes.*

*(A brief for facilitators to assess the feedback on the HEAP is enclosed as Appendix K)*

### **Way forward**

*'Prioritize HEAP within the key partnership agencies work plan in order to explore funding and enable early planning to be on a yearly basis'.*

*'To sustain momentum and build on the campaign throughout the year with health seminars, events, displays and discussion groups'.*

*'Develop specific work around Men's health'.*

*'In recognition of the limited resources and reliance upon the energy of volunteers within Karimia, statutory organisations need to support in building*

*organisational capacity’.*

*‘Establish channels of communication to develop mutual understanding of the need of the Muslim community within Nottingham in order to translate them into appropriate and effective interventions’.*

*‘Bring various organization together and develop joined up approach in dealing with health problems’.*



**Picture 4:** Roger Williams, Chief Executive of Primary Care Trust and Dr Musharraf Hussain, *Imam of Karimia Mosque* at the Seminar. (Jan 2001)



## **CHAPTER SIX**

# **Learning From Experiential Knowledge**

*No one is born fully-formed: it is through self-experience in  
the world that we become what we are.*  
(Paulo Freire)

This study, as pedagogy of inclusion, explored the multiple connections between agency, identity and social mobility. In doing so, the project took a contextual approach, and looked at the issues of marginalisation from the intersection of various disciplines and perspectives which helped to take this research closer to people's day to day lives and their cultural practices. Working on the premise that in many post-industrial Western cities, a complex relationship between social conditions, geographic location and the ethnic and racial background of people create a culture of disadvantage (Power and Wilson, 2001; Hardill et al., 2001), this study based on a critique of the modernisation model, developed a multi-disciplinary framework that allowed the people's experiences, knowledge and points of views to develop a dynamic and engaging theory.

With Radio *Ramzan* providing a context, this study brought feminist, poststructuralist and liberation theology perspectives closer. This approach, though uncertain, nevertheless opened up the ways for thinking outside the disciplinary rigidities and essentialist reading of community and communication. This framework, on the one hand, helped to raise a critical consciousness about the causes and consequences of marginalisation, and on the other explored the possibilities of dealing with.

The case study of the Health Education Awareness Project (HEAP) campaign on Radio *Ramzan*, which brought into focus the inequalities in health faced by the people belonging to the Mirpuri community living in inner city Nottingham, helped

to ground the concept of communication as a process of social interaction for sharing experiences and formulating actions. Although this was not a straightforward process, as many conflicts came to the surface, the radio station, however, provided the context for the members of the Mirpuri community to engage through mediated and interpersonal communication to reproduce and represent their shared interest. It will be naïve to assume though, that the community-based communication initiatives like Radio *Ramzan* can offer solutions to the complex problems of social exclusion but, as was demonstrated during the month of Ramadan, the radio station provided a 'frame of reference for a shared interpretation' of the community life (Hollander and Stappers, 1992:19-20).

The presence of this 'frame of reference' for the people living in and around the Forest Fields area of Nottingham encouraged them to participate, reflect and create the content for broadcasting on a radio station they owned and belonged to. This engagement proved a liberating process for the people who, on the one hand are victims of social exclusion, and on the other hand are marginalized by the mainstream media. Radio *Ramzan*, as a communitywide platform, assisted in the formation, maintenance and propagation of solidarities and identities among people who share interests in terms of faith, country of origin and kinship on the one hand, and on the other are grouped together, uncritically, as Asians, immigrants, non-white, disadvantaged, and so on through the discourses associated with bureaucracies, popular media, politicians and academia. This way the radio station not only generated debates and discussions on social and political issues including health inequalities, educational under-achievements and discrimination, but it also initiated debates on external factors that essentialised their existence within the poor neighbourhoods of Nottingham. Radio *Ramzan* was not only a platform that debated the bigger issue but it also helped people to keep a focus on the everyday life matters like sharing information on cultural

events, car boot sales, births, deaths, funerals, weddings, lost and found, and so on. This was possible in a situation where the medium was embedded in the social and cultural life of the community it served.

This implies that participation becomes meaningful and empowering when there is a shift from the media to the people and from persuasion to participation. This paradigm shift cannot take place within the existing mass media where the whole emphasis, in the war of ratings, is on increasing numbers; on quantity rather than on quality. While the BBC is not commercial in the sense that it does not allow advertising on its domestic services, it follows the principles of commercial media to determine its popularity. It uses the Radio Joint Audience Research (RAJAR)<sup>39</sup> figures to show how many people are listening to its services. While the commercial stations use these figures to determine their advertising rates, the BBC uses them to justify licence fees which every British resident pays. Many people 'othered' due to their immigration status, cultural background, ethnicity, sexual orientation and socio-economic ability, are further pushed to the margins in this ratings war by both the commercial and the public service media.

In such a media situation, community media, whether representing a geographic community or a community of interest, or both, provide marginalized people an opportunity to promote their own point of view. Within the normative media discourse, it is media that create audiences and then sells the numbers and figures to advertisers to generate revenue. The media production and distribution is one of the most profitable businesses, using the sophisticated production techniques, marketing procedures and mathematical models to create niche markets for the torrent of entertainment the media conglomerates create globally to feed hundreds of channels round the clock. But in the context of the

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<sup>39</sup> RAJAR is the official body in charge of measuring radio audiences in the UK owned by the BBC and the RadioCentre on behalf of the commercial sector, uses quantitative methods to figure out how many people are listening to various national and regional BBC and commercial radio station.

community media, it is the people (audience) who create their media. In the latter framework, the use of medium is more contextual to reflect the living experiences of those marginalized by the commercialized, standardized and westernized content of the distanced, vertical and highly structured mass media.

Within the participative paradigm, however, community-based media enable the involvement of ordinary people in the conception, production and the evaluation of the content, thereby offering ways and means for the voices to be heard. The month-long radio project in Nottingham substantiated these arguments as people's involvement in a dialogic process, which started well before the actual broadcasting and did not end even after the radio was off the air. Radio *Ramzan* provided a social context to the spiritual life and through this linking of social with the spiritual, the station promoted a holistic approach to community development where people's references to their culture, faith and tradition complemented their efforts to fight social exclusion.

This was best demonstrated by the month-long health education campaign, Health Education Awareness Project (HEAP) on Radio *Ramzan* wherein the religious leaders, health professionals and the community workers shared a common platform to raise health awareness within a religious and culturally sensitive context. This approach provided the legitimacy to health education as radio facilitated the individual and the community participation via a sustained interaction. The HEAP campaign demonstrated the fact that a health education programme can have a long-term dividend and enjoy wide support from people if it acknowledges and adapts to the cultural practices of people and respects their points of view.

As an action research project, the study put the theory about the efficacy of small scale and communally-focused community media into practice, and in the process learnt about the possibility of employing the narrative of dialogic communication

for raising consciousness and developing agency. The month-long project demonstrated that informed discussions grounded in peoples' knowledge and experience can improve the ability of the members of the community to raise problems, analyze them, and work together to solve them. This blended approach became not just a process of sharing knowledge but also generating knowledge as the receivers of the information were actively engaged in the production of content for this radio station.

The radio station run by the members of community for the benefit of the community to focus community than on the media itself. Zane Ibrahim<sup>40</sup> (quoted in Fogg et al., 2005); a veteran of community radio in South Africa argues that community radio is 90 per cent community and only 10 per cent radio. This is an interesting observation which changes the whole dynamic of media in the sense that it challenges the conventional wisdom of looking at media as loud speaker or magnifier and disseminator. This observation tells us that community radio is a place where identity, experience and knowledge meet to give meaning to a way of life; a place where people reflect on their situation. It shows that community media are not developed for the sake of communication but for the betterment of community. This alternative vision is the essence of small scale media which come into existence from the needs of those marginalized by the mainstream media.

But the importance of dialogic communication and experiential knowledge in fighting social exclusion has been realized after decades of dependence on socio-scientific models of communication and a general aversion to faith and cultural practices of people. The literature review in first chapter of this thesis showed that while the role of information and communication has been highlighted in all

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<sup>40</sup> Ibrahim, founder of the Bush Radio in Cape Town made this famous comment during the Community FM 2004 Conference in Manchester.

three major development models - the modernisation, the dependency, and the participation paradigms, it is the purpose, application and expectations from the communication that has varied significantly in these three conceptualizations. The participatory model has underlined the need for a contextual and dialogic role for communication to increase the participation of people and empower them to take proactive role in the process of development. This approach makes the participatory model more people-centred and takes into consideration the social and cultural context of the peoples' lives to argue for the heuristic use of communication.

This change in the dominant paradigm, characterized by the critique of the process of modernisation and Western knowledge from a variety of perspectives and disciplines has led to fresh ways of conceptualization of poverty and dispossession. The agency and cultural practices of people when embedded in the process of human development according to Amartya Sen give dispossessed people, through political participation and democratic decision-making, the 'ability to help themselves and to influence the world'. This conceptualization of development changes the way we look at the concept of poverty in the 'Third World' (1999:18) and that of the social exclusion in the West. Against the background of these arguments, the thesis engaged with a number of debates to suggest that besides the striking similarities in the conceptualization of the 'Third World' and 'inner city', modernisation seems to be the mega discourse behind both processes, implying that the discourse of powerlessness only gets reframed, not fundamentally altered in the West.

The study as an overt political project that emerged from the pockets of the marginalised existences of the disadvantaged minority ethnic groups highlighted the role of agency and voice in reversing the process of

marginalisation. The support for this approach came from the intersections of various disciplines and perspectives, and one of the key nodal-points provided by the overlapping of these fields and standpoints was my own position in the research process.

Being born and brought up in Kashmir has a direct relationship with the subject and the subjects of this research. My position has a direct link with the 'imagined' Kashmir through which the majority of subjects of this research romanticize 'back home'. My Kashmiri origin is not a simple reality but a highly complex construct which adds layers of meanings and confusions to my relationship with the Mirpuri Kashmiri community in Nottingham. I am a person from an 'occupied land', thus deserving sympathy, I am a person from 'real Kashmir', thus deserving reverence, I am a person from the 'Indian side' of Kashmir thus deserving suspicion, yet I'm also an 'educated' young Muslim who deserves support. However, I cannot speak Mirpuri, I do not belong to any tribes, I am not part of local politics and do not have any clout back home, but I am working on the community radio which is meant to provide a channel for articulating Muslimness, Kashmiriness, Britishness and Blackness to fight discrimination, disadvantage and deprivation . My association with the community, in many ways, helped me to understand the various subjectivities and develop ways to let the relational power, which such positions embody, be realised through the medium of Radio *Ramzan*.

The exclusion and disadvantage faced by the members of the Mirpuri community along with the disengagement from the mainstream institutions, especially the mainstream media, has left this community disillusioned. The need for cultural and social support to overcome these disillusionments has led the members of this community to look inwards for support. While various community institutions, including the mosques and charities do help people to engage locally and

communally, the radio station offered a community-wide tool to reach out to members of the community to work together. In a way, the radio station took the institutions to people rather than bringing people to the institutions. The immediacy and spontaneity of the medium of radio had a dramatic effect as people could hear call for prayers (*Adhan*), followed by a debate on sex-education and an appeal for charity to help people in Palestine and Kashmir, while driving taxis, working in shops and sitting in their homes. This was unprecedented. People of minority ethnic origin had a voice and a platform to celebrate who they were.

This generated a sense of camaraderie and people, organizations and local businesses came forward to provide social, institutional and financial resources needed to sustain this project. The resources, like time and skills from dozens of volunteers, proved valuable social capital, while the resources including the space for studio, telephone, computers and furniture from the local mosque and book shop came as vital institutional support. Similarly, the financial support through donations, sponsorships and advertising from local taxis, take-aways, books shops, boutiques and jewelers kept the daily operations going. These resources not only made the broadcasting possible for 30 days round the clock but also enhanced the communitarian feeling.

When a listener from the West Bridgford area volunteered to do the sound-proofing of the studio after many people complained about the bad sound quality, more people came forward and offered both material and in-kind support to make this community project a success. Similarly, one morning on the breakfast show, our usual receptionist did not turn up, and I had to apologize on-air for not answering the phone calls. Within fifteen minutes of this apology three people living in the vicinity of the studio on Radford Road turned up at the station to look after the reception. This proximity enhanced by the local broadcasting helped in



raising the consciousness about the community, as the link between spiritual, social and communal got stronger.

On Radio *Ramzan*, people spoke in their mother tongues without the fear of being excluded, and they enjoyed learning basics of production and presentation through peer education. This learning was very informal and pedagogic in which the teachers and learners shared the same passion and operated within the same discursive space. Ordinary people's voices could be heard, debating issues and posing questions to those who exercise authority. The Imam of the local mosque, the local councillor and the doctor from the local surgery were sharing airwaves with the members of Mirpuri community. The language and the localness of the issues discussed, enhanced the proximity as the debates on radio were heard cascading down to shops, schools and social and communal gatherings. Being a presenter myself, I was approached many times and was given spontaneous feedback.

Radio *Ramzan* provided a voice, both in reality and symbolically to help people to propagate and validate their own knowledge and worldviews. The communicative interaction facilitated by this radio station in practice is described by critical scholars as 'participation through media' for self-representation in the public spheres for collective decision making (Couldry, 2003). Symbolically, the radio provided a 'frame of reference' to belong, to share and to celebrate what is common in a highly fragmented and changing world (Hollander and Stappers, 1992).

The consciousness about powerlessness is as important as finding ways of dealing with it. The tenets of liberation theology offered ways of linking the spiritual with the social to devise the ways of dealing with the problems

associated with social exclusion using people's experiences and practices. This way, liberation theology along with feminism and poststructuralism created a unique methodology which eventually helped to explore the possibility of analyzing the role of cultural experiences in the recovery and validation of marginalized knowledge.

The intersectionality, as promoted within the feminist scholarship, provided an analysis to conceptualise the interrelatedness and multiplicity of forms of disadvantages and discriminations. The very presence of Yesmean Khalil, the health promotion specialist on Radio *Ramzan*, encouraged many other women to join discussions. Yesmean was not only a health worker but was also a practising Muslim, a Mirpuri woman who was born and brought up in the Forest Fields area of Nottingham. Her passion about the issues of patriarchy within the Mirpuri community, the voicelessness and racialised identity of Muslim women on the one hand, and her determination to change the practice of health education on the other, had a positive effect on the HEAP campaign. She understood local women's issues as well as the problems and prejudices of the practice of health promotion. This epistemological privilege helped the study to challenge the positional superiority of Western knowledge for its failure to engage with the life and experience of 'other' women. At the same time, this position offered a unique analysis by bringing Mirpuri woman's interpretation of identities, experiences and power relations to the centre of the debate on health inequalities. Yesmean's presence helped to ground theory of feminism contextually in the day to day lives of marginalized people (Stacey 1988).

It would be, however, wrong to suggest that the radio station had solutions to all the issues and problems faced by the members of excluded communities in Nottingham. Radio *Ramzan* was a time-bound experiment which exhibited its potential in generating alternative voices but, at the same time, revealed a

number of deficiencies in this project including the gendered nature of the station, the dominance of religious elite and the divisions and difference of opinions within the community itself. Some voices of dissent could be heard from the fringes of the community as not everyone was in favour of having this radio station run from the local mosque which belonged to a particular school of thought within Sunni Islam. At times, these voices confronted and contested what was being said.

During the fund raising campaign for Palestine and Kashmir, some people objected to giving air time to 'Muslim Hands' a local charity, seen as being very close to the *Karimia Mosque* and *Barailve* school of thought. Many callers phoned in during the live charity event and demanded other charities should be given time. People in fact went all the way to the Charities Commission and Radio Authority to complain. Although legally there was nothing wrong in allowing a UK registered charity to raise funds, it led to an internal debate within the management of the radio station, which eventually resulted in allowing other charities like 'Islamic Relief', 'Muslim Aid' and 'Imran Khan Cancer Appeal' to run campaigns for raising funds through the medium of Radio *Ramzan*. The 'Muslim Hands' charity also raised funds but its chairman had to come on a live radio show to answer the questions raised by listeners in a public debate about the performance of this charity. This whole episode can be seen as healthy for the public debate. 'Muslim Hands' Charity was made accountable through a live debate on the radio. A listener of Radio *Ramzan* highlighted the importance of public debate on such issues:

'To be honest, we have a tendency to not to ask questions and brush everything under the carpet. I'm not sure if the Muslim Hands charity is good or bad but the public debate gave me the impression that if we have platforms like radio *Ramzan* we can scrutinize the actions of those who claim to represent us'. (Radio *Ramzan* listener, Dec, 1999)

The majority of the Mirpuri Muslims living in and around Nottingham belong to the *Barailve* school of thought. This can be judged by the number of *Barailve* mosques in this area. But that does not mean there are not followers of other schools of thought living in Nottingham. These schools, especially the *Deobandi* School were not part of this radio station. Although, they were invited to initial meetings, they were not given a separate programme. Some of their leaders were only invited on to the shows hosted and produced by *Barailve* followers. None of the Mosques from this school were linked through network to relay live prayers as were the mosques from the *Barailve* tradition. The simmering discontent between various schools of thought came out into the open when in a live debate over the controversy of 'sighting the moon'<sup>41</sup> went out of control and the discussion had to be stopped.

This study illustrated the fact that there are hidden and obvious layers of divisions and fragmentation within what looks like a homogenous community. The study helped me to understand not just the political and social divisions within the Mirpuri community, but the polarization due to the subscription to various schools of thought within the contemporary Islamic movements including *Barailve*, *Deobandi*, *Tablegi*, *Ahle Hadith*, and *Jamate- Islami*. Although such theological divisions occur in other parts of the Muslim world as well, in the UK these schisms are orchestrated publically, as was demonstrated on *Radio Ramzan*. Besides, these religious differences, understanding hyphenated and bracketed political identities like Mirpuri/Kashmiri/Pakistani/South Asian/Black/ethnic minority, and so on was an education for me. The fact that the members of the Mipuri community are divided into the clans that are not just hereditary lineages, but based on ancestral professions was also revealing, and to learn that these fragmentations were still valid among the second and third generation Mirpuris, born and brought up in the UK, was astonishing.

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<sup>41</sup> Muslims follow the Lunar Calendar which determines the start of new month with the sighting of the crescent.

But in the absence of a radio station these feelings and contestations would have remained out of the public debate. The community-based project, specifically, cannot claim to have the complete involvement of all people or give representation to all shades of opinion all the time. To make such a claim will be misleading. Radio *Ramzan*, as has been stated in the introduction to this thesis, emerged against the backdrop of a number of conflicting realities and multiplicities on the one hand, and the common experiences of marginalisation and discrimination on the other. The radio station, in fact, reconciled through some of these multiplicities using the process of dialogic communication. The study demonstrated the explicit subjectivity and intention of offering a situated version to the various possibilities of knowledge and knowing. One such possibility came through Radio *Ramzan* when it gave expression to many voices and opinions which normally remain stifled and bottled-up due to lack of alternative platforms and forums. A listener of Radio *Ramzan* put this in context:

Mirpuri community like any other community is not a seamless group; there are various interest and voices within this voiceless community. We do not agree on everything, we do not have to. At least, we have a chance to listen to each others' point of view. It is much better than having no voice at all or being represented by self-styled leaders who are uncritically used by the mainstream institution, especially mass media'.

(Listener of Radio *Ramzan*, Jan, 2000)

But the dissent and difference of opinion is not only due to the affiliations to various schools of thought or links with particular groups, clans and political organizations. The Muslim communities are largely seen to be patriarchal where rights of women are violated in the name of tradition and validated in the name of culture (Afkhami, 1999). While it is debatable whether patriarchy is intrinsic to Islam or is part of Muslim cultures and geographies (Ahmad, 2003), the gendered nature of Muslim organizations which are dominated by men is widely accepted. While it was beyond the scope of this thesis to engage into the debates about

Islam and gender issues, however, the gendered nature of Radio *Ramzan*, which claimed to be the voice of the Mirpuri community in Nottingham, came under scrutiny in different ways.

Although, around 25 per cent of the presenters on the Radio *Ramzan* were women and there was also an exclusive show, 'Sister's Hour' for them during day time, all the discussions and debates were taking place within a patriarchal framework. In the majority of the shows, these women were discussing their roles as mothers, wives, daughters and sisters, and there was little about the issues they face as women in the gendered society they lived in. However, for the first time in their lives, women had a chance to raise and discuss issues. This was a big change from a position where women have to listen and follow. The women of Mirpuri origin are not just the victims of patriarchy but the fact that they are non-white, immigrant and belonging to socially excluded groups, adds to their disadvantage.

In the beginning many women's groups including the Asian Women's Project (AWP) and Muslim Women's Organisation (MWO) along with Muslim women professionals like teachers, health workers and social workers from Nottingham were invited in the open meetings to give women representation in the management and running of this month-long radio station. But only one woman was actually on the management committee. The AWP and MWO did take part in programme production and presented regularly on Radio *Ramzan* but there were many tensions between these two groups of women.

While Radio *Ramzan* had assumed the role of being the sole representative of the Muslim community in Nottingham, some women volunteers of the station challenged that claim by setting up Radio *Kiran* (Ray of light) to represent the

'voice of Asian Women'<sup>42</sup> under the banner of Asian Women's Project (AWAP). Radio *Kiran* started broadcasting in August 2000 and opened up the possibility of other points of view which were over-shadowed by the male dominated Radio *Ramzan*. In fact, Radio *Kiran* went further to promote this radio station as a voice for Asian women to include non-Muslim women of South Asian origin including Hindus and Sikhs and people of Gujarati and Bangladeshi origin. The fact that a women's group managed to get the licence, develop the resources and operated a radio station in the territory of the dominant Muslim radio station, demonstrates the relational and discursive nature of power which is not always repressive. (The impact of this phenomenon on the future of Radio *Ramzan* is included in the postscript). Although, Radio *Ramzan* obscured the gendered nature of the Mirpuri community, the fact that this radio station was the first Muslim organization to recognize the need to involve women, gave them some hope and encouragement. It was due to the exposure on Radio *Ramzan* (though limited), that women started their own station.

From the gender point of view, another interesting feature of Radio *Ramzan* was that the majority of its listeners were women. The evidence gathered from the phone calls received and the head count at the final feedback session revealed that women made up a substantial part of the audience of Radio *Ramzan*. It was found that for the illiterate, isolated and voiceless women (mostly confined to the four walls of their houses), the radio station became a purposeful companion. It was for the first the time that women of Mirpuri origin were articulating issues on a community-wide platform. Having a limited say in the public affairs, this was the first time women's voices could be heard in the public space and many women found it empowering. In this regard the HEAP project played a significant role. The discussions in the Mirpuri language, the presence of a Mirpuri health professional (Yesmean Khalil) along with the familiar context of *Karimia Mosque*

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<sup>42</sup> This was the tagline used to promote *Radio Kiran*. A sample of the poster of Radio *Kiran* is included as annexure O

helped women to identify with what was being said. Yesmean was already known to many of these women. Her inside-knowledge proved an asset to the success of this campaign. She co-produced and co-presented the shows, and played a critical part in the self-reflections after every show. My association with her helped me to understand the issues from a very unique perspective.

Problematizing the concept community has been an important part of this study. This meant to critically examine the seamless and egalitarian notions of community on the one hand, and on the other to look at the dynamic process of formation and fragmentation of the community. The critique of the notion of community benefited from the poststructuralist analysis of subjectivities and power relations. Poststructuralism, especially Foucauldian analysis recognizes the construct of community as a series of discursive relationships engaging with shifting perspectives of race, ethnicity, religion, politics and immigration. During the research process, the power tussles, silencing, and labelling were reflected through the discourses of patriarchy, essentialism and racism within the disadvantaged Mirpuri community. Foucauldian analysis was helpful in finding centres and peripheries within a group which looked seamless from outside. The divisions of the basis of school of thought within the Sunni sect of Islam, place of birth in Mirpur and belongingness to a particular clan, immigration pattern, back home politics and political affiliation in the UK provided valid levels of analysis.

The thesis thus theorized community formation as a strategic process in the clash and concurrence of political, social, economic and cultural interests, affiliations and loyalties in an array of power relations operational in a community. This dynamic conceptualisation of subject positions provided the support to my theorisation of community as a fluid and strategic positioning of various subjectivities. The members of the community used various labels like black, ethnic, minority, immigrant, non-white Muslim, Pakistani, Kashmiri,



Sunnis, and *Barailves* strategically. This process of subjectification was not fixed but a dynamic positioning to forge a shared feeling, promote a worldview, organize communal events and engage in debates. And in this flux of positions, Radio *Ramzan* provided a consistent backdrop linking together the social, cultural, political and spiritual aspects of life.

The real and symbolic Muslim minority reference reinstated through Radio *Ramzan* helped to renew and acclaim a tactical Muslimness in which an idealized *Ummatic* concept, a racialised ethnic minority, a politicized black and socially excluded concept along with Mirpuri/Kashmiri is accommodated. It was, however, the discourse of social exclusion which created more earthly connections between the people. The themes emerging from the discussion on the health inequalities on radio demonstrated that the *Syelheti* group of Bengali immigrants and the Mirpuri group of Kashmiri/Pakistani immigrants have many common references like their minority status, poor health, and place of living, other than the overarching reference of being Muslims. The radio shows on topics of Coronary heart disease, smoking, Diabetes and asthma had a direct relevance to the people of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin. As was observed during the broadcast of radio programmes, these references brought these disparate Muslim groups together in debates and discussions while in reality they were going to different Mosques in Nottingham. While *Karimia Mosque* attracted the majority of *Barailve* Mirpuri people, *ShahJalal Mosque* in the Radford area was predominantly Bengali. This role of radio in highlighting the health inequalities regardless of the divisions and differences among various immigrant groups on account of the country of origin, ethnicity and language was something unique.

The study reinforced the fact that health and well-being cannot be divorced from other elements of human development as it affects every other capability. It was found that much of the work into inequalities in health has paid little attention to

the social, cultural and political aspects of life by over-simplifying the very complex nature of community, ethnicity and identity, and through the racialisation of health of minority ethnic groups. Against this background, the insights from intersectionality, power relations and critical consciousness helped to map the contours of health inequalities from the victims point of view and looked at how the racial background of many minority ethnic groups has become 'etiologically important in the development of illness' (McKenzie 2003; Karlson and Nazroo 2002).

A counter argument to this 'pathologising' of race, ethnicity and difference, the study learning from the various forms of cultural expression of marginalized groups, offered valid sites of analysis to shift the focus from a clinical view of health to a more holistic approach in dealing with inequalities in health. This provided the basis for the evaluation of the HEAP project as a campaign grounded in the subjective experiences of people, especially their relationship with their spirituality. By theorizing this dynamic link between the social and spiritual, the study conceived an empowering and sustainable way in foregrounding people in the fight against the inequalities. The theorization proved critical in moving away from the state 'managed' conceptualisation of health to a holistic approach based on people's participation and knowledge.

There is no doubt that the HEAP campaign had many lessons for the community as well as for the local NHS Trust but, as happens with most of the community-based partnership projects, there was no sustainability. While it looked good on paper for the Health Department to show off their commitment in fighting health inequalities, in reality it raised expectations of people, and those expectation were not met. As the feedback session revealed, people said it was a good project but 'what now'? It will be unfair not to mention the inherent deficiencies within the voluntary/community sector, which lacks the capacity and

organizational structure to take on such projects on a long-term basis. From the feedback sessions and subsequent meetings we had with the health department, one of the ways forward to keep some momentum in this partnership was to have a Mirpuri health worker who would continue to liaise between various health agencies and voluntary sector. But the tussle between various community groups to own this health worker became such a political issue that the health department gave up the idea altogether. The local politics, power struggles and more importantly the competition for limited resources between various community groups, led to awkward situations, and statutory and mainstream organizations, in a bid to remain 'politically correct,' walked away from such partnerships. But one cannot deny the fact that the project developed a unique approach to health promotion through the combination of spiritual, social and clinical points of view which generated a wide interest from listeners. The study exhibited the need to reflect not only on how to overcome the barriers at the service user's end but, more importantly, at the service provider's end, whose own attitudes, assumptions, notions and practices could be contributing to perpetuating rather than eliminating health inequalities.

As was effectively exhibited during the month of Ramadan, Radio *Ramzan*, situated within the religious ethos, enhanced the reach and access of the health campaign. This, however, should not mean that the use of cultural practices, especially faith, should be appropriated to make the process of fighting inequalities and exclusion attractive. Similar mistakes have been made in the discourse of developmentalism where through 'partnership' and 'participation' people have been appropriated in the process as part of patronization and coercion. In this study the sole idea of having people in the driver's seat is to help people develop strategies to deal with their own social realities through human agency and dialogical praxis.

The localness and relevance of the content helped Radio *Ramzan* to become a communal notice board, providing useful day-to-day information on social, cultural and political aspects of life which plays a major role in the everyday construction and maintenance of the Muslim /Mirpuri /ethnic /black /excluded identities. Radio *Ramzan*, despite its short-term nature, demonstrated that it can facilitate participation, especially among the marginalized communities, reducing the risks of isolation and exclusion. The radio station proved to have the potential of a sustainable voice for the silenced groups to speak up in their own languages, build confidence, develop actions and play a decisive role in their own empowerment.

This process is important for the people who are not only marginalised by the mainstream media, but often demonized through a media discourse that particularly is disrespectful to Muslim life and their cultural practices. This projection of incorrect images based on pre-conceived notions, racism and prejudice has come to be known together as *Islamophobia* (Fredman, Alston and Burca, 2001). In 1997, the Runnymede Trust defined *Islamophobia* as the 'dread or hatred of Islam and therefore, to the fear and dislike of all Muslims,' stating that it also refers to the practice of discriminating against Muslims by excluding them from the economic, social, and public life of the nation. The term is thought to have been in circulation since 1980s but gained currency after the 9/11 attacks in the US and the 2007, bombings in London. These two events are believed to have increased the racial attacks on Muslims in European member states (Alenn and Neilsen, 2002).

This study has deliberately omitted the discussions on 9/11 and 7/7 as these events fall outside of the period remit (July 1997- July 2001) of the thesis. However, it is worth mentioning here that, not surprisingly, these events and the so called 'war on terror/on Muslims' have both impacted significantly upon a

number of the issues raised throughout, particularly the issues of exclusion because of the negative perception of Muslims in the media and general public and, maybe also, the self-image of Muslims in the community.

This case study of Radio *Ramzan*, however, will serve as a precursor to what was happening within the Muslim communities in the UK before 9/11. This study hopes to serve as a reference for the comparisons in Muslim/minority politics before and after 9/11 as it records in detail the growing significance of the mosque in the social life of Muslim communities and an emerging aspiration to assert their 'own' worldview. Although it will be naïve to link these aspirations to what has been labelled as the 'radicalization of Muslim youth' in the UK, the disillusionment with mainstream institutions, especially the media, was evident from this study. Radio *Ramzan*, though a temporary initiative, provided hope to the people that 'owning and running our own media' is possible.

The experiences gained and the lessons learnt from the study of Radio *Ramzan* in general and the HEAP project in particular require further research to explore the dynamic relationship between space, spirituality and media. Such research is most needed within the 'deprived pockets' of the 'affluent West' where many people because of their status, faith and colour of skin and the area they live in, remain tangled in a vicious circle of disadvantage and discrimination.

As a practice, Radio *Ramzan* has provided some useful insights in exploring further this relationship but such insights, as this study has shown, are possible only by adopting a dynamic and multi-disciplinary framework enriched by various perspectives and points of views. This research should rise above the disciplinary rigidities to let the knowledge from various streams engage, overlap and intersect for an understanding of the other ways of living and knowing.

This study has made a humble effort in this direction by offering fresh insights in foregrounding the worldviews of marginalized communities living in the back streets of the West. The study has tried to remove the barriers between the theory and practice by practicing theory and theorizing practice simultaneously while the Radio *Ramzan* was on air. This way the experiences from the inner city found echo in the corridors of the academy, and it is hoped that these experiences will make a contribution in the way the social policies are developed, implemented and evaluated.

## Postscript

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of January, 2000, when the final feedback session for the HEAP project came to an end, it was a very sad moment for many present at the Forest School to say good-bye to Radio *Ramzan*. As the month of Ramadan ended, so did the 30 days licence to run this community radio station. It was a very intense month both spiritually and socially, and the radio station had created a vital link between the two.

Radio *Ramzan* first started in Nottingham in 1997 and this was the third such station in this town. People had to wait another year to get on the air waves once again. The tight regulatory regime in the UK, at that time, did not allow for community radio to operate within the duopoly of the BBC and Commercial broadcasting, although, some community groups under the banner of Community Media Association (CMA) had long been lobbying for the 'third sector' of broadcasting but without much success.

However, after years of lobbying, the Radio Authority (now Ofcom) set up a pilot project in 2001 to explore the possibility of introducing community radio in the new legislation then planned. The term it used was Access Radio, though this has

now been changed to 'community radio'. The experiment would explore the sustainability of a separate tier of small-scale community radio services that were not-for-profit, had a social gain purpose.

We were excited at the prospect of applying for a licence to run the Access Radio in Nottingham. We had accumulated some equipment, had three years of experience and a reasonably good local support to apply for such licence. Meanwhile, another major development took place while we were mulling over the possibility of running the pilot for Access Radio station. Asian Women's Project who participated in Radio *Ramzan* since its inception, applied for a separate licence in the Autumn of 2000 to run a restricted service licence radio to celebrate the independence days of Pakistan (14<sup>th</sup> August) and India (15<sup>th</sup> of August).

The radio station called Radio *Kiran* started broadcasting in August 2000 within a secular ethos in contrast to Radio *Ramzan* which operated within a religious framework. Radio *Kiran* was supported on the technical and programming side by the Radio *Ramzan* team. However this support was not coming from the *Karimia Mosque* or Radio *Ramzan* institutionally but from the individual volunteers who were part of a growing network of community workers and volunteers associated with Radio *Ramzan*. Although there was no direct competition between the two radio stations as they broadcast at different times of the year and had different focus, the Radio *Ramzan* management was surprised about this development. This surprise turned into a worry when the Radio Authority decided to run a pilot project (Access Radio) on the feasibility of community broadcasting in the UK.

Finally, when the bids for running pilot radio stations were invited, both Radio *Ramzan* and Radio *Kiran* were keen to apply to get a long-term radio station in Nottingham. This created a lot of tensions within the community as it looked like

a competition between a religious and a secular radio station. However, the network of volunteers<sup>43</sup> and community workers who worked across these two radio stations came up with a plan for a joint application for running a long-term pilot radio station.

The rationale for this partnership was:

- To cut the competition between the organizations
- To make the application more attractive to the regulators
- To share the resources
- To send a positive message to the community

This rationale proved attractive to the management committees of Radio *Ramzan* (*Karimia Mosque*) and Radio *Kiran* (Asian Women's Project) and it also fitted well into the social gain criteria, which the Radio Authority was trying to achieve from this experiment.

Eventually, the Radio Authority granted a licence on a frequency sharing arrangement between the *Karimia* and the AWP. The new station came to be known as Radio *Faza* (Fresh Air). This arrangement allowed both *Karimia* and AWP to broadcast three and a half days each week from their respective studios which were linked to a neutral transmission and relay facility on top of a building in the Mapperley Park area. This was a unique arrangement both technically as well as production wise. To avoid overlap in production, a coordinator was appointed to liaise between the two organizations.

It was a nightmare to keep the two parties going as there were serious issues and disagreements regarding music and editorial policies, advertising revenue,

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<sup>43</sup> I was part of the team that provided the support to AWP to set up Radio *Kiran*. Because of this association I was instrumental in persuading the AWP and *Karimia* to apply jointly for the pilot Radio project Radio *Faza*. It was frustrating in the beginning to bring these two organizations together on a common platform but later the arrangement of sharing frequency but not studio worked well.



and choice of guests between the two groups. Keeping the arrangement of frequency sharing going was proving a very difficult balancing act. I was the person given the responsibility to coordinate, and without doubt, it was the most challenging time for me. Having the same audience and same resources but broadcasting with a different focus tested the nerves of everyone involved. There were arguments, differences, even threats from both sides to withdraw from the frequency sharing arrangements. While all these tensions were brewing up behind the scene, people in the community were getting a bit confused.

Meanwhile, the Radio Authority selected Professor Anthony Everitt as an independent evaluator with the following remit:

- Evaluate the Access Radio Pilot project as a whole.
- Evaluate each individual service, measuring their outcomes against the development targets they each set before going on-air.
- Draw conclusions about an appropriate licensing regime for community radio.

His report, 'New Voices', was published in March 2003. A follow-up evaluation, 'New Voices - an Update' was published in December 2003, updating the social gain findings of the earlier evaluation, as well as reviewing the evidence of the pilot projects' organisational, financial and community-based sustainability. He concluded that community radio "promises to be a positive cultural and social development and should be introduced as a third tier of radio broadcasting in the United Kingdom" (New Voices, Executive Summary, 2003:8).

The report particularly highlighted the potential of Access Radio in the creating a linguistic impact, enrolling the community in volunteering and learning new skills, forging new alliances locally and developing healthy local radio ecology. The New

Voices report (2003) specifically mentioned the tension at the Radio *Faza* by observing:

The result may have confused Radio *Faza* listeners, since the editorial character and content of the two broadcasters' output differs sharply. It is as if rival manufacturers agreed to market their goods under a single brand name. One possible solution to the problem would be for AWP and *Karimia* to broadcast openly as separate organisations under different station names. However, this could very well lead listeners, expecting continuity from a local radio service, to exchange a sense of confusion for one of irritation (2003: 120).

However, with all these difficulties and tensions, Radio *Faza* sounded alright to outsiders, especially to the Radio Authority. Everitt, observing problems in the frequency sharing arrangements, found the arrangements still attractive in the light of limited resources and scarcity of radio frequencies in the crowded area.

Based on the recommendation of Professor Anthony Everitt, and an overwhelming demand for restricted services and community based licences, the government decided to set up a separate tier of community broadcasting in the UK. The Community Radio Order 2004 was laid before Parliament, and was approved to become law on 20 July 2004. The Radio Authority eventually invited fresh applications from community groups in September 2004 to develop and operate permanent community radio stations.

People associated with these radio stations and the listeners were excited about the prospect of having a permanent radio station, but the differences between the *Karimia* and the AWP had gone out of control. All efforts to keep a religious and secular group together, for the sake of the community they claimed to serve,

had no impact. Both groups applied individually under the same name Radio *Faza*. To the surprise of all, both were successful in getting separate the licences. While the AWP was given the name Radio *Faza*, *Karimia* was allowed to use *Faza* FM by Ofcom (previously Radio Authority).

These two stations were among the first fifteen community radio stations given a permanent status under the new Community Radio Law 2004 with the following remit:

Community radio is a new sector of radio being introduced in the UK. It will become the third tier of radio which will complement the mix of services already provided by the BBC and commercial radio sectors. The characteristics of community radio are distinct from commercial radio in that the services will cover a small geographical area and be provided on a not-for-profit basis focusing on the delivery of specific social benefits to enrich a particular geographical community or a community of interest.

(Ofcom:2005)

Having a similar name and operating on two different frequencies, in the same geographic area, added to the confusion about the partnership between *Karimia* and AWP. This issue was, eventually resolved when *Karimia* changed its name from *Faza* FM to Radio *Dawn* FM.

As of now both stations are still on air, and have developed partnerships with various statutory and non-statutory organizations. They have been successful in attracting funding and other resources, including from the Community Radio Fund set up the government to support non-profit making community radio stations. Both stations have some permanent staff to look after day to day running of the radio station, but there is a lack of community enthusiasm and involvement. Radio broadcasting has become just another activity for the management of

*Karimia* and AWP while they remain busy in attracting more funds and jobs for their respective organizations. Both organisations are trying to get bigger, and in this competition the initial focus of serving small communities and offering qualitative alternatives to mainstream broadcasting does not seem to be as important as it was during the restricted licence.

The frequency sharing arrangement, which volunteers of both station had fought for, had many advantages. Besides saving scarce human, institutional and financial resources, this arrangement had eased the pressure on both organizations of the demands of 24/7 broadcasting. However, the most critical benefit of this arrangement was the balance to reach out to all and not the few in the community.

Despite the fact the *Karimia* and the AWAP had different focuses within the frequency sharing arrangement of Radio *Faza*, they maintained a central ground to attract and keep the interest of the most of the listeners. But going separate ways has taken them away from the centre ground to secular and religious extremes. In these comfort zones, Radio Dawn has become an exclusive religious radio station, broadcasting religious content most of the time while the AWP's Radio *Faza* plays non-stop Bollywood music. In both situations, the social gain remit of the stations seems to have gone out of the window. The permanent licence has taken away the zeal and passion of working tirelessly to improve the content and reach out to all in the community.

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## Appendix (A)

S No	Name of the Mosque	Area	Post Code
1	Islamic Centre	St. Anns	NG3
2	Madni Mosque	Forest Fields	NG7
3	<i>Karimia Mosque</i>	Forest Fields	NG7
4	Jamia Fatimia	Forest Fields	NG7
5	Lenton Muslim Centre	Lenton	NG7
6	Beeston Mosque	Beeston	NG7
7	Masjid Bilal	Lenton	NG7
8	Bobbers Mill Mosque	Hyson Green	NG7
9	Darus Salaam	Sneinton	NG2
10	Jamia Sultania	Sneinton	NG2
11	As Shifa Mosque	Bobbers Mill	NG7
12	Meadows Mosque	Meadows	NG2
13	ShahJalal Mosque	Radford	NG7
14	Jamia	Radford	NG7

List of the Mosques in Nottingham

## Appendix (B)

S No.	Organisation	Membership	Area
1	Pakistan Centre	Muslim Pakistani/Mirpuri	St Anns
2	Indian Community Centre	Hindu Indian /Punjabi/Gujarati	Forest Fields
3	Afro Asian Forum	Secular South Asian/AfroCaribbean	Forest Fields
4	Bangladeshi Welfare Centre	Muslim Bangladeshi/Sylhetti	Radford
5	Pakistan Forum	Muslim Pakistani	Forest Fields
6	Kashmir Centre	Muslim Mirpuri/Kashmiri	Sneiton
7	Muslim Women's Organisation	Muslim Pakistani	Lenton
8	Asian Women's Project	Secular South Asian	Forest Fields

List of main community organisations in Nottingham

## Appendix (C)

### CONSTITUTION OF RADIO RAMZAN NOTTINGHAM

#### 1) Aims and Objectives

The Radio station shall aim at providing information, education and entertainment to the community.

The station shall deal with the day to day social, political, cultural, economic and moral issues of the community.

The Radio station shall supplement the moral and spiritual education of Muslim community during the fasting month of Ramadhan.

The station shall lay emphasis on education, health, employment and environment.

#### 2) Membership

The membership shall be open to all those who actively take part in producing and presenting programmes for the station. It will also be open to those who run and manage the station. A minimum of 5 hours participation shall be expected from each member.

#### 3 Management Committee

The management committee responsible for the overall running of the station shall be elected annually from the membership.

Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected from the management committee.

The management committee shall constitute sub-committees for programming, hardware, marketing and administration for smooth functioning of the station

The majority shall make all decisions and chairman will have a casting vote.

#### 4) Annual General Meeting

The AGM called by Chairman shall be held annually three months before the month of Ramadhan.

The AGM shall present previous years report and set agenda for next year.

The third of the Management Committee shall be re-elected through a secret ballot at the AGM

#### 5) Assets

Financial records shall be maintained at the official address of the radio station

An inventory of all other assets will be maintained

#### 6) Bank Account

A bank account shall be held in the name of the Radio Ramzan. All cheques and orders for the payment of money from such account shall be signed by three signatories.

#### 7) Official Address

The official address of the radio Ramzan shall be 141A Berridge Road, Forest Fields Nottingham NG7 6HA

Copy of the Consitution of Radio Ramzan



## Appendix (D)

**GOOD NEWS GOOD NEWS GOOD NEWS**

**RADIO RAMZAN**  
Nottingham 97.5 fm

During the blessed month of Ramdhan, the Muslim community in and around Nottingham will listen to their favourite Radio station. For 30 days round the clock, spiritual, moral, educational social and political programmes.

**THE STATION WILL BE  
ON AIR FROM  
WEDNESDAY THE 8TH OF  
DECEMBER 1999**

If you wish to participate, advertise or sponsor our programmes, please contact Fazal Malik  
Tel. No. 0115 9420 588 Fax on 0115 942 2228  
e-mail: [Fazalmalik@fsnet.co.uk](mailto:Fazalmalik@fsnet.co.uk)

Postal Address: 141 Berridge Road,  
Forest Fields, Nottingham NG7 6HR

**The voice of the community**

**Radio Ramzan Poster, December 1999**

## Appendix (E)

### **The Amman Declaration on Health Promotion**

The Consultation on Islamic Lifestyles and their Impact on Health Development and Human Development in General, held in Amman, Jordan, on 19 to 22 Thul-Qa'da, 1409 AH (corresponding to 23-26 June 1989) with a view to achieving Health for All by the Year 2000, hereby issues the following Declaration on Health Promotion:

Whereas the Consultation was convened in response to the urgent need in the Eastern Mediterranean Region for the formulation of health messages to its populations, in language that they can understand and respond to, and for the initiation of health promotion activities, making use of the devotional spirit that characterizes them, and that makes of the religion the authority to which they turn and the stimulus for their survival;

Therefore, and based on the deep-rooted health heritage with which the people of the Region have contributed to human civilization, on the goal of WHO aiming at achieving Health for All, on the Alma-Ata Declaration on primary health care, and on the resolution by the World Health Assembly regarding the spiritual dimension; the Consultation declares the following;

**First:** Health is a blessing from God, which many people do not appreciate, as is mentioned in the hadith.

**Second:** Health is but one element of life, and cannot be complete unless the other major elements are provided, including: freedom, security, justice, education, work, self-sufficiency, food, water, clothing, housing, marriage and environmental health.

**Third:** People can preserve their health, as enjoined in the Quran, by maintaining a moderate health balance in a state of dynamic equilibrium, neither exceeding the bounds, nor falling short in that balance.

**Fourth:** Every human being is in possession of a certain health potential, which they must develop in order to enjoy complete well-being and ward off disease, as is mentioned in the hadith.

**Fifth:** The lifestyles followed by human beings have a major impact on their health and well-being.

### **The Amman Health Declaration, 1989**

## Appendix (F)

FAO: Sue Batch  
Nom: Fazal Malik.

### PROJECT MONITORING

Project Title	HEALTH EDUCATION AWARENESS PROJECT (HEAP) Start Date: 8 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 1999
Project Lead	-KARIMIA INSTITUTE -SPECIALIST HEALTH PROMOTION SERVICE -CITY CENTRAL PCG  Fazal Malik, Yesmean Rashid Roger Williams
Project Aim	-To create awareness about health issues and to disseminate information about disease common among the Muslim Asian community living in Nottingham. -To create an environment in which the community can actively participate. -To involve community groups and voluntary organisations in health issues.
Brief Description of Project	-The Health Awareness Project (HEAP) consisted of 5 following components in order to meet above mentioned aims: 1) Production and broadcast of 12 Radio progs. On Health issues and diseases most common among Asian community 2) Follow-up prog. Support and information from NHS Direct 3) Health promotion Announcement (Jingles) in four different languages 4) Competition on health issues 5) Seminar at the end of the Radio broadcast
Main project Achievements	The project successfully achieved following: 1) Broadcast of 12 interesting discussion/ interview, documentary programmes of 1 hour's duration over a period of 30 days. 2) Active participation and involvement of listeners in the debates and discussions 3) Multi-agency partnership 4) A well attended Seminar that provided feedback on the whole project.
Progress with evaluation	The whole project was evaluated in a series of meetings between the partners. The outcome of the project was measured against the aims and objectives of the project. An independent observer and the comments, lessons analyzed the feed back from the seminar and future action was documented in a report on Heap published by the City Central PCG.
Lessons Learnt	1) To continue the HEAP project on Radio Ramzan with changes recommended in the HEAP report. 2) To prioritize HEAP within the key partnership agencies work plan. 3) To sustain momentum and build on the campaign throughout the year. 4) To develop specific work around men's health. 5) To support voluntary organisation in capacity building 6) To carry out the need assessment of the health issues of the Muslim community in Nottingham

### **HEAP Project Proposal**

## Appendix (G)

15th Dec NCTD  
9706036-230

### **RADIO RAMADHAN** **Programme Schedule** **1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT**

WEEK	MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
1	BANK HOLIDAY	9th December 8th December Curtain Raiser  Dr Khan Roger Williams Helen Thompson	10th December CHD, Diabetes  Dr Khan Dr Packham?? Shayasta Taj
2	13th December Stroke  Perween Riaz and another Julie Bowers	15th December Smoking  Penny Spice Liz or Katharine Islamic Perspective??	17th December Asthma  Linda Petch (St Lukes Surgery) Jackie Bracey (Sherwood Rise)
3	20th December Accidents  Speakers to be confirmed	22nd December Sexual Health . ?  Dr Ahmad Shashi Nijran (confirmed)	24th December Mental Health  Zulf confirmed Angela
4	BANK HOLIDAY	29th December Nutrition  Speakers Jean Pearson Sharon Regel	BANK HOLIDAY
5	BANK HOLIDAY	5th January Thalassaemia  Gemma Bailey  6th January Domestic Violence  Sectal, Tahira confirmed	7th January Drugs  Yasmin Ganchi

### **HEAP Programm Schedule**



## Appendix (H)

In light of certain topics, e.g. domestic violence, health programmes etc. In your opinion why do you think we should have a separate radio?

By having our own radio station we can talk about things more independently. We get to know ~~more~~ people who are Asians just like us who face the same problems as us who we can share our problems with and talk to them independently. ~~By having~~ Radio gives us a chance to talk to someone without having to get out of our house by just picking the receiver up, we can ring them up and give our own views on the problems faced everyday & for as listening to music we also get educational, health and many other programmes. This way children learn a lot of new things while they are entertaining themselves. Those who don't like going to the doctor's and asking them about certain issues can just get their answers ~~as the~~ in the health programmes on the radio. ~~Station~~.

Culture & religion is different so we need a separate radio. A radio is also very helpful for women who stay at home and not go out that often because they get lots of information.

The Asian community is increasing here.

Other radios can never cover our problems.

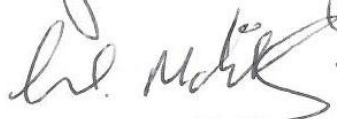
Parents force their children to listen to the radio when some don't want to listen to the radio. One of the reasons behind that is that it's not so easy for them to understand the programmes especially the ones who speak ~~English~~ <sup>Urdu</sup>.

Some children find it boring & old fashioned, they prefer watching TV. Because it's a bet

Radio Ramzan has definitely filled a niche in the market and in the airwaves.

Many many thanks for all your extremely hard work by a 100% voluntary team.

Yours faithfully,



(Mr. Mohammed Wasim Malik).

### Radio Ramzan Listener letters

## Appendix (I)

13

**HEAP**  
Health Education Awareness project  
141 Berridge Road, Nottingham NG7 6HR  
Tel 0115 942 0588 Fax 0115 942 2228

**To: Radio Ramzan participants, listeners and supporters,**

With your support and participation, Health Education Awareness Project (HEAP) on Radio Ramzan has been well received by our listeners.


Twelve programmes of one hour duration on different aspects of health issues pertinent to the Asian, especially Mirpuri/Pakistani, community in Nottingham were broadcast, supplemented with jingles in four languages. From the initial feedback we have learnt that the programmes have been successful.

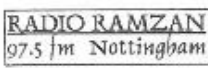
In order to assess the impact of the project and to identify the gaps and need for future health work, we are organising a seminar on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2000. The aim of this conference is to learn from the experience of working on the radio station and to propose a way forward. This will also provide an opportunity for service providers to hear the views of Radio Ramzan listeners.


You are cordially invited to attend this conference details as follows:-


**Date:** Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2000  
**Time:** 4.30pm  
**Venue:** The Forest School, Gregory Boulevard  
**Refreshments:** Food and drink will be served at the end of the conference.


Yours sincerely

  
Fazal Malik  
Programme Director









### **HEAP Seminar Invitation**

## Appendix (J)

APPENDIX 3

RADIO RAMZAN  
97.5 fm  
PRESENT

**HEAP**  
Health Education Awareness Project

Tune in every Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 2.30 and 3.30pm  
First programme 9th December 1999

Free health  
information packs

Phone in and  
ask the experts

Information  
Conditions  
Prevention  
Treatments

Learn about  
your health

**COMPETITION**

The team would like to invite individuals or organisations to take part in the HEAP competition by presenting a 10 minute piece on a health topic of their choice.

1st Prize	=	£300
2nd Prize	=	£200
3rd Prize	=	£100

Closing date for entries 15th December 1999 - first 6 will be selected so hurry. For more information contact Fazal Malik on 9420588.

### **H EAP Competition Poster**

## Appendix (K)

### HEAP Seminar Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2000

#### Facilitators Brief

The aim of the group discussion is to gain feedback from the listeners of Radio Ramadhan in order to assess the impact of HEAP and to develop a health work plan for the future.

The following list of questions are intended to enable the facilitation of feedback:-

- What did people feel about the overall programmes in relation to HEAP ie initial impressions.?
- Were the topics relevant?
- Was the language appropriate?
- Was the programme duration too long or too short?
- What were the gaps?
- Have the programmes been beneficial?
- What would you like to see happen in the future? NB: Other than Radio Ramadhan

HEAP Feedback Breif for facilitators

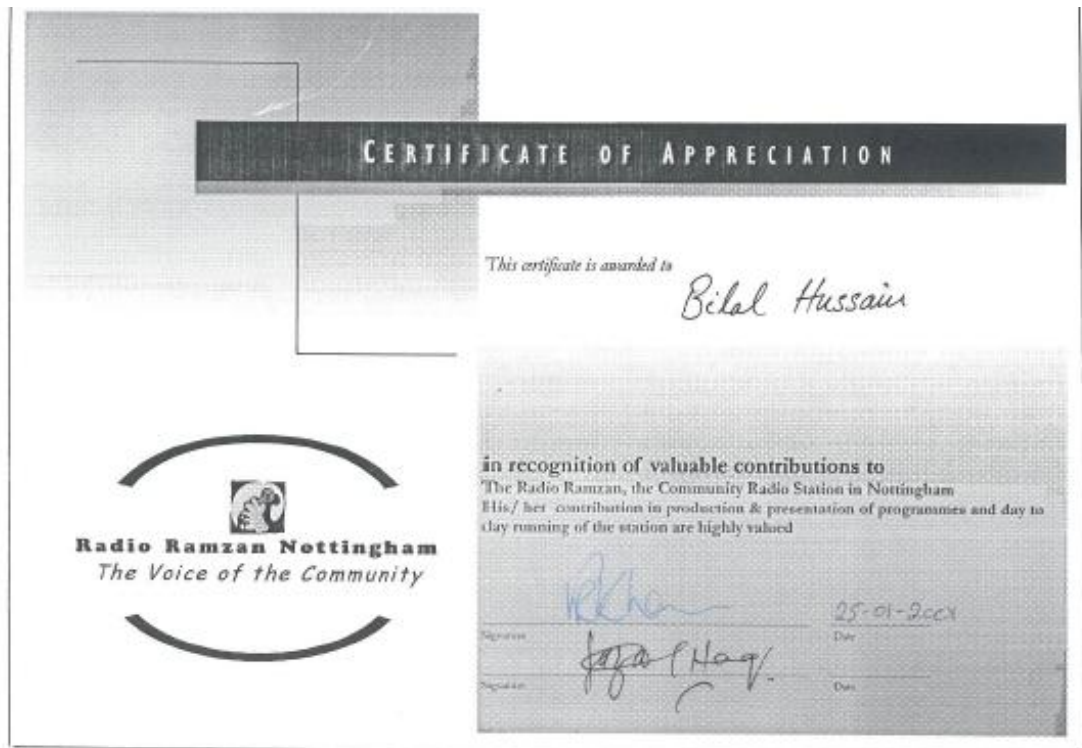


## Appendix (L)

Advert Details	
<p><b>Chunk A</b></p> <p>Jingle  Pak Foods ✓  Imran Khan Cancer Appeal  ABC Project ✓  New Leaf - Bengali ✓  Revs School of Motoring ✓  Royal Sweets  Rauf Builders ✓</p> <p>Running Time : 5m 29s</p>	<p><b>Chunk B</b></p> <p>Jingle  Meadows Community College ✓  Muslim Hands  Mobilink ✓  New Leaf - Mirpuri ✓  Nottingham Police  Imam Fried Chicken ✓  Shah Fast Food ✓</p> <p>Running Time : 4m 32s</p>
<p><b>Chunk C</b></p> <p>Jingle  Wellington Dental Practice ✓  Human Relief Foundation  Broxtowe College Employers Links ✓  Muslim Aid  Green Dome Rags  Taj Mahal ✓  Project Rahnama ✓</p> <p>Running Time : 4m 46s</p>	<p><b>Chunk D</b></p> <p>Jingle  Khans Halal Meat ✓  Islamic Relief  Mizan Books  New Leaf - English ✓  Nottingham Travel ✓  Medina Chemist ✓  Karimia Tutorials ✓  Japanese Auto Salvage ✓</p> <p>Running Time : 5m 37s</p>
<p><b>Chunk E</b></p> <p>Jingle  Pakistan Center FC ✓  Caspian Kebabs  Cut-price Furniture  Islamic Relief - Urdu  Oasis  Pakistan Center Netball ✓  Islamia School ✓</p> <p>Running Time : 4m 52s</p>	<p>21 @ £10</p> <p>£210</p>

Local advertisers/Sponsors of Radio Ramzan

## Appendix (M)



Certificate for Radio Ramzan volunteers

## Appendix (N)



HT/RR/SJA

4<sup>th</sup> February 2000

Yesmean Rashid  
Health Promotion Specialist  
Linden House

Dear Yesmean

**Radio Ramadan: Health Education Awareness Project Evaluation**

As NHS Direct is a fairly new service which many Asian people are not aware of, NHS Direct's input into the Health Education awareness project was a valuable opportunity to facilitate and inform the Asian people in the local community.

As previously learned, Radio Ramadan is a successful programme in Nottingham. A key focus point of communication, it enables Asian people to gain access to services. This can sometimes be difficult due to language and culture barriers, and for people whose first language is not English.

The Radio Ramadan programmes have been very interesting, educative and informative.

This has also been an opportunity for NHS Direct to evaluate the suitability of resources on health topics and services for the Asian community, and carry out research regarding other services. There is very little appropriate material available in other languages for the popular health topics on the programme.

NHS Direct would like to take this opportunity to thank Radio Ramadan (health project) and everyone involved, for their support and co-operation.

Kind regards

Rashida Riaz  
Bi-lingual Co-worker


Helen Thompson  
Communication, Quality & Training Manager

NHS Direct East Midlands Victoria Health Centre Glasshouse Street  
Nottingham NG1 3LW Office Tel: 0115 971 5101 Office Fax: 0115 941 3371

NHS Direct letter of Appreciation for Radio Ramzan

## Appendix (O)

PROGRAMMES



### RADIO KIRAN on 87.9 Fm

*Radio Kiran broadcasts entertaining Programmes in English, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Mirpuri, and Gujrati producing a beautiful blend of informative and enlightening programmes for everyone.*

**BIG BREAKFAST**  
*Light entertainment, What 's on, News/ Weather, competition*

**COFFEE HOUR**  
*Discussion around womens' issues*

**EMPOWERMENT**  
*Asian Womens Project Slot*

**GOLDEN OLDIES**  
*Music from past*

**IDENTITY**  
*Language programmes in Bengali, Gujrati, Mirpuri, Punjabi*

**HEALTH IS WEALTH**  
*Programmes on Heath issues with Medical professionals*

**GELTUN BAREE KAILANI**  
*Programme based on stories and lyric Poetry and literature*

**YOUR SHOUT**  
*Listeners slot to raise issues of their concern*

**CHILDRENS' HOUR**  
*Programme for children and toddlers*

**FARMAISH**  
*Programme of dedications and listeners' choice music*

**HOME SWEET HOME!**  
*Programmes dedicated to family issues*

**WE ARE YOUNG**  
*Programme on youth issues*

Poster of Radio Kiran – first womens' only radio station in the UK.