Making a Better Life: The Stories of People from Poor Rural Backgrounds in Sindh, Pakistan

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part, to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature: _____

<div align="center">Ambreen Shahriar</div>

Acknowledgements

This PhD has been a long journey for me, and my personal life changed much through the course of my studies. However, with my share of problems, struggles and responsibilities, the best thing was that this PhD was a sort of refuge.

Abstract

This study analyses the stories of young people, both male and female, from rural and economically weak backgrounds. Participants in the present study come from the province of Sindh, Pakistan, and Sindhi is their first language. The data consist of the narratives of their lives. They deal with their attitudes and behaviours, actions and struggles, hurdles and hardships, expectations and desires. The participants talked about their family, home, village, surroundings, socio-economic problems, etc. My participants struggled to make ends meet economically and worked hard to improve their social position and that of their families. This study tries to interpret the observations of the interviews in terms of the theories and categories of Pierre Bourdieu (cultural, social, and symbolic capital; habitus, field, symbolic violence, practice, etc) and treats them as evidence of these theories. Symbolic Interactionism was used to interpret small-world lives of one-to-one interaction of individuals with individuals and artefacts and their roles. Narrative Analysis was applied to stories taken from two interviews.

I investigated how young people from poor rural backgrounds progressed towards a better standard of living. The socio-economic position of my participants in the social structures of their native villages hindered or facilitated their progress towards their goals. By interacting with people and artefacts in their environment, my participants managed to improve their standing in wider society. By getting an education, they found a way to cope with their day-to-day problems. But they were hindered in these attempts by the restrictions inherent in the existing social structures. This study found that my participants had to overcome obstacles which were so great that many other people from the same background never succeeded in doing so. This study is an attempt to look at their lives and the world at large through their eyes.

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Sarmad	Male
Aqeel	Male

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Ahmar	Male
Abdur Razzak	Male
Shabana	Female
Farhana	Female
Farwa	Female

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Our Trajectories

My father got me admission to college and I started going to college. After that what happened was that in 1998 the sugar mill was shut down. So my father's salary stopped. Now my story! I had seen the world there [in college]; I opened my eyes in college. It is right that I got education at school, I was taught well there, teachers were nice, environment was good, my father was there, my family supported me a lot. However, when I came to college and the sugar mill was closed, then I thought that my studies would end there. I had to sit at home like other girls and do the same household chores. Obviously in the villages this is the idea of girls, what else is there? I thought, ok, but I would not give up the little knowledge that I had. I used to do my chores and then would go to the roof of my house and study, whenever I had time. I used to cry on my own and would say to Allah 'look, if I had been a boy then I would have done something but now I am a girl what can I do?' What can one do at home, in the village! At most one can do sewing or the household chores, what other work is there? There is nothing that one can do. Then I would study and cry as well. I would lie down there, spread my quilt and sleep there on the roof. I would study and I would say, 'no, this is my education, so whatever I have studied at least I should not forget that'. ... I used to study on my own, hidden away so that people of my village would not know that I was studying. They might have said, 'she has no money, then why is she doing that.' But I had decided that I would study, it was education, it could be useful at some time [in the future].

(From Shabana's Interview, a female participant)

1.1 Introduction

> The poor are not disadvantaged primarily because others fail to value their identity and misrecognize and undervalue their cultural goods, or indeed because they are stigmatized, though all these things make their situation worse; rather they are disadvantaged primarily because they lack the means to live in ways which they as well as others value. (Sayer, 2005a:947)

I investigated the lives of young people from poor families who wanted to improve their lives socially and economically. They come from the rural areas of the southern province of Sindh, Pakistan. I interviewed the participants in Sindhi (my mother tongue and that of my participants). I learnt that each of my participants thinks that education is the way to a better standard of living. This led to a big question, which I intend to explore: **How do some people from poor rural backgrounds in Sindh try to progress to a higher standard of living?**

This research is important for the natives of Sindh, especially from rural Sindh, as there are not many from the background of my participants who intend to improve their social status (see Chapter 2 for details). The social conditions of the people, and the education system in the villages, of Sindh are so pathetic that most of these people cannot even

imagine a better life style. That is why most of them do not aspire to it. There are therefore only a few who stand out and decide to change their and their family's living conditions. It is these few that my study focuses on. I shall explore incidents in the lives of my participants which made them act in certain ways. How and why did they decide that they had to improve their social condition? What measures did they take to achieve this? The study is not concerned with the success of any intentions. It tries to unravel only *why* people make certain decisions (form intentions), *how* they try to improve their lives, *what* obstacles they have to overcome or *what* aids them.

In the next section, I shall present some incidents which made me think and eventually made me undertake this study. This will bring the reader closer to my thoughts and feelings about this project. It is very important to have a real insight into the world which this research describes. My work is not the result of chance: I witness such incidents every day and was driven towards giving a voice to my people. I am not from this poor, rural background, but these are *my* people, my relation to them is profound: the next section will explain that. The last section will explain the structure of the thesis.

1.2 How the Journey Began

At the government university where I was studying and where a large number of youngsters come from rural backgrounds, mastery of written and spoken English was considered the greatest of a person's assets. I knew students who excelled in their L1 (either Sindhi or Urdu) Literature class, which was compulsory during the first year of our undergraduate course, but could not even be noticed by teachers in other classes since English was the medium of instruction and in-class communication, and their English was not good. One of my friends used to get top scores in her L1 class but not in the other subjects because of her inadequate command of English. At that time I did not know what treasure went unexplored. None of our teachers ever bothered to ask those silent students or to encourage the diffident ones. They just regarded them as undeserving village bumpkins who had been badly educated. This negative attitude to such people is wide-spread (e.g. see Taylor, 1981). Later, when I joined the university as a lecturer, I tried to pay individual attention to such students in order to motivate them.

Once, however, a student in an undergraduate class of English Literature really annoyed me. I asked him to come to the rostrum to repeat what I had explained to the class. He came forward with confidence. He stood silently at the rostrum for about fifteen minutes, at times smiling at his fellow students who were smiling back at him. But he could not utter a word. At first I felt sorry for him and gave him time. I asked him to say anything he wanted. Finally I asked him just to read from the book, but he could not even do that. This really annoyed me. I still wonder what went wrong with him; but more importantly how he would be feeling about the whole incident. He came to the rostrum with confidence, but he lost it when he was in front of a class of some eighty students, most of whom he knew very well, and all of them were encouraging him, as I could tell from their gestures. He was able to look at them, at their individual gestures and return smiles to them but…

I thought and thought, then and now… They all usually spoke and quite happily (especially the men) whenever I asked them to. When a teacher looked at them, they felt important and their confidence was boosted. But after a while I began to understand that university teachers needed to know about the home culture of these students in order to make them better learners (see Obied, 2009). These students had been brought up in an environment where children might have seen their fathers obeying the landlords and their mothers obeying their fathers. Everyone had a pre-defined role. Everybody had responsibilities. Nobody was allowed to speak, to express, to query or to question anything, nobody: not their fathers, not their grandfathers, not their uncles, nobody. Nobody had rights. From early childhood, they might have experienced the severe consequences of expressing personal views or of arguing with a person in authority. They might have been doing manual work in their villages from the time they were little. They might have been beaten for no fault of their own by the *wadero* (village landlord who pays *haris* to work in his fields). They might have been bullied because of their low class. They might have been disgraced at any moment. And above all, they might have seen their fathers, helpless in the face of all this, being disgraced or beaten at any time too. I recognised that it was this culture that they carried within themselves, culture, which Sapir (1949:197) defined as an 'impersonal aspect of those values and

definitions which come to the child with the irresistible authority of father, mother, or other individuals', of which the child is only a 'passive recipient'. I thought and thought ... why they did not speak in class, why was it that, when at last a teacher asked them to express themselves, some of them felt so good and became so happy, and spoke up, but others fell silent. I understood, all were not the same.

Definitely all were not the same. Recently a colleague of mine completed his doctorate in the UK. When he got the scholarship to study in the UK, he said, 'some people dream about achieving certain heights in their career and when they achieve them, they are very happy, but with my background, I never even *dreamt* of going to the UK.' He may have forgotten his words but they kept echoing in my mind.

Here is another example. It was the last class before exams of undergraduate students of English Literature. The students wanted to ask me questions related to the entire course. I asked one of my students, Sarmad, a participant in the pilot study, to stand in front of the class and answer the questions of all the students. I was so confident about the subject knowledge and competence in English of this young man that I knew he would answer each question well. When I discussed my students in general and this session in particular with my colleagues in the staff room, I was utterly surprised to learn from one of my colleagues that she had taught Sarmad during his first year at university and that he was one of those silent students who observe everything but never open their mouth. Later, when he obtained his MBA, he received a gold medal, and today he is an official in a private bank in Karachi. This goes to show how much these suppressed children can achieve given half a chance.

So many incidents and so many people around me, students and friends, left me thinking. I began to understand that these people with their humble background have a lot of experience of life to share. I decided to collect life stories of these people from poor rural backgrounds for my research. I conducted a pilot study and interviewed two Sindhi-speaking men from this group. I chose one person who has completed his education and is on a sound career path and another who quit university a month or so after joining. At first I intended to conduct the main study on participants with similar

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specifications, in order to make a comparison in my study. Later, however, this differentiation (success vs. failure) did not seem very relevant to me. I realised that it was not only their academic success that was important but their entire lives. Every detail, every small incident helped to make them the people they are. Therefore, for my main study, I widened my objective into simply gathering and interpreting the life stories of young Sindhi people from poor rural backgrounds who aspire to a better life.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of nine chapters.

Chapter 1 forms the introduction to my thesis. My research deals with the life stories of young people from poor rural backgrounds. I am trying to see the lives of my participants through their eyes as presented in their narratives and to look at the situation with the fresh eyes of a novice, triggered by the experiences related in this chapter.

Chapter 2: The participants in this research are Sindhis from rural Sindh. However, I realise that my Western readers would not be familiar with their culture and living conditions. Therefore, in order to give my readers some better understanding of the people of this study, I relate in this chapter the recent history of Pakistan and its effect on Sindh. I shall discuss the effects of partition on Sindh and its people. The land of Sindh with its centuries-old glory was reduced to a small province in Pakistan and yearns for its rightful share in the national economy. Its people are lagging behind in every field of life. The chapter ends by exploring the issues of religion, language, education and the job market in today's Sindh.

Chapter 3: To get a better understanding of the field, I interviewed two young men for a pilot study. The pilot study high-lighted three main concerns:

- intrinsic and extrinsic motivation,

- responsibility versus rights

- struggle to be included and accepted.

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Separate sections are devoted to each of these.

The pilot study clarified the goal of this research, advanced key research questions and helped me narrow down the focus for the main study. After I had analysed the data from the pilot study, my focus slightly moved away from what it was originally. For the main research, instead of comparing academically successful and unsuccessful young people, I decided to focus on the lives of all those who aspire to better living conditions, regardless of their ultimate success.

Chapter 4: Having determined my focus, I discuss my theoretical framework. For interpreting my data, I chose Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism. Following both Bourdieu and Blumer, I view structure and agency as complementary forces. This chapter discusses Bourdieu's Conceptual Triad (*Habitus*, Field, Capital), and his concept of Symbolic Violence. Bourdieu helped me look at the bigger social structures and the individual's relation to them. I used the techniques of Symbolic Interactionism to understand the small worlds of my participants, one-to-one interaction, meaning-making and interpretation, detailed aspects of playing social roles, self and society.

Chapter 5: My study gives voice to those who have been unheard for years, as any ethnographic research should do. Within a wider ethnographic framework, I used case studies to collect the life stories of two participants for a pilot study and five participants for the main study. I chose life stories in order to show life from the perspective of my participants. This chapter explores the theoretical and practical issues related to methodology, including

- the research context with special reference to the participants,

- the process of data collection and the relevant issues of reflexivity and ethics,

- the process of data analysis with an emphasis on the issues of translation and evaluation of qualitative research.

Chapter 6: I have created detailed biographies of all the participants, built up from their own words. The participants told me the stories of their lives through interviews conducted in Sindhi, their and my native language. To make them easier to understand, I presented the biographies in the form of stories, in English and in the third person. I did not use the first person because I want to remind readers that it was I who created the stories out of the interviews and that they are not in their original form. Each story contains a number of small or large literal extracts (translated into English) from the interviews in order to give readers a flavour of the individual voices.

Chapter 7: *Habitus* forms the core of my data interpretation. My participants carried limited symbolic capital from the field of early socialisation with their position as dominated agents. They managed to find a bit of the cultural capital that they needed at home and tried to achieve social success. In order to cope with the symbolic power of the dominant class in the field into which they moved for higher education and jobs, my participants used creative, discursive agency to transform their *habitus* and activate their capital for improving their lives. Putting an argument regarding symbolic violence meted out to my participants, I conclude this chapter by discussing their logic of practice.

Chapter 8: In this chapter, I wanted to look more closely at the individual voices and understand *the participants'* interpretations and meaning-making of incidents. I, therefore, applied a second methodology, namely structure-based narrative analysis (Labov's model) of two extracts from the stories of Ahmar and Shabana. The story of Ahmar shows the importance of self-respect and motivation. That of Shabana shows a relationship between choices and circumstances. This type of analysis enables us to see the environment and the interpretation of the narrative entirely from the participants' point of view. I presented 'a partial reliving' of experience by my participants, as they were sometimes weeping and sometimes laughing while telling their stories (Labov, 1972:355). I want to share that with my readers.

Chapter 9: I present my theoretical understanding, reflect on the research questions and present the implications. I summarise how Bourdieu helped me to interpret the practices

of my participants and how Labov's narrative analysis provided an understanding of interactions and meaning-making during ordinary happenings in their lives. My participants and their eagerly narrated stories are the most important aspect of this thesis.

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Sindh, Pakistan: People within their Context

See, mother, father, sister, brother (in Sindhi, when we say these relations, we say them in this order) they are necessary [for a complete family]. If all of the siblings are brothers and there is no sister; then the need is felt of a sister because the mother would have difficulties till her sons get married. If a sister is there, she can take care of the household chores. If all are sisters and there is no brother, then they feel the lack also because the father faces problems since the son would be his heir. See, sisters belong to other houses because they are going to get married and go away; they are not going to live with their parents forever. For that reason, the important relationships are these: mother, father, sister, brother. Uncles and aunts are distant. They are for connecting us with other people, like by marrying into a family my uncle would connect us to them.

(From Abdur Razzak's Interview, a male participant)

2.1 Introduction

> Three major events have contributed to the shaping of (modern) Sindh's history, politics, and culture: the Muslim conquest in 711, the British conquest in 1843, and the Partition of India in 1947 (Pal, 2008:2).

This chapter discusses the geographical and historical context of my research (see Appendix 1- Map of Sindh during different periods of history). We cannot understand the attitudes and actions of my participants and the people around them without understanding the culture and identity that they carry as a people. To help my reader, I briefly present some of the most important events from the recent history of Sindh and Pakistan and their impact on the lives of common Sindhis. Knowing these events helps us to understand their feeling of deprivation and its causes. For centuries, Sindh enjoyed a significant and glorious position, but after becoming part of Pakistan, it was reduced to the deplorable condition of a small province, struggling for its existence and its rights. The reader has to know this in order to understand why this research is important. I shall argue that issues of culture and identity are of greater significance in Sindh than in any other province of Pakistan. This is due to the influx of immigrants from India at the time of partition and the exodus of native Hindus, who left a gap in the educated population of Sindh. These issues are even more important in Sindh because Sindh, its language,

culture and education system have been acknowledged and honoured during British rule of India and even long before that. However, they are considered worthless in present-day Pakistan.

I start the chapter with a brief overview of Pakistan's geo-political evolution followed by a section on, Sindh and its history. Then I shift the attention of the reader to present day Sindh. I shall discuss religion, language, education and job market. The chapter ends with a brief summary.

2.2 Pakistan: Geo-political Evolution

'Two types of nation-states have emerged in the Third World during the post-World War II era: nations with history and nations without history' (Kazi, 1987:1). Kazi continues that Pakistan was a nation without history built out of 'nations with history'. Therefore, Pakistan was formed by 'denial of the existence of the old and historically well established nationalities inhabiting the Bengal, Sindh, Baluchistan and the Pakhtoon areas' (Syed, 1974b:21). Thus it has not just the task of state-building but more importantly that of nation-building.

Nowhere in the world, except in Pakistan (and perhaps Israel [see Law of Return]), has religion ever provided the basis of nationality (Syed, 1974b). Pakistan was established on the basis of the 'Two Nation Theory', which regarded Hindus and Muslims as two nations living on the Indian sub-continent. When Pakistan was created, the Muslim majority provinces were carved out of the Indian sub-continent and made to form an independent country. At the time of partition from India, Pakistan comprised the states/units of Sindh, Balochistan, North West Frontier Province (now called Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa) and the partitioned provinces of Punjab and Bengal. Culturally, politically and even economically, each of these states was a distinct nation, existing in its own right (Syed, 1974b). The province of Bengal was in the far east of India and therefore called 'East Pakistan', and the remaining provinces in the north-west of India and therefore called 'West Pakistan' at the time. Joyo (2005: xviii) describes the formation of Pakistan as, 'the final sheet-anchor of Muslim power in India [which] stood conceived and identified in history as a count of peoples/nations each of whom an entity

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in its own right – the Punjabis, the Kashmiris, the Pukhtuns, the Balochis, the Sindhis, and the Bengalis each a nation put together never ever known to or called by history as one nation – Muslim or Pakistani.'

Struggles over power and influence, over language and education, between Bengal and Punjab arose soon after the birth of Pakistan (see Joyo, 2005). These were the two most important provinces of the new state. Bengal had the largest population. Its agriculture generated more revenue than any other province because of its plentiful supply of water. Bengalis traditionally take the arts and education very seriously and therefore often are very well educated. Conflicts arose between Punjab, the most powerful province in West Pakistan, and Bengal, identical with East Pakistan. West Pakistan tried to impose Urdu as the national language on Bengali-speaking East Pakistan. The Punjabis, very well established in the military, created rules specifically designed to keep Bengalis out of employment, e.g. in the armed forces by demanding a minimum height which most Bengalis could not satisfy whereas Punjabis could. By other machinations the Punjabis managed to ensure that they also dominated the civil service even in Bengal. These conflicts resulted in a civil war, and Bengal became independent Bangladesh in 1971. This meant that Punjab now was even more powerful and influential in West Pakistan (now simply 'Pakistan'), and this in turn dramatically increased the problems of the politically weak, neglected and disadvantaged province of Sindh.

However, the controversies did not end with the separation of Bengal, they continued in the remaining four provinces. In Balochistan, the largest but least developed province, people wanted equal rights and treatment. In Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, a beautiful mountainous province, a newly started war on terror is ruining not just the natural beauty and the life of humble hard-working mountain people but has also destroyed 80% of its economy. Punjab, the most powerful province, is not free of problems, the most important of which is the demand of a separate province by the Siraiki speaking people of lower Punjab. Yet it is Sindh which Rahman (1996) calls, a 'conflict-prone province.' It is due to the emergence of Muhajir (immigrants from India at the time of partition in 1947) ethnic identity and its claims for Urdu as one of the languages of the province, their opposition to Sindhi language and culture and even their demand of a

separate province for them to be carved out of Sindh. Thus Joyo (2005: 370) remarks, 'non-homogeneity of sentiments and incoherence of will has been the single banefulness of life of the peoples hustled together to live in a rigid unitarian state called Pakistan.'

My research deals with life in this 'conflict-prone province', the problems caused by identity, poverty, language, education, low esteem by others and low self-esteem, and how my participants are trying to break out of their disadvantaged position.

2.3 Sindh: The history

The province of Sindh has a very strong national identity, formed out of its centuries-old history, culture, language and politics, and carried by its people to wherever they go (as in the case of my participants). It is stronger in Sindh than anywhere else in Pakistan. Sindhis have emphasised it for time immemorial. These distinct features of Sindhi identity are losing ground in present day Sindh, and this is leading to a crisis.

According to Ahmad (1988) and Ansari (2005) Sindh was, even long before partition, a magnet for immigrants and conquerors from all around India and elsewhere. Greeks (Alexander, the Great), Iranians, Turks, Afghans etc have at some time or other conquered Sindh. Both writers agree that the type of immigrants and their attitudes after settling in Sindh were quite different before and after the partition. Before partition, the immigrants were in the minority. They tried to integrate with the native population by adopting their language, culture and education system. Whenever Sindh was invaded by foreigners before partition, Sindhis worked hard to maintain their identity; the invaders were absorbed by the natives and adopted Sindhi ways. After partition, however, the immigrants came in huge numbers, thought themselves superior to the natives and despised them, so that eventually the natives became a suppressed majority (sic!). The immigrants promoted their own language and system of education, depriving the natives of their rights and alienating them in their own land.

Sindhis (both Hindus and Muslims) form the majority of the population of the province. Siraikis, Balochs, Punjabis and Pathans/Pukhtuns have been living here for centuries and have mostly integrated with the natives, adopting their language and culture. They

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also call themselves Sindhis. This makes them different from the people who came to the province because of the partition of India in 1947. After partition, immigrants came not only from India but also from other provinces of Pakistan, but they did not try to amalgamate with the native culture. Therefore Punjabis living in the province before partition are very different from those who came after partition, in both their lifestyle and their attitudes towards the province. This has fragmented the province, and the natives are searching for their identity. My participants are L1 Sindhi speaking young men and women from rural Sindh. They belong to the land more than any other group, but they are suffering most.

The problems began when, after the partition of India in 1947 and continuing today, immigrants started flooding into the province.

These immigrants came in spite of the famous Pakistan Resolution (Lahore Resolution) of 1940, which was the basis of Partition and decreed that there should be no cross-border migration. The 'fathers' of that resolution realised that the formation of two countries, one for Hindus and one for Muslims would result in the migration of Muslims from all over India to their new country (and of Hindus in the opposite direction, from Pakistan and today's Bangladesh to India) and that such migration would cause enormous problems for the natives of those territories (Sindhis, Bengalis, Balochs etc). That is why the Muslim leaders accepting the resolution decided that no cross-border migration would be allowed, and Muslims living in India should stay in India.

In the event, this provision was ignored, and in 1947 Muslims and Hindus in huge numbers flooded across the border in both directions, and untold misery and violence resulted.

These immigrants of 1947 form the biggest and most powerful Urdu-speaking 'pressure group' in the province (Rahman, 1996:112). They are commonly called *muhajirs* (meaning 'immigrant') and live mainly in urban areas, especially in the cities of Karachi and Hyderabad. After Bangladesh obtained its independence from Pakistan in 1971, a small number of humble and inconspicuous Bihari-speaking people came to Sindh. The Soviet war in Afghanistan (1979-1989) caused the immigratian of poor Pathans from

Afghanistan. They live mainly in Karachi, the largest city of Sindh and give a hard time to the Urdu-speaking *muhajirs* by competing with them for their rights, something the native Sindhis did not do to the same extent.

Immigration from Swat (Khyber Pukhtunkhwa) started with the earth quake in October 2005, and still continues as a result of the military campaign against the local Taliban which unsettles the local population and turns them into refugees. So Sindh now is home not only to existing communities of Afghan Pathans but also to Pathans/Pukhtuns from Swat (Khyber Pukhtunkhwa). This resulted in a power struggle between *muhajirs* and Pathans in the city of Karachi, making the native Sindhis an even smaller minority in their capital.

There are other groups living peacefully in the province, including Bohris, Ismailies, Kachhi-Memons, and Ahmedis. None of the immigrants who came during or after Partition tried to become a part of the local community. Instead they retained their group identity, with aims and objectives different from those of the Sindhis. They were not concerned with the common good of the province as a whole, leaving the Sindhi natives alone in their struggle for the survival of Sindhi National Identity.

During the campaign for independence before partition of India, some Sindhis were worried about Punjab's policies and although most Muslim politicians supported the cause of Pakistan, others thought that Sindhis would become a minority which would be oppressed by Punjab (Ahmad, 1988). Accordingly, on 3 March 1943, the famous nationalist leader of Sindh, G M Syed (1904-1995), presented a resolution in the Sindh Legislative Assembly which stated that the people of the sub-continent constituted not one, but many nations. Therefore, the resolution claimed, Pakistan would not be a single 'Muslim Nation' but a plurality of nations. This fact was ignored after the creation of Pakistan so that most ethnic groups are in danger of losing their identity. The resolution, which was passed by Muslim and Hindu members, demanded sovereignty and autonomy of the states (units or provinces) that were to form Pakistan. The Assembly declared that the distinct Sindhi identity had to be safeguarded and that Sindh was entitled to freedom from any power and parliamentary subordination to a central

government or any other nation. G M Syed repeated this demand of the right of self-determination of the provinces (to decide their destiny) along with their recognition as sovereign units in his meeting as a leader of the opposition in the Sindh Assembly, with a British Delegation led by the Secretary of State for India, on April 2, 1946. The demand clearly shows Sindhi concern for their culture and identity.

However, after partition, the immigrants simply seized the land and buildings abandoned by Hindus, took over the major cities of Karachi and Hyderabad and occupied all important jobs in administration and elsewhere. The assault on Sindhi National Identity continued when in 1948 Karachi was made the capital of Pakistan, i.e. it was no longer part of Sindh. Sindh was deprived of its biggest city and its cosmopolitanism, of a seaport and of a great source of wealth. Soon Sindh was deprived of its autonomy and sovereignty and was treated as a little province which was made sub-ordinate to the bigger and administratively stronger province, Punjab. Finally, in 1955, the One-Unit policy came into effect. It merged the former four provinces of West Pakistan (Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan and Khyber Pukhtunkhwa [then called North West Frontier Province]) into one province. This was to give the new amalgamated province more power over Bengal, which would otherwise have been the biggest province. On all these and many other occasions, it was not the immigrants who faced the inclusion / exclusion tension but the natives of Sindh. Rahman (1996:115) notes, 'Sindhi now became a major symbol of the sense of deprivation - cultural, educational, economic, and political - which Sindhi leaders and the emerging middle-class intelligentsia felt.'

In the following section on Sindhis before and after partition, I shall discuss the deprivation faced by Sindhis in rural areas today and its causes, with sub-sections on religion, language, education and the job market, each of which will help my Western readers to understand this study.

2.4 Sindhis: Before and after Partition

Markovits (2008) and Khuhro (1978) note that Hindus and Muslims were quite neatly divided in the province before and during British rule, when most Hindus lived in urban and most Muslims in rural areas. Both discuss the more educated and economically

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sound status of Hindus, who had formed an urban population and were either *amils* (government officers) or *banios* (rich traders and bankers who used to lend money on interest). Except for a small middle-class Muslim urban population struggling to survive, the rest of the Muslim population was rural. Muslim Sindhis were either *waderos* (landowners, who hire poor people to cultivate their land) or *haris* (the cultivators/peasants). On the one hand, there were rich Hindu Sindhi *banios* who lent money on interest to Muslim *waderos*; and on the other hand, there were Hindu *banios* in villages as shopkeepers who lent money to *haris*.

'The Balochi rulers of Sindh and their land-owning followers, both Sindhi and Balochi, known in Sindh as the *waderos*, were very dependent on the literary and financial skills of the local Hindus' (Markovits, 2008:47). As the power shifted to the British, the *amils* easily acquired the administrative jobs under British rule, whereas despite a well-established treasury system of the British, the local *banios* remained popular with the local *waderos*. Thus Hindus and Muslims lived in harmony in the province, without any religious conflicts, respecting and even celebrating each other's religious festivities, and practicing certain beliefs together as well. At the time of Partition, most of the Hindu Sindhis (who formed around 25% of the population of Sindh) left for Far East Asian countries (such as Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Burma), where many of them already had strong business links, and settled there. They left a vacuum in the educated urban Sindh which could not immediately be filled by rural Sindhis. Thus the urban areas, including the positions of importance in government, were left to the immigrants, towards whom the government was very sympathetic. The first Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali (1895-1951), was also an Urdu-speaking immigrant from India. Unlike the government of India, the government of Pakistan allowed the immigrants to take possession of the properties abandoned by the Hindus in Sindh, so that the immigrants became wealthier than the locals, and that over night. At that time, the ordinary Sindhis left behind after the emigration of the educated Hindus were not powerful and educated enough to cope with these issues. Thus their present condition, as explored in my research, could be seen as inevitable.

The refugee groups, who came to Pakistan under miserable conditions and whom the indigenous nationalities had wholeheartedly welcomed in the spirit of their common bonds of Islamic brotherhood, began to show a conflict of interest, treating the indigenous nationalities as uncivilised and infidel peoples and blaming them for their Hindu historical past. This has been especially true in Sindh and Balochistan, resulting in the continuous sense of regret among the locals. (Kazi, 1987:28-9)

The insistence of the indigenous elite on a secular society and the Sindhi demand for assimilation of the refugees into the local culture led to a hostile environment in the province.

For example, the following factors gave rise to anti-Urdu and anti-*Muhajir* feelings among the natives of Sindh:

- the pro-Urdu policies of the government,

- the concentration of muhajirs (immigrants) in urban Sindh,

- the dominance of muhajirs in jobs in Sindh,

- the demand for separating Karachi, Hyderabad and the surrounding areas from Sindh and turning them into a separate province for muhajirs,

- re-locating the University of Sindh from Karachi to less developed Hyderabad,

- the creation of the University of Karachi with Urdu as the sole medium of instruction and forbidding the use of Sindhi for answering the examination questions.

As a result of more recent changes at administrative levels, Sindhis 'have also lost the right of education and employment in their capital city, Karachi, on the basis of being outsiders in the city ... they are hardly given 1/6th of what they pay to the Centre in the form of tax and other economic gains' (Joyo, 2005: xx).

In today's Sindh, the rural and urban divide is stark with rural areas deprived of even the basic necessities of life. Most of the rural areas are still inhabited by Sindhis (both

Hindu and Muslims). The *waderos* are usually Muslims and omnipotent in their villages. For their people they are the rulers. It is the *wadero* who decides the fate of all the people in the village, including

- what jobs they would take,

- who the people would vote for in the country's general elections,

- who would stay in the village,

- whether villagers would send their children to school or not,

and even the village school cannot run if the *wadero* is not willing. Most of the *waderos* are not very interested in the progress of the people because they would not like them to get educated and challenge them one day.

There is no middle class in rural areas. The *wadero* is upper class. The *haris* and labourers are lower class. The lower class men have usually four job options,

- to work as *haris* on the *wadero*'s land,

- to work as servants for the *wadero*,

- to work on their own land if they have any,

- to work as a labourer in the nearby town/city in a factory or on building sites or as navvies building roads.

In a few villages there may be a government-appointed doctor. He would either be a native of the village or be used to the conditions of the village. Therefore, it would be easier for him/her to survive in the village, and probably his wife would be from same village. Or he would commute to the village every day. He and his family would live in the nearby city because living conditions in the villages are so primitive.

Therefore only the children of the poor would attend a village school, if there is one. The village school teacher would be someone from the village who has studied a few

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classes and passed private exams taken for a BA without going to university (see Section 2.4.3). He (a village primary school teacher is usually male) would ask the *wadero* to get him a job. The village primary school teacher is not well paid. He would do nothing against the wishes of the *wadero* who got him the job. The *wadero* is a powerful person who can get the school closed. Although the poor are deprived in urban areas as well, they don't have a *wadero* to look up to for everything, including decisions on education and jobs.

Schools, in villages, lack resources, e.g. chairs, desks, blackboards and books. They may lack water, their toilets may be in a deplorable condition. There may be no school building, and sometimes no teacher and no school at all. Some villages may have only a primary school and others may have both primary and secondary schools. However, students who study further than that SSC or HSSC have to travel to nearby towns to attend classes and sit for exams. The physical living conditions in the villages are very unpleasant. For example: no clean water, muddy paths (especially during the rainy season), no roads, no toilets, insects (especially mosquitoes), diseases spreading as a result of these unsanitary conditions, and annual floods. The urban poor too have to suffer due to their poverty but the living conditions in cities are far better.

In the following four sections, I shall discuss religion, language, education and the job market in Sindh. These are the areas in which rural Sindhis are disadvantaged and these are the main causes of the suffering of my participants.

2.4.1 Religion

Sindh has been a secular land for centuries. The followers of different religions have lived here peacefully together. Sindh is the land of the Sufis, mystics who taught the lesson of love and harmony to their followers. All natives of Sindh, whatever religion or denomination they belong to, respect and follow the teachings of the mystics. Discussing the beliefs of the Sindhis, Syed (1974a: 36) remarks that 'for Sindhis, spiritualism and atheism are only two sides of a picture' (Author's translation) (original:

دهريت ء روحانيت ۔۔ هڪ تصوير جا به رخ آهن). He further says,

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Henan (Sindhin) jadenh dahriyat aen jumli mazhaban khe hik tasweer ja ba rukh samjhyo ho … ta he mazhaban je nale mei manhun mei nafaq nafrat paida karan khe kean thay berdasht karey saghya!!! [In Sindhi language, Roman script].

[Translation] They (Sindhis) viewed religion and atheism as two sides of a picture … then how would they consent to intolerance and extremism in the name of religion.

The *muhajirs*, immigrants from India at the time of Partition, however, consider religion to be their most important asset. They acquired a homeland, Pakistan, in the name of religion. That is why they denigrate everything Sindhi as un-Islamic, be it language, culture, rituals or ideology. They encourage religious extremism in the areas where they are in the majority and dislike Sindhi tolerance for all religious groups. *Muhajirs* discourage Sindhi thought of harmony and peace and regard Sindhis as bad Muslims and bad Pakistanis. They are supported by the Punjabi ruling elite in their propaganda. Punjabis like the intolerance of the *muhajirs* because that stirs up religious divisions. Linguistic and religious discord will make it easier for them to dominate the remaining three provinces, in accordance with the maxim divide and rule. This will be further discussed in the section on language (below).

2.4.2 Language

The preferred language for Sindhis in Sindh is Sindhi; that is the language in which they feel at home and especially the best language for expressing their emotions. But Urdu has enormous prestige, and Sindhis will therefore use it if they know it and when they want to make an impression or want to show off their education, or are talking to non-Sindhi speakers.

During the British era, a British official had to pass exams in Hindi-Urdu (then known as Hindustani) to be posted to any of the Indian provinces. In Sindh he had to pass a similar test for Sindhi as well. Sindhi was used in the domains of power and education before Partition. This is no longer so and sorely missed these days. It contributes to the feeling of deprivation among my participants.

Urdu has been considered a prestigious language and better than the indigenous languages in Pakistan, exceeded only by English in prestige and importance. Of all the indigenous languages, Sindhi is the only well-established language with its own script. Language controversies are more prevalent in Sindh than in the other provinces of Pakistan because of the strong presence of Urdu speaking immigrants from India since Partition, as they started asserting their separate identity during the late 1980s (Rahman, 1996, 1999). The language riots in Sindh in the 1980s claimed thousands of lives and forced Sindhis to migrate from bigger cities to the safety of smaller towns and villages.

The Pakistani ruling elite, comprising mostly Punjabis, with an all-powerful position in administration, bureaucracy, armed forces and legislature, support Urdu over their mother-tongue and English even over Urdu. Rahman assumes that Punjabis do not support their language because they do not want the other indigenous languages to be strengthened. Rahman (1999:98) says about the Punjabi ruling elite: 'Urdu gives it a wider base of support, a wider area to rule and seek jobs in, than the Punjabi itself' (sic!). Sindhis, on the other hand, made it clear that they never made Sindhi subservient to Urdu, although during pre-Partition days, they, like the rest of Indian Muslims, supported Urdu over Hindi. Because of such sentiments, Sindhis are accused of being anti-Pakistan and anti-Islam (Rahman, 1996). Sindhis in turn believe that Punjab, being the majority province and having a more powerful status in the politics of the country, tries to reduce the distinctiveness of the other provinces through its Islam and Urdu propaganda (see also Kazi, 1987).

In this power struggle, my participants suffer the most since they do not have a good command of Urdu or English. My participants are Sindhis, and Sindhis in rural areas only communicate in Sindhi, a language in which they feel at home and of which they are proud (like Swiss Germans who proudly speak Schwyzerdütsch among themselves, but use High German as a prestige language). By contrast, in Pakistan, there are the native speakers of Urdu who, of course, speak Urdu well, and the Punjabis whose native language is Punjabi but who also have a tradition of sometimes speaking Urdu among themselves because Urdu is a prestige language. When Sindhis speak Urdu, then often their distinctive accent is made an object of ridicule. So Sindhis, my participants, are at a

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disadvantage compared to these other groups in Pakistan. This is largely the result of their education in rural areas, discussed in the next section.

2.4.3 Education

The education system of Pakistan is quite diverse (see Appendix 3, for pictures of classrooms in different types of school). Urdu, the mother tongue of 8% of the population, is used as the medium of instruction in all government schools in present day Pakistan except in Sindh. Sindhi is the only developed and well-established provincial language in present-day Pakistan since it was the medium of instruction in Sindh during British rule and before that. The only language to be affected by the introduction of Urdu as the medium of instruction from class 6 in all government schools during 1950s was Sindhi (Rahman, 1999). During different regimes the provinces have been allowed to teach and use their local languages or prohibited from doing so. This badly affected the Sindhis, who could have adopted Urdu or English (although it would have been unjust and difficult to impose) if the policy of the successive governments had remained the same. However, in rural Sindh primary and secondary education is given in Sindhi, with at least the medium of in-class communication being Sindhi. On the other hand, a string of bills was passed which reduced the use of Sindhi in education. Whereas formerly Sindhi was compulsory for all people living in Sindh, including Karachi (capital of Sindh), at SSC (Secondary School Certificate) level, now an exception is made for Karachi: Sindhi is excluded from the syllabus in Karachi but not in the rest of the province. This is extraordinary when one considers that Karachi is the capital of Sindh. Such policies are designed to insinuate that Karachi is not part of Sindh. When Urdu speaking people from Karachi chat with people from the rest of the province (including city dwellers, e.g. from Hyderabad, Sindh), they might say: 'We are from Karachi and you are from Sindh.' They always try to separate Karachi from Sindh. The language policy about the status of Sindhi in Karachi is part of these separatist tendencies. In the private schools catering for the elite throughout the province, English is the sole medium of instruction. Thus the population is divided into groups with varied proficiency in different languages. This results in inclusion/exclusion issues for my research participants and others from their background

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who have received their elementary education in their mother tongue. (see also Appendix 2 on the education system in Sindh)

2.4.4 Job Market

In Pakistan everyone must do some work to survive. The government does not support the unemployed. Everyone must earn a living for herself/himself and her/his family. That's why child labour is equally common in villages and cities. Girls in poor families do embroidery and household chores from a very young age. Mothers work

- as maids in the village homes of their *waderos*,

- as maids in the cities,

- in factories (which are located at the outskirts of towns and cities),

- at home doing embroidery and other handicrafts (and the products are then sold by their menfolk).

Factories are on the outskirts of towns, and often there are small satellite villages around these factories where the poor workers live with their families. Many families migrate to live near a factory. They just squat on some vacant plot of land and erect some house or shelter there. Many factories provide transport which takes the workers from their homes to the factory. Therefore often the parents working in factories can live with their families.

Their children also do work during day, or go to school or just roam around. Young boys work in fields, collect plastic, paper and other waste to sell it for re-cycling, or they work in shops or houses to earn some money. The absence of family planning, due to a lack of education and awareness, leads to problems associated with large families. An uneducated poor couple might have six or even twelve children to support. Families become even larger because usually parents and grandparents live together in an extended family. Then they might be joined by a son or brother who cannot support his own family. Such a person might be physically unfit, or mentally unstable, a gambler or

a drug addict. People do not realise that people with mental defects or bad habits should not marry. Instead parents expect such offspring to improve and give up bad habits after marriage. In extreme cases this can impose an unbearable burden on the one person who has to earn a living for all. Therefore children are encouraged to work rather than go to school, even though schooling is free for all at primary and secondary level in government schools.

The job market in Pakistan is not very promising. Only the best get the jobs of their choice. Sometimes even doctors and engineers remain unemployed due to a lack of vacancies, especially in the government sector. Jobs are offered by both government and the private sector. Small private companies offer low salaries without any career prospects or fringe benefits. Therefore people prefer government jobs. Big private companies offer good salaries but give jobs only to well-qualified people, usually from private universities. Jobs in the civil service are the most prestigious and give its holders high social standing. These include powerful positions in departments like the foreign services, district management, the police, inland revenue and customs, audit and accounts (similar in function to the National Audit Office in the UK, which scrutinises public spending on behalf of Parliament), etc. To get such a job, anybody holding a bachelors degree can prepare for, and appear in, the Central Superior Services (CSS) exams. These exams are competitive. The posts are given on the basis of marks obtained in the exams. Such exams are also taken at provincial and local levels, but are considered less prestigious than the CSS. The most important and powerful people in the country are in the armed forces. Anyone with an Intermediate (equivalent to 'A'-levels) can appear in entry tests, including medical tests, and can get into the armed forces.

Class is an important factor in acquiring an education and getting a job. This is because better education is expensive, and good jobs can be acquired through better education, bribery or recommendation of some resourceful person. People from a poor background may have educated parents motivating them to study, yet they cannot expect to rise above certain social level unless they decide to go against the norms or choose a difficult path in life. It is usually expected that the child of a teacher will be a teacher and that of a doctor will be a doctor, that of a businessman will be a businessman and of

a politician will be a politician. It is hereditary, and usually the son (sometimes the daughter) carries on in the profession of the father. A doctor, for example, would pass on his private clinic (or private hospital in some cases) to his son regardless of his abilities as a doctor.

Respect in society is determined by salary and power. A village school teacher or Qur'an teacher will be respected for teaching children but receives less respect than a District Police Officer or an Army officer since the latter earn more and are more powerful. Teaching jobs, especially in schools, are considered least worthy. Many people (especially men) teach as a stopgap until they get some other job because they do not want to adopt teaching as a career. Many people even quit a 17th grade teaching job in a government college if they can get a 16th grade job in some other department where they might be paid less but have more power and greater social standing. A teacher is considered the least powerful person in the social hierarchy.

2.5 Summary

Sindh is a land of many different people who can be roughly divided into three categories:

- 'ancient immigrants' who have been in Sindh so long, have assimilated so well and contributed so much to what is today considered the typical Sindhi way of life that they no longer count as immigrants in any way. They have been in Sindh for centuries and can no longer be distinguished from the 'natives';

- immigrants arriving during the last one hundred years or so, who have not mixed with 'the natives', have kept their separate identity, but are living peacefully together with the other groups;

- immigrants who arrived during Partition and, rather than wanting to adjust, pursue a strong political and cultural agenda, the Muhajirs.

Sindh suffered more than any of the other provinces because of the arrival of *muhajirs* in Sindh, their claim to power and the imposition of Urdu. The natives began to see

themselves as powerless, jobless and ultimately worthless in their new country. Given an unfair share of resources, the Sindhis felt deprived as if they were a colony, transferred from British ownership to Punjabi and Muhajir ownership.

People whose mother tongue is Sindhi suffer because the education system varies from province to province and because of government policies. In rural Sindh, Sindhi is the medium of instruction in primary schools. Urdu and English are introduced later. This causes problems for Sindhis because of the importance of English and Urdu in higher education and in the job market. Therefore Sindhis in urban areas prefer their children to learn Urdu instead of Sindhi in order to pave their way to success. As a result, Sindhis from rural areas have to cope with a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and above all multi-lingual society and education system when they enter university. A major cause of this is that my participants from rural Sindh have received their pre-university education in Sindhi, unlike their fellow-students coming from urban areas. Thus the education system is making my participants dominated agents in the field.

The participants of my research face problems when they grow up in their villages. They have further problems when they arrive in the city, especially at university. This is partly caused by their socio-economic status, but even more by their language and culture. This chapter helps my readers to understand the problems of culture and identity of Sindhi people. It explains why the distressed and miserable condition of the Sindhis is worse than that of any of the other peoples forming present-day Pakistan, and why the rural participants of my research are the most deprived of these.

3

The Pilot Study

There used to be a few [academically] good class fellows of mine. One of them was a good friend, the others used to be very jealous of me. Due to that I got into competition. I decided to study even more. After that, my responsibilities in the village and home also increased. We grew up, parents used to ask us to work in the fields also. I started doing that as well but despite that, my routine was the same. I used to study at night because I realised there was competition; it might become an issue of self-respect some day, as I might not know an answer and then I might get insulted. That was not right. So I would turn the lights on and would study [late at night].

(From Ahmar's Interview, a male participant)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the analysis of the data collected during a pilot study. I interviewed two male Sindhi participants to obtain their life stories. They came from rural and economically weak backgrounds, had attended government schools and had then been admitted to the University of Sindh for their undergraduate studies. One of them successfully completed his education and even received a gold medal for his MBA, while the other left university a few months after joining. When I collected the data for this pilot study, my intention was to compare the lives of people from similar socio-cultural and educational backgrounds with different academic results at university level in order to find out more clearly which formative aspects of their lives had contributed to these differences. I wanted to keep the comparison simple at this stage. I therefore confined myself to male participants. I could have chosen two female participants, but finding women fitting the required specifications is rather difficult, so I left that task for the main study. New ideas emerged from this pilot study, and this changed the focus of the study. This chapter discusses the pilot study in detail and finally explains how I moved from my initial research question to the ones addressed in the main study of this thesis.

In the next section, I shall briefly discuss the research context, along with the participants and the role of the researcher. In the section after that, the data are divided into the common patterns found in the interviews. Selected portions of narrative from the two interviews will then be analysed. The themes developed from the data will be discussed in detail.

3.2 Context – from the outside inwards

It has been said that all inhabitants of England are, or are the descendents of, immigrants - refugees, adventurers, economic migrants, types that have existed from time immemorial. The Celts (perhaps the first inhabitants of Britain) saw the arrival of the Angles, the Saxons, the Jutes, the Vikings, the Romans, the Huguenots, the Indians, the Caribbeans, the Africans, refugees from any trouble spot on earth, more recently Spain (civil war), Germany (holocaust), Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, Somalia, and so on endlessly, they all contributed to the human melting pot that is England today. When they have been here long enough, they no longer have to consider themselves even as n-th generation immigrants and are no longer in danger of being called 'benefit scroungers'. England today also has groups of immigrants of which it is claimed that they do not try hard enough to adjust to the English way of life.

The situation in Sindh is similar. As described in chapter 2, Sindh has a more diverse population than any other province in Pakistan. It is a blend of people from all over the country. Sindh comprises several communities, e.g. language communities (Sindhis, Siraikis, Balochs, Punjabis, Pathans, Biharis, Kachhi-Memons from Gujarat), religious communities (Bohris, Ismailis, Ahmedis, Hindus, Christians), occupational communities such as the Mohanas (fisherman-tribes) of whom it is said that they are the original inhabitants of Sindh, descendents of the Scythian Medes, arriving there over a thousand years ago, and above all, the Muhajirs (post-Partition Urdu speaking immigrants).

There is a strict dividing line between the rural population and the urban population. These two groups behave differently and are treated accordingly. The rural people are either upper class (waderos: feudal landlords) or working class (haris: agricultural labourers). There is no rural middle class. The urban people are office workers, business

people and intelligentsia. Therefore Sindhis coming from villages to cities find it hard to cope with this multi-cultural, multi-lingual and above all multi-ability society. The system of education is also very varied. Government and private educational institutions run alongside each other, with huge differences in standards of teaching and learning, yet all aiming at the same job market (see Appendix 2 - Education System in Pakistan).

For the pilot study, I interviewed undergraduates at the University of Sindh from rural and economically weak backgrounds with Sindhi as their first language. Originally I intended to investigate the causes of their academic success or failure at university. I wanted to do this by conducting life story interviews with one student who had completed his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and was professionally successful; and with another student who had started his undergraduate studies but dropped out. The pilot study helped me to determine the questions and the focus for my main study.

3.2.1 Research Participants

The two participants in my pilot study were Sarmad (a pseudonym, like the names of all the participants) and Aqeel. Both come from poor backgrounds but the financial circumstances of their families are different. Sarmad is a gold medalist in his MBA and currently works as a Senior Official at a Private Bank in Karachi. Aqeel dropped out of university during his first year and is now back in his village. He is doing a private B.A. (see Appendix 2, explaining Private Exams) for which he does not take any regular classes and is supposed to study at home on his own. When he feels ready, he will present himself at one of the authorised colleges (examination centres) to sit the exam. When he has got his degree, he will get some job, but finishing his studies and getting a job does not seem very important to him.

How I found these participants and arranged for the interviews is also interesting. Sarmad was my student in the Department of English, University of Sindh, where he studied for two years before joining the Institute of Business Administration at the same university for his MBA. I contacted him, and he readily agreed to be interviewed.

Finding my second participant was difficult. I had been away from the university and my students for two years due to my studies in the UK. Because of my domestic duties I could not visit the university personally to find out if anyone had recently dropped out. My former students helped find some candidates. Some of them agreed to be interviewed but did not turn up on the day. Finally one of my students, Shabbir, brought his cousin, Aqeel (pseudonym). I had a list of all the potential interviewees my contacts had suggested. Aqeel had been on this list from the start but he was not keen on being interviewed despite repeated reassurances from me and Shabbir. When I had only a few days left in Pakistan, Aqeel at last agreed to the interview. He started his university education as an undergraduate student in the Mass Communications Department, but dropped out two months after joining.

Even though I and my participants operate 'from shared realities', I tried to develop a 'balance between rapport and distance', as suggested by Bhopal (2000:74). On the one hand, I tried to use our mutual understanding of the context to establish trust. On the other, I tried to show more interest in what they know and I do not, in order to encourage them to share their experiences. However, the effect of my presence on the data is also problematic, the next section discusses this.

3.2.2 Researcher in the Research

My presence as a researcher influenced the data gathered. To my participants I was a university teacher, a person traditionally to be treated with respect. Sarmad knew me as his own teacher, and Aqeel knew me as the teacher of his cousin. I tried to reduce distance between us by introducing myself differently and being modest about my status and achievements. I told them that I was only a researcher in the first year of my studies, that I did not know much about what I was doing and that all my work would depend on what they were to tell me. Instead of reducing the gap between us, as I had intended, it seemed to increase the distance and made them look at me with awe as a PhD student in the UK. Thus the power difference continued to exist, in spite of my efforts.

Aqeel seemed to be very guarded with his speech. There is no obvious reason for this, but I had a feeling that he was not open, which could be due to either his or my position

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in the project. Bhopal (2008) agrees that the participants can show their power by withholding information from the researcher, but she adds that nevertheless the researchers are usually more powerful, with pen, clipboard and tape-recorder on their side. Even though the researcher-researched relationship is unequal, with greater power usually on the side of the researcher, I tried to do justice to my participants in defining their reality and in translating their social life and their view of it. I could not promise my participants any personal benefits from participating in the project but assured them that I hoped my research would lead to far-reaching benefits for their communities as a whole.

In the next section, I shall present the differences between my participants. What they have in common is that both come from a similar socio-cultural background. What distinguish them are their achievements and attitudes towards life.

3.3 Patterns that Separate

'It is undoubtedly true that learners bring many individual characteristics to the learning process which will affect both the way in which they learn and the outcomes of that process' (Williams and Burden, 1997:88). While reading Kearney's The Monkey's Mask (2003), I found that he was looking for patterns that connected his participants. But I realised that, since my participants shared similar socio-cultural backgrounds, it can be already assumed that they were similar, i.e. were connected. Yet they ended up with different results in their lives: Sarmad completed his university education and now has a white collar job whereas Aqeel dropped out. In this section, I am trying to explore the reasons for these different results. Through their life stories I found some important personality traits. Differences were visible in four broad divisions and each one explained some aspects of their lives and personalities. The following extract from the interview of Aqeel will explain how I found the broad categories and then narrowed them down,

Me	Aqeel	My Comments
Tell me something about your school, your studies there, your teachers, your first memory of school	The schools in our village are just okay. If we were absent, nobody asks us the reasons. Elsewhere when you run away from school, they stop you in childhood, hold you accountable, even beat you, but nobody used to say anything to us in our school. Till 5th class, we had a teacher who used to beat us, thrash us, and also teach us. We were scared of him and that is why we used to go to school. But from 6th to 8th, for three years we just had no real education. Rather we did not study at all.	Issues of Education - Motivation - Role of teacher - Role of education system

In order to make the raw data (Figure 3.1) meaningful and comparable, I shall explore the differences between the two participants by looking at the following aspects:

- personality, character,

- social class, social standing,

- economic condition,

- education.

Personality **Character**	Level of confidence Tone of speech Attitude towards life and various events in it Effort Sense of responsibility Sense of right
Social class	Parents' attitude

Social standing	Family life
	Significant others
	Role of the village environment
	Importance of education in the village
	Awareness of the outer world among villagers
	Role of feudal system
Economic condition	Financial issues
	Relations versus money
	Significance of money in life
Education	Significance of education
	Role of motivation - intrinsic and extrinsic
	Role of parents
	Role of education system

Figure 3.1 Patterns in the Data

These four aspects, character/personality, social conditions, economic conditions and education, are the main topic of discussion in this chapter. They arose out of the interviews and will help in analysing them.

3.3.1 Personality and character

Parekh (2008) finds that human beings are subjected to countless experiences in life. Their reactions to those experiences help to define and build their personality. Here I shall discuss various personality traits of the two participants.

From the very beginning of the interviews, I noticed that the tone, attitudes and confidence of the two participants differed and that this could cause problems. Sarmad spoke in a positive, confident tone. His long, endless narrations showed his pride and confidence in what he was and what he had achieved. His success gave him a positive approach to life and even to negative incidents. 'One learns from them,' he said. He did

not miss a chance to stress again and again that he was successful because of his persistence. His father, with his meagre salary, was the only provider for a family of twelve. His elder brothers could not support him. Few people in this position would have struggled for so long. Most would have given up. 'People seldom have the courage to face such problems', Sarmad thought. By contrast, Aqeel lacked self-confidence. He was reserved, monosyllabic and defensive. He replied in short phrases and gave one-line answers. For example, when I asked him about his expenses he said, 'My father gives me everything and so does my mother'. He was reluctant to speak all by himself, he wanted me to ask direct questions, 'Ask me, I will reply to whatever you ask'. He was not at all eager to tell his story.

As a child, Sarmad was unhappy about his poverty. He thought, 'If others have books, why not me?' But instead of blaming others (life, the world, the rich) or accepting his 'fate', he decided to do something about it. He held himself responsible for his fate. 'God helps those who help themselves.' He decided to study in spite of adverse circumstances. He decided to bear his pain. He did not blame his father for anything. He did not even wish to tell his worries to his father. His thirst for knowledge was never satisfied. He wanted to move on forever, study more and more, win the Nobel Prize. Self-confidence and ambition were at their best in case of Sarmad.

By contrast, Aqeel talked about the non-supportive village environment, the teachers who did not make him accountable and of course his own lack of interest in studying. He said that children are always more attracted to games. He thought teachers should beat and scold children for being inattentive and not studying. His greatest regret was his inability to use computers.

3.3.2 Social standing

Social identity arises out of human relationships and the roles people play in them, as members of a family, a group, a community, a society. Human beings categorise themselves and each other on the basis of their social identity (Parekh, 2008). Social background plays an important role when individuals from a variety of social settings meet in the same setting, e.g. a university. Aqeel's village was comparatively large, and

a fair number of people had to travel to cities for various purposes. About 25% of the population was educated. On the other hand, Sarmad's was a small village with hardly 10-20% educated people (these figures are given by participants). Very few people from Sarmad's village ever study at university. This means that Sarmad had very little knowledge of life outside the village before coming to university, as shown by his surprise about the daily expenses in the boys' hostel.

Both participants showed a positive attitude towards their families. For Sarmad his parents were his 'inspiration'. His father tried hard to provide the best he could for his children, and of his mother, who was no doubt uneducated, he said, 'But she is the best. I mean the way she has brought us up, the way she cares for us, she is my Paradise'. Likewise Aqeel made it absolutely clear from the beginning of his story, and repeating it time and again, '[My family] has been very good to me since my childhood. I have three brothers; they are good to me and so are my parents. I have two sisters; they are good to me too. My family is very nice from every perspective. We live together with love and affection for each other'. Throughout his interview, it was quite obvious that his family, both his parents and his siblings, were very good, they lived with love and affection, and they were a happy family. Besides, his relationship with uncles, aunts, cousins, and all villagers was very good. They were a happy family, a happy village. Therefore Aqeel seemed to convince me that things were running smoothly in his home life. Even though he dropped out of university later, at home everything was as normal as could be. No other participant, even in the main study, seemed to have such a promising background.

While Sarmad's father wanted his children to receive as much education as possible, Aqeel's father had a job which kept him away from home and his children for at least 5 consecutive days every week. Whenever his father was at home, he dropped Aqeel at school. Aqeel's mother also had a job. She was a school teacher. After returning from work, she had to do the household chores. She did not closely supervise Aqeel's education. As a result, Aqeel often played truant. He went back home after his mother had left for work, and his aunts did not make him go back to school. Aqeel was grateful to his aunts for taking care of him and his siblings when their mother was at work. Aqeel felt that if his father had been at home every day or if his mother had not been at work,

he would have been forced to go to school. This means that Aqeel needed extrinsic motivation.

Unlike Aqeel's entirely positive views about all his relatives and the people in his village, Sarmad found jealousy in society and noted that some people were not happy with the success of others. Aqeel did not seem to experience such emotional problems, perhaps because he was not successful enough to be envied by anybody. Sarmad's experiences with the wider world were mixed, both positive and negative. He recalled very good friends at university. They sometimes paid for his lunch or helped him get some children to give tuition to. This eased his financial problems. While Aqeel presented a purely rosy outlook about his village, he experienced neither the village jealousies nor the helpful friends at university which Sarmad reported.

The village environment was not very supportive of education. On one hand, 'the landlords do not want the poor to be educated since, if the poor are educated, the landlords will lose their dominance,' noted Sarmad. On the other hand, the people themselves were not very positive about education and rather thought of it as a threat because if children are educated, they will not do menial jobs. Aqeel was greatly influenced by this atmosphere. He said 'the village environment was not encouraging. It has a very small number of educated people ... It is all about the surroundings then. I followed the band wagon. I spent all day playing, running here and there'.

Sarmad, like Aqeel, said that 'the village boys are directionless'. The decision makers in their lives, like their fathers, uncles, elder brothers and village elders (all men! mothers, aunts etc play no part in this) decide about their lives. In his case the decision makers were his father and elder brother. They decided that Sarmad should be a doctor. But they did not provide him with the resources (books, money, coaching) he needed to be admitted to study for the Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBBS). Sarmad did not even have physics and chemistry books then. This led to economic problems, discussed in the next section.

3.3.3 Economic condition

Sarmad delivered his sentiments as: 'In this world, man worships money. [...] The only cause of all our [Sarmad's family] problems were finances ... , even relationships matter only if you have money and you are financially sound'. Teachers earn little money and are therefore not highly respected. Twice Sarmad told the story when his relatives called his brother 'a school teacher and son of a school teacher'. He regarded it as an insult. It hurt his self-respect (see Section 3.4.1). This little story had great significance in his life. It haunted him whenever he had to take an important decision. He did not ever want to hear these words again, did not want to adopt teaching as a career, and therefore left the English Department. He still wanted to be a teacher but preferred to teach part-time. He giggled when he recalled that the same relatives who did not want to let their daughter marry his brother were later keen on giving one of their daughters to him, because of his present job and status.

His deprivations affected his thinking, 'God gave me intelligence, understanding, and brains, but I could not do my heart's desire due to certain things'. His father's income was small; he had problems paying for the upkeep of his children, all of whom wanted to study. At school Sarmad lacked even basic necessities like books and pens. 'At university,' he said, 'I used to take just one meal or have two samosas for the whole day.' While at university, he had to earn money by giving tuition. This took up valuable time, at the expense of his studies, time even more badly needed because of his poor pre-university education. But Sarmad was content.

Money had not been a problem for Aqeel. His parents did not have rules for giving or not giving money to their children. 'Whenever I need money and whatever amount, they give. Even now, though I do not study, but if I ask for money, they give me'. Aqeel's parents did not take much interest in his formal education. As in the case of Chambers' (1999) research, here too motivation decreased because of lack of parental encouragement, and even discouragement. For Aqeel's mother made it clear to him

- that he would not be allowed to take up any profession which would expose him to risk (like the police or the armed forces),

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- that it would be better to find a job around his village,

- and that otherwise he had better stay at home, without doing any job.

The next section discusses the issue of education.

3.3.4 Education

Williams and Burden (1997:88) suggest that the researcher should focus on, 'how individual learners make sense of their learning situations in ways that are personal to them'. Sarmad had realised the importance of education from when he was a child. This was crucial. He fondly spoke about the education of his brothers. Aqeel too talked about the education of his siblings and appreciated their hard work. He realised that education gives a better understanding of life and of the world. Aqeel regretted his own lack of education. He said, 'if I had studied [at school], I would be at university now, and I could expect to get a good job in a good organisation. I would be able to read [books].' Aqeel spoke of his dreams, which could have come true if he had studied, 'I could have done anything in the world, could have started my own school. I would be able to do anything on the computer. But as it is I do not have enough knowledge or understanding, and I cannot do anything.'

Sarmad was highly motivated. His entire conversation abounded in phrases like, 'I was very keen to study from my childhood', 'I was never disappointed, never discouraged', 'All this forced me to work hard', 'I was very regular and punctual and never missed a class'. According to him, his teachers were very talented and motivating. Aqeel's remarks strongly contrast with those of Sarmad. Aqeel said, 'we used to go to school, and we would leave the books there and go out. That is how my studies were till HSSC. I never even thought about education'.

The story of buying old newspapers (because they are cheap) and reading them just to improve his language skills was significant in Sarmad's learning. He was motivated and encouraged when people praised him for his knowledge and understanding. But when Aqeel was asked by his father and village friends to continue at university, his reply was

simply, 'I cannot study'. He happily abandoned university instead of wasting his parents' money because he did not enjoy studying, was learning nothing and thought he would never get anywhere. He accepted the responsibility for this decision. He admitted that everyone asked him to continue his studies and that his teachers taught well both at school and university. But as a child he was not interested in studying because 'after all, children only like games' (see Section 3.5.2 Motivation - Intrinsic and Extrinsic, for questions arising from this and other such statements by Aqeel). He said this even though he remembered two of his cousins, Noor and Jalal, who used to study at school and at home, without even having been asked to do so by teachers or parents. That is why, when he reached university, where Urdu and English were the medium of instruction, he felt himself to be '12 years behind' the rest. An important reason for educational failure is often the difference between the languages spoken at home and in the educational institution (university in the case of Aqeel) (see Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, and Collins, 1993).

Sarmad sometimes experienced frustration because 'merit is not valued.' During his college days he sometimes thought, 'what country are we living in where there is no justice?' After unsuccessful job interviews he realised that 'hiring was done on a political basis.' Sarmad also occasionally was on the verge of losing his motivation, 'I sometimes thought that I cannot continue, I cannot study any more'. But, unlike Aqeel's situation, it was due to his finances, which he eventually coped with.

3.4 Analysis of the Narrative

Narrative is a life story which people decide to tell, depending on what they remember and would like others to know (see Atkinson, 1998). Therefore I gathered 'first person accounts' (Riessman, 1993:17) from the participants' 'experience of life as a whole, highlighting the most important aspects' (Atkinson, 1998:8).

I preferred my approach because I wanted to understand the connections between the segments from the lives of my participants. I expected that 'when the varied pieces of a life are consciously put together as a whole, we have a very purposeful, powerful document' (Atkinson, 1998:11). I therefore asked my participants to talk about their

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lives at length and freely narrate their stories. It took the form of a 'Phenomenographic Interview', which tries to find out how the participants of the research experience different aspects of the world in different ways (Francis, 1993).

I wanted to understand the reality as my participants perceive it. Goffman (1956) notes that, for many reasons, people in public try to hide their true impressions regarding any situation. I wanted to know

- what they did at certain times or in certain situations,

- what they showed and what they tried to hide,

- what drove them to do what they did,

- what came before a very important situation,

- what went through their mind during that situation,

- what they had been through to reach this situation,

- and what, according to them, would be the consequences if they chose one option rather than another.

But the narratives of my participants, when transcribed, lost their life. They became as dead as the paper they were written on. Therefore, I followed Labov (1972) and did narrative analysis, which preserves their styles of telling their stories to put as much life into them as I can. They were the stories of living people, and I wanted to analyse some of the excerpts in order to make the life stories clear to myself and my readers. This helped me to understand their interactions and to discuss their attitudes and behaviours.

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STRUCTURE                              QUESTION

┌─────────────────┐
│    ABSTRACT     │         ---- What was this about?
└─────────────────┘

┌─────────────────┐
│   ORIENTATION   │         ---- Who? When? What? Where?
└─────────────────┘

┌─────────────────┐
│  COMPLICATION   │         ---- Then what happened?
└─────────────────┘

┌─────────────────┐
│   EVALUATION    │         ---- So what?
└─────────────────┘

┌─────────────────┐
│     RESULT      │         ---- What finally happened?
└─────────────────┘

┌─────────────────┐
│      CODA       │
└─────────────────┘
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<div align="right">Cortazzi (1993:45)</div>

Figure 3.2 The Structure of Narrative in the Evaluation Model

Labov's model has been my choice following Cortazzi (1993) and Kearney (2003). Labov seeks Aristotelian characteristics of an ideal tragic plot in the narratives of the research participants (see Figure 3.2, for Cortazzi's (1993:45) presentation of Labov's model). I agree with Cortazzi (1993), Reissman (1993) and Kearney (2003) that most narratives contain most of these elements, but they are used in different ways. Sometimes some elements are omitted and some may be repeated, which leads to individual styles of narrators.

3.4.1 Extract 1: Sarmad on 'Money Matters'

Sarmad's interview seemed to be the right start for my data collection. From the beginning of Sarmad's narrative, I had a feeling that it had a persistent undercurrent, a recurring theme, which significantly surfaced at the beginning and at the end of the interview, thus framing Sarmad's story. It is contained in the following extract, in which Sarmad talked about his financial problems. It is a story within a story, beautifully told by Sarmad. I chose this from among the other extracts because it emphasises one of the most important themes discussed in this chapter, money. Through this story, Sarmad explained the importance of money in his household and in the world around. But more

than that, he explained how he (and his family) was disadvantaged in society because of their poverty, and how his entire life was an effort to overcome this handicap.

Orientation	My father was a school teacher and the only person supporting the family of 12.
	All of us brothers wanted to study but my father's income was meagre and we had to face many problems.
Exposition	Definitely as a teacher when he was looking at his family, he just not only wanted to provide us food but all necessities of life, like medicine, education etc.
	He tried to provide us with everything possible for him.
Complication	But when we used to go to school, we did not have many things which any student would need.
	During my primary education we were not provided with our basic requirements like books or pens or other things.
Evaluation	I used to feel sorry at my condition because I was very keen to study from my childhood.
	Besides that, whenever there arose any family problems I used to feel sorry when seeing my father and my brothers because the only cause of all our problems was our finances.

Result

	Abstract	I found that people honour those who have money.
	Orientation	Even relatives matter only if you have money and you are financially sound.
	Complication	I really felt bad seeing that. One of my brothers was to get married to my cousin but they refused, mentioning that, 'Would we be getting our girls married to teachers or teacher's

	children?'
Result	That really disheartened me. I felt very bad.
Coda	That encouraged me to study and I decided to study and reach a position of respect in society.

Sarmad starts abruptly, without any prior notification of what he is going to talk about, without giving an abstract (Figure 3.3). His story begins by answering all those 'WH' questions which any listener would like to ask, if they were not addressed in the first attempt. After setting the scene, he provides some detail. It is this detail which actually takes us to the problem, i.e. it is only because his father wanted to provide his children with everything possible that the problem regarding schooling and finances arose. If the father had not thought of getting them an education, none of these problems would have arisen. But as he was a school teacher himself, he decided to procure an education for his children. The use of the word 'definitely' shows its importance. Sarmad uses the English word 'definitely' (which is quite commonly used) while narrating this story in Sindhi. The use of English words and phrases mixed with, say, Sindhi and Urdu (etc) speech, is an example of code-switching, a phenomenon that is common in Pakistan and in many other parts of the world. Within these first few sentences of his story, Sarmad had already provided the audience with three different arguments, and each has great significance in Sarmad's life:

- Influence of environment

- Influence of parents' education

- Influence of parents' or family's financial standing

Figure 3.3 Model of Narrative Structure - Sarmad
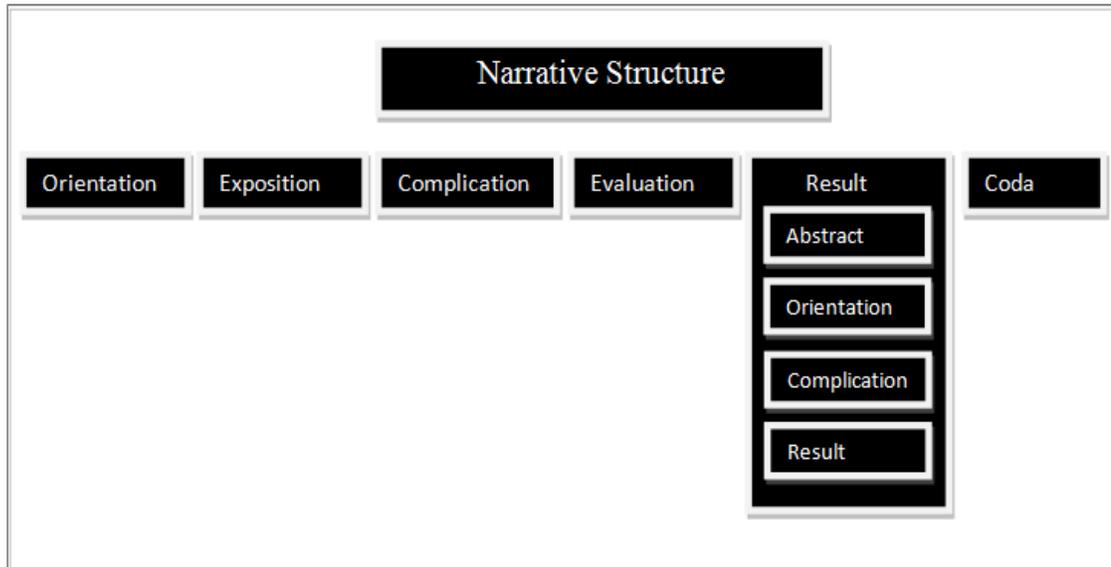
When Sarmad came to discuss the results of all the family problems, he could not have done it better than by describing them in the form of another story, again beautifully woven. He embeds an inner story (an excursus) into an outer story (the main story). He breaks off the outer story and starts the inner story. At the beginning of the inner story, he gives an abstract of the inner story which explains why the inner story has to be told before he can finish the outer story. Then he tells the inner story and provides the results of the inner story and gives the same conclusion (coda) for both stories. Sarmad seems to have an unshattering faith in better future.

3.4.2 Extract 2: Aqeel on 'Corporal Punishment'

While Sarmad was motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically, Aqeel was not motivated at all. Presence or absence of extrinsic motivation was more important than intrinsic motivation throughout the two life stories. Aqeel described a lack of extrinsic motivation i.e. learning for external reasons (Ehrman et al., 2003) in the following extract in which he reported his first memories of school.

Abstract	The schools in our village are just okay.
Complication	If we were absent, nobody asks us the reasons.
Exposition **Explanation**	Elsewhere when you run away from school, they stop you in childhood, hold you accountable, even beat you,
Evaluation	But nobody used to say anything to us in our school.
Exposition **Background Knowledge**	Till 5th class, we had a teacher who used to beat us, thrash us, and also teach us. We were scared of him and that is why we used to go to school.
Result	But from 6th to 8th, for three years we just had no real education.
Coda	Rather we did not study at all.

The first sentence of Aqeel's interview, 'my family has been very good to me since my childhood', seemed to summarise its purpose. He wanted to make sure that his parents would not be blamed for his lack of education. He repeated this many times during the interview. Although it showed his intention of defending his family, it did not reduce my interest in the rest of his story, on the contrary, it rather increased it. Aqeel describes his family and continues as follows:

'Since the beginning of my schooling, like I studied well for four or five initial years, then I was never interested in going to school for the sake of studies. When we used to go to school we would usually leave the books there and go out. That is how my studies were till Intermediate. I never thought about education even. My family used to ask me to study and tell me that it is good. The environment in our village was like, we were involved in sports all the time; that is how it was, very bad environment. I followed the trend. That is why I could not study well till Intermediate (HSSC). Although I got admission in the university and I attended for a few days as well. I went through the process of introduction etc but when they started presentation and madam or sir used to

explain in English or Urdu but I could not understand well. My base was not strong. I could not understand anything. I did not know what to do? What would happen next? How would I continue my studies? I could not understand the lectures in English. I never studied English or anything eagerly before. I did not know any English. Then I realised it was better to leave university instead of costing my parent a lot of money for my studies. I could not study and returned to the same environment of my village.'

When I asked if he is happy now, he shrugged his shoulders and said, 'Happy? Well, parents still ask me…' I wanted to know what he has got to say about it when he said it is 'just okay' and went on to talk about his present situation of leaving university and returning home. I realised that now he is going to give me the real reason for not studying and he did, in the very next sentence, without providing any introduction or orientation, in the form of the story analysed above, not just to the listener but to himself as well. This explanation seemed more like a reassurance to himself that what he did was the only possibility in those circumstances. The background information that he provided about his past when things were different is intended to reassure the listener. He does this by saying that, when corporal punishment was given, he used to study. Therefore it was the fault of the teachers when, later, he failed to study. This is the only occasion during his entire life story that Aqeel blamed someone else for something he had done or failed to do. He never said that his 'rights' had been trodden upon or that he had been unfairly treated. Normally he always blamed himself for his present state and never clamoured for any rights. He accepted his fate as if it were his fault. Aqeel knew his duties but not his rights.

3.4.3 Extract 3: Sarmad on 'Take Tuition'

The section I have chosen here from Sarmad's narrative describes his understanding of the education system of Pakistan. Sarmad noted how badly the poor are served by the 'eco-system' of education.

Let me provide some background for what he says and what we both know. University teachers are well paid. School and college teachers are badly paid and are looking for ways to supplement their income. In an ideal world, students of all ages would get

enough knowledge to pass their entry and exit exams from the institutions they attend for this purpose, from primary and secondary schools (free), from colleges and universities (fee-paying). But for a variety of reasons, some due to the teachers and the institution, some due to the students and their home background, some or many students do not learn enough at these institutions to pass over the next exam hurdle. If they are determined to get past that hurdle and if they can afford it, they will take private lessons. College teachers will charge a lot because they teach only their specialist subjects. School teachers teach all subjects and are less expensive, but even if they are cheap, poor students are still unable to afford even these elementary lessons, which are the key for everything higher.

The inadequacies of 'institutional' education mean that poor students have to go to their badly paid teachers and pay for private lessons. It is a reciprocal relationship: the students need skills and knowledge and give money, and the teachers give skills and knowledge and take money. The following story is about this.

Orientation	My college was 24 to 25 kilometres away from my village. And I had to pay the bus fare to and fro.
Complication	And my parents could give me only enough to pay my fares But not enough to take tuition.
Evaluation	The government colleges in Pakistan do not have 100% satisfactory education. Or it is better to say that only 25% satisfactory education is available and everyone has to take tuition for studying well. Besides it has become a part of the culture as the income of these teachers is so small that their tuitions bear their expenses.
Result	I had many problems in college, I had no books.
Further Evaluation	They asked me to be a doctor but they did not realise my needs.

Coda   If they had been able to get me tuition and provided me with books, then I might be a doctor today.

This is a self-contained extract which discusses Sarmad's college life, clearly mentioned in the orientation. He sets the scene of commuting between college and a distant village. He describes the complicating factor of the action. A similar situation was described elsewhere, where Ahmar said, 'If we asked them [the teachers at college] to explain something, they would say, "better take private tuition then." ' We see here that the low-paid teachers have a vested interest in not answering students' questions (i.e. in teaching badly in their main jobs) in order to push the students into paying for private lessons. This is analogous to the situation in which low-paid policemen and government officials want to make ends meet and have to be induced by bribes to do their official duties.

Is it not deplorable that we have an education system which discourages students from asking questions, and teachers from answering them! How much better would the world be if an attitude prevailed which honoured students who ask questions and who thereby

- help their fellow students to understand,

- help the teachers to become aware where their students need assistance,

- and help the teachers to clarify their teachings.

In his evaluation of the problem, Sarmad analysed the state of teaching in Pakistani public-sector colleges. Not surprisingly, he had good reasons for his judgement. And his reason was as obvious as could be to anyone in his position. He knew that 'money makes the world go round'. His greatest worry was not having money, and at present his greatest relief was having it. Therefore, for him the reason behind whatever people do could easily be traced back to having money. His statement was powerful and effective, and so it influenced everything he said after that. The result, further evaluation and coda only highlighted the severity of the issue. Two circumstances combined to make it impossible for him, and many others like him, to become a doctor:

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- his own poverty

- the low income of college teachers in general, which forces them to supplement their salaries by giving private lessons to their poorly taught students and give them a financial incentive to teach badly in class.

This story comes directly from a person satisfying three criteria: intelligent, rural and poor. These are exactly the criteria I had in mind when choosing my participants, but the story suggested a new category, 'deprived by the system'. This will be discussed in the section on themes, below.

3.5   Themes arising from the Data

Their attitudes and circumstances explained their interest towards education; which, resulted in making Sarmad and Aqeel completely different people with a variation in their level of satisfaction, goal of life and attitude towards the future. By a closer examination of the data, following the patterns and the narrative analysis of the extracts above, the main themes became apparent, which are discussed in the sections below.

3.5.1 Inclusion and Exclusion

My participants did not feel themselves included in society. They felt like outsiders. Sarmad strove to be included in his village environment, among his relatives. His continued effort for more, for the best, was actually a conscious or unconscious attempt to be included. He enjoyed the fact that his relatives were now happy to let him marry their daughter. Aqeel naturally felt excluded at university, where most of his fellow students would be intelligent, well prepared through their prior studies and fond of learning. That's how university students are selected. Aqeel was the very opposite of this, he had to be forced to study by being beaten, he was an unsuccessful student at school, he was comparatively uneducated, his attitudes were those of a village boy. Among his fellow students he would have appeared like a village bumpkin. He must have felt utterly out of place and hated his life at university. He, therefore, returned to his village. His greatest satisfaction in the village was that of being accepted again. He

repeatedly assured himself and me that he was happy, and that his family and relatives were good to him. It was the fear of being outsiders that haunted my participants. Both participants were on the horns of a dilemma, the incompatible demands of their two habitats, village as opposed to university. If they behaved such as to be accepted in the village, they were excluded at university, but if they tried to get accepted at university, they would be excluded in their villages. Sarmad successfully maneuvered his way through this dilemma. Aqeel struggled in vain and ended up choosing his village (see Figure 3.4, contarary to academic convention I have included this as a figure because of its explanatory significance).

Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside social agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a `fish in water': it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted.

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:127)

Figure 3.4 Social Reality

The issue of inclusion and exclusion was also noticeable in the village environment. This environment is quite strict, passive and static and does not easily adapt to the new life of education and learning. It had its set activities, set goals, set roles and thus its limited awareness. Both my participants were more worried about this village environment than anything else. They were part of it and felt comfortable and satisfied when they were accepted there. The significance of early socialisation and the field, where the participants belong, brought Bourdieu's notions of *habitus* and field into play (See chapter 4 for literature review and chapter 7 for data analysis in the main study).

3.5.2 Motivation: Intrinsic and Extrinsic

Motivation, besides aptitude, determines the success and failure of a learner in any sort of learning, notes Dörnyei (2000, 2001), because it affects the degree of attention and effort that a person invests into her/his learning activities. Sarmad demonstrates that intrinsic motivation is a key to success, but even for him, extrinsic motivation played a more important part. Relatives' behaviour, lack of resources, college teachers along with everything else negative or positive motivated him. Sarmad succeeded because of

- his determination to fight against adverse circumstances,

- his continuous efforts to study regardless of a lack of books and pens,

- his decision to stay at university in spite of his financial problems and the adverse hostel environment,

- his unending thirst for knowledge.

Eventually he reaped the rewards. He explained them with the proverb, 'where there is a will, there is a way.'

Aqeel criticised his teachers for not being strict enough, for neglecting their duties and for not caring whether their pupils wanted to learn. He wanted someone else to motivate him. Aqeel said, 'now I cannot study any more, my time is past'. On another occasion, he regretted that he could not start a school at his village or use a computer because of his lack of education. He was interested in games; he was fond of cricket and volleyball. But his talent in these areas was not acknowledged and appreciated. Exploring my participants' outlook on life through this pilot study helped me to view the world from their perspective. The small-world lives and every day interactions performed by my participants determined their attitudes and behaviours (see Section 4.3 for literature review on Symbolic Interactionism).

3.5.3 Discrimination

The education system of Pakistan is weak and discriminating. It provides the rich with a better education and thereby indirectly with a higher standard of living. There are huge differences between students from different types of schools coming to university, and Aqeel said, 'but they [the teachers] did not have to teach me alone. They had to teach the same to all [the students]. The rest had studied till Intermediate, and I had not studied. The others could understand what was taught but I could not'. Such a system gives the poor no sense of entitlement but creates a feeling of guilt, as if their failure were entirely their own fault and not equally, or even more, the fault of the education system. They think, like Aqeel, 'the only problem was that I was weak in studies'. This ultimately gives the poor a sense of deprivation and of being dominated. Research (Oxford and Ehrman, 1993; cited in Williams and Burden, 1997) shows that the differences between individual learners need to be carefully considered if teaching is to be effective. The failure of institutions and teachers to do so is partly responsible for the bad performance at university of Aqeel and others equally insufficiently qualified. Aqeel's failure at university thus has two causes:

- his failure to study effectively prior to entering university,

- the failure of university teachers to adjust their methods to the (often poor) prior knowledge of their students.

The same applies to many students like Aqeel. However, the education system through all its faults helps to perpetuate such structures in the social order and ensures that the dominant and dominated classes, the rich and the poor, retain their respective positions. (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 4 for details).

3.6 Focus of the Main Study

The two interviews concurred with Bourdieu's (1990b:81) argument that 'interpersonal relations are never, except in appearance, individual-to-individual relationships and that the truth of the interaction is never entirely contained in the interaction'. Before

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conducting this pilot study I had thought the most important themes were the broader and bigger questions like politics, language, education or the feudal system. But during the pilot study I noticed that my participants brought with them their complex background, the influences, their weaknesses and strengths and the wide variety of circumstances and situations that they had dealt with throughout their lives. I found them talking keenly about their personal struggles, which now seemed to me to be more important in bringing them to their present state. The narrative of the interviews seemed to be achieving new objectives. It shifted my attention to minute details and individual efforts, my participants' fights, on very personal levels, against resistance and depriviation, their experiences and struggles throughout their lives. It made me aware of the notion of one-to-one interaction among people and situations.

The participants went through experiences that were individual and collective at the same time. However, they were describing the problems faced by them as individuals and not as members of a group. They were presenting their world as they were seeing it. The pilot study made one thing clear to me, that I was studying individuals, and not systems. But these personal issues are not as specific and exceptional as each of the participants thought. They are, rather, the issues which are common to all people from similar backgrounds, as the main study shows. But they might be seen differently by different people from the same group. Therefore I shall in this study give voice to my participants and let my readers see the reality through their perspective.

The pilot study highlighted many issues related to motivation, the inclusion-exclusion dilemma, the education system in rural areas, etc. After analysing the data from this pilot study, I realised that it was not success or failure at academic level that was important: it was their whole journey through life that was interesting, enlightening and inspiring. The socio-economic conditions of Sarmad were worse than those of Aqeel, but Sarmad achieved what Aqeel was unable to do. However, Aqeel was facing greater emotional conflict because his talents other than education (e.g. in sport) were not acknowledged and appreciated. In their journey towards a better way of life, the effort counts more than the results. These insights made me change my focus from a comparative study to a more indepth study of the lives of young people from the above-

mentioned background. I decided to investigate the lives of young men and women who tried to create a better standard of living for themselves and their families, regardless of whether they succeeded or not. This enabled me to formulate my main research question:

> **How do some people from poor rural backgrounds in Sindh try to progress to a higher standard of living?**

3.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the life stories of two young men. One of them is an MBA gold medallist and now a senior officer in a bank. The other could not complete his undergraduate university studies and dropped out within a few months of starting. The data gathered through these interviews highlighted various circumstances and situations during the lives of my participants, when they used their personal judgement to make decisions based on the choices available. Sometimes circumstances drove them into certain situations against their will. This chapter discussed the patterns that distinguish the two participants from each other in spite of their similar socio-cultural, economic and linguistic background and their similar pre-university education. The differences between them were discussed from the personal, social, economic and educational perspective. Some extracts from their narratives were analysed. These helped to formulate the key themes.

Through my data I could identify three themes:

- deprived and discriminated against by the education system,

- the effort of my participants to feel accepted in their native society,

- the role of extrinsic motivation in the process of learning.

In the first of these themes, the differences in the education system and the socio-economic conditions of people, led me to study Bourdieu's work on the Theory of Practice (see Chapter 4). The latter two themes introduced me to the effect of personal interactions between people. As a result, I looked into the perception of Symbolic Interactionism (see Chapter 4).

The chapter ends by addressing the focus of the main study. This chapter assisted me in directing the focus of my research towards the lives of young people who aspire to higher living standards. Having discussed the history of the people of Sindh in the previous chapter, I made contact with the field through this pilot study. In the next chapter I shall present the theoretical framework that will help me in my explorations. I decided that Bourdieu's Theory of Practice would be very useful in interpreting my data. Symbolic Interactionism complemented the theoretical concepts of Bourdieu, which will underpin my discussion of the data in my main study.

4

Theoretical Framework

When I had to study chemistry during my B. Pharmacy degree, I found it very worrisome. I wanted to know the subject thoroughly but I was not able to sort out the formulas. I could not share my problem and concern with anyone. I do not have any elder brother, who could be educated enough to help me with my studies; all my brothers are younger than me. My elder sisters studied privately, so they could not help me.

(From Farhana's Interview, a female participant)

4.1 Introduction

When examining the literature, I found Bourdieu's (1977, 1984) Theory of Practice and Blumer's (1962, 1969) Symbolic Interactionism to be important resources. They gave me new insights. Bourdieu helped me to understand important issues raised and discussed later in my research. However, I felt there were certain situations in which the small worlds of people were significant, and I became aware of the function of one-to-one social interaction. This played an important part in the lives of my participants. As Bourdieu does not deal with these situations, I added Symbolic Interactionism to my theoretical framework.

This chapter begins with a review of those aspects of Bourdieu's theory of practice that influenced my study. I discuss Bourdieu's three thinking tools - *habitus*, field and capital, followed by symbolic domination and symbolic violence. Bourdieu's theory relates to social spaces, objective relations, and agents' roles and positions in them. It does not treat one-to-one interactions as integral to social structures. I, however, consider *two* types of interaction as integral to the lives of my participants:

- interaction on a social level between structures and agents and between two or more structures (as discussed by Bourdieu)

- interaction on an individual level between two agents (as discussed by Blumer).

Therefore, after my exposition of Bourdieu's theories in the next section, I discuss the literature on Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism, especially in relation to my theoretical framework. I end with a summary of the chapter.

4.2 Bourdieu's Theory of Practice

I chose Bourdieu's theory of practice for interpreting my data because his concepts have empirical relevance. Bourdieu describes his concepts as 'open concepts designed to guide empirical work' (Bourdieu, 1990b:107). In an interview with Beate Krais (cited in Bourdieu et al., 1991: 252), Bourdieu suggests that the practical world has its own logic, and it cannot be limited to theoretical knowledge. He maintains that therefore an agent knows the social world around him better than any theoretician. Bourdieu's concepts help to explain the social order of the empirical world. This section is intended to explore such concepts and notions in Bourdieu's thought, with reference to my research.

My research focuses on agents from subordinate groups in society. At the centre of the theoretical framework that I adopt is Bourdieu's conceptual triad with special emphasis on his notion of *habitus* (see Figure 4.1). *Habitus* is a disposition formed during the early life experiences of an individual. However, it keeps changing and developing throughout one's life, despite having the greatest impact of early socialisation. Change and choice are important aspects of *habitus*, even though choice is limited by the social structure (both change and choice will be revisited in this section). Bourdieu's logic of practice and his notion of *habitus* are used to help interpret the lives of my participants (see Chapter 7). Bourdieu's theory has been frequently used for analysing the everyday interactions of disadvantaged groups and their day-to-day struggle for survival. *Habitus* provides a method for simultaneously analysing 'the experience of social agents and [...] the objective structures which make this experience possible' (Bourdieu, 1988:782).

Figure 4.1

Bourdieu's Conceptual Triad

Habitus

Capital   Field
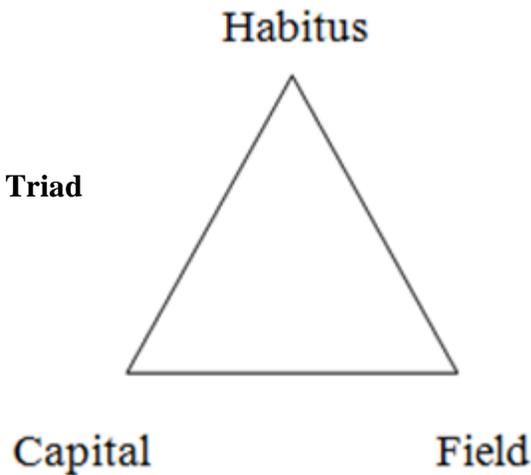
In this study, *habitus* is treated as something that is shaped by structure but where also agents can exercise choice and agency in constructing their *habitus*. Bourdieu (1977, 1990a) attempted to balance structure and agency as complementary forces, thus:

- agency: human behaviour can transform the existing social structures.

- structure: social structures can change human behaviour (by permitting certain actions or making them impossible).

This is a reciprocal relationship: behaviour affects structures, and structures affect behaviour. Therefore it is the balance between structure and agency through the notion of *habitus*, which plays a key role in my theoretical framework and is evident in the lives of my participants as well.

Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, with its capacity to accommodate unpredictable vagueness, continuous reformation and restructuring, individuality and collectiveness, compatibility and incompatibility in the field of action, makes it as attractive as ordinary life (see also Figure 4.2). *Habitus* is designed to fit in with the complexity of the real world by making it more adaptable to the conditions of agents under observation; this in itself is a great strength of the notion of *habitus* (see also Reay, 1995a).

Bourdieu considered *habitus* as a method, rather than as an idea (Bourdieu, 1985; cited in Mahar, 1990). This notion is important to my understanding of the concept of *habitus*. *Habitus* changes as time goes by; my participants demonstrate this. Thompson (1991) notes that an agent's *habitus* is the sum of all his experiences. By internalising the ongoing socialisation, *habitus* keeps adding layers to itself; this transforms, restructures and enriches it with every passing day. Reay (2004b:434) says that *habitus* is 'permeable and responsive' to the social practices etc. in the world around. Thus it develops and changes over time, though the greatest impact is still that of early life experiences (Bourdieu, 1990b; 1990c). Such change of *habitus* in the course of time, in response to experiences in the social world, forms an important part of my discussion of the data in Chapter 7.

The notion of *habitus* aims at eliminating:

- finalism/mechanism,
- explanations by reason/explanation by causes,
- conscious/unconscious,
- rational and strategic calculation/mechanical submission to mechanical constraints
- etc.

(Bourdieu, 1990b:107)

Figure 4.2 Habitus

The concept of *habitus* is flexible because it manages to combine subjective and objective aspects. It is subjective inasmuch as it permits choices, and objective inasmuch as it shows that choices are limited. Although 'choice is at the heart of *habitus*' (Reay 1995a:355; 2004b:435), the choices available to individuals are limited by their *habitus* and all the capital they possess.

There is fluidity in the concept of *habitus*, which makes it both a theory and a method which can be used in empirical research (Bourdieu, 1993b). Together with the associated concepts of capital and field, which can be defined respectively as 'accumulable social-symbolic resources' and 'the arena of social life and struggle' (Collins, 1993:116), *habitus* as a method gives a broader, and deeper, view of the structures in the social world. The three concepts together are the tools with which I shall explore the social inequalities which my participants and all agents have to cope with. The greatest attraction of the triad to me is that it enables me

- to focus on structures of society,

- to analyse complex behaviours

- to take the context of those behaviours into consideration.

Bourdieu (1991) says that the inhabitants of the social world are powerful, or weak, to varying degrees depending on the type and amount of 'capital' they possess, which may be economic, social, cultural, linguistic, etc, capital. The owners of this capital use it to create various social 'fields' in the social world. Different kinds of capital are accorded different value in different fields. Knowledge of Sindhi is essential for survival in rural Sindh and therefore invaluable but not highly prized since everybody has this capital. Knowledge of English is highly prized in universities, where it is essential, but not all students have it to the same degree. Village skills like handicrafts (e.g. embroidery), animal husbandry or agriculture are highly prized in the village but not in the city, a factory, an office or a university. Skills in handling explosives, metal drills and cracking safes will be highly prized in the criminal fraternity but not in a university library. Therefore people having these skills ('owning this kind of capital') will, even with the same kind of capital, be more powerful, or less powerful, in different fields. Power depends not only on the capital but also on the field in which it is employed. Different fields ('force fields') recognise different kinds of capital. This divides the social world. It creates layers of people (a hierarchy of people) who are more powerful or less powerful. The 'agents' (people) who possess more recognised capital are more

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powerful. Those who possess huge amounts of non-recognised capital (e.g. a hafiz, who can recite the entire Qur'an by heart, and seeks employment as a teaching assistant in England) will remain weak in spite of their capital.

Capital and the power associated with it can be passed on ('reproduced') from generation to generation. The rich can pass on their money and possessions to their children ('economic capital') and also give them a good education ('educational capital', 'cultural capital'). The social structures (which are dominated by powerful people) reproduce these differences. Differences in power lead to power struggle, and everybody uses the tools at their disposal to maintain and, if possible, increase their power. Bourdieu's sociological research focuses on power struggle, especially domination of class and gender, based on the aspects which divide a force field and decide what happens in it (see Figure 4.3).
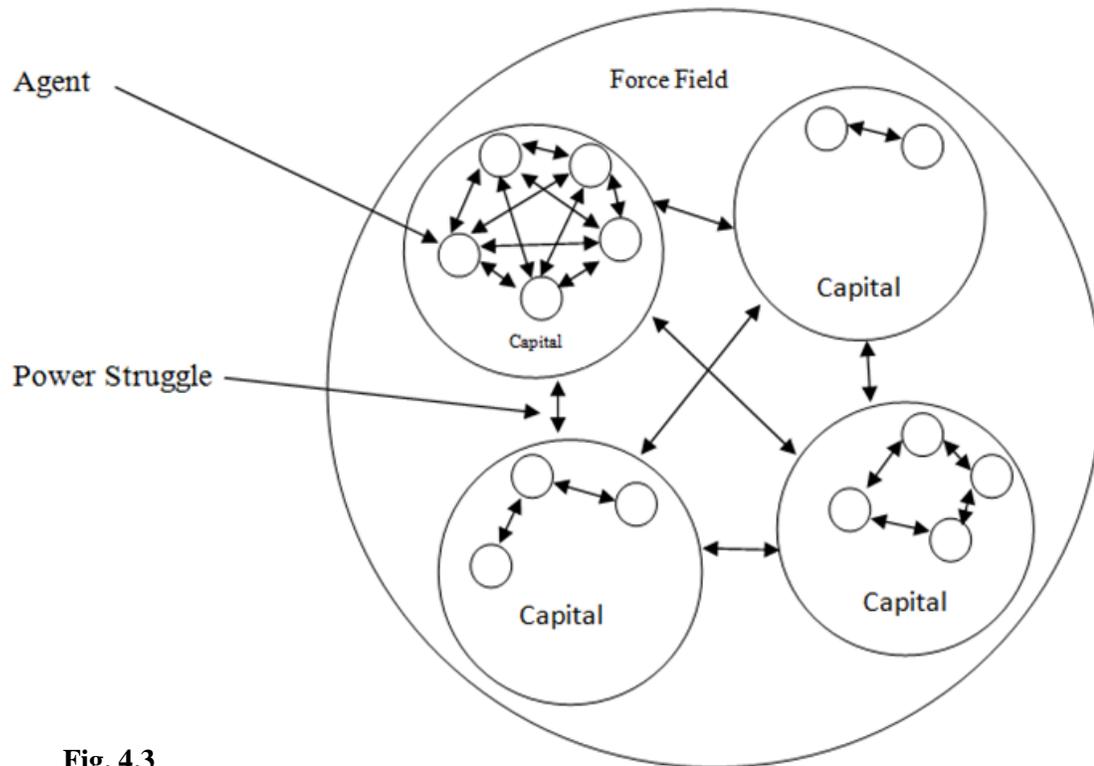
Fig. 4.3

Power Struggle in Force Field

A field is a system of

- social positions occupied by agents and institutions,

- the power relations exerted by the same agents and institutions to occupy those social positions.

Every field is 'bounded' (Grenfell and James, 2004:510), as it values certain practices, behaviours, kinds of capital etc and deprecates others. This is also true in the context of my research (see Chapter 2). Bourdieu (1986) says that family status, the amount of economic capital, the influence of an educational institution, the size of the social network etc determine the position of an agent in the field. He also points out that there is a living relationship between *habitus* and field, and that the same *habitus* can lead to very different practices depending on the field (see Bourdieu, 1990b; Reay, 2004b; Wacquant, 1989). Each field is different because it is 'both the product and producer of the *habitus* which is specific and appropriate to the field' (Jenkins, 1992:84).

Unequal distribution of capital gives birth to power struggles and makes some agents dominant and others dominated. The capital owned by *dominated agents* is undervalued in the field. By contrast, *dominant agents* possess capital that is respected by other members of the field and makes the owners powerful. They can exert force and affect the field by means of their capital. The field obeys the rules made by the dominant agents. In every social field, agents (and groups of agents) invest their symbolic capital to earn symbolic power (McClelland, 1990; Cicourel, 1993a; Reay, 1995a).

All possessions or kinds of capital which are significant in a social field are called 'symbolic capital'. It gives symbolic domination to those acquiring it (Moore, 2004). Jenkins (1992) explains this further by saying that each agent aims at maintaining and improving his position by acquiring more and more symbolic capital. Owning valuable capital is not enough. It must also be activated at the right time and in the right manner, and the response of the field to this activation is also important.

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Since people have capital and can activate it, social structures can change. While the same people, families and groups often continue to dominate throughout their lives and over generations, and others are similarly subordinated, this is not necessarily so. People can change their position in society, even if only slightly, and thus social structure can change.

Lareau and Horvat (1999) point out that a field decides the value of the possessions (capital), material or symbolic, of any agent. Bourdieu (1986) extended the concept of capital by analogy in order to clarify the structure and functioning of the social world. He and his followers acknowledged other forms of capital, including

- cultural capital (Dumais, 2002; Lareau and Horvat, 1999; Moore, 2004; Reay, 2004a),

- social capital (Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch, 1995; Webb, 2011),

- linguistic capital,

- educational capital,

- emotional capital (Gillies, 2006; Reay, 2000),

- physical capital (Shilling, 2004),

- etc.

The total capital present in a force field consists of different portions of different kinds of capital distributed among the classes and individuals in the field. The amount of capital in their possession determines their position in the force field. Agents with varying portions of different capitals act and react in different ways.

Cultural capital is hereditary, i.e. parents can pass on some of their education to their children, e.g. through an educated home atmosphere. This makes cultural capital important in the lives and struggles of agents. Merely because of their different cultural

capital, some agents achieve something without much effort, while others do not achieve it in spite of all their efforts. Bourdieu (1986) discusses

- cultural investment and cultural profits, which are not considered by economists,

- cultural capital as an explanation of unequal scholastic achievement of children from different social classes,

- and 'the domestic transmission of cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986: 243).

Bourdieu says that social order starts with the practice of classifying, of creating distinctions. The most important of these are social class and gender. In ordinary life, social inequalities do not result from direct institutional discrimination but power is subtly imposed on individuals so that certain everyday assets (skills, behaviours, types of capital) are treated as legitimate and others as unacceptable (McNay, 1999). Moore (2004) argues that objects, practices and dispositions which are treated as superior are not innately superior and have no intrinsic qualities which make them superior per se. Their meaning and significance is only relative. Some things and tastes are cultured because others are vulgar; some are reasonable because others are unreasonable. The relationship and the distance between the two mark the relationship and the distance between groups in the social hierarchy. Therefore, the social distance gives value to the symbolic relationships within a social (cultural) field.

Symbolic violence is primarily a subtle, invisible mode of domination that prevents it from being recognised as such. It is the imposition of a certain type of thought and perception upon dominated social agents (see Bourdieu, 2001; Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Krais, 2006; Moore, 2004). It implants certain unconscious structures into the social order which tend to maintain and propagate the ways in which the dominant class habitually acts. As a result, the dominated internalise their powerless position, accept it as rightful and fair, believe that the power structure is just, let the dominant classes oppress them and do not rebel.

Symbolic violence arises out of a social order based on a certain kind of classification. This is embedded in the *habitus* of both the dominant and the dominated and makes established practices appear natural. The distinguishing feature of my research is that despite accepting their position as the dominated agents, my participants want to improve their social position.

One reason why I am using Bourdieu's theoretical framework is that he discusses the power relations existing in any force field very effectively (see Figure 4.3). He explains class divisions in terms that go beyond the economic differences. He describes how all agents, dominant and dominated, actively participate in the power struggles inherent in the social order. Each agent receives a *habitus*, i.e. code of practices, from the force field and in turn changes the force field. Consequently, according to Bourdieu, individual agents have the ability to transform their lives, challenge the existing systems, develop a subversive *habitus*, and use reflexivity, i.e. the tendency to interpret and act according to personal judgement.

This has been noted in the pilot study and will become even more apparent in the main study. Choices are limited, and each person has different choices. My participants are weak in all social respects - socio-cultural, educational, linguistic, political, economic etc. But they are strong, though to varying degrees, in personal respects - intelligence, aptitude, hard work, will-power and motivation. Therefore the 'misery of position' (Bourdieu, 1984) of my participants does usually not result from personal weakness but from inherited weakness. Even though most of them have some cultural capital for education, their class and the occupations they inherent have the greater effect (see Chapter 2). This makes them liable to receiving symbolic domination and symbolic violence. Symbolic violence is not physical but is inflicted by dividing people into classes and making one class dominate the other, by giving some people an unmerited or inherited advantage over others. The result is symbolic domination. These concepts help us understand how domination and discrimination are socially and culturally produced and reproduced. Against all these forces, my participants try to transform their *habitus* by making difficult choices which are not common in their environment. Such choices do exist but are not often exercised.

Bourdieu's theory can be applied across different cultures. Bourdieu himself talks about the transferability of his theory to Japanese culture in 'Practical Reason' (Bourdieu, 1998; cited in Robbins, 2004). According to Robbins (2004:415), 'the English Preface to Homo Academicus (Bourdieu, 1988) is an explicit discussion of how the analysis presented in the text of French higher education should be read and adopted by English readers'. Robbins states that, if Bourdieu can be applied to English society, it can be applied across cultures, i.e. Bourdieu's framework is universal. Scholars have used Bourdieu's theories in a variety of social science disciplines (see for instance, Fowler, 2006, 2009, 2012, and Sapiro, 1996, 2002 for literature; Krais 1993, 2006 for gender studies), regardless of the limitations of time and space. There have been studies conducted solely to provide an understanding of *habitus* (see Reay, 1995a, 2004b; Crozier et al., 2008; for institutional *habitus*, see Ashwin, 2009; Cookson and Persell, 1985; Falsey and Heyms, 1984; Lamont and Lareau 1988; McDonough, 1997; Reay, 1998; Reay, David, and Ball, 2001, 2005; Smyth and Banks, 2012). Though different types of capital have been investigated, cultural capital, together with *habitus*, has been a favourite of educational researchers (Dumais, 2002; Reay, 2004a; Lin, 1999). Of all the concepts discussed by Bourdieu through his conceptual triad, field has been least researched by educational researchers (Deer, 2003; Naidoo, 2004; Lareau and Horvat, 1999; Marginson, 2008). Dillabough (2004:489) examines Bourdieu's theory in relation to feminist theories. Now that Bourdieu's theory has been applied to the environment of England, Hong Kong, South Africa and continental Europe, I intend to apply it to a South Asian environment, namely a region in rural Pakistan which differs greatly from the environments to which the theory has previously been applied. Even though I am most interested in studying the *habitus* of my participants, I want to explore all the components of Bourdieu's triad (*habitus*, field and capital). I want to see what all three can do together to cope with symbolic violence. (Most research known to me deals with one or two components only). I will try to match the *habitus* of each of my participants with the quality and quantity of her/his cultural capital. I will also examine how effective and useful *habitus* and cultural capital are in the social fields to which my participants initially belong and which they enter as time goes by.

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Bourdieu's framework carries an important part of my theory. The balance between structure and agency that Bourdieu created through the concept of *habitus* was convincing, and I have used it in my work. Clearly the bigger social world is decisive in making my participants what they are today, but there also exists a small world within which they live and interact more freely with the people around them. That small world is affected by the bigger social structure, but these one-to-one relationships of people determine their lives and ultimately their decisions. In order to look at the data from this point of view, I used Symbolic Interactionism to complement Bourdieu's framework.

4.3 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism (SI) refers to the process of meaning-making through interaction. Symbolic interactionists believe that between every action and the reaction that is made in response to it, there lies the process of interpretation. Individuals interpret each other's actions and behaviours before reacting to them. As a result, they only react to their interpretation of any action, not to the action itself.

$$\text{Action} \longrightarrow \text{Interpretation} \longrightarrow \text{Reaction}$$

This assumption is fundamental and is accepted by all symbolic interactionists. By contrast, there are several 'schools' or varieties of SI, differing by which principles they accept and which they reject. Two of these are led by Kuhn (called 'Iowa School') and Blumer (called 'Chicago School'):

- Kuhn (see Kuhn, 1964; Kuhn and McPartland, 1954) focuses on purely structural aspects of SI and is interested in instrumental, positivist, experimental methodology.

- Blumer (1962, 1969) severely criticises this. He insists upon 'sympathetic introspection'.

For my theoretical framework, I follow Blumer's version of SI, which will be discussed in this section.

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Bourdieu helped me see the influence of society on a person's life. Blumer's SI showed that a person's relationship to other persons is equally important.

Individuals' interactions with each other and with the objects surrounding them are important for understanding their behaviours. These behaviours arise from the meanings and interpretations that the individuals attach to objects and situations etc. These meanings and interpretations vary from individual to individual and in different circumstances, resulting in differences in behaviour, which are often unpredictable. SI showed me how important the function of choice and change is. It showed me that structure and agency depend on each other.

Blumer thinks that neither structure nor agency can be dominant. Like Bourdieu, he emphasizes the balance between structure and agency. This balance is also fundamental in my approach. Every individual, group, institution, object, practice, etc, has a distinct character and is part of an environment which also has a particular character. Individuals, while trying to cope with, and adjust to, their surroundings, also help to shape them. This idea is important in my theoretical framework. In Blumer's SI, agency and structure are reciprocal forces. Structures help agents to act, and agents help structures to continue to exist (reproduction) and to create new structures (production).

Thus my position is, like that of Bourdieu and Blumer,

- that structure and agency are reciprocal forces,

- that the social world consists of social structures which limit individuals in their actions and behaviours,

- that individuals can to some extent act against the restrictions of structures and thus bring about social change.

Social order consists of structure and agency.

Blumer's SI is based on Mead's (1934) thought. Mead pioneered the notion that the availability of language to humans separates them from other animals and thus allows

for the existence of a society which gives consciousness to an individual (for detailed discussion, see Mead, 1934). Mead's theory helped to study individuals as social beings. Objects do not carry a meaning of their own; the meaning is rather situated in the behaviour towards objects (see Meltzer, Petras, and Reynolds, 1975). For Mead (1982:5) 'the individual mind can exist only in relation to other minds with shared meanings.' Therefore, the three most important aspects of his thought are

- the interaction between individual and society,

- individual and society as dynamic (reproducing) processes,

- the individual's ability to interpret the social world.

Thus interaction and meaning-making are at the core of Blumer's SI.

Although all symbolic interactionists are advocating understanding behaviour by going 'inside the human mind', yet their approaches are very different. Gusfield (2003) articulated four, interrelated and overlapping, aspects of symbolic interactionist perspective that I consider of significance to my stance on SI, discussed below (adapted from Gusfield, 2003);

- Behaviours, situations and objects have multiple possible meanings. An agent reacts to his understanding of the events, and meaning-making and interpreting is therefore central to what he does. These personal meanings and interpretations are not always obvious to a researcher. When studying human behaviour, the researcher must therefore make a conscious effort to see things as much as possible from the perspective of the researched.

- Humans are reflective (thinking) beings, who respond to their experiences in creative ways. They act and react in context; they respond to what they observe in their environment. Their responses are based on their interpretation of those observations. Reality is relative and depends on interpretations.

- People produce and convey ideas and meanings through a complex system of symbols. People act and interact through linguistic exchange, whose meaning can be transferred and interpreted in a variety of ways.

- When I (or anybody) react or respond to an object, my reaction is not 'caused' by that object but it arises out of a relationship I have with it. Thus, when I hear that one of my favourite films will be shown on TV tomorrow, I get excited, not by the film and not by that announcement (which after all is mere words) but by my relationship with that film.

Therefore, people are capable of being creative and unpredictable and coming up with new ways of acting and reacting. People do not only react (respond) to events, they often also take the initiative, are proactive and try to alter their environment or force other people to respond.

In all such actions, *interpretation* of circumstances and incidents, and consideration of the *choices* available are important.

Blumer (1969:86) points out that individuals usually understand objects, events etc in terms of the commonly accepted academic definitions (e.g. dictionary definitions). However, there are situations when different agents view the same events in different terms, e.g. the police as oppressors (as opposed to "law enforcers"), soldiers and judges as murderers, etc.

Any one agent can interpret the same situation in different ways. Different agents can interpret the same situation in different ways. This is evident in my data (I found the narrative analysis as a helpful methodology for this).

Blumer explains Symbolic Interactionism as, 'the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings' (Blumer, 1962:180). As mentioned above, the response to an action is not determined by the action itself but by the meaning which a person attaches to that action.

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Interpretation is very important in the stories narrated by my participants. I, therefore, carried out a narrative analysis of selected portions. (see Section 3.4 for pilot study and chapter 8 for main study.)

The concepts of 'self and 'society' are significant in understanding the notion of SI that I adopt. Self is a particular kind of process which is in continous formation. The formation of self depends on the choices an individual makes in her/his life. In the development of the self, individual and society play complementary roles. The significance of an individual cannot be denied due to the availability of choice, even though limited choice. Mead (1934:135; cited in Ashworth, 1979:91) further explains 'self' as developing out of experience and activity in society. Self is conditioned by an individual's relation to the social process and to other individuals within that process. A person's self-image is a product of society. It grows out of internalising others' views about one's self, and simultaneously out of one's reflections on one's behaviour and actions.

Society consists of people who during most of their daily activities interact with each other. They try to conform to the existing customs of their society. They try to make shared meaning and understanding possible. Individuals and society are inseparable because both are created through social interaction, and each can only be understood in terms of the other.

Blumer (1969) says that there is a reciprocal relationship between human experience and social reality (see also Morrione, 1988; Low, 2008). Blumer presents meaning, language and thought as the three fundamental principles of SI, which explain how a person's character is created and how he learns to live in society (Griffin, 1997). Individuals act and react in accordance with the meaning they attribute to people, objects, situations etc. They also negotiate through meaningful symbols (language). Thought helps to modify and interpret symbols. Blumer demands that we directly observe people in their indigenous settings and that we take human agency into account when trying to explain social processes (Shibutani, 1988).

For SI the relationship between an individual and society is reciprocal (Stryker 1980; Brewer, 2001). Stets and Burke (2005) explain this reciprocity:

- on the one hand, self affects society by forming groups, organisations etc;

- on the other hand, society affects individuals by providing shared language and meanings.

These enable individuals to engage in social interaction and thereby create a sense of their own identity (see Robinson, 2007).

Personal identity is formed by social interaction and social structures; conversely, individuals can create and affect social structures by interacting socially. Self emerges from society and reflects society. In order to gain a social understanding of the self, we must also understand the society in which the self is acting. This means that individual and society as viewed by SI are always changing, just as Bourdieu's *habitus* and social structures are always changing and developing. The self is acting in a social context in which other selves exist. The researcher must always be aware of this.

To summarise the argument, SI attaches a key significance to meaning and subjective experience in the study of self and society. All interaction in the social world uses symbols (including language) which, on a macro level, have certain meanings for a cultural or ethnic group, and may differ from group to group. On a micro level, meanings can vary from person to person within a group.

Generally speaking, objects (including expressions and situations) in the social world have socially determined meanings. People act and react and make decisions in accordance with their subjective understanding of people, objects, situations, events, incidents etc. As a result of such subjective interaction with society, life in society constantly changes. In view of all this, SI considers the individual as an entity which can be understood only through its interaction with others.

Blumer sees social change as a continuous process by which people jointly construct their lives (not just reacting to external forces); human beings, individually or

collectively, act in society through an interpretive process. By contrast, SI is sensitive to the problem of how situations are interpreted and meanings are developed. It does not explicitly discuss the processes of social change, and social structure is lightly treated (Brittain, 1973; Meltzer, 1964; Meltzer, Petras, and Reynolds, 1975; Weinstein and Tanur, 1976). My work takes care of this weakness of SI by using Bourdieu's Theory of Practice.

Bourdieu and Blumer have strengths and weaknesses which complement each other:

- Bourdieu mentions the role of individual choice but seems to neglect the influence of interactions on an individual level. He rightly emphasises objective relations.

- Blumer talks about social structures but does not investigate their impact thoroughly enough. He regards subjective interactions and meaning making as the main means of understanding human action and behaviour.

4.4 Summary

This chapter presented my theoretical position. I outlined Bourdieu's framework, discussing his Conceptual Triad of *Habitus*, Field and Capital, and his Theory of Practice, including the concepts of symbolic domination and symbolic violence. I explained that Bourdieu's theory can be applied to other cultures and why I chose Bourdieu's theory for my research, notwithstanding its limitations.

I noticed that Bourdieu does not cover one-to-one interaction, which is important for understanding the lives of my participants. I introduced the Symbolic Interactionism (SI) to deal with that aspect. SI sees meaning-making (interpretation of situations), interaction between individuals and language as a key to human behaviour. However, SI does not acknowledge the role of structure and culture. In the lives of my participants, the importance of socialisation, influence of social group, ethnicity, etc, is obvious. Bourdieu helped me to overcome the deficits of Blumer's SI. In brief, Bourdieu and

Blumer helped me in developing my theoretical framework and will help me to understand the lives of my participants.

Every event in the lives of my participants that has a lasting effect on them is influenced by both the bigger social structures and the small one-to-one interactions between people. For example, one of my participants, Ahmar, decided to go to school when he was slapped by his mother for playing truant. He decided to become a District Police Officer or join the armed forces when he was slapped by a policeman. While the importance of the social structure which gave that policeman the power to slap a young boy is undeniable, the significance of the interaction between two people which made my participant understand the significance of power must not be overlooked either. Therefore, I used Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism as theoretical framework for my research. Chapter 7 contains the discussion of my data using Bourdieu's framework. Chapter 8 contains a narrative analysis of selected extracts from the life stories of my participants.

5

Final Preparation and Stepping into the Field

But in Class 3, I remember that once my teacher asked me if I would like to give a speech ... on 14th of August ... I think. I don't remember who wrote it for me, maybe it was my sister because my speeches have always been written by my sister. I said, 'Alright, I will do it.' That was in fact a lucky chance because what we call, the monitors; that girl was absent and that is why I was given the chance. I did that speech and I got the first prize. When the prizes were announced, I was called up on the stage and they gave me a pack of story books. That was the beginning of my career. Take it like this that I was given importance; and I started feeling that I could do something. In class 4 and class 5, I continued speeches, went into extra-curricular activities as well. I was never interested in studying or reading any other books. I started painting from then. I started painting in 4th and by 5th I painted some very good paintings. I sat exams for getting scholarships and I passed those also. Till Class 8, I did good painting and I had learnt English language well also, for my age, of course. In SSC, I had also translated [into English] a book by Khalil Gibran, I don't know right or wrong, as I am not talking about my ability or potential here, I am only telling you about the interest that was developing in me slowly and gradually. The inclination towards literature was developing in me then. Books were already available at home and so I started reading them.

(From Farwa's Interview, a female participant)

5.1 Introduction

Social science research explores the perceptions of the social actors (see Miller and Glassner, 2004; Charmaz, 1995). Therefore, my research tries to understand the meaning that my participants attribute to the events and incidents in their lives; I want to understand the way they see the world they live in. Through in-depth life story interviews I learn about the views and ideas of my participants and give voice to them. I try to present reality *as seen by the interviewees* 'with depth and detail' (Bourdieu et al., 1999; Fowler, 1996). Such socio-cultural perspective of reality has great significance for my participants, me and the social world where this reality belongs. These ideas and their application are discussed in greater detail throughout this and the following chapters.

This chapter is divided into two main sections:

- general principles of research method (ethnographic study, case study, life story interviews)

- the application of these principles and methods to my specific task (collecting and analysing the data and what happened)

The general principles are discussed under the headings: research approach, research methodology and research tools. Throughout this section, I concentrate on those general issues which are relevant to my research.

The second section is a survey of my research procedure. I shall discuss the research questions, the research environment and the participants of the study. The process of data collection is then discussed further, especially the role of the researcher, and research ethics. The section on data analysis has sub-sections dealing with problems of translation and how to evaluate the quality of my research. The chapter ends with a summary.

5.2 Theoretical Considerations

My research studies the lives of five young men and women. My study cannot be called 'an ethnography', which has been defined as 'a detailed study of the life and activities of a group of people' (Feagin et al, 1991:4). But I am not looking at a group but at *individuals* from a group and how they are, or try to be, different. My study can, therefore, be called 'a study of multiple cases', or 'a case study that is ethnographic in nature.' My research tool for this study was life stories (see Figure 5.1.).

Tool: Life
History

Methodology:
Case Study

Approach:
Ethnographic
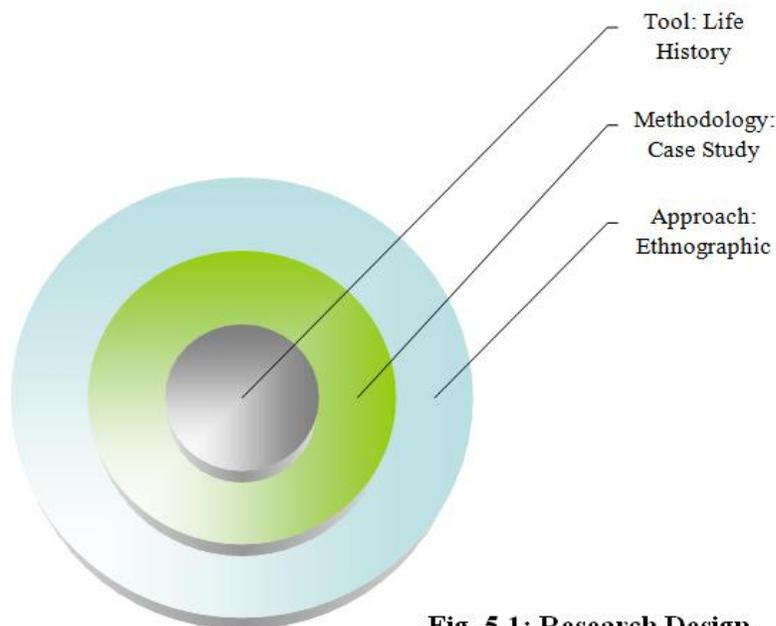
Fig. 5.1: Research Design

The figure shows that this work is ethnographic in nature, since the big question deals with issues of culture, and these are usually addressed through ethnographic studies. However, I use case study as a methodology to better understand the research problem and solve my research questions. Life story interviews are my research tools as 'the case study needs to present people as complex creatures. Biographies offer the researcher provocative models' (Stake, 1995:97).

The theoretical issues of my methodology will be discussed in the following sections:

- ethnographic approach,

- case study methodology,

- life story interviews.

5.2.1 Research Approach: Ethnographic

I prefer the ethnographic approach because I focus on the uniqueness of my participants and their situations, and not on generalisation (see Appendix 5 - Ethnographic Enquiry versus Experimental Enquiry). Moreover ethnography starts with a big question, by identifying a problem in the field, as I did in the case of my study. I started my research by identifying a practical problem. I discovered it during my teaching career and can therefore largely share, and sympathise with, the perspective of my participants (Conteh et al., 2005: xxi). Davies (2008) agrees with Kristmunsdottir (2006) that an ethnographers' personal history, job experience, socio-cultural environment affect their selection of issues and population to be researched; this is true in my case. The origins of my research go back to the three years I spent teaching at the University of Sindh from 2004 (see also Chapter 1). After doing an MA in English Literature, I taught English language and literature, first in a private school and then at the university at which I studied. My experience of teaching at university led me to this research.

Following Davies's (2008) view that ethnographic research should use qualitative techniques based on the lives of the researched, I conducted life story interviews of my participants (see also Figure 5.2 - Ethnographic traits in my research). My data contain

whatever relevant information I could gather through the interviews (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983).

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Figure 5.2   Ethnographic Traits in my Research

- Empirical data systematically selected for the purpose
- Real world context (no experimental conditions produced by researcher)
- Informal conversation
- Unstructured approach to data collection
- A small number of participants
- Data analysis involves interpretation, description and explanation of human action or words

Adapted from Hammersley, M. (1993)

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Edwards and Talbot (1994:49) describe ethnography as a 'progressive focusing design' and say that ethnographic study requires special knowledge of sociological conditions since individuals are observed in interaction with the environment to which they belong. Through their stories I study my participants' interaction with their social field. Thus rich and readable data are produced. Edwards and Talbot (1994) further point out that, in the course of examining the data, the focus of research is continuously refined. Successive study of different cases, therefore, leads to progressive focusing. My study is based on the cases of five different participants, and each helps to define and redefine the information gathered from the other.

Nader (1993:7; cited in Altheide and Johnson 1998) quotes the objective of ethnographic research from Malinowski as, 'to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise his vision of the world'. The goals of my study are to understand, interpret, discuss, and give voice to, my participants from rural Sindh so that

more people know about their journey towards a better life. My research also fits Hammersley's (1993) idea of three features of ethnographic thinking:

- Naturalism: My research is based on natural knowledge and understanding of actual social situation. And it developed out of knowing what people do in real life situations through the life story interviews. Data gathered explain events with reference to the context.

- Discovery: I am doing this research due to my personal interest in the social setting and the problem under research in this thesis. I began research with minimal assumptions so that I would be able to see the world through the perspective of my participants, without it being overshadowed or blurred by any already existing hypotheses or assumptions. I continuously narrowed down and sharpened the focus of this research, which, in turn, changed it substantially, as it proceeded.

- Understanding: My data explain human actions and behaviour, with reference to cultural perspective. I carry the knowledge of the culture of the group under study, as I belong to the same culture and therefore, have experienced their way of life throughout my life. That is why, I attempt to produce an effective and acceptable explanation of its behaviour.

The suitability of an ethnographic approach for research on human behaviour is accepted widely (Bruyn, 1966; Blumer, 1969; Harre and Secord, 1973; all cited in Hammersley, 1993). It can give us a profound understanding of behaviour, of the complexity of relations, of power relations, of the complexities of everyday life, of many significant trivialities *seem* so insignificant that they are hardly ever noticed. (see Figure 5.3 for details.)

The study of cultures is mainly the domain of ethnography. My study is only partly ethnographic, namely inasmuch as it takes culture into consideration. But it focuses on *individuals*, inasmuch as they are trying to improve their standard of living. It is not trying to describe the culture for its own sake.

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Figure 5.3   My Study is Ethnographic in Nature

- Its participants have a common culture or world view. (Alasuutari, 1998; Hammersley, 1993).

- It seeks to understand human behaviour from participant's point of view (Fetterman, 1998; Clifford, 1988; Kamil, Langer and Shanahan, 1985).

- It identifies and describes phenomena from beginning to end across cycles. (Edwards and Talbot, 1994; Kamil, Langer and Shanahan, 1985).

- It develops hypotheses grounded in the event and driven by the conceptual framework of the study (Hammersley, 1993; Kamil, Langer and Shanahan, 1985).

- It presents a vivid picture of another culture to its readers. (Alasuutari, 1998; Geertz, 1988).

- It provides emic – insider's or native's – perspective. (Robson, 2002; Fetterman, 1998; Hammersley, 1993; Nader, 1993).

5.2.2 Research Methodology: Case Study

Despite having strong ethnographic elements, my research can be called a case study, as it includes the study of five different cases, whom I would prefer to call 'individuals' or 'my participants'.

Case study research has the case as a unit of analysis. 'Case studies are undertaken to make the case understandable' (Stake, 1995:85). Mine is case study research as it investigates an existing problem in a real life setting. I expect to explore the 'how' and 'why' questions in my field (Yin, 1989). Feagin et al (1991:9) regard case study as a holistic approach and note that it 'can permit the researcher to examine not only the complex life in which people are implicated but also the impact on beliefs and decisions of the complex web of social interaction'. For my research field, case study is advantageous as it can provide fundamental insights, detailed analysis and rich and in-depth description (Feagin et al, 1991; Sjoberg et al, 1991). Mine is a 'descriptive

multiple-case study'. Descriptive case study can be defined as one which 'presents a complete description of the phenomenon within its context' (Yin, 2003:5).

My study focuses on young people

- From rural and economically weak areas of Sindh, Pakistan.
- From deprived and less educated families.

My study comprises 5 different cases: 3 females and 2 males.

In order to understand their path towards better life,

I expect to find out

- The impact of their native field, capital and *habitus* on their achievements in life.
- The impact of day-to-day interaction with other individuals.

Figure 5.4   My Case Study Theory

Some cases are studied for the sake of generalising. Others, like mine, have significance of their own and the interest in their generalisation is negligible (Stake, 1995). My purpose is to understand the situation in rural Sindh and bring it to the attention of scholars and of people who can help to improve the situation (see Figure 5.4).

Narrative analysis is the second methodology that I applied to my data; however, I do not intend to discuss it here as I have a separate chapter on that (see Chapter 8).

5.2.3 Research Tool: Life Story Interview

My research is based on the life stories of five young men and women (except the two young men for the pilot study) from rural and economically weak backgrounds of Sindh. Though narrative research has fewer participants than any other form of research, I have been able to gather a large amount of data by having five participants. They were all eager to talk about themselves. I was really moved when, at the end of his interview, Abdur Razzak (a male participant) said that nobody had ever listened to him for so long with so much interest. These words revealed to me an important aspect of his life. Every

narrative I collected was very personal and provided rich autobiographical accounts (Lieblich et al, 1998). Agreeing with Davies (2008), I studied the lives of my participants in order to understand the social and cultural issues existing in their world; but I cannot expect their stories to be entirely representative. Some of their experiences will be entirely personal, and the fact that this is possible is interesting in itself.

One important reason behind choosing life story as a research method is that it would be difficult for a Western public to imagine the life and culture of my participants. However, their specific narratives will be much easier to understand since 'we may not be able fully to comprehend specific thought patterns of another culture, but we have [...] less difficulty *understanding* a story coming from another culture, however exotic that culture may appear to us' (White, 1981:1; original emphasis). Telling, and listening to, stories is common in everyday life. Narrative 'is international, trans-historical, trans-cultural: it is simply there, like life itself' (Barthes, 1977:79). The translatability of narrative is accepted by Barthes (1977), Lejeune (1989), Mishler (1986), Rosen (1998) and White (1981).

When we use any qualitative method, participants are expected to respond by telling stories. During the interviews, whenever I put a question to Shabana, a female participant, she started her reply with, 'Oh, that is another story [...]' and then happily described the incident. Everyone can, when given a chance, narrate their life story, as all of us have a sketch of our biography in our minds (Lejeune, 1989; Rosen, 1998). All of my participants were quite comfortably narrating their life stories; though, unlike the rest, Ahmar brought some jotted notes to the interview which were to remind him of the incidents he wanted to share.

There is a reciprocal relationship between life stories and life: life provides raw material for the stories, life stories provide meaning and understanding to life. Life stories are an act not only of expressing oneself but also of understanding oneself. Time and again my participants said that narrating their stories gave them a chance to see their lives all over again, and sometimes even from a different perspective. Kearney summarises this idea, as in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5	**Autobiography**

Not a private act of self writing but a cultural act of self reading

Understanding

- oneself/ self-reflective

- One's perspective of the surroundings

- Relationship between oneself and society

Adapted from Kearney, C. (2001)

Narratives cannot be taken as accurately reflecting reality; rather they are personal to their narrators and creative in nature (Lieblich et al., 1998). Different persons can give different accounts of the same incident. What is remembered and how it is narrated has special significance for an ethnographer (Davies, 2008). Life stories are valuable even if they are not verifiable or true because they reveal the understanding and perception of the participants, their way of looking at events and the world in general (Fetterman, 1998). Fetterman (1998) accepts incompleteness in autobiographical accounts due to memory failure etc but, for him and for me, narratives still express whatever is important for the participants because that is what they remember. However, it is also possible that some very disturbing and painful, and therefore important, incidents have been 'repressed' and therefore forgotten (Nietzsche and Freud have pointed this out, and others have followed suit). The interviews I gathered show what the interviewees understand from the incidents they are relating (see also Denzin, 1991; cited in Miller and Glassner, 2004).

I chose life stories because I wanted to explore those aspects which the researchers, using other tools, usually prefer to avoid or miss out - subjectivity, exceptions, contradictions, complexities and most importantly the general messiness of ideas and points of view gathered through this type of research. Using life stories as a research tool has allowed me to focus on individuals and emphasise subjectivity. I preferred life

stories to other research tools because I want to see my participants as individuals in their social circle with their real life family problems, along with their typical identity, style and mental make-up. I want to see them as they see themselves or as they want me to see them. I also want to understand how they portray themselves when they act in adverse circumstances. I do not want to categorise individuals only by their social or economic or educational circumstances; I do not want to study only those circumstances and do not want to draw my results from them alone. Individuals are not simply their social persona or their educated persona etc. Individuals are a combination of these personas, and that combination makes them the person they are. My research gathers all incidents and aspects and circumstances of the lives of my participants that they wanted to share with me. It explores and interprets their lives, with their uniqueness, triviality, individuality, predictability and commonness, heroic acts and failures.

I have used Francis's (1993) phenomenographic approach to qualitative interviews (see also Kearney, 2001, for an application of phenomenographic interviews), which offers greater significance to individuals' reflection on an experience than the process of interview. Not only the interview but also the experience of interviewing itself is important:

- how it is conducted and where the interviewee had some specific emotions and expressions,

- how the interviewer felt at the time when different incidents were narrated

are no less important than the events narrated. By using Francis's (1993) approach of unstructured interviews, in the form of a conversation, I handed the reins of the entire conversation to my participants, with me asking questions only when clarification or explanations were needed. Such interviews yielded rich data. 'The aim of the interview is to have the interviewee thematise the phenomenon of interest and make the thinking explicit' (Francis, 1993:70). During these interviews, I did not use a list of questions, and I had no expectations of what the participants would say. The participants thought aloud about their own lives and increased their awareness of them, exactly what Marton

(1981; cited in Francis, 1993) expected to happen. This was very helpful when I analysed the data in my theoretical framework.

Fetterman (1998:52) notes that life stories provide invaluable depth 'in putting the pieces of the puzzle together'. The data gathered through the life stories of my participants helped me to understand the context better and answer my research questions. My participants provided me with their experiences and predominantly painful reflections, accumulated during their lives. Their accounts were embedded within layers of history and in sometimes conflicting traditions. My participants, politically oppressed, socially ignored, economically deprived and linguistically rejected, with their rich home culture and the blend of complex networks of people around them, had fascinating stories to tell.

5.3 Research Procedure

Having presented the theoretical perspective of my research, I shall in this section discuss the research process. My research has its origins in my job as a lecturer of English language and literature at the University of Sindh, Pakistan. During my work at the university, English language competence seemed to me to be the major problem for my students. I thought it would be a major hurdle for them in acquiring good scores in exams in any subject since English is the medium of instruction at the university. Nevertheless many students choose not to attend their English language classes. As soon as I got a chance, I decided to do an MA in TESOL with a dissertation on issues of motivation. I wanted to find out why, in spite of poor English language skills, students choose to bunk their language classes. Though the research revealed a number of factors, I realised that using a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) on a big sample of 180 did not give me in-depth understanding of key issues and concerns of the individuals. I therefore decided to choose a smaller number of participants and study them closely for my PhD. I wished to do an in-depth study of factors responsible for individual differences of students studying English at university level. The PhD proposal that I submitted for admission had a topic somewhat resembling this.

I then told my supervisor in broad terms what was happening in the area I wanted to study (rural parts of Sindh province),

- about the education system,

- the environment in which teachers have to teach and pupils have to learn in primary schools,

- about the experiences of such students when they leave their rural environment for the first time and have to cope with life at university,

- that the greatest worry of their families is not education but how to get enough food, keep their houses repaired, keep themselves and their animals healthy, protect themselves against floods, etc.

In spite of these circumstances some extraordinarily determined students reach university. And then some of these just cannot continue their university studies. Why? This is what I described to my supervisors. I then realised that comparing academically successful and less successful students would be more useful for understanding all the factors responsible for success in the students' academic career. Such a study would also make the role of English language proficiency in academic success clearer by establishing its place among all the factors responsible for success in studies at university level.

After doing some initial reading, I conducted a pilot study - two life stories, one each from an academically successful and an unsuccessful student (see Chapter 3). Collecting life stories from people with an unsuccessful education was next to impossible. By academically unsuccessful I mean early drop-outs, students who left university within a few months of joining, for whatever reason - personal, financial, academic etc. Finding such drop-outs was very difficult as they usually do not stay in contact with their fellow students or do not even get a chance to develop any friendships at university. Once one has found such drop-outs, one has to persuade them to be interviewed. But as soon as they hear that the researcher wants to find out why they 'failed' (or 'did not succeed'),

they refuse to be interviewed. Nobody wants to spend time reflecting on, or talking about his failure to achieve a once cherished goal. It is too disappointing. This is in stark contrast to the people who managed to complete their studies and are proud to talk about their success.

I did manage to find some young drop-outs, male and female, but only one of them allowed me to interview him, and he was not very comfortable during the interview.

I encountered several problems in the field, of which some were social and cultural, and others intellectual. People did not want to wash their dirty linen in public, they were not prepared to make their and their family's shortcomings public. That's why they were reluctant to give a life story interview. Two girls refused to be interviewed because their elder brother did not want them to. They, like so many people, had skeletons in the cupboard. They would have done me a favour if they had given me an interview, but why should they reveal these skeletons just to do me a favour! This reluctance to talk indicates that they did not trust me sufficiently, and that they did not realise the importance of their voices being heard by the world. For an ethnographer these experiences have their own significance. By experiencing them during the pilot study I learned about the problems awaiting me in the field during the course of the main research. I also learned how careful I would have to be when talking to my participants about their actions (if at all) and how important it was not to upset them or inhibit them by making comments which might appear to be judgmental (Hammersley, 1993).

After analysing the pilot study, the focus of my research shifted towards *interpreting* the lives of people who aspire to a better life. When I started the pilot study, my main interest was who succeeded and who failed, and why people succeeded and why they failed. I was also interested in the fact that some people had aspirations and others had none. While doing the pilot study, I become more concerned with the circumstances which aided people with high aspirations and with the obstactles they had to overcome. High aspirations were now a given for all my participants in the main study. Even actual success or failure in getting a degree was now only a minor matter for my research. Figure 5.6 makes this clear.

Now I want to explore the life stories of young people from poor rural backgrounds in order to understand what aided or prevented their journey towards a better life.

Figure 5.6		Aspirations and Success Matrix		
		M/F	A	S
Pilot study	Sarmad	M	1	1
	Aqeel	M	0	0
Main study	Ahmar	M	1	1
	Farwa	F	1	1
	Shabana	F	1	1
	Farhana	F	1	1
	Abdur Razzak	M	1	0

Notes:

1. For A (aspirations), 0 means 'low or no aspirations', 1 means 'high aspirations'.

2. For S (success), 0 means 'did not get degree', 1 means 'did get degree'.

3. M means male, F means female.

4. Circumstances are the same for all only inasmuch as they all come from a deprived rural background, but there were differences in detail, some of which my study has unearthed.

5. Two people failed to get a degree. One failed in spite of high aspirations and due to adverse circumstances (main study). The other did not have sufficiently high aspirations (pilot study).

That is how I developed my research questions. Before going into the field, I decided that, as a matter of principle, I would only interview people who were happy to tell their stories. Therefore now the main criterion for choosing participants became whether they wanted their voices to be heard. I found two men and three women who came from poor and restricting backgrounds and were trying to find a way to escape from their poverty. As is customary among qualitative researchers, I was responsible for 'data collection, analysis and writing up simultaneously in a kind of spiralling process' (Woods, 1999:7).

5.3.1 Research Questions

Through this research I attempted to explore the lives of my participants, with the following being my big question:

How do some people from poor rural backgrounds in Sindh try to progress to a higher standard of living?

Since mine is an interpretive study, I am mainly interested in the lives of my participants. Concerning these, my research wants to answer the following questions:

- Why is it important to improve their social status?

- How do familial and social backgrounds affect their lives?

- To what extent is it important not to quit?

5.3.2 Research Context

The broader research context is discussed in Chapter 2 of the thesis, where the history, life, issues of language, education and jobs faced by people of rural areas of the province of Sindh are discussed in detail. In this section, however, I am going to explain the context on a deeper, more individual level.

My participants are from rural background and Rind (2012:50) notes,

> In the context of Pakistan (and particularly in the Sindh), rurality and village life are associated with poverty (Baulch, 2002), poor education (Sawada and Lokshin, 1999; The Daily Observer, 2009), and a lack of facilities and resources (Freeman, 1982). More importantly, rurality is characterised by the class divisions of the feudal landlord vs. the agricultural labourers (Naimullah, 2003)… the Zamidars (waderos or landowners) have blocked any attempts to improve the quality of education provision in the rural villages of the Sindh (Qazi, 2004). Being rural in the Sindh is therefore characterised by a low socio-economic status, being poorly educated, oppressed and lacking confidence.

This quote describes my participants well. They belong to different villages of Sindh. Their stories show that living conditions can be different in different villages. Some villages have, and others do not have, basic facilities like electricity, gas, clean drinking water or a non-asphalted road leading to the nearest town and making car or bus transport possible. Likewise some villages have separate primary and even secondary schools for both boys and girls, others have one and some have none. Thus in some

villages (e.g. Farwa's village) the education of girls is common but in others even that of boys is rare (e.g. Ahmar's village). It is clear from every interview that boys are given better treatment than girls whenever there is a matter of choice or priority.

During the discussion with my participants, I also noticed that the social atmosphere in different villages can be very different. In some villages, people live in harmony with each other, helping each other in times of need, in others you find

- jealousy (Ahmar's story),

- family feuds (Shabana's story),

- quarrels amongst villagers (Ahmar's story)

- the issues of safety and security (Abdur Razzak's story).

Some give a fair amount of freedom to their girls and allow them to play with boys in the street (Farhana's and Farwa's stories), go to school, and take decisions on their own (Shabana's story).

The family system is more or less same in the villages. It is a joint family system. Several nuclear families live in the same compound. Even if siblings after getting married no longer live under same roof, they share a very close bond. Men and women have distinct roles:

- The husband is the bread-winner and deals with affairs outside the home.

- The wife takes care of household and children.

The parents of my participants followed this pattern. For my participants themselves, and especially for the women, these roles were beginning to change.

5.3.2.1 Research Participants

Following Fetterman's (1998) suggestion I decided who must not be included among the participants instead of who should be among them. Then I decided who was available to

me following those conditions of who needed to be rejected. As mentioned earlier, after my experience during the pilot study, I decided not to include anyone who was not completely sure and willing to be interviewed. With this choice at hand, the main study consists of five participants, three females and two males. All of my participants belong to different villages of the province. Their families enjoy different socio-economic statuses, though all of them come from backgrounds that suffer considerable economic hardship. And the same is true for the extent of education in each family, in the case of their parents and siblings. All of them, however, speak Sindhi as L1. These are the five people who struggled through their lives and some are still struggling, but more importantly, they are proud of their struggles and have no intention of giving up in the face of adversity. Each of them was happy and excited to share their experiences of life.

Using Bordieu's terminology, the capital possessed by each participant has a different value at home as opposed to the social field in which they study and later work. All of my participants wanted to acquire a significant amount of 'symbolic capital' in life.

The various kinds of capital that my participants own, or might own, are completely useless in the new world they are entering:

- Their 'linguistic capital' (their native language, Sindhi) is so undervalued that it could almost be called a social liability, it turns people *against* them.

- Their 'social and political capital' is almost worthless.

- They possess very little or no economic capital.

- Their rich 'cultural capital' (e.g. the codes of conduct, mannerisms, rituals, traditions etc handed down to them by their parents) is worthless in the city and university environment.

Chapter 7 further discusses the data in the light of Bourdieu's framework.

In chapter 6 you can find the life stories of my participants as straight narratives (rather than interviews), which are easier to understand for Western readers (sample transcripts

of the interviews can be found in Appendix 9). In the following paragraphs I will introduce each of my participants (arranged in the order their interviews were conducted).

Ahmar

Ahmar is now an officer in Pakistan Air Force. He went to school in the morning and worked in the fields of his family in the afternoon.

Several times in his life he had to suspend his studies because he had to help his father during some financial crisis in the family or in the quarrels with other villagers. But as soon as he was able to, he resumed his studies. Eventually, when he was at university, he decided not to talk to his family because their quarrels in the village were distracting him from his studies. I had known Ahmar since he was my student at university. Somehow I managed to get hold of his phone number, called him and told him about my research. He immediately agreed to the interview. He was in his village for a holiday and was due to return to Karachi, where he was then posted, the next day. When I arrived from London, I spent a day in Karachi to meet him and conduct the interview. He came well prepared. He had jotted down some points. He was even ready to give the interview in English but I insisted it should be in Sindhi. After the interview I somehow lost touch with him and was unable to contact him in spite of repeated attempts. More recently he replied to me through Facebook, told me that he was well and that he had got married. Ahmar is well settled now and is able to support his family and his parents and siblings.

Abdur Razzak

Abdur Razzak works as a clerk in a private school in the small town close to his village. He started working as a motor bike mechanic when in the 6th class to support his family financially. He dropped out from university after his first month because his family needed him at home. At present he is studying privately (that is, studying on his own without attending college, but presenting himself for exams when he feels ready; see also Appendix 2. 'Private exam' is a common route for people who cannot study as

regular students, attending classes, because of their jobs etc. It is similar to the system of 'external degrees' first offered by London University and now by many other British universities). He plans to study Law at some future date or get a job abroad (e.g. Saudi Arabia) in order to provide a good standard of living for his mothers (*sic*), his wife and his siblings. His father married twice, and he calls both his birth mother and his step mother his 'mothers'. He is more attached to his step mother.

I was introduced to Abdur Razzak by one of my students who teaches English at the same private school at which Abdur Razzak is a clerk. Since Abdur Razzak had promised to give the interview, he came in spite of the floods and the recent death of his father. After the interview, I asked him how he felt about the interview. He thanked me and said, 'This is the first time that someone has asked me about my problems and listened to me for so long with so much interest. Till today nobody has sat down with me and asked me what I am, what I need, what's there in my house and what is not [...]' I was overcome with joy and contentment when I heard this. I have continued to be in touch with Abdur Razzak through messages since then.

Shabana

At the time of the interview, Shabana was working on a project for an NGO. Her parents conducted a marriage ceremony for her when she was only seven days old. As a result of this she was now officially 'married'. Her husband was her cousin, also a baby at the time. Hers was not a betrothal, not a promise by the parents that these two children would one day marry each other. It was an actual marriage (see Appendix 4 - Nikkah). This puts Shabana's experiences into perspective.

Shabana grew up in her parents' house and for a long time did not even know that she was married. When she was a teenager, her in-laws demanded that she moved into their and her husbands house, but her family refused. Her in-laws kept harrasing them (throwing stones and tomatoes into their house, banging their doors with bamboo sticks, making false allegations to the police which resulted in a law-suit, getting her father and brother jailed, etc). Then the in-laws took her to court in order to force her to move in

with them. She realised by then that her in-laws were domineering and unpleasant and, most importantly, that they would not let her pursue her dream of getting an education. Eventually the court granted her a divorce.

Now she supports her parental family financially, pays for the education of her siblings and tries to get her younger sisters married. One of my ex-students is working as Shabana's senior in the same NGO group. I initially wanted to interview that student of mine and phoned her to make an appointment. She was out of town and suggested that I interview Shabana instead. Shabana already knew about me and my research and was very excited about doing the interview. After the interview we had dinner together. Then I took her to her residence even though she had come to my house on her own. I thanked her for the trouble she had taken for me. She said, 'No, I am grateful to *you*, you are doing so much for us'. I realised that Shabana felt that, through this interview, she had been given a voice that she expects to be heard by the world. I have remained in close contact with Shabana since this interview. She told me that she had a second marriage, to another cousin of hers. She had given up her job for her new family. She was very happy and content with life. Some time later, I learnt that she had been separated from her second husband.

Farhana

When the government changed in Pakistan, Farhana lost a job she had been holding for five years. The new government appointed heads for various projects in accordance with personal choices and preferences (as is customary in Pakistan), and the new officials in turn recruited new people. Farhana's father supported her when she, with others, went on strike against the government's decision and was taken to a police station. Farhana related how she had suffered at work because she was a woman, and, even worse, a woman coming from a village. Farhana's brother is a colleague of the same student of mine who introduced me to Shabana. When I called Farhana for the first time, she was grumpy and said that she had no idea what I was talking about. So I asked my student to arrange my meeting with Farhana. Soon I received a more positive text message from Farhana, and we arranged to meet that very night to conduct the interview. Farhana

came to my house with her sister, whom I asked to sit in another room during the interview. Initially Farhana was quite tense but gradually she began to relax. After the interview we exchanged e-mails. I learnt about the death of Farhana's father and that her entire village had been destroyed by the floods. Farhana is still trying in vain to get a new job.

Farwa

Farwa is an Assistant Professor at a university and a PhD student. She was an 'unwanted child', since everyone, including her mother, wanted a boy. The same was the case with the two other female participants. Farwa was very stubborn, assertive, bold and rebellious, and, in her own words, not a 'good' girl during her childhood. Even today, she does not like to obey conventions. Farwa and I have known each other since 2004, when I joined the university as a lecturer. Farwa had already been teaching there for some years by then. We made friends in no time at all. Farwa talked to the two female colleagues of ours suggesting an interview, but both refused because they did not want to be recorded. Two days before leaving for the UK, I told Farwa that I would like to have one more partipant for my research. She asked me to repeat my requirements for participants. She then said, to my great surprise, 'Why don't you interview *me*?' This possibility had never even occurred to me before. So we conducted the interview at her house that very evening. Farwa herself has worked on TV and done interviews and chat shows, but after our interview she said, 'You are wonderful at doing interviews, you get every bit about personal life out of a person'. I had been in contact with her before the interview and our contact continued after it. I have not noticed any change in our relationship as a result of the interview.

5.3.3 Data Collection

Before leaving for Pakistan to collect my data, I had an abundance of people willing to participate in my research. But once I arrived in Pakistan and wanted to make appointments for the interviews, they bailed out one by one, giving a variety of reasons, e.g. that they could not spare even one hour (not credible), or assuring me of their

willingness to participate and then not turning up. I was most surprised by two female colleagues of my own university (where I work as Assistant Professor). They declined to be interviewed because I would be recording their voices. I did not suggest taking notes instead of using a recorder because I realised that I had already lost (or never had) their trust and that any number of reassurances would not be able to build it. I know 'that if the researcher makes friends with the informants, and the informants trust the researcher, they will also be honest with the researcher' (Alasuutari, 1995:52). The reverse is also true: without trust I cannot obtain any reliable information, and there was no trust in this case. So there was no point in trying to persuade these two women to participate or to appease them.

Due to the distastrous floods in Pakistan in August 2010, I could not travel to most of my participants and was mostly relying on them to travel to me. I refunded their travel costs and gave them presents as a token of my appreciation. But my gestures were greatly outweighed by the efforts some of my participants made to enable my study to succeed. Abdur Razzak came from a flooded area and attended even though his father had died only a few days earlier. Shabana had come to my city to attend a workshop. She knew she had to travel for several hours the next morning. Nevertheless she agreed to give the interview, which had to take place in the evening, after her workshop was over. I conducted Farhana's interview late at night, at around 11 p.m., because that was the only time available to us. So even though some candidates did not turn up and others dropped out at the last moment, my participants made an enormous effort to get their voices heard by the world. One might argue that there was some principle of 'natural selection' at work here, thus: the interviews are very important to me.

Data collection did not take me long. I interviewed Ahmar on 29 July 2010 and completed my final interview, which was with Farwa, on 19 August 2010 (see also Appendix 8). Sections on reflexivity and ethics follow.

5.3.3.1 Reflexivity

Research in the social world is affected by the physical presence of the researcher (Bourdieu, 1977; Clifford, 1986; Kenway and McLeod, 2004). Research on human

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subjects cannot be completely objective. Believing in complete objectivity is denying the presence of the researcher herself/himself and the research participants and denying the identities and individualities of all those involved in the research. However, research on human subjects cannot be completely subjective either. Adopting a completely subjective approach would be ignoring the objective realities like race, colour, language, social status, chance happenings etc, all of which are beyond the will and effort of human agents.

According to Davies (2008), ethnography emerges from the ethnographer's personal areas of concern or interest. He suggests that they be acknowledged at all points, as I have done throughout this chapter, especially in Section 5.3, and in Chapter 1. Davies continues to say that the ethnographer's views on the field also affect his interpretation of what the informant is trying to say. Therefore, heeding a warning from Heath and Street (2008:37) that, 'every ethnographer must always be on guard against letting one's own beliefs about what *should be* overcome the accuracy of what *is*' (original emphasis), I discuss various relevant issues in this chapter.

Edwards and Talbot (1994: 45-46) note that while doing a case study 'the very labeling of an event or phenomenon as a case and your presence as an observer of the case will in fact change it' since being a 'participant covert observer' is against research ethics. They suggest to 'accept that you will disturb the case, name it and note it'. Therefore I did not try to eliminate any influence I might have on the data but decided to be aware of it and to acknowledge it (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Davies, 2008; Miller and Glassner, 2004). As my participants and my readers expect me to be aware of, and open about, my role in relation to my data, I write not only about my participants but also about my own background and previous experiences, and how these and my presence during the interviews might have affected my findings. 'How people respond to the presence of the researcher may be as informative as how they react to other situations' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:15).

Nowadays biographical details of the researcher are an important part of all qualitative research. They draw attention to the fact that the results are not objective (not absolute),

were obtained by a specific researcher with specific life experiences and would not have been obtained by a different researcher with different life experiences, even if conducting the research in very similar circumstances and with the same participants (Woods, 1999). Qualitative writers prefer to write in the active rather than the passive voice ('I understood', rather than 'It was understood by me'). Davies (1982; cited in Woods, 1999), for example, refers to herself in her book by 'I' instead of by 'the author'. She declares thereby that she was significant during data collection and that she herself is part of her data. In this thesis I have followed her example. Wherever necessary I have pointed out the influence of my prior knowledge or my physical presence on my data and findings.

The question of power relations (Miller and Glassner, 2004) is also worth mentioning here. Edwards and Talbot (1994) advise that while collecting the data, the researcher must always ask herself/himself 'am I taking undue advantage of my position to gain information?' In my case, though I was not taking advantage deliberately, it seems to me that I have an undue advantage due to my position as a university teacher in Pakistan, a researcher and above all a PhD student from the UK. My position as an interviewer was one of authority. I was motivated by the desire to find out as much as possible about the lives of my participants but I must admit that presumably they accepted to be interviewed more out of respect for me rather than because of a desire to *give* as much information as possible about their lives. I used phenomenographic interviews to compensate for the problems of power relations.

I used phenomenographic interviews because phenomenography tries to obtain reliable insights into a person's perception of the external world. These insights should be new to the researcher and not be influenced by his preconceptions. (see also Marton, 1981; cited in Francis, 1993.)

Ali and Kelly (2004:124) concurring with Code (1991) say that 'objectivity and ethics in research are linked in a complex relationship which requires us to question who can know, and what they can know'. If the interviewee knows in advance what the researcher is likely to think, the interviewee will think and talk about the events from the

researcher's point of view instead of his own (Francis, 1993). I therefore did not tell the participants what I was expecting from them. Even though they asked me repeatedly about my area of interest, my only reply was, 'I want to know about your entire life, everything that you want to share'. I, therefore, expected to get more valid firsthand knowledge by using a phenomenographic approach (instead of going after knowledge that is filtered by the interviewer's own perceptions). Instead of asking questions and expecting my participants to reply, I let them tell me their stories as they wished, listened to them eagerly and only from time to time asked them to clarify some detail. Our 'interviews' felt more like a conversation. I tried not to ask questions in the middle of the story as I did not want to break the momentum. I asked most of my questions at the end of their stories, by asking them to go back to such and such an incident and give me more details or reflect on this or that aspect. That is the reason why I have rearranged the interviews in the form of stories and presented them like that in the next chapter.

5.3.3.2 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues emerge for all research. They are particularly important when a researcher collects data, especially from human beings. Throughout this project I followed the accepted principles of research ethics, such as informed consent, right to privacy, confidentiality and data protection (Ali and Kelly, 2004; Fontana and Frey, 1998). I encouraged my participants to help with my project by telling them that I wanted to give voice to them, get the stories of their lives and make them known to the world (Couchman and Dawson, 1990). Like Marton (1981; cited in Francis, 1993) and Francis (1993:70), I treated each participant as a 'reporting subject' rather than 'an interrogated object' (Francis 1993:70). I took care to treat my participants as individuals who have complete control over what they want to share. I am grateful to them.

As my interviews were informal, unfocused and uncontrolled, I had to be particularly mindful of privacy and confidentiality during the data analysis (Fetterman, 1998). I ensured privacy by using pseudonyms for my participants. During the analysis I did not discuss anything the participants told me after the recorder was turned off, except with

their explicit permission. I wanted to keep my participants safe and make sure that my research could in no way disturb their personal lives. The analysis of data is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

5.3.4 Data Analysis

'Analysis in ethnography is as much a test of the ethnographer as it is of data' (Fetterman, 1998:92). Fetterman (1998) approves that unlike other research, in ethnography data collection and analysis go side by side. Analysis in ethnography is multi-staged. The first step of analysis takes place when the first item of data is collected and continues while more data are added. The ethnographer has to consider and analyse every bit of data provided. This provides him with certain choices, and blocks others, for the path ahead. The ethnographer will accordingly be guided by her/his analysis so far when deciding the next step in data collection. These are the general principles set out by Fetterman (1998). In my case, I refined the research focus while doing the research, like any ethnographer does. I also adhered to the following principles for data analysis set out by Robson (2002):

- The first thing I did when I had the transcriptions of the interviews in front of me was to develop categories and look for patterns (see Shahriar, 2013).

- All research questions arose from data while I was doing data collection and analysis.

- I closely thought about all the major events and incidents that happened during the process of data collection, from the participants' attitude towards giving the interview to their emotions while narrating specific incidents.

- I tried to understand the implications of the stories collected by using different methods of analysis. In Chapter 7, I will show how Bourdieu's theoretical framework helped me to understand the data in depth. Chapter 8 contains the narrative analysis of extracts from the stories.

My theoretical framework for this study uses

- Bourdieu's Theory of Practice

- Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism.

In chapter 7, I shall use Bourdieu's theory to discuss the data in detail. I shall show how various notions of Bourdieu can be found in the lives of my participants. Following Blumer's ideas on the importance of one-to-one interaction in the small-world lives of my participants, in chapter 8, I shall analyse extracts from the narratives of two participants to show the impact of some incidents on their lives.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994:575) noted that 'the humanistic commitment of qualitative researchers is to study the world always from the perspective of the interacting individual'. I use life stories of my participants as a tool of data collection in order to view the issues from their frame of reference. However, one major concern during this study was that I and the reader were looking at data from a different perspective, a different locus of reference (Sapir, 1949). On the one hand, I am familiar with the culture of my participants. Therefore their actions tell me something about their personality. On the other hand, the reader is probably not familiar with the culture and therefore would interpret factual observations not only as characteristics of an individual but also as features of a culture. At times the reader might mistake idiosyncrasies for cultural norms. To reduce this danger, I shall often explain whether certain behaviours and practices are personal or culturally determined. I shall also discuss issues of translation and evaluation in the next two sections.

5.3.4.1 Issues of Translation

Denzin (1991:68; cited in Miller and Glassner, 2004) notes:

> The subject [participant] is more than can be contained in a text, and the text is only a reproduction of what the subject has told us. What the subject tells us is itself something that has been shaped by prior cultural understandings. Most important, language, which is our window into the subject's world (and our world), plays tricks. It displaces the very

thing it is supposed to represent, so that what is always given is a trace of other things, not the thing – lived experience – itself.

Miller and Glassner (2004) note that a researcher's tool for rebuilding and understanding reality is language used by interviewee. It can only rebuild a part of reality. To this Miller and Glassner (2004:127) add that 'the language of interviewing fractures the stories being told' and then the process of 'the research commits further fractures as well'. Language is of special significance in my research, as it is conducted in a context very different from one it is going to be read in. With great cultural differences between my participants and my readers, the responsibility lies with me to convey through this piece the actual essence of this research. That is why, I intend to discuss the issues related to translation and interpretation in some detail here.

My research is based at a public university, the University of Sindh, with students coming from varying social and educational backgrounds, as discussed earlier in this chapter (see Section 5.3.2). The language of informal communication at the university is Sindhi. But the language of education and learning is English. Urdu is used when one of the parties in any informal communication is a L1 Urdu speaker. I conducted the interviews in Sindhi, which is my mother tongue and that of the participants. This was a natural thing to do in a situation when all participants have the same mother tongue and where needlessly using a foreign language would inevitably impede communication. This thesis, however, had to be written in English, the world language for international research and science. The words of my participants therefore had to be translated into, or reported in, English. While translating, interpreting and analysing the data, I was seriously worried lest my final text should lose the flavour of the original. I was aware of the Italian adage: Thou art a traitor, translator.

Following Catford (1965), Bassnett (2002) recognises two types of untranslatability;

- linguistic untranslatability, when the target language lacks a syntactic or lexical equivalent for a feature or item of the source language;

- cultural untranslatability, when the target culture lacks an equivalent for a situational feature in the source culture.

While translating and interpreting my data, I encountered both types of untranslatability.

Linguistic Untranslatability:

Here are some literal translations of some of the ideas of my participants,

- *Then my father stopped working and as they say, even when you have tons of rations to feed yourself on, if you are not earning anymore, the same tons of ration may end before you realise*. (Abdur Razzak)

- *Till the truth is revealed, lies eat up a person*; means, until the truth is known, lies will mentally disturb and eventually destroy a person (Shabana).

- *My parents [are aged], my brothers were young, who would take out the thorns*; means, who would help them in the time of adversity. (Shabana)

- *My brother's home was getting destroyed*, actually means his life was getting destroyed, but we use the word *ghar (home)* for the life a man spends with his wife and children, as another common expression is *make one's own home*, which means get married. (Shabana)

Cultural Untranslatability:

- Ahmar told me how his mother used to prepare him and his brother for school by oiling their hair before combing and putting *surmo* on their eye lashes and around the contours of their eyes. *Surmo* is a cosmetic like kohl, a black powder which is applied with the help of a thin metallic rod called *sarai*. The effect is similar to, but not identical with, mascara and eye-liner. *Surmo* is banned in the UK for health reasons; the word and the use of the substance are not known to the 'non-Asian' population of the UK.

- The word *kacho* used by Abdur Razzak can be translated as 'rural area', but no exact equivalent is available in English since *kacho* refers to an area where there are ditches, dunes and swamps, open drains etc.

- In Farhana's interview I did not know how to translate the Sindhi word *mathan* which means 'above'. She is talking about examiners being sent by higher authorities, so we just say 'they are sent from above'. This usage of the word can have a religious connotation like prophets are sent from God, and God 'lives in the sky above'. So the authority or people in authority are always referred to as 'above'.

- *Given water on the charpoy* is a phrase that means A lazy bum, usually a man, who spends all day lying on a Pakistani style camp-bed (charpoy or *khatt'a*), does not work, is useless in the household, is given iced-drinks and served left, right and centre by the hard-working womenfolk in his household. (Farwa).

Bakhtin (1981) advises that, when translating, the translator should always carefully consider the context. From the meaning of the word to its speaker to the significance of the event it is used to express, everything is determined by the context:

- the time and place of the utterance,

- the listeners,

- the social status of both the speaker and the listener,

- the power relationship,

- the significance of the incident for the speaker and also for the listener.

Therefore I advise my Western readers always to keep the context in mind while reading my work. My participants, both male and female, talk about how they (or others around them) sometimes got a good hiding or were slapped by parents and teachers. This is

common in our culture, as we believe that corporal punishment is effective, not necessarily harmful and not in itself unjust if a child has overstepped the mark.

Parents and teachers are jointly responsible for developing a child's healthy personality, therefore, in our culture, both of them have a right to chastise the child for her/his own good. None of my participants are ashamed of talking about this, as they realise that almost everyone had the same experiences when they were young. None of them resents those elders who administered such punishments.

All of the participants, especially Abdur Razzak and Farhana, were using Arabic expressions like Inshallah (meaning 'God willing', 'If God will'), Mashallah (meaning 'Praise the Lord') and Alhamdulilah (meaning 'Thank God') every now and then.

This is quite common for Muslims from anywhere in the world, whatever their native language. None of my participants can speak Arabic apart from such common words and phrases. People from the Indian sub-continent recite the Qur'an in Arabic but they read it translated into their mother tongue so that they can understand it. Shabana talks about remembering Allah, reciting the Qur'an, prayer and *tasbeeh* (reciting prayer using a rosary with 100 beads), when there were hard times for her family. *Tasbeeh* is similar to Mantra Jaap (chanting Mantra using *mala,* a rosary with 108 beads in it) in Hinduism or Roman Catholics' saying the rosary and similar practices in many other religions.

Besides, there were some peculiar very personal tags as well. For example, Farwa used the expression *Keena budhayan* every now and then. It means 'how should I tell you'. It does not mean that she is unable to explain something; she was just saying it out of habit, to gain time to think and to keep the channel of communication open. Many people use this or other such phrases for starting a conversation in Sindhi. Similar expressions exist in other languages, for example in English: 'How shall I put it?'

There were many other cases when translating and explaining was difficult since 'all translation is only a somewhat provisional way of coming to terms with the foreignness of languages' (Benjamin, 1969:75; cited in Ding, 2008). I did what I could by providing a fairly literal translation and then explaining it to my Western readers.

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5.3.4.2 Issues of Evaluation

Qualitative research is expected to be a collaborative study developed out of a dialogue between the researcher and the researched, with goodness and trustworthiness to be emerging criteria to evaluate qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000a; Tobin and Begley, 2004). Scholars from different schools of thought evaluate qualitative research by different criteria (see Appendix 7):

- Positivists: Validity, Reliability, Generalisability.

- Constructivists: Trustworthiness, Authenticity.

- Postmodernists: No need to assess qualitative research due to the nature of the research and the world it studies.

- Poststructuralists: Subjectivity, emotionality, other anti-foundational factors.

Scholars following ethnographic methodology also discuss the issues of ethnographic quality in varying ways. Fetterman (1998) says that ethnography, like all research, is biased. The what, the who, the on whom, the how, and the where of the research are themselves biased, like in the case of my research, where my personal choices determined the topic, the setting, the participants, etc, and even the methods of data collection and analysis. Ethnographers give the inside story to the reader. They have the liberty to see and judge reality from its many faces. Therefore, following Fetterman's observation that the field can find the right questions for the ethnographer, which in turn direct him to his participants and methods, I also went into the field and decided everything once I had done the pilot study, including the research questions. Using ethnographic methods helped me to reduce personal bias in my analysis of the events in the actual social setting (Fetterman, 1998).

I used five participants for the main study and two for the pilot study, a small sample. This is justified by Hammersley's (1993) view that smaller samples can provide in-depth data and these can help us in the development of theory. Replication is not possible in ethnography, but this does not make ethnographic research less valid, since

(according to Hammersley, 1993) replication is not the most common way of assessing the work of other scientists even in the natural sciences. In my research, as in other such research, triangulation checks ethnographic validity (Hammersley, 1993; Tobin and Begley, 2004).

Discussing the in-depth interviews, Riessman (1993:11) advises the interviewer not to forget that the 'story is being told to particular people [interviewers]; it might have taken a different form if someone else were the listener.' (Davies, 2008; Miller and Glassner, 2004, agree.) Fetterman (1998:51) goes a step further and makes four major assertions: (1) Life stories can often be verified. (2) But even if they cannot be verified or turn out to be not correct, they can still be valuable. (3) This is firstly because they tell us how a person remembers the past (i.e. tell us something about that person's mind). (4) This is secondly because they explain how thoughts, actions and events helped to shape personal and cultural values, and how these values in turn influenced thoughts, actions and events (a kind of feedback). I do not claim that every detail in the stories I have been told is literally true. I am unable to verify that in every case. But I trust my participants and believe that they told me exactly what they remember and what they feel. Therefore my data are trustworthy *at least* to that extent (see also Mishler, 1986; Conteh et al., 2005.) While conducting this study, I was constantly concerned with gaining the trust of the participants and developing a friendship with them (Alasuutari, 1995), since trust is essential for any interview. Trust nurtured for days, weeks and sometimes months can be destroyed within moments by a slight carelessness on the part of the interviewer (Fontana and Frey, 1998). It is because of lack of trust that I decided not to interview the two women who refused to allow a recorder to be used during the interview.

Altheide and Johnson (1998:292) suggest a general approach for evaluating ethnographic research. They say, 'the process by which ethnography occurred must be clearly delineated, including accounts of the interactions among context, researcher, methods, setting, and actors'. They are broadly in agreement with Hammersley (1990, 1992), Atkinson (1990, 1992), Dingwall (1992), Athens (1984) and Silverman (1989). They identify plausibility, credibility, relevance and importance of the topic as four

criteria of good ethnography. Following Altheide and Johnson (1998), I have tried to discuss all important interactions with the research context, participants, methods etc.

I explored my data at two different levels of resolution. I used Bourdieu's theories to study the interaction of my participants with the social structures with which they had to cope. Study of Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism made me aware of the importance of the relationships between the individuals in my project, and I therefore used Labov's model of Narrative Analysis to explore these (in Chapter 8) (Hammersley, 1993).

However, the purpose of this research or any research using the life story method is not to collect honest true life stories but to see what *the participants* want others to see and to understand how they view the world. Therefore, following Kearney's (2001:41) example, I took 'what they [my participants] said in good faith' and 'by this I mean that I am well aware that in the space of a short dialogue I am not going to have anything resembling a complete life story', but what I have is enough to enable me to understand

- the world in which my participants live, in a way they perceive,

- how this world responds to them as a result of their particular perception,

- how such a perception has developed.

5.4 Summary

This chapter dealt with methodological details of my research. I first discussed issues of theoretical importance. An ethnographer tries to understand and explain the culture of a group. For my study I looked at young men and women from a particular background who aspired to a comfortable life and a respected position in society.

Though my participants share a common socio-cultural background, this study is not intended as research on a particular cultural group. I want to know why *individuals* want a better life and improve their position in the pecking order of society, and what happened to them later in life. I do *not* make statements about the group.

Therefore I said that my study is not ethnography in the established sense of the word, but that it *uses* an ethnographic approach. I have discussed this in detail in the section on the ethnographic approach. I then discussed case study as my research methodology. I used five participants for my main study. They would help me to understand my big question. Life story interviews were my research tool.

I gave a survey of the research process and presented some of the insights I gained and some of the obstacles I encountered. The stories of my participants with their very personal ways of talking and their distinctive emotions relating to every incident they were narrating are still fresh in my memory. My study was able, by and large, to answer the big question that it addresses. But, like any ethnographic study should, it raised further questions, which are presented in the relevant section. I discussed the research context, process of data collection and data analysis.

My ride through this research project was very bumpy with regard to my personal life, but the research itself did not face more than the usual problems. The next chapter presents the life stories of my participants. They are not simple transcripts of the interviews but, to make them easier to understand for my Western readers, I have turned them into straight narrative prose.

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Stories from the Field

This is another story. It was like this that my grandfather was not willing for his daughter (my mother) to get married to my father. My mother was already having good proposals from [socially] good families. My maternal family was very good, like the people who have a say in the village, they were that kind. People used to respect them and listen to them. My maternal and paternal grandmothers were both sisters. My paternal grandfather died earlier and my grandmother was alone, she did not have anyone in her family. When my father's [first] wife died then… like it happens in the villages, women say I am putting mehndi (Henna) on your hands, I would get you married. My father soon got married to a cousin, my mother. This was a custom. My grandmother was too worried about fellow-villagers making stories about their family. My mother had not reached puberty yet, she was a little child and my father was a young man, who had four children from his first marriage. They got her married to him.

(From Shabana's Interview)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the stories the participants told me during their interviews. They contain the events the participants thought were important and worth sharing with me. The experiences contained in the life stories tell us something about the speaker and her/his view of the world through their interactions with the world around them. No doubt the lives of my participants will continue to change as time goes by, but I am interested in looking at the efforts my participants had to make, and the particular obstacles they faced, because of their particular socio-cultural and linguistic background. All the events narrated by the participants are included in the study.

I started the interviews by saying, 'tell me about your life, you can start from your childhood or any important incident in your life'. It is typical for Indian culture that stories are started from the beginning, i.e. childhood. So each of my participants started her/his story at childhood but the earliest incidents remembered and mentioned tends to be connected to something important in their life, a critical point.

My participants (except Ahmar who brought his notes along) told their stories from memory. Therefore, their narratives drifted between events from time to time. The

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participants often wanted to add a detail to an incident they had already narrated. Therefore, for this chapter, I tidied up the sequence of the events and wrote them down in the third person. In Appendix 9, I have translated samples of the interviews. By writing them down in the third instead of the first person, I make it obvious to the reader that this is not the participants talking but I, an outsider, retelling the stories as I have heard them.

In the last chapter, I presented my research methodology and explained how I carried out the work in the field. In this chapter I shall present the stories, and in the following chapters I shall analyse the data. My participants narrated their stories in a conversational style, usually in chronological order. I interrupted only occasionally with a few questions because I did not want to break their flow of thought. I put most of my questions after they had finished their stories. Pseudonyms are used for all names in the stories. The stories are arranged in the order in which the interviews were conducted. The chapter ends with a summary.

6.2 Ahmar's Story: Four slaps are enough

> I was four or five years of age when my mother gave me this thought that I had to study. I used to feel a fear because my elder brother, who was in school then, told me that teachers beat a lot. This made me afraid. I went to school once and saw a teacher slap a student. I thought that it is really all about being punished so I ran home in the break time. After some time, around a year, my mother said, 'we would not tolerate you at home any more'. But I was not willing to go, so she gave me a sharp slap and that was the first and the last slap, I had [laughed].

A slap from the midwife to make Ahmar breathe was his first experience, now forgotten, in this world. Another slap, five years later made him start his education in earnest. Ahmar started his interview with the second slap. Despite being uneducated herself, Ahmar's mother wanted him to have an education. When she realised that he had wasted a whole year and was still not willing to go to school, she warned him and eventually gave him a sharp slap. While talking about the incident, Ahmar laughs that a single slap should be enough to bring him to his senses. The impact of the slap was symbolic rather than physical.

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Even at that young age, his self-respect was hurt by his mother's slap. After a few weeks, Ahmar realised that his idea of school was based on wrong assumptions and that school was a good place for those who studied. He studied in 'third class' conditions, as he called it, because people used to tie up their cattle in the school grounds and kept fodder, etc, in the school building, but he soon started to enjoy studying. In no time at all, he overtook his elder brother and his friends who had been at school for over a year and became their classmate by passing two classes in a single year. Next year he was in class 3 and by then he had become very fond of books. He was so good that the teacher asked him to teach classes 1 and 2. (The school had 5 classes and only one teacher.) Their teacher used to set homework and those who were good at memorising were given authority to slap those who were not. Once Ahmar was hit by a boy who was very jealous of him because Ahmar was always good at memorising his lessons. This only served to increase Ahmar's motivation. From then on he studied not because he was afraid of the teacher but because of the competition in the class.

Though his mother never asked him about his studies again, his father always kept a check on all his children. Ahmar says that, as his father was educated, his home was different from the rest in this small village with no electricity, no roads, no secondary school, not even a hospital, and 99% (Ahmar's statistics) illiteracy. He used to feel this difference when still very young. Their house was built of bricks and the children helped their father when he was building it. They also had an *autaq*, a guest room for male guests, usually found in houses in towns and small cities in Sindh, with its own entrance from the street and another from inside the house. His father was very concerned for the needs of his children, their clothes, their health, etc.

One day, a new teacher was appointed at their village school. He called Ahmar and his brother to ask about their family background as they looked better than, and different from, the other children. When Ahmar and his siblings got ready for school in the morning, their mother always gave them clean clothes to wear, combed their hair after putting some oil into it, put 'surmo' (a kind of mascara) on the contours of their eyes, so that they always looked neat and well-dressed. Therefore the teacher decided to eat his meals at their house, and Ahmar considered it a great privilege. Ahmar mentioned that

they also arranged for the teacher to stay at their *autaq*. They were not taking any money for boarding and lodging from Ahmar's teacher. All over the subcontinent, Sindhis are known to be 'mehmaan-nawaz' (very hospitable). We love to have guests, and we love to serve them, 'guests are blessings from God' (equally accepted by Hindus and Muslims). We believe that if guests come to our house, then God is happy and will provide plenty to our house.

Ahmar's father earned only Rs. 1000 (less than £7.00 following the exchange rate in April 2013) per month, but that was enough for their expenses in the village. They owned some land which they worked themselves. Whenever the children needed books or stationery, they would sell a kilo of cotton, etc, and buy what they needed for school. Their father did not see this because he was at work during the day. He first had a job with the army, then with the police, and later with health department. Their mother never stopped the children from buying stationery or books by selling some of the produce of their land as she knew they were not wasting the money. Sometimes they would also buy biscuits or snacks for themselves. Their village had no playground for children to play games, cricket or football, so their mother knew that the children would not waste money on buying a ball etc. So their expenses for 'luxuries' and treats were small.

From class 6 onwards, Ahmar attended a secondary school which was in a small town, 6 to 7 km away from his village. In his primary school, physical conditions were not good. But now going to school got even harder for him. He now had to travel a long distance, do it in cold weather and on foot. At primary school (class 1 to class 5), he was taught in Sindhi, but now he had to switch to English. Teachers and senior boys tried to frighten him, and showed off, by telling him that English was very difficult. But that did not put him off. On the contrary, personal interest and desire for competition made him take up the challenge and want to join this school. Students from many villages and from the town itself studied at that school. Ahmar felt embarrassed by his appearance. 'We were simple villagers,' he said. 'We used to wear simple Shalwar Kameez, whereas the other boys would come in trousers and shirts, and they were well-dressed and they used to show off with their self-confidence'. Ahmar was impressed by their appearance and

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thought they must be very intelligent. He decided that he had to overcome these drawbacks, worked even harder and soon proved to be a tough competitor for these boys.

People in Ahmar's village did not live in peace and harmony but would rather fight with each other all the time. They were jealous of each other. His paternal uncles and his father's uncles did not want him and his brothers to study. In this village people were not only uneducated themselves but also would try to stop others from studying. Ahmar's uncles and most villagers thought that once younger generation would be educated, it will be out of control and will no longer listen to the elders. And they did not want their sons to follow Ahmar and his brothers. Therefore, Ahmar's uncles tried to disrupt the life of Ahmar's nuclear family (parents and siblings) by blocking their money, starting quarrels, and in many other ways. Ahmar's family was repeatedly dragged, by these relatives and other villagers, into court cases based on false accusations. As soon as the boys were old enough, their uncles started implicating them personally in contrived cases, thus getting them arrested by the police. Once Ahmar was involved in four false cases related to theft and land-grabbing. Sometimes he had to go to the District Police Officer (DPO), on other occasions to the 'Mukhtiarkar' (magistrate), to court and even to other officers at different times. Since Ahmar was educated and knew English, his parents advised him to write to the government functionaries *in English* (which gives higher status to the sender), and on a number of occasions this saved them from having to pay penalties and lawyers' fees. But his education suffered a lot because of all these distractions.

As they were growing older, none of his brothers took any interest in taking care of their fields; Ahmar, however, did. At this time he had not yet left school. He worked in the fields before sunrise. Especially his wheat crop needed a lot of care. He then walked 5 or 6 km to school. He walked home during the heat of the afternoon, when people tend to stay indoors. In the evening before sunset he worked again in the fields, and at night he studied. That would be typical for summer. In 'winter', the days are shorter. The sun sets more quickly, and there is not much time between afternoon and sunset. So Ahmar would have worked in the fields in that short period. People in villages do not usually

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stay outdoors after sunset. They have their supper (last meal of the day) after sunset. Then the women spread the bedding. Women and children lie down on their beds and chat until they sleep. Men sit outside the house (in the street or some other suitable place) and chat for a while.

At harvest time, friends and relatives would help as is customary in villages. When Ahmar had grown up and had more responsibility in his household, he, unlike other villagers, did not allow the women in his household to work in the fields. He did not approve of that.

Ahmar's life was just one big obstacle race. He got no support from his family. He took so much pain, worked so hard at school and in the fields and received no praise and appreciation. His parents did not realise that they should spare him unnecessary worry by keeping family and village quarrels and problems away from him so that he could concentrate on his studies. So he bore the double burden of his studies and of his family and village. He simply had to shed one of these burdens, either his home or his studies. He decided to give priority to his home and leave education. 'After having graduated from secondary school (SSC),' Ahmar said, 'my interest in studying died. My problems increased, the fields had to be looked after, my parents had lots of worries, so I thought of quitting my education.' Ahmar decided to provide the support needed by his family by working in the fields and during the village quarrels.

At that time, he met a former teacher who advised him to enrol at the college for Intermediate Studies (HSSC), and at the same time teach junior classes at his tuition centre. In return for teaching at the tuition centre, the teacher offered free tuition to Ahmar. Ahmar accepted the offer. He hoped to finance his college studies in this way. But soon the problems in his village increased so much that he could not concentrate on his studies and failed in two subjects in the first year at college. In his second year (Intermediate or 12th class), Ahmar realised that, by not performing better, he was putting his career at risk and that he would never be respected if he remained as insignificant as he was then.

One day he was visiting a paternal uncle who was in police custody on false charges. Without provocation, a policeman slapped Ahmar. That's when he had his Damascene conversion. He told me: 'I was very young then, 17 or 18 years. I got angry. I decided that either I would work to become a DPO (District Police Officer), or a military officer, in order to better handle these people and gain respect.' Because of that decision, he started going to college regularly, and instead of the town near his village, where he had been at primary school, he now went to the nearest city (which was further away), to be taught by the best teachers possible.

One day he and some friends met a teacher from their college who knew them to be hardworking boys. This teacher ran a private tuition centre. 'I told him that we don't have money and we are all poor students,' said Ahmar. 'We travel from Sobhodero, paying a hefty fare of Rs. 15 [almost 11 pence, which is a lot of money in a Pakistani village]. The teacher agreed to make a concession. So we decided to go. He even offered us free lunch. Ours was not a situation where we could easily afford paying Rs. 15 every day [for travel], but we did. It used to be very hot weather ... but we continued our studies there'. Ahmar's teachers were always proud of him. At school Ahmar was often praised by his teachers as he performed so well during the annual school inspections. This time, his teacher was even happier as Ahmar outperformed the students of one of this teacher's rivals, another teacher also running a private tuition centre. Ahmar achieved grade B in Intermediate, because he 'never cheated, never copied during exams, never at all'. When he appeared for an entrance test at a medical college, he got good marks in the entrance test itself, but he could not be admitted because his overall marks were slightly less than required (due to his B grade).

Then again, there were so many problems and quarrels in the village that he got distracted from his career path. For a few months, he ran a tuition centre with his friends, to help poor boys at the village, but could not continue because of the village environment. One day some friends made Ahmar realise that all of them were studying except him. So he told his father that he was unhappy with him and other elders of the village because they did nothing to resolve issues facing the village. Finally his father

decided that Ahmar should study at the University of Sindh, and he applied for admission there.

When he appeared for the entrance test, it was his first time in that big city. His distant relatives lived there and he expected to stay with them and that they would guide him through the big city. But when he arrived, he found that they were not there because they had gone to visit their village. So now he was a stranger in a big city, utterly lost. To be admitted to the examination hall Ahmar needed an entry-slip. One of his friends was studying in the university and Ahmar expected that he would collect his entry-slip and arrange for his accommodation but the friend was also not at his hostel. So he sat down outside the office from where he had collected his entry-slip wondering whom he might contact for help. Then he recognised a passer-by who was from a town close to his village, who worked at the university and had been living in the city for a long time. He took Ahmar to his house, and Ahmar had his meals and spent the night there. Next day he took Ahmar to the examination hall for the entrance test. Ahmar passed and was offered a place in the Department of English, his third choice on the admission preference list. The university announces a second list of available places after offers on the first list have been accepted or rejected, giving some students a chance to get into their first and second preferences. Ahmar was expecting a place on his first or second choice in the second list as the difference in the marks was not great. However, his host in the city recommended that he accept the offer from the English Department. Ahmar agreed, thinking that his host would know best since he was working at the university.

Ahmar started in the English Department. Initially it seemed very difficult to survive in the department. But soon he and a friend of his from the same village decided, 'We have to stay here ... to study properly, literature as well as language ... we lacked confidence. [Their English language skills were not good enough]. We thought we will have to do some planning'. A man from the village now working at the university told them that boys from their area often got involved in student politics and campaigning and that he too participated in such activities, but they should avoid doing that and should concentrate on their studies. Weller (2006) points out that bonding networks are instrumental in developing bridging networks. It takes time to develop relationships of

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trust. This applies to Ahmar as well as to Weller's participants. Ahmar studied about seven hours a day and worked on improving his spoken and written English because he knew that insufficient mastery of English was a basic problem for him. At the beginning he did not know how to give presentations in the class. But by the end of first year, he had learnt it all and was the third-best student in his class. He continued his efforts and became better every day.

During his stay at the hostel and during his entire university life, Ahmar was troubled by the quarrels at the village. He always asked his father not to quarrel with other villagers and to stay on good terms with them. Ahmar's father was not a particularly quarrelsome man. But the general environment in the village was such that people did not live in harmony. Nobody was ready to compromise, and people would quarrel on every small issue. Ahmar really hated these peasant quarrels. Soon, he made his decision and stopped all contact with home so that he could study in peace. So he would not visit his village. Ahmar said: 'I would even refuse to take money from my father. My mother would then send me money, she would motivate me, would keep praying for me'. During the two months of summer vacation, he would not return to his village but stay with friends in Karachi. There he would prepare the topics for his course next term by studying at a library. Other students studied there for the CSS (Central Superior Services, the civil service in Pakistan). Ahmar helped them with English language and he learnt a lot from them.

Ahmar also attended lectures and seminars organised by the HEC (Higher Education Commission of Pakistan) and benefitted greatly from those. However, in his third year, he again faced a financial crisis. While he was still agonising whether he had to drop out or could somehow continue at university, one of the teachers at the department helped him with advice and money. Also, the friend from the village who worked at the university invited him to his place every week, gave him a good meal and encouraged him in his efforts.

He was planning to prepare for the CSS while still in his last year at university, though he realised that it required a lot of money to buy books, etc., and he did not even have

enough to live on for a month. After receiving his degree, Ahmar decided not to go back to his village. He stayed with a friend in the city and started applying for jobs. Ahmar also thought of going abroad for further studies. Scholarships for such study are offered by the HEC. To obtain such a scholarship, the candidate has to pass a test conducted by the National Testing Service. Ahmar thought of attending a Test Preparation Centre to prepare for this test. Test Preparation Centres are similar to the so-called crammers or cram schools in the UK and the USA.

While still in his final year, the teacher who had helped him with money introduced him to one of his Arab class-mates who had not been able to pass a subject in the English department. So Ahmar helped the Arab with his studies. Soon the two became friends and Ahmar compares himself and his Arab friend with Vladimir and Estragon from Samuel Becket's 'Waiting for Godot'. The Arab friend was a very good human being and a devout Muslim. He sometimes made predictions regarding Ahmar, and his prophecies tended to come true. He told Ahmar in which month he would get a job, and, lo and behold, he got one just then. Ahmar got a year's internship (a government programme for new graduates to help them train for professional jobs). With the help of yet another teacher, he got a job as an intern in the English department of the university. The internship was such that the government will pay the interns and they will later be posted at any government institution where they are needed and accepted. Ahmar was also advised by his Arab friend to apply for a lectureship in the university. He predicted that Ahmar would pass the written test but would not pass in the interview. The Arab friend said Ahmad was not destined to be there. Everything happened as his friend had predicted. Finally, Ahmar was offered a job in the Pakistan Air Force as a Lieutenant, again in the very month the Arab friend had foretold.

Ahmar has five brothers and five sisters.

- Elder brother is a qualified teacher of religion.

- Ahmar himself

- One younger brother did HSSC (Higher Secondary School Certificate). Ahmar got him a job in the army.

- One younger brother did not study at all and is taking care of the family's fields.

- Two younger brothers are studying for a university degree, and Ahmar is paying for their expenses.

None of Ahmar's sisters are educated. Ahmar said, 'When even boys are not studying, then how would the girls study?' All his brothers, three of whom are married, and his youngest sister, who is unmarried, live with the parents in their village compound. They run a joint home. Ahmar also sends money for their monthly expenses. He can get free medical treatment for his parents. He is enjoying a good middle-class life himself. He has also managed to put aside some money 'for a rainy day'. Whenever he visits his village, he wears his military uniform. People respect him and his family now, and nobody dares drag them into any trouble. Life is running smoothly for him now.

6.3 Abdur Razzak's Story: Never give up

Abdur Razzak comes from a small village. Abdur Razzak's father married his mother when he was sixty because he had no children from his first wife. From this marriage he first had four daughters (a great disappointment) and then at last their first son, Abdur Razzak, followed by few more children. Abdur Razzak received more love and care than even a first son normally gets because his parents had had to wait for him for such a long time. His father owned a business selling jute. At the time of his birth, his family had, according to Abdur Razzak, good social and financial standing in the village. But today Abdur Razzak does not consider his family to be financially sound any more, even though they still have enough *charpoys* (*Khattoon*, in Sindhi, see Glossary 1 for explanation) and quilts to accommodate 200 to 250 people, and whenever there is a wedding in the village with large numbers of guests unheard of in western countries, other people borrow these from them. His father brought up a nephew, who left him once Abdur Razzak was born, believing that now his uncle did not need him anymore because now he had a son of his own. But Abdur Razzak's father was an old man now

and had several very young and hungry children. He could no longer work as he used to, and the nephew was no longer there to help him. Now began hard times for the family. Abdur Razzak explains it like this:

> We were well-off back then. In old age he [his father] could not work well and we were not there [sons were too young to help], as a male child is a support. He lacked that support. Then he stopped working and as they say, [literal translation] even when you have tons of ration to feed yourself on, if you are not earning anymore, the same tons of ration may end before you realise. He lagged behind. His life changed completely.

Abdur Razzak recalls with nostalgia the good carefree days of his childhood. He was an ordinary child, neither a tearaway nor a paragon of virtue. He always wanted to play rather than study. He said, 'my father did not let us go out to play. For ten to twelve years of my life I never left the house alone, except for going to school. Even if we had to visit our relatives, that too was with our father or mother or cousins, etc.' They were never alone, children among themselves, to run wild or do as they liked. Abdur Razzak did not like that and asked his mother why. But he was scared of his father and never questioned him. Now he knows that his father wanted to protect him from the environment and conditions of the village. 'I and my cousin used to fight and play all day long, go to the fields, and do cycling and when we returned we got a good hiding from my father. My cousin was beaten because of me, he was blamed because he was a year older.' Abdur Razzak was scared of his father's beating. But his father used to beat him only when he fought with his brother or sister, or did not do one of the prescribed five daily prayers or missed a Qur'an lesson. One day he ran away from home to the fields after fighting with his younger brother because he was afraid that his father would beat him. Luckily his cousin found him and took him to school, and then nobody said a word to him. Nevertheless Abdur Razzak thinks it is right that children are punished. It is for their own good. 'Spare the rod, and spoil the child,' as the English proverb says. Abdur Razzak likened society to burning coal. A child sees only that it is red and shining and does not know that touching it will burn him. So parents have to make sure the child learns that. Abdur Razzak would like these halcyon days to return, 'I was a child. Everyone wants his childhood to return. But childhood never returns.'

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Abdur Razzak always followed his heart, though he takes advice from others. He says that his friends, if asked, would describe him as someone who always cares about his relationships. He always minds his own business and does not like interfering with the other people, goes to work and comes straight home. He helps his friends when they are in trouble. Whenever friends fight, he tries to mediate and encourages them to make peace. He does not like fighting and quarrelling with anyone.

Abdur Razzak had received his primary education at private schools. When he reached secondary school age and his brothers started going to school, the family was very poor, poorer than before. So his father put all his sons into government schools. Since Abdur Razzak's brothers had never been to a private school before, they could not tell the difference and happily went to the government school. But Abdur Razzak was not ready to go to a government school after having had his primary education in a private school. So he went to a private school for his secondary education as well. This was made possible in spite of the family's poverty because he was so good, so desirable a pupil, that the school granted him a full bursary.

Abdur Razzak's switch from government school to private school was dramatic. His father wanted to send even him to a state school after 5th class. What can happen in a government school is that, every day, the children run away after attending one or two classes. That is fine for the teachers as well because then they do not have to teach any more classes on that day. So that is what Abdur Razzak found when he gave government school a try for a few days. But he refused to continue at the government school. His family gave in and sent him to another private school. He said,

> I received a bursary there as well; otherwise I would have gone to the state school. That school did not even have boundary walls, so students used to disappear after attending a class or two. But I did not like that environment because for five years previously I had studied in a good environment where students attended classes regularly. I did not like attending one or two classes only.

While he was still in 6th grade, his father got him a job with a motor bike mechanic. Abdur Razzak continued his studies while working there. A turning point came in Abdur

Razzak's life when he was still in the 8th class (only 15 years old) and his father's business began to fail and eventually had to be closed. The father, now very old, asked Abdur Razzak to stop studying and start working in order to take over the responsibility for the family. His life changed dramatically. 'The days of hanging out freely were gone,' he said, 'and responsibility increased.' He was no longer free. He could not just come back from school and then go out to play and enjoy himself. Working and studying at the same time was hard. After returning from school, he went to his job, working till late at night. When at last he got home at 9, 10 or even 11 p.m., he studied in preparation for school.

Then a conflict between his studies and his work arose. Abdur Razzak went to school in the morning and worked at the motor bike shop in the afternoon. But the shop was busiest in the morning, and at that time Abdur Razzak was not there to help. The owner therefore told Abdur Razzak to come in the morning as well, or leave the job so that a full-timer could be employed instead. Abdur Razzak had to choose between earning money (immediate benefit) and going to school (long-term benefit).

Abdur Razzak chose education. For around a year he was without a regular job. He picked up some money here and there as best he could. Sometimes he worked as a casual labourer on a construction site, and sometimes as an agricultural labourer. That's how he earned money to feed his family while still going to school in the mornings. His whole life changed. He was not emotional any more, he did not quarrel at home over small things, and he no longer had petty wishes. He became sober and determined, his mind rationally and entirely focussed only on one goal, his education and his long-term career prospects.

One day, the principal of his school saw him working as a labourer on a construction site, and offered him a job as a clerk at the school once he had passed his SSC (Secondary School Certificate). Abdur Razak accepted this offer which enabled him to earn 2500-3000 Rupees per month.

For the next two years, Abdur Razzak studied for his 'Intermediate', i.e. his HSSC (Higher Secondary School Certificate) while working at the school. He took private

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lessons to cover his college subjects since his job at the school prevented him from attending college classes. He successfully passed his college exams. After completing college, Abdur Razzak attended university. He was accepted in the mathematics department. But due to reasons of safety and finances of his family, he dropped out. Now he is studying privately (i.e. as an external student) for a BA and eventually hopes to proceed to an MA or LLB.

Abdur Razzak felt that none of his problems would have existed if his elder sisters had been brothers, i.e. if he had not been the *eldest son*. He finds other boys of his age free from responsibilities because they have elder brothers providing for their families. He thinks parents should be there to support their children until they complete their studies and are able to get a well-paid job. He blames poverty for all his problems and therefore he plans to struggle against it. Abdur Razzak is the kind of person who learns from adversity, from the experiences of others and his own. He says that, 'everyone makes his life on his own either he makes it a hell or heaven, it depends on oneself.'

The first time he left his village for more than a day was when he came to the university town of Jamshoro to hand in his application forms for admission to the University of Sindh. He had never spent a night away from home before. He was staying with friends away from home for only a day and a night, but his family was worried. He applied both to Mehran University of Engineering and Technology and to the University of Sindh. He came again to do the pre-entry tests for admission. He missed the required grades for admission to Mehran University by the skin of his teeth. He could have got in if he had paid Rs. 10,000 (on a self-finance scheme, I think) but his family could not afford that. Instead he was admitted to the Mathematics Department of the University of Sindh. After having studied there for a month or so, his father told him that he was needed at home due to security reasons. But his family did not force his hand. They let him decide freely whether to soldier on or to leave university. He decided to leave. Meanwhile his friends from school were university students, but he was leaving. How did he feel at this moment?

No, not exactly like everything was ending but more like something was slipping out of my hands, as you hold sand in your hands and you realise that it was slowly and gradually going out of your hands. I was thinking education was going out of my hands like that. But no, it was not utter despair, I was not totally left alone - the principal of my school, who had helped me through my Intermediate exam, continued to support me and gave me hope.

So he returned to his earlier job and is still working as a clerk in the same school. But this is not the end! In an attempt to get some qualifications, Abdur Razzak took an admission test for training as an ECG (Electrocardiography) Technician and passed. He started the training and received a monthly stipend for it. However, he could not complete the training as the training venue was very far from his village. He could not afford to travel there regularly and missed classes. Therefore he was not eligible to sit the final exam. The principal of his school, who had become a friend and mentor, suggested that he study law. Because of his job, Abdur Razzak cannot attend university as an internal student, where he would have to attend lectures. Therefore he enrolled as a private BA student (external student). He needs a BA in order to be admitted for the study of law. He just goes to the examination hall without preparation and passes exams by cheating (see Appendix 2 for an explanation on private exams and cheating etc).

Two of his cousins were doing low-paid jobs in Saudi Arabia. They invited him to join them and do similar work and earn some money for his family. He plans to follow that advice once his younger brother is sufficiently mature to take care of the family in his absence. Going abroad for work would be a sacrifice for him but he would be happy to do it for the sake of his dear ones. It could bring happiness to his family. For the time being, however, he has to stay with his present job and wait for his younger brother to grow up.

Abdur Razzaq mentioned the incident of his brother's wedding as an important incident of his life. A double wedding was planned for Abdur Razzak's brother Yusuf and his sister, Mariam. Mariam got married to Imtiaz and Yusuf was engaged to Moomal, Mariam's sister-in-law.

When the time for the wedding of Yusuf and Moomal approached, Moomal's parents demanded the bride price. *Bride price* is money the groom's parents have to pay to the bride's parents for giving them their daughter (see Glossary 1, for details).

Abdur Razzaq's parents did not want to pay any bride price and took the issue to the Panchaait ('Fiver-Committee', a council of village elders). The Panchaait decided in favour of Abdur Razzak's family. The Panchaait justified its decision by that fact that when Mariam was married to Imtiaz, Abdur Razzak's father (father of the bride at that time) did not demand any money. Abdur Razzak sees this incident (demanding Bride price) as a typical example of village ignorance.

Abdur Razzak likes to talk about the need for education amongst his people. But when asked whether education was as important for women as it was for men, he said that women should be educated only enough to have common sense, understand, read and write. He did not think his sisters should go to university. His main concern was that it is vital that the chastity of girls be preserved until marriage. To guarantee this, girls must not be allowed to live away from home on their own. A solution that he would adopt if he could afford it would be to buy or rent a house in the city and arrange for personal conveyance for their girls. Only then would it be possible for them to attend university.

6.4 Shabana's Story: The loneliness of a free spirit

Shabana says: 'I was young and still living with my parents; but I was old enough to make decisions, I looked through the attitudes of people around me.' She was in the grip of, and battling against, class-ridden, gender-ridden present-day Pakistani society, in which only might is right. Only men or the rich have power, but despite being neither, Shabana refused to accept herself as weak.

Shabana's father was a Hafiz-e-Qur'an (title of a person who has memorised the entire Qur'an). He was a teacher of the Qur'an in the Dadu Sugar Mills school, a co-educational private school. Therefore Shabana's education in that school was free. There was also a girls-only government school in the village. Many villagers would not send

their girls even to that school, for the sole reason that a boys' school was close by. When Shabana had passed her final exams at secondary school, her father decided to send her to university, in spite of neighbours' tongues wagging. He insisted, 'my daughter will go to university. Who cares if I am a Hafiz! My daughter is entitled to study. It is her right. We will not prevent her from being educated just because she is a girl. To me she is a son'.

It was at about that time that Shabana learnt that she was married (see Figure 6.1). Her grandfather had wanted to develop a close bond between his sons (Shabana's father and her uncle) in his life. He therefore got six-day-old Shabana married to her four-day-old cousin (see Appendix 4 – Nikkah, the Islamic marriage). He also got Shabana's elder brother (a step brother) married to her cousin (sister of her husband). Child marriage in order to form alliances and protect family property was also common in feudal families in medieval Europe (see Appendix 6 - Child Marriage in Medieval Europe).

Shabana's mother Hajira (F3) had another daughter immediately after Shabana, i.e. she still had not yet produced a son. So people started telling her father Abdullah (M2): 'You are old now. You only have a son from your first wife. Hajira (F3) will not give you another son.' The neighbours did not know, and Shabana's father (M2) did not know, that Hajira (F3) would actually give him four sons. So the neighbours were wrong. But Abdullah, the father (M2), believed them and handed his house and all his lands to Wajid (M5), his son from his first marriage. As Shabana's brothers were born very late, there was no inheritance left for her and her siblings. Everything had gone to Wajid. Her paternal uncle, Beejal (M3; also her father-in-law) even taunted her mother (F3) for having no sons.

He bragged to anyone who would listen: 'I am a charitable fellow. Out of the goodness of my heart, I will let Hajira's daughters marry my own sons, because otherwise these girls will remain on the shelf and have to live as old maids. Who would be stupid enough to marry those girls. Who would want to marry girls like that if I didn't come to their aid!' When suggesting that he would permit his sons to marry these girls, he did not act out of sympathy for them or for Hajira (F3) but to make them ashamed of their

family and keep them humble, as the parents of daughters are supposed to be, especially in front of their in-laws.
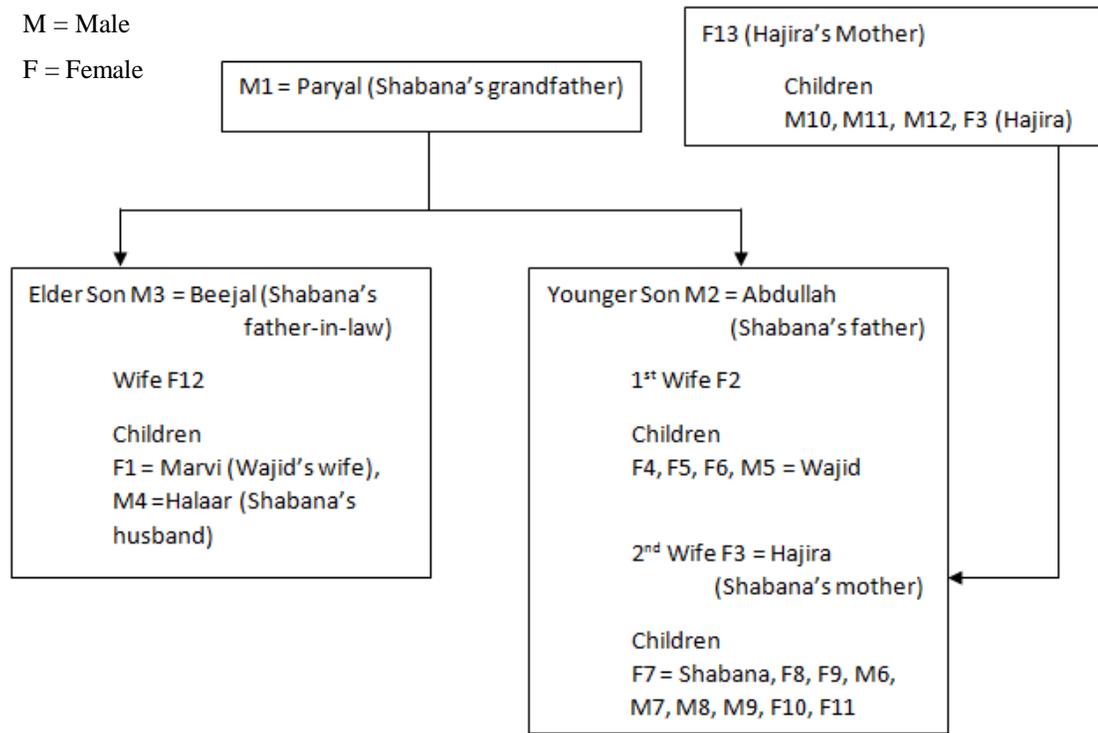
Figure 6.1 Shabana's Family

Shabana believed that her aunt (F12) had worked some black magic on her uncle, Beejal (M3), and that was, she believed, the reason why Beejal was talking against his own brother Abdullah (M2, Shabana's father). Belief in black magic is widespread in villages. Shabana's father (M2) always followed his brother and relatives. He did not think that he is forced to follow others, rather he 'considered their opinions as his own.' He was comparatively weak. He was unable to stand up against Shabana's aggressive in-laws. But he cared for his children, that was an endearing feature of his character, and that is why Shabana's mother (F3) bore everything, even though he did not defend her or his children sufficiently.

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Shabana's brother Halaar had, like Shabana, been married by Nikkah when he was only a baby. As Halaar grew older, he wanted his young wife, Marvi, to do the Rukhsati ceremony and move in with him. But the girl refused and wanted to stay with her parents. Halaar did not like this. He blamed his wife's refusal to join him on the fact that Shabana, who was in exactly the same boat as Marvi, had not yet joined *her* husband. So Shabana was creating a bad precedent and an excuse for Marvi. Shabana had a good reason (or excuse) for not joining her husband, namely that she wanted to study. You cannot be a student and a traditional wife at the same time. So Shabana's love of learning deprived her brother, as he saw it, from getting his wife. That's why he was against her getting education. This made him angry with his family, and with his father (who supported Shabana's studies) in particular. As a result he was never of much use when family problems had to be solved. Shabana did not think that it was her fault that Marvi, her sister-in-law, refused to join her eager husband. Shabana thought that the girl simply did not want to become a housewife and home-maker and preferred to stay with her parents. But even though Shabana had not yet performed the Rukhsati ceremony and had not yet joined her husband, legally she *was* his wife and more under the jurisdiction of her in-laws than of her parents. The in-laws also imposed restrictions on her and tried to decide where she should and should not go. Her parents had to accept that.

A major problem was that Shabana's aunt (also her mother in-law) did not approve of this marriage at all. She did not like Shabana (and probably her brother too) and used to say that, come what may, she would get another wife for her son from her own family, as Shabana was from her husband's family.

While Shabana was still studying for her HSSC (Intermediate), the sugar mill was closed, and her father lost his job. Many people including Shabana's family lost their only source of income. Some people committed suicide because they could not run their homes, and the government was doing nothing for them. Shabana also had to stop studying. The thought that she had 'to sit at home now like other girls [in the village] ... and do the same household chores' was bothering her. Shabana attempted suicide several times, 'almost thirty or forty times', she recalls. She wanted to study, but her parents did not have enough money to feed their children and therefore pushed her to

join her unwanted husband and live with her unsympathetic in-laws. Her attempts at suicide failed because 'Allah did not want it this way,' even though she was serious about it and tried as hard as she could to kill herself. She did not want to be like other village girls who had nothing to do but household chores, sewing, etc. After finishing her daily chores, she went to the flat roof of her house, where it was cool and airy, and studied her Intermediate books, as she did not want to forget what she had learnt. She would hide her books from everyone in the village, because she did not want people to say, 'She has no money, then why is she doing that?' She often cried for a long time and prayed to Allah to help her, until she fell asleep. When she recalls those days, she says, 'I used to cry on my own and would say to Allah: "Look, if I had been a boy, then I would have done something, but now I am a girl, what can I do… what can one do at home, in the village?" '. She regretted being a girl, and especially being a girl from a village. Somehow she managed to do her Intermediate exams but lack of money meant that she could not continue her studies. She wanted to study.

Two of her maternal uncles lived in the city of Hyderabad, and they were very serious about Shabana's education. They knew that she wanted to study and that she had always secured a good position in her class. They also knew that it was only money which had prevented her from continuing her studies. Therefore they paid the application fee for the admissions test of the university. They told her about this only three or four days prior to the actual test, so she had hardly any time to prepare or to worry about the test. This was one of the most wonderful moments of her life. She will never forget her emotions on that day. Even during the interview when talking about it she exclaimed, 'Oh Allah, I was so happy! I cannot explain it in words, oh Allah! At first, I could not even believe it [...]'

The day Shabana joined university was a turning point in her life. It was a life-changing event. She started feeling as an individual. She was free now to develop her life, she was getting higher education. The world lay undiscovered before her, but it was in her grasp. Her uncles were very concerned about her safety because of student unrest during those days. When Shabana joined university, she became her uncles' responsibility. They took turns to take her to, and collect her from, university on their motor bikes. Shabana was

new to city life, and her uncles did not want her to get into trouble. But she was not happy with these arrangements. Her uncles had to make a special trip from where they worked in order to provide this transport for her, and, even more importantly, she was embarrassed and felt somehow excluded by this special treatment because all other students travelled on the university bus. She had to explain to her fellow-students why she did not travel with them. She felt a bit like a child, and therefore an outsider, by being so protected (or supervised). After a while she asked her uncles for permission to travel on the university bus, and this was granted. Now she was able to establish closer relationships with her fellow students. They all were comparatively well off. She was the only student who came from a poor family.

Initially, Shabana wanted to stay at the university's girls' hostel but her uncles thought that some relatives would start spreading bad rumours about her, or even about them that they took the girl and now they cannot take her responsibility. One of the uncles wanted her to live in his house. Shabana told him that she would stay with him only on condition that he allowed her to cook for herself. She had three reasons:

- She did not want anyone ever to criticise her for having cooked badly or for having eaten too much.

- She did not want her cousins to feel that their father (her uncle) was caring more for her than for them.

- She did not want her education to suffer by doing household chores and trying to please her aunt (uncle's wife). She was there to study, and she wanted to do her best in that.

These terms were accepted by both parties. She now either cooked her own meals or brought something to eat from the university. Sometimes she had no money to buy food, but she would not tell anyone. She rather went without food than accept obvious charity from anyone. She was fiercely independent, had a high sense of personal honour and dignity. She was content that her uncle had given her a roof over her head and that her uncles did so much for her education.

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Whenever her maternal grandmother, who lived with another of her sons, came to visit, she gave something to Shabana (usually something edible), something that she had brought for Shabana only and that nobody else was allowed to know about. Shabana always told her not to do that and said that her love was enough for her. 'But,' Shabana said, 'Naani (grandma) would hug me, kiss me, her eyes would be filled with tears and she would say, "You are our daughter, you are studying in such condition, I don't know if you are even eating or not." '

For a long time Shabana used to give private lessons to children to earn money for her study and living expenses. She encouraged the parents of her pupils to save money by sending them to government schools instead of private schools, assuring that she would teach them as good as in a private school. She worked very hard with them, for example, when they had to change school, to make sure they did not suffer as a result of such a change. She was sincerely concerned with the progress of her pupils and, unlike some private teachers, did not only care about her own income. The parents realised that, were very grateful and prayed for her. Even though she was poor herself, she taught some children, who were equally poor, free of charge. Some people found her attitude towards money stupid but she did not care. Occasionally she would study outside in the open in the cold winter at night, as she shared room with a cousin and she did not want to disturb her sleep. Talking about those days, she says, 'Believe me, the three years that I studied [while living in my uncle's house], I used to miss sleep because it was a different home, and I had to study, I would miss my home. Though I would be so tired and used to be tense, even then I would tell myself that I was there to study and not to sleep.'

Soon Shabana realised that her family was having a hard time in the village. Her father was old, and her in-laws did what they could to make their lives a misery. She therefore asked them to join her in the city or else she would break off her university course. 'I did not really mean that but I just said it to threaten them,' she laughed. Her father did not want to leave the village, but, because Shabana's in-laws were a continuous pain in the neck, he allowed her mother to take all the children to the city. It took Shabana a whole year to get her family settled in the city. One of her maternal uncles, who lived in

another city himself, owned a house in Hyderabad, which Shabana's family rented. They were not able to pay the rent regularly, but they kept a record and would pay him whenever they had some money.

Initially her siblings could not be admitted to any city school. Shabana taught her siblings herself to minimise the negative effects of the disruption and help them prepare for exams. They appeared in exams at their village school. In the next year, she managed to get them into a city school. The move of her family (except her father) to the city meant that Shabana had to miss one year's university studies. After a year, she resumed her studies. Soon, the uncle in whose house they were living sent his son and daughter to them to stay and study in the city. At that time, Shabana and her family were struggling to eke out a living for themselves. They could only afford one meal a day for themselves, and they had to bear the expenses of their cousins' meals. Sometimes they would not eat themselves but would provide for their cousins. They did not want to ask the father of these cousins for help as they were already living in his house. They did not want to take the slightest risk of being criticised by anyone. That went on for a long time, and in spite of Shabana giving private lessons and her sisters and mother making handicrafts, it was growing increasingly hard for them to make ends meet in the city.

Eventually the pressure became too much: they decided to leave the city. They called their father and one of their maternal uncles to discuss the situation. Their uncle encouraged them to stay in the city and started supporting them. This uncle's family was living in a government-provided house (government service perk) given to him by the department where he worked, so he bought a house and gave it to Shabana's family to stay. Shabana asked her uncle to allow them to let a portion of the house to bear some of their expenses. The whole family then started living in a single room and rented out the rest of the house. The rent they received was enough to cover their monthly bills.

Shabana's father had meanwhile started a small shop selling savouries and confectionery outside the house in the city for her sons to run. He started it on a *charpoy* (khatt'a, in Sindhi) in lieu of a table. Her brothers started looking after 'the shop' (perhaps we had

better call it 'the business') after they returned from school. Shabana's father returned to the village.

Shabana said that her parents were very pious and God-fearing people, 'that is why Allah listened to them. Everybody who came to our house was amazed at how we managed such a big family, with everybody going to school or college, boys and girls alike, and me even going to university while there is nobody earning. They often asked how we managed to survive despite all hardship, and wanted to know our secret. But we would say, "It's all Allah's grace…".'

When Shabana was in her final year at university, Shabana's in-laws filed a court case against her father for not allowing Shabana to move to her husband's home. Her father was 90 years old by then. He and her step brother were held in police custody for a while. Because of all the harassment, by her in-laws and by the police, Shabana's father eventually decided to move to the city. He was Imam (leader of prayers) at the village mosque and was very reluctant to leave his mosque. But his family promised to find him a mosque in the city where he would continue to be Imam. Shabana's father had another reason for not wanting to leave his village. He was afraid of becoming a laughing stock. The other villagers would say: 'This is the world turned upside down. Normally when a daughter gets old enough to marry, it is the daughter who leaves her parents' home to join her husband's family. But this old fool has to leave his home because he cannot control his daughter.' People also were convinced that Shabana, being a university student, would definitely elope with someone someday.

Hardly anyone in her village was educated, and that was why they made fun of Shabana's love of higher education. She inherited her love of education from her mother, who was very keen about her children's education, boys and girls alike. Girls in the village were very conscious of her presence. While Shabana was a university student, she occasionally visited the village for some special occasion, e.g. to celebrate the two Eid festivals with her family or to attend a wedding. On these occasions, women used to come to gape at her as if she were a rare bird or a black swan. They believed she must be very trendy and stylish. But she was not fashionable. 'For one thing I don't have

this in me,' she said, 'I liked simplicity, and why should I lie, I did not have money for that either.' Her battle at getting an education has had an effect. She has set an example. Her village is changing, and other people have also started getting their children educated. Her small actions do not only affect *her* life but are helping to change the world. Somebody has to take the first step. Shabana has done that in her village.

When Shabana's in-laws filed their court case to force her to join her husband, she filed for a divorce. It was all-out war now. Her family, especially her mother, was not happy with her decision.

A stigma is attached to a divorced woman, even if she had cause to initiate the divorce. People in our society think that there must be something wrong with her. 'Please do not dishonour our family by insisting on this divorce,' her mother wailed. 'You are a daughter; it does not matter if *your* life is destroyed.' Shabana argued back:

> Listen, Mother, when you were young, you listened to your brothers and married a man who was three times your age. … Did they think of *your* happiness? How did *you* benefit by following that advice? For whom did you sacrifice your youth and your life? Why did you sacrifice your life? What good has it done you? … What did I learn from you, if I should also do the same thing then what would the future hold? Nothing at all. So I would have to face the situation, else nothing will change ever.

So many questions! And Shabana could not think of any answer but rebellion.

In some cultures there is a deep-seated assumption that it is not good for people not to be married. Therefore there are various customs which ensure that people find partners, both for their first marriage, or after the death of a spouse. In Shabana's village (and in other villages) there was a custom, designed to provide 'automatically', so to speak, a partner for a widowed person, in this case a man. When a man's wife died, his maternal aunt would publicly put mehndi (henna) on his hand and promise to give him her own daughter in marriage. When the first wife (F2) of Shabana's father died, it was his maternal aunt (Shabana's maternal grandmother, F13) who had to do this. The only daughter she had to give away was Shabana's mother Hajira (F3). But Hajira was more than 40 years younger than Shabana's father. Shabana's maternal grandfather did not

like this idea and permitted his daughter, Shabana's mother (Hajira, F3), to accept or reject this offer. Hajira (F3) was still a little girl then and had not even reached puberty. She let her mother and her brothers decide for her (this incident is quoted in the beginning of this chapter). From earliest childhood, Shabana's mother (F3) inculcated into Shabana the principle that all her actions must be designed to preserve the family's *izzat* (honour). This is the value which trumps all other values in our society.

So it was that Shabana did the opposite of what her mother had done twenty years earlier. She put her interests higher than those of her family and her community. She did not yield to the pressure of her elders and insisted on demanding a divorce. Even the judge was not neutral. He too wanted her to withdraw her case. He asked her and her husband to talk to each other in private. Shabana found her husband to be very handsome. 'When I looked at him I liked him, "O God, what should I do" ', she giggled. But 'my life is already a mess so I should not [think of my husband], I thought.' Shabana recalled how she and her family were harassed by her in-laws.

> My parents were being tormented, my aged father was jailed, it was the month of Ramadan and my father was fasting. He was an Imam [someone who leads prayers] at the village mosque. They planned his arrest so he would spend at least the weekend in jail. We left our house and went to live at the railway station, as my in-laws threw stones, tomatoes and eggs into our house. They also started beating the gate of our house with bamboo sticks to frighten us with the noise and stop us from sleeping and to attack anyone who might want to visit us.

On another occasion when Shabana was on a train with her maternal uncle, men from her in-laws brought the Holy Qur'an to him to force him to hand Shabana over. Then when Shabana was at university, their pressure reached such a fever-pitch that she was afraid they might kill her and her siblings, or physically harm her parents.

Such acts by her in-laws made this family quarrel public, and even people who would otherwise not have known about it now knew everything about the two quarreling families.

During the private conversation, through which Shabana and her husband were supposed to find a compromise, the husband asked her not to pursue the divorce petition, since it was a matter of his honour. As they were sitting in a small room inside the court house, the husband reminded her that this marriage had been wanted and arranged by their grandfather, and his will had to be honoured. But Shabana argued, 'our grandfather is dead, but I am alive!'

For Shabana, living under the control of her narrow-minded and vindictive in-laws, giving up her education and career, and becoming a breeding machine and a household drudge would have been a living death. Shabana had a compromise proposal. She was ready to abandon her divorce case, and go to her husband; provided her husband would set up house for them, just the two of them, and later their children. She asked him to leave his parental family and Shabana would leave hers.

The husband refused to leave his parents. He insisted that Shabana, as is customary in rural Sindh, lived with him at the house of her in-laws, people who, for so many years, had done everything possible to hurt her, to show their rights and their power, but not their love. Shabana said at last, '[if he was not ready to leave his parents] then neither will I.' Thus they could not agree on anything and Shabana went ahead to get her divorce.

Soon Shabana's brother, Wajid (M5) followed suit and divorced his wife, Marvi (F1) who continued to live with her parents as she had always wished. He has a son from another wife while Halaar, Shabana's husband (M4) has three daughters from his second wife. Though his second wife was also not happy, Shabana prayed for her happiness.

Shabana decided that she had to pursue her career and to support her siblings. She regarded herself now as an 'honorary man' and as her mother's 'honorary son', i.e. a man and a son in practice and in function, even though not in dress or title. She persuaded her mother by saying: 'The world has changed now. I am educated, and now I am your son, not a daughter anymore. So you need not worry about me anymore.' Since then, Shabana's priority has been her family. Her brothers are too young to take any responsibility, and all her siblings are still studying. Despite everything that she had to

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bear and is still bearing, Shabana is very happy with her decisions, to study and to get a divorce.

'My father,' she said, 'agrees with my decision now. He gives me hugs and kisses and says, "I was just worried about other people and society, and I was afraid that you would destroy your life, but you were right, and now I am not worried about anything anymore. You have saved us all." '

Now the time has come for Shabana to reward her siblings, who used to send their pocket money to her when she was at university. She used to save it and used it in emergencies. One of her sisters (F8) had to stop studying after obtaining her BA because the family could not afford the cost. She is now engaged to be married. Shabana is trying to save money for her dowry as she does not want her in-laws to criticise or even ill-treat her sister after marriage.

Another sister (F9) wanted to be a doctor but could not continue her studies for the same reason, i.e. finances and suffered from severe depression after she realised that she would not be able to achieve her goal. She had lost her mental balance and had lost her wish to live. The doctors treating her accused her parents and siblings of beating her, and people started saying that she needed to get married (thinking her to be sexually frustrated, which in itself is a very bad thing in our society), 'people have such things to say' Shabana regretted.

Soon her brother got ill too. One of her maternal uncles allowed Shabana's sister to live with his family when, after three months, she was discharged from the hospital. The doctors said that the crisis at her home (caused by the problems related to Shabana's married status and her seeking a divorce and the poverty of the family) were too much for her to bear and advised that she should be kept away from that stressful household. Her brother was sent to stay with his friends. Soon Shabana's mother also suffered from depression, and Shabana started concealing all her personal problems and the financial issues of the family from her in order not to add to her mother's strain. All these facts demonstrate the mental stress which Shabana's marriage arrangements and the financial

crisis of the family caused to the members of her family. Shabana broke into tears when she told me all this.

Shabana herself wanted to do an MPhil, but the fees were so high that she thought two of her brothers could study for that amount. So she sacrificed her own ambition (at least for the time being) to give *them* a chance. She has borrowed money from the bank for the education of her oldest brother. Two of her brothers studied Engineering. The third now started his studies at a medical university. Her brothers know that they owe all this to Shabana: here is a *woman* in charge of a family now, here is a woman taking care of men, rather than the other way round! If Shabana

- had taken the traditional route, respected her elders' (e.g. her grandfather or her mother) decision, chosen to join her in-laws and had had the typical 'career' of a Sindhi housewife, breeding machine and drudge,

- had not moved to the city herself,

- had not brought her siblings to the city,

they, her brothers, would now be working in the fields instead of studying. Their studying or not studying is not a question of brains, but of money, opportunity, of cultural support and community expectations, or the lack of it.

Shabana's health is deteriorating with every passing day. She has worked so hard for the last 14 years, exerted herself physically, walking and standing as part of her jobs, not had proper meals and suffered worries and stress in her personal life. Her feet and legs are swollen. Her doctor has advised her to stop doing field-based jobs for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). She is reluctant to follow that advice because that kind of job earns her good money, without which she would not be able to support her family. She has not told anyone at home about her health because, if they knew, they would not allow her to work anymore, but some of her friends know. Her sufferings have not ended yet. She has been working on different projects with different NGOs.

Right now she is doing an internship and hopes to get a job on another project, which is expected to start soon.

6.5 Farhana's Story: If only I'd been born as a boy

Farhana said:

> When one is a student, one feels very positive about life – I was sure that I would get a job, would become manager of some big company, would do this or that. But when I got into the job, I did not find it such a pleasant experience.

Her first job was a great let-down for Farhana. She found that the working environment was much harder than what she had experienced as a student. She was then in her early 30s. She came from a family full of girls. They were seven sisters. She was the third daughter in a house with no son as yet. At the time of her birth everyone, especially her grandmother, wanted a boy.

The story of Farhana's grandparents is important in her life. Farhana's grandparents did not have the customary arranged marriage, but a love marriage, which ignores some of the traditional restrictions on the choice of partner. Her grandmother was from a Sindhi land-owning (rich or upper class) family. Her grandfather was a Pathan (old settlers in Sindh often originally from the North West Frontier Province now called Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa or even Afghanistan) family. Her grandmother was well off financially and was a land-owner in her own right. Her grandfather was not rich. Her grandfather never allowed her grandmother to visit her birth family. The marriage was not a success, and they soon separated. Each got married a second time. Farhana's father was the only offspring of this marriage and suffered a lot because of all this. He had a half-brother and a half-sister from his mother's and father's side respectively but he was not very close to either of them. He was brought up by his mother. Therefore his surname is after his mother's maiden name and not after his father's. Farhana's father also suffered financially because his mother's family was not willing to give him the property that he inherited from his mother. He received some share of her land but not much. Moreover when anything went wrong, his maternal relatives would often taunt him and his

children (Farhana and her siblings) for being Pathans. Farhana's father loved and respected his mother very much and held his father responsible for mistreating his mother.

Farhana's mother's whole family was educated. Her maternal grandfather was in the government service. All her maternal uncles enjoyed good social standing. Both her mother and maternal grandmother could read and write. But Farhana was most inspired by her father's cousins who not only owned a lot of land, but most of them were also doctors. So she wanted to be a doctor herself.

Relationships were key to Farhana's life. Her house was full of people and that was why Farhana loved to be surrounded by company, and that was why, whenever she was alone, she felt frightened. She was more attached to her father than to her mother. 'Our father,' she said, 'used to love us like sons, even more than sons'. He never let his daughters feel that he had too many daughters. He was very loving and affectionate. 'Whatever we wanted, he would do for us.' She is very close to both of her elder sisters.

> One of them got married; the other is with my father. We used to go together to the bazaar (market), my eldest sister would go with me. Earlier it used to be the second sister, I was more close to her, I was the third and I used to help her a lot with everything she did. I would go and give their clothes to the tailor even, without me, they couldn't get anything done.

There was a time in Farhana's life when she liked to read books on palmistry. She wanted to know what was in the lines on her hands; she wanted to know about her own life.

Farhana loved to watch TV in her spare time. She loved saying her prescribed prayers and spent a lot of time reciting the Qur'an. She found great peace in that. She was even told off by her mother for reading the Qur'an so much. Therefore she would close the door of her bedroom before starting to recite the Qur'an. When she moved to the city many of her habits changed. She no longer prayed the Tahajud (late night prayers which are recommended but not obligatory) and which she had always said before that move. She describes it as,

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The life there [in the village] is calm. When you would go there you would not have any tension that I should do this or that and when you would come to the city you would want to do this and that, you would want to be like others. Village-life is easy and simple; your heart doesn't desire anything like I should spend more money or do this or that. Whatever allowance you would get would be enough; you could even save from that. We would not go out or anything and there is no other such thing. This is a city so we go to the bazaar as well, then we spend money, then there is tension regarding that.

Farhana compares city life with village life. In the city people are never satisfied, they always crave for more – more money, more shopping, more fun, more excitement, and businesses and advertising purposefully create more and more desires. In the village so little is needed to satisfy one's real needs. City life has changed many of Farhana's habits but she is still quite sensitive and gets angry easily, but she is also compassionate and, unlike many city people, shares in other people's suffering. Tears well up into her eyes easily. She thinks people around her do not understand her and that is why they are rude to her. Farhana can make friends very easily, but she does not share her secrets with anyone but Allah. Not even her sisters know all the secrets of her heart.

Farhana's first memories were the beatings that she used to get at home for being naughty and wandering around all day. She giggled and said that she used to beat her sisters and other children in the village. Her favourite pastime in childhood was cycling and swimming. 'We used to play all day long and go swimming. There used to be water courses where we could swim. We had a very happy life. We would play truant and roam around on our bicycles.' After coming back from school, she would just drop her books, go out again to play only to come back after sunset. She was told off a lot for that. The sisters were very close, like a gang, and loved each other dearly. Whenever any other girl dared to meddle with one of them, they would all turn on her and beat the living daylight out of the attacker. Then the girls who had been beaten by this Amazonian gang would come to her father to complain. Farhana used to climb trees, would be sitting in their branches, go swimming with the boys and, above all, she could swear like a trooper. 'I was more in the company of boys so I became like them too', she smiled. She was a tomboy. But time has mellowed her. When she came to the university and started living by herself in a hostel, away from parents and siblings, she found

herself different. She was a tomboy no more. Eventually, as soon as she got a job, she felt the burden of family responsibilities.

When Farhana was growing up, her village was fairly liberal in its attitude towards girls, but girls' education was still neglected. Money was one of the reasons, but quite apart from that, girls in the village did not like studying. Therefore there was no girls' school in the village. Farhana's father was a teacher himself and was therefore determined that all his children should be educated. 'Everyone at our home has a Masters degree,' Farhana said. She and all her sisters studied with boys' in a boys' school. In fifth grade she was the only girl in her class and this was the case with all her sisters. Once she had completed her primary education, she had to walk six miles every day to a nearby village to attend secondary school. For two years of her Intermediate, she again had to study together with boys. So she had a good experience of co-education before joining university.

People in Pakistan often accuse village teachers of being lazy, not trying to teach well, not caring whether their pupils actually learn anything and only wanting to collect their salaries. These critics see this as the reason why village children know, and can do, less than town and city children and fail when they have to compete with them in later education. Farhana does not agree with that reasoning. She feels that village teachers should not bear all the blame for the inferior performance of their pupils. It is also, she claims, the fault of the children and their families. She maintains: 'A child who truly wants to learn can learn even in the worst village school; but a child who does not want to learn will fail even in the best city school and with the best teachers.'

Teaching methods in the village and in the city are quite different, especially in the teaching of English. Farhana had problems learning English at university. Some students try to solve the problem by taking private lessons, but this does not always suffice. Farhana was satisfied with all the teachers who taught her in the village. But even though she attended school regularly, she still needed, but could not afford, private lessons for key subjects during her Intermediate. Because of her inability to take private

lessons, she could not get the required scores for admission to a medical college. So what her schools offered was good, but not good enough.

Farhana thought that if she had had an elder brother, she could have reappeared in her Intermediate, improved her results to get admission to a medical college and would be a doctor today. The main problem was that their village did not have a college, so they had to come to the city for exams. Custom did not allow an unmarried girl to travel alone to the city for the exam. An elder brother would have been her natural chaperone. But there was no elder brother. And her father was old and had many other important duties and could therefore not take her to the city for the exams.

She was happy again when she was admitted to study for an undergraduate degree in Pharmacy and was able to wear a white coat. 'I would feel that I am a doctor,' she said. During her university studies, she stayed in a girls' hostel. But she was not very comfortable with other girls around her. City girls were very different from village girls. Farhana preferred to stay quiet and alone than to mix with them. She never changed her nature and her principles in order to fit in better. Like one of Weller's (2006) participants reported, no one could replace Farhana's friends from the village. She often felt homesick, but she could not visit home regularly as girls from other departments did. On the one hand, her department had an annual exam system (unlike the rest of the university, which had a semester system), on the other, there was no direct transport to her village. The journey was time-consuming and complicated. Whenever she went to the village, her eyes would fill with tears at seeing her village again.

After graduation, Farhana did an internship in a pharmaceutical company in Karachi. She was offered a job in the same company but she had to decline the offer because she was living with relatives in Karachi, and she could not continue living there indefinitely. She applied for jobs elsewhere but could not get any. So she decided to continue studying. But there were only very few places available for the MSc Pharmacy course. Farhana therefore changed her main subject to public administration.

Farhana had financial problems when she was still at university but soon her elder sister got a job as a teacher and supported her. When more of her siblings started studying at

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university, her elder sister rented a house for them, so that they did not have to stay at the hostel. In turn, when Farhana got a job, she started paying for the monthly grocery there and also paid for the maintenance of the house.

Farhana got her first job immediately after she graduated. But she regretted not having any political support which could have helped in her job. Her father did not know any influential people and that was why she had to suffer in her professional life. She often was posted to different towns and cities which were difficult for her to manage.

Farhana also experienced workplace harassment and gender-based discrimination. Whenever she arrived at a new posting, everyone in the office would come to stare at the new 'girl wonder'. On such occasions she wished she were a man and had all their freedom and no one would stare at her. On one posting, she and another female colleague were sent to do field work all alone 'just the two of us with no security or anything. Just us two girls…'

During another posting, one of the senior officials used to irritate her a lot by coming to her office every now and then and sitting for long without anything to do. She was soon transferred to another office, but that office was no better. The new boss was rude to her. Colleagues with friends in high places were promoted to become managers or coordinators etc. and then started being cocky and needlessly insulted Farhana and those colleagues which had no political backing. All girls except Farhana and her village friend were given office work. She was not only the victim of male prejudice against females, but also the victim of the disdain in which stuck-up snooty city girls hold village girls however well qualified the latter may be. So the city women working at this office would take sides with the boss against the village women, tell tales and denigrate them and thus damage their reputation. So overall her experience of working life, of society outside her village, of people in general was not good at all.

However, Farhana said,

> I have a very strong faith in Allah. All the girls would tell me that I would lose the job. Like
> if officers would do something wrong, then I would say it is wrong; if it's wrong then it is.

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They would tell that I would get fired but I had so much faith in Allah that this can never happen. When something is going to happen it would happen on its time. If I am to lose my job, then it can be done only by Allah. No one else can do that. I have never felt helpless. I have a strong faith in Allah.

Farhana was working on a project which was supposed to last for five years, but as soon as the government changed, all the people of her rank on the project were fired, six months before the contract was to expire. The news was announced on television. When the contractors/employees protested, they were taken to jail in a Black Maria. Farhana said, 'They took us in that van in which they transport prisoners ... My mother became very worried. But my father said, "I shall garland my daughter when she comes out of jail; she is fighting for her rights" '. Farhana was very excited about the whole incident and treats it as an adventure. Losing a job which was so unpleasant was good riddance and initially she was happy. But soon she realised how much of her independence was due to her having a job. That's why she was now desperate for a new job. Several new projects have been announced since then but in spite of her experience she has so far been unable to land another job.

This experience of having a job made her feel very bad about being a girl. She never had such a feeling before, neither at home, nor even at university. But nevertheless she wanted to get a job, as she was unemployed at the moment. She wants to get some benefit out of her education. Besides her wish of being a boy, Farhana regretted that she had not studied further than MSc Public Administration. She would have liked to have done a PhD. However, she thought she could now not study any more, as it had been quite a while since she left education and her mind is not as fresh as it then was, she thinks.

6.6 Farwa's Story: The Turning Point

Farwa is at present Assistant Professor of Psychology at a university and working speedily towards the completion of her PhD thesis. She belongs to a family of four children, two girls and two boys. That sounds balanced and acceptable even for a family in Pakistan. But the sequence of births also matters. The first two children were

girls, Farwa was the second. The first girl was a disappointment since a boy would have been preferred. But the second girl, Farwa, was a disaster, because all children at this stage were girls. Therefore the elderly female members of the family were not very happy with Farwa's birth.

> My mother basically is an educated woman. She was fine with it. It was not like she was happy, even she was expecting a boy and she was not happy to see a baby girl. But then she thought that whatever happens is from God. So even if it is a baby girl then that's okay. So when my grandmothers would grumble as to why it was a girl, she would say the same to them as well. My mother tells me that whenever she held me in her arms saying BISMILLAH ['In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful', the prayer with which we should start all our actions and entrust them to Allah] or she hugged or kissed me, then my grandmothers would taunt her and say she shouldn't be so happy as she has given birth to a girl and not a boy.

It was with the birth of her first son, born five years after Farwa, that her mother started gaining 'worth' and significance in the family, as is the norm. 'My mother also became very positive; the difference in attitudes of people around due to the presence of baby girls decreased'. Farwa's mother loved Farwa as a mother should, but somehow unconsciously she was inattentive towards her. That inattentiveness also lessened with the birth of Farwa's first brother.

In our society, there is no room for rebellious girls. Children, and especially girls, do what their parents tell them, and their parents teach them the norms of good behaviour that everybody believes in. So when girls are children, they have to obey their parents, when they grow up, they get married and have to obey their husbands, and when they are widowed, they have to obey their sons. Even as children they are used to serving their brothers.

Farwa as a child was determined not to conform to these standards. She was stubborn. She liked what she liked, and she did not listen to anyone. When given orders, she disobeyed. She did not listen, and she later thought that as a child she was hyperactive. She was not like other children. She did not play with other children in a normal way, as an equal, but she bullied them and beat them with her fists. The children in the

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neighbourhood were afraid of her beatings. She described herself to me as an aggressive and very difficult child. The neighbours often complained about her to her parents, but she always defended what she had done, tried to justify her behaviour and never regretted it. She was a proper tearaway. One reason for this behaviour could be that the male members of her family, including her father, always appreciated and encouraged it and would say, 'You should beat and not be beaten', in accordance with the law-of-the-jungle proverb 'Eat or be eaten', 'Be hammer rather than anvil.' So they turned her into a bit of an alley-cat.

Farwa's childhood friends were children from her neighbourhood, both boys and girls, who also went to school with her. Among her best friends there were more boys than girls. She was more into the boys' games/sports, though she played with dolls as well. She played 'bilor' (a game of marbles) in the street, explored unknown neighbourhoods with her friends, bathed in a brook (and dried her clothes in the sun before coming home so nobody would know what she had been up to). Even in winter, when it gets dark earlier (the sun sets at 5.30 or 6 p.m.), she did not come home before 8 p.m. Farwa was adventurous and enjoyed risky or dangerous activities. Above all, she never liked school. During her first two years at school, she was not allowed to sit any of the exams because she had not attended classes regularly. So she wasted two years of education. Her mother often beat her, but that was the fate not only of Farwa but of all her siblings, except Farwa's Adi, her elder sister. Adi was never in trouble, she was good at everything – study, extra-curricular activities, household chores, etc. Adi was liked, appreciated and respected by all. She was like a second mother to Farwa and her younger siblings and set a good example.

Farwa's father had always been closer to Farwa than to her other siblings. Farwa thought this was because her parents were too young at the time of their marriage to understand the feeling of parenthood on the birth of their first child. Therefore, it was when Farwa was born that her father felt the joy of being a father for the first time, and therefore he always loved her more.

Farwa regretted that her early schooling was a complete mess. Farwa's parents, and especially her father, worked very hard to improve her behaviour and make her study. Her father sat with her to help her studying. They gave her advice, arranged private lessons for her. They tried every means under the sun; tried the carrot and the stick approach by rewarding her with toys and by punishing her; but whatever her parents or teachers said fell on deaf ears.

Her mother was always concerned about her schooling and used to say that things should not be like they were. But since there was nothing like parent-teacher meetings in those days, her mother could not ask the teachers to give Farwa extra time. Farwa thought that neither parents nor teachers know enough about learning psychology to teach difficult children well. She said, 'teachers at the primary level don't know and they don't realise that the children who are studying are all different and every child is an individual, her/his perception is different, her/his attention span towards different things varies, her/his interests are different, her/his attitudes are different, her/his skills are different'.

The turning point came when Farwa was in class 3. She was about nine then. The class monitor was absent. So her teacher asked her if *she* would like to make a speech on Independence Day. She won the first prize and received story books. 'That was the start of my career. I started feeling worthy of attention. I felt I was important. I started feeling that I could do something,' says Farwa. Farwa thinks that recognition, approval and self-esteem are the social needs of any person, and they are as important for survival as eating and drinking are. She started comparing herself to her Adi, her elder sister, and realised that her Adi was much more liked than Farwa was. People loved, and cared for, Adi. Why was that? Adi had a reputation for being 'a good girl'. That reputation was like a label. People were predisposed in favour of Adi because of that label. Farwa now started using her Adi as a role model. She also followed the example of her cousins, who used to receive a lot of praise for whatever they did when they were children.

While still in class 3 or 4, she started buying colour pencils with her pocket money and started expressing herself through drawing. She continued this for a year or so. Then she

started participating in other extra-curricular activities, and she developed a desire to get recognition, to have her achievements recognised by others. She made more and more speeches, participated in debates and games, passed an exam for a scholarship and received a bursary and participated in singing competitions. She also competed against the boys at school. That required and proved self-confidence, which she describes as follows: 'From the beginning I have known that I am bold'. She even translated a book by Khalil Gibran into English when in SSC (class 10) and commented on this, 'I don't know right or wrong, am not talking here about my ability or potential, am only talking about the attitudes [positive interests] that were developing in me slowly and gradually'.

As she grew, Farwa started expressing herself through drawing and painting. She had received a lot of punishment as a child because of her uncontrollable behaviour. So now she hid her feelings from others. By the time she had reached Class 8, she had produced some beautiful paintings.

> After 8th, the exams of class 9th and 10th have to be given a lot of time and importance because then you are starting to build your career, so now my painting habit which used to give me a refuge, a mode of expression and a comfort got diverted and I got more involved into my studies. I had started studying and a serious aptitude towards studies had started developing in me. Now I feel that any inclination towards painting has completely withered away.

Later she started writing, 'not for the purpose of publication but for the sake of self-expression.' Recently she had repeatedly thought about taking up writing again, but hasn't got round to it yet because of various other engagements. Writing is a solitary occupation. Farwa likes solitude but says that solitude cannot be compared with company. They are two separate needs of any person. Solitude does not mean being alone, but being with one's own self, which is as important as being with others.

Farwa used to be very temperamental but now her behaviour is calmer and more predictable; she has realised that nobody will put up with her tantrums. Farwa believes herself to be very straightforward, in the sense that she does not hide her views and calls a spade a spade, especially in her professional life. Her boss calls her 'expressive' and told her, 'You say it out when you dislike something and you say even when you like

something'. Farwa talks of filters (usually of relationships) through which we see world and the world sees us. She thinks it is the cultural filter that forces us to behave in certain ways. Our thoughts, attitudes and behaviours are filtered through customs, values and relationships. We are expected to act and react in a certain way. Also while doing something, we are cautious because we are afraid of people's reactions. But Farwa did not care about other people's views and reactions, and she did not regret anything she had ever done. She strongly believes that so she always acted courageously and did her heart's desire.

Farwa does not normally take the initiative of talking to strangers or try to make friends. She rather thinks that friendship develops on its own with the passage of time among people who have lived together for some time. For example, when she was living in the hostel, she developed friendships with her roommates. But the friendships that she developed in childhood were permanent and the best because she thinks 'relationships founded in the days of innocence are innocent'.

Farwa was very close to her siblings, especially to her youngest brother. She had a special bond with her elder sister, despite the two being completely different in their personalities. Farwa said, with a giggle, 'a few times, when we were children, I gave even my Adi a good hiding'. Also, Farwa always protected her sister and fought for her with other children. Farwa said that she trusts her Adi 100%.

Farwa's mother comes from a more educated family than her father. Not only Farwa's mother is an educated woman but so is her grandmother, i.e. Farwa comes from a line of educated women. Farwa's mother wanted her to be a dentist, as her elder sister was a doctor. But Farwa could not qualify for admission. Her mother suggested that she should take the Central Superior Services (CSS) exam but she did not want to. So Farwa studied for a BSc at a college in the town closest to her village (comparable to the 'county town' in England). Her degree was not only first class, but hers was also the *best* that year. She then proceeded to do her Masters in Psychology at the University of Sindh.

Farwa's extended family lived in a compound in their village. It consisted of three parts. Each portion belonged to one of her grandfather's three sons, including her father. They were brought up in the same compound as their cousins. When she came to the city for her studies, she lived at first in a house that belonged to her paternal uncle, a part of whose family lived with them in the family compound in the village. Later on she moved to a hostel, but she could easily visit her uncle's city house and stay with them for some time whenever she felt homesick. So her life away from home was not really life away from home. Then, when Farwa was still at university, her mother moved to the city along with Farwa's brothers, but Farwa preferred to stay at the hostel for the entire period of her studies; 'because at the hostel everybody is a student. They understand you have to study and you can also get help with your work. And above all, nobody cares whether God created the day for work and the night for sleeping. You work or sleep when you feel like it,' said Farwa.

Living at home in Pakistan is far from ideal for a woman who wants to concentrate on her studies. The family home is a bee-hive of activity; where mother or grandmother will be doing their chores and always wanting help, there will be siblings playing or crying for attention, neighbours and guests will visit unannounced. The woman, who can even have an exam the next day, is not automatically excused from being sociable or hospitable.

That's why Farwa said, 'At university… I had freedom and I believe that anyone who cannot enjoy freedom cannot enjoy anything'. Farwa enjoyed her university life to the utmost. She was at complete liberty at the hostel, and there were no anxious or domineering parents around. She believed in living life to the full. Farwa no doubt missed her home at the village, but she missed her home as an environment, and not the individuals. She was part of a joint family, and 'in a joint family system individuals are not important, it is the group that is important, and you are attached to all'. Therefore, when she went to her village, staying there for four or five days always relaxed her, but 'then you had to leave home again,' she was sad when returning to the city, which in other respects she loved so much. She was pulled in two directions by two magnets. Farwa was so attached to the old house in her village in which she spent her childhood

that she still sees herself in that house in her dreams, even though that house has been pulled down and a new one was built in its place. Farwa still thought of her old village house as the ideal house. She thought she was perhaps too young to know the troubles of daily life then and that was why she idealised her life in those days.

When Farwa finally left university and her hostel, her whole family had already moved to the city. She felt that she was in danger of losing her freedom. She was moving away from her circle of friends. They all knew that their friendship would not continue to be the same. She was also worried about her future. There was then no career counseling system in our universities and a student of psychology has no definite career-path to follow (Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch, 1995).

Farwa's professional life was unlike that of other graduates, who usually knew their future path. But there were no job opportunities in Farwa's specialty, and she found herself in the middle of nowhere. So she started applying for teaching jobs in schools. She was successful and worked as a school teacher for eight months. Then she struck it lucky and got a job as a teaching assistant in the same university department in which she had studied herself. She then stopped applying for other jobs because she was sure that she would soon become a lecturer. She was very happy and excited about her job. But she realised that teaching was not as simple as studying. When she was a student at university, she did not understand psychology as well as when she was teaching it. Now she has found a positive change in her personality which she tried to transfer to the personalities of her students through knowledge. She enjoys her work very much. She feels privileged to be a university teacher since this had been her dream when she first arrived at this department as a student.

A number of factors helped in making Farwa what she is today, her parents, her schooling, the company she kept and her own understanding of events and the world. She has now spent ten happy years at this university, teaching, studying and doing research. Farwa's philosophy of life helped her stay satisfied, she said,

> I am satisfied; I am satisfied with my life. I believe that God has set a place for everyone such that if that person is in that place then that is better for them [...] otherwise man's

needs and wishes can never be fulfilled ever [...] I believe there should be few wishes in life that should remain unfulfilled so that you may feel the wish for living life itself.

6.7 Summary

This chapter is based on the stories and thoughts of my participants. All my participants had to assert themselves very strongly at some time or other. None of them allowed circumstances to overpower them, but all had very different ways of coping with their problems. The role of family and village are important in their lives. All parents were great believers in the value of education. All, except Ahmar, regretted the absence of an elder brother who would relieve them of their burden of responsibility. Attitudes, norms and customs of their villages were significant. Both men and women had to face some hardships, had different duties and responsibilities depending on their gender. Women had to suffer from considerable discrimination at all ages. Life for men was not easy either because they were the bread-winners.

7

Understanding the Stories

And people do react. Because people do not know what you are doing, what your intentions are, people do not know that. But you know what people are thinking. We have all these things built into our minds since childhood.

(From Farwa's Interview, a female participant)

7.1 Introduction

In the last chapter I presented the life stories of my participants, gathered by interviewing them. Each of my five participants, Ahmar, Abdur Razzak, Shabana, Farhana and Farwa (arranged in order of interviews conducted), belong to poor rural backgrounds with their pre-university education from their villages or nearby towns. Each of the participants faced a number of problems and hardships in their lives, but they continued to aspire to, and struggle for, better living conditions, which according to them could be achieved through educating themselves.

In this chapter, I am going to discuss the stories of my participants in the light of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice. I am going to analyse how Bourdieu's Triad can explain the continuous effort on the part of my participants as a result of their desire for an improved standard of living. While doing so, I shall discuss the symbolic violence inflicted upon them and the logic behind their practice.

The chapter is divided into sections and sub-sections. The next section discusses the field and capital owned by my participants through early socialisation, with a sub-section on the roles and responsibilities of men and women, and another on education as

their key to a better life. This should give my readers an insight into the background of my participants. *Habitus* is significant for my research, and a whole section is, therefore, devoted to it. Then there is a section discussing the symbolic violence inflicted upon my participants by society. Finally, in the section on the logic of practice, I have examined behaviours and practices of my participants in order to understand and interpret the logic behind their practices. The chapter ends with a summary.

7.2 Early Socialisation: Field and Capital

Bourdieu's concept of field, or 'field of struggles' as Jenkins (1992:85) puts it, is a social setting which locates the agents in accordance with the significance given to their *habitus* and capital in that particular field. Every field identifies and approves certain capitals and rejects others. The position of an agent is known on the basis of the already existing and known rules of the field. Those families that possess a higher concentration of different types of capital transmit more capital to their children, Bourdieu argues. But in the case of my participants, their families possessed very little recognised capital (which could give them symbolic power in that field) to pass on to their children, and if sometimes the parents do not think carefully about the distribution of that capital, this creates great problems. For example, when Shabana's mother gave birth to her second daughter, after Shabana, her father gave all his property to Shabana's step brother, believing people who said that he was an old man and would never have another son. This decision resulted in long lasting problems for Shabana's family, which soon comprised five daughters and four sons (not even counting Shabana's step siblings). Shabana mentions that 'because the family was growing, children were growing as well; as a result, the expenses were increasing'. This meant that, on some days, they had hardly anything to eat. Shabana recounts that for a simple meal one needs not only flour but also salt and oil. It was difficult for them to pay for all these things.

Finances are a major concern for people from the field to which my participants belong. Poverty was Shabana's reason for attempting suicide several times. She wanted to study but she knew that her father could not afford it because he had lost his job at the sugar mill. When asked the cause of his problems and worries, Abdur Razzak's answer was a

single word that meant a whole life to him, 'poverty'. My participants realised that everything in the social world needs money, even 'one has to have so much money to remain in contact with friends', notes Shabana.

The world around my participants was very important for them, and it included their families, relatives, neighbours, and the people in their villages. What other people might say and think is more important than what they themselves (the participants) think and want. That is why, on a number of occasions, it was other people who decided for them. Whenever they requested that such and such a decision should be taken about their life, the 'important others' (father, paternal uncles, village elders etc) did not like their interference in the matters of their own lives, thus exercising symbolic power. That's what happened to Abdur Razzak when he refused to get married because he was still going to school. 'I thought that if I were to get married, my friends would laugh at me', said Abdur Razzak. So he decided to get only engaged. Later he showed a wish to marry into a different family. Abdur Razzak recalls how that wish destroyed the friendship between the two families because 'they thought that I was looking into their house' (i.e. that he was eyeing the women in their house). His father too was very upset about his son's attitude and persuaded him to marry his original fiancée. The two families did not have any contact for years, but the relations were recently restored because of the death of Abdur Razzak's father. 'In our families, we may be very angry but when some relative passes away, then we become one all over again. In the time of sorrow, everyone comes together'. Shabana also talks about her mother, who, due to family pressure, was forced to marry a middle-aged man with children when she was just a young girl, even though she had other good proposals. Shabana's father is her mother's cousin, and they got married because his first wife passed away. In both these cases, 'the dominated accept as legitimate their own condition of domination' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:167); thus allowing the exercise of symbolic violence over them. Here it becomes obvious that symbolic violence is inflicted upon my participants from members of their own family, as a result of cultural norms which give elders power over the young. Later in this chapter, I shall discuss how the socially strong class inflicts

symbolic violence in greater and more organised ways on people from socially weak backgrounds, like my participants.

Lareau and Horvat (1999) note that every type of capital works in its particular field and thus no conclusion can be drawn without understanding and discussing the importance of the field. In order to understand the field in greater depth, I shall discuss, in the following sub-sections, the different roles of men and women in the target field and their views on education as a key to better life.

7.2.1 Roles and responsibilities as men and women

The roles and responsibilities of men and women in the field that my participants belong to are fixed. Men are usually considered more powerful there, and it can be thought that their life is easier than women's. At the same time, men are expected to earn and provide for the whole family, and this sounds like women having an easier life than men. However, it is clear from the stories of my participants that just being a man or a woman does not in itself make life easy for either of them. Each of them has to perform her/his duties without exception. This section explores how these duties are different, are expected to be different and are treated differently.

At the time of their birth, none of the three female participants were welcomed by the family. In each case, the family expected and wanted a male child. However, in the case of each of them, they were loved dearly by their parents, especially their fathers, regardless of people 'say[ing] to my father that these are your daughters, they have to go to another house', states Shabana. (She means that daughters, unlike sons, will on marriage become members of the husband's family, and are not a permanent asset for the parents.) Likewise the expectations and responsibilities of girls are also defined and demarcated. Farwa explains,

> Our cultural values are such that girls are brought up in such a way that they are mostly
> responsible by nature, this is innate in them. By responsibility I do not mean that they would
> take up the responsibility of the whole household; no, they would be responsible in the
> context of their own self, in the context of their family members. See, when in our world
> girls get married at a very young age, then they are responsible, they know what their

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responsibilities are, and what rights others have over them. What *their* rights are that is known by very few, that is not known usually.

Similarly, the attitudes and expectations from men are equally well defined. While explaining the family's reaction to his birth, Abdur Razzak says,

> They were very happy, because my father had no children from his first wife. He was nearly sixty when he had neither a son nor a daughter. Then he married for a second time, he got four daughters [before me from my mother]. He brought his brother's son up, got him an education, a job, made him a primary school teacher.

As the eldest son, Abdur Razzak has known his importance to his family from the very beginning. He used to decide which school he would like to study in; his decision was always taken seriously. Once his father asked him, for financial reasons, to leave a private school and join a government school. He went to the government school for a few days but did not like it. He stubbornly refused to study at a government school. His family accepted his decision.

When his father died, Abdur Razzak's rights and duties as the eldest son changed radically. On the one hand, he gained the privilege of being head of the family - so much so, that his elder sisters asked for, and followed, his advice on their affairs. On the other hand, he now shouldered the responsibility for his entire household. He said:

> That those who are younger I should get them educated. I myself should work and struggle, might get a job somewhere but they should be given comfort. Their life should be comfortable, even if I am stressed that's ok because I have already borne stress. There is one thing that the first load is the hardest to bear ... so I want that my younger siblings would not face problems.

The social world is subjective and objective at the same time. Despite my participants (the agents) acting and behaving in their individual ways, there are events and incidents which happen in their lives without being the result of any of their actions. They happen because they have to happen. In such situations the agents react in their distinctive ways. A son is the supporter of the family. Everyone looks up to him, and that is why all my participants, except Ahmar, who has an elder brother, wanted to have an elder brother.

Abdur Razzak said, 'I used to think: "What if my eldest sister had been my brother. If she had been my elder brother, I would not have had to suffer all this pain, the whole responsibility would have been his then".' He even wished all his elder sisters to be his brothers. Abdur Razzak, Farhana and Shabana deeply felt that if they had had an elder brother, life would be different for them.

Farhana thinks her entire career has suffered, 'that was because my brothers were still young.' She could not get admission to a medical college because she was not able to re-sit the examination. Being a girl, she depended on male members of her family to take her to the city for her exams. Since her father was old, he could not do that himself. Even when she had to study chemistry during her Bachelors in Pharmacy, she longed to have an elder brother who would be better educated and would help her in her studies.

Shabana, too, suffered a lot because she had no real elder brother (she has an elder step-brother). Her in-laws have been tormenting her family because they knew that her father was old and they had 'nobody to look up to'. But Shabana stood up for herself. She decided to fight for her rights. After a time, she got a divorce and supported her family. She got her brothers educated and plans to get her sisters married. She says,

> My younger brothers say: 'Sister, if you had not come here [to the city], we would have been working in the fields [in the village], we would not have been here either.' They kiss me on my forehead, and say: 'you are not our sister; you are a brother to us.'

Even though Shabana, like Abdur Razzak, overcame this feeling of deficiency in her life and accepted responsibilities so that her younger siblings would not ever have to suffer, there is still an unfulfilled wish in her heart: 'If I had been a boy, I would have married by my choice, I would have had my family settled. Now I am a girl, I can't do everything ... .' But she is doing more than any sister or daughter could normally do in her social field. My female participants have come out of the stereotyped views of women in Pakistan and proved themselves to be active in the social world outside their homes. Yet they still feel that men have better choices and chances of survival in the job market in Pakistani society. This will be discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

Concepts like marriage being the ultimate goal of life for a woman, giving a dowry to girls or 'bride price' for a girl still prevail in the social world that my people belong to. More seriously, finding suitable educated men who would accept educated wives is also very difficult. This has been a problem faced by my three female participants. Shabana says, 'I could not get a proposal because I was doing a job, so people would not opt for me, [they would think] she would be the wrong type, wrong … how can I explain that in words ... but this concept is still there.' On the other hand, the social world is also not a safe place for these women, as they go out of their home to study and then earn. As Farhana points out, 'people are not good. The managers I mean … It should not be like this that she is a girl, we can tease her; they should let us work independently … I mean they would say bad things'. The other females would follow their bosses, flatter them etc but Farhana was not prepared to do that. In this vein, Shabana says,

> I applied to a bank and there also I got field work, see my luck. I had to go to collect money
> from those people who do not pay on time, going to their houses talking to the men. I did
> not have anyone from the staff with me even. I did not feel secure in that job, so
> unfortunately I had to quit that job.

'Agents shape their aspirations according to the concrete indices of the accessible and the inaccessible, of what is and is not "for us", a division as fundamental and as fundamentally recognised as that between the sacred and the profane' (Bourdieu, 1990b:64). Each of my participants knew their boundaries and their options, especially Farhana, who cannot 'go abroad to earn'. She has felt at every instance that she is a woman and therefore was treated improperly, 'but they did not show as much respect as should be given to a 17th grade officer, don't know why, may be it was because we were women'.

Bourdieu (1984:107) confirms that 'sexual properties are as inseparable from class properties as the yellowness of a lemon is from its acidity.' He states that as one moves up the social hierarchy, gender difference tends to decrease as the division of labour is not as strong. But here we are talking about the lowest class of society. Since my female and male participants came from same social class, they were expected to receive similar cultural capital, which defines the different roles and responsibilities of men and women.

However, the *habitus* they develop is quite different, on the basis of their socialisation and the views they form of the opportunity structure available to them. McClelland (1990) found through a study that men follow their *habitus* when they realise their professional ambitions, whereas women violate their traditional *habitus* when they pursue the same ambitions. Robinson and Garnier (1985) also noted that even when men and women begin their lives with similar class positions and cultural capital, the social reproduction process functions in such a way that women attain less-privileged positions. Therefore, social action takes place in different fields for men and women, and men always have more symbolic power than women.

Gender is an important issue in the field that my participants belong to. Both men and women have to perform their specific duties, no matter what. Their roles and responsibilities as men and women do not give them any latitude, they are precisely defined. Responsibilities for both men and women are different, and they are not easy for either group. My participants accept their roles as men and women in the particular way in which their field acknowledges them, and they agree to perform those roles. However, at the same time they have decided to improve their and their families' social standing (see Section 7.5). Nonetheless, for this additional responsibility, they do not get any relief from their previous responsibilities, i.e. not much support from the people around them.

7.2.2 Education as a key to better life

Educating their children cannot be a priority for parents when even the basic necessities of life are not available. The field my participants belong to assigns different roles to the two genders. It expects females to take care of their home and family and do the household chores both before and after marriage. By contrast, it expects males to earn in order to take care of the family's financial needs and provide for the family. Therefore, men and women have their respective duties to perform in order to make sure that life runs smoothly. Thus, for many of these poor people, educating their children is not a priority, especially when they need them for household chores or work in the fields. For them children going to school upsets the smooth running of their difficult lives.

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However, there are also poor parents who know that giving their children an education is the only way in which the family can eventually be lifted out of poverty.

The parents of both the male participants were not keen on giving them a higher education. They would prefer them to start earning in the village and support their families financially. Abdur Razzak's father did not encourage him to study. He said, 'my father wanted to stop my education then, but because of my interest he agreed to let me continue in another school'. Abdur Razzak started earning money for his family while still going to school. His family did not encourage him to go for higher education either. His father told him how hard up they were at home and asked him to decide for himself. So Abdur Razzak decided to quit university within a month of joining. However, he was full of despair.

A similar situation confronted Ahmar when his family problems kept him away from his studies and he had to leave and rejoin education time and time again. However, he finally took the big step of cutting himself off from his family entirely while at university, until he had completed his degree, because he realised that the solution of his problems lay with education (see also Duru-Bellat, 2008, for social mobility through education in France).

Not only lack of economic capital (poverty), but also, even more importantly, lack of cultural capital (uneducated parents) causes families to shy away from allowing their children to be educated. For example, none of Abdur Razzak's close family members had higher education, and therefore no cultural capital could be passed on to the younger members of the extended family. Accordingly, Abdur Razzak quit university within a month of starting due to family pressure. Likewise, Ahmar lived in an extended family where his uncles and his father's uncles (i.e. two generations!) did not like him and his brothers to get an education. So they made every effort to undermine their efforts to study. In fact, 'families are corporate bodies animated by … a tendency to perpetuate their social being, with all its powers and privileges, which is at the basis of *reproduction strategies*' (Bourdieu, 1998:19; original emphasis), and that developed problems for my participants.

Here are some examples which show that cultural capital (education passed on in earlier generations) makes it more likely that the parents are in favour of educating their children, and this willingness is even more important than having the money to pay for it. Only someone who badly wants something will make the effort to get the necessary resources.

In the case of Ahmar's family, his mother insisted that her sons be educated, and his father was also educated and was in a government job. But his other relatives thought differently. They saw education as a threat and feared that their children would demand it as well. This is an example of the uneducated relatives trying to hinder the education of the educated branch in their extended family. By contrast, Farwa provided an example of the educated members of a family 'converting' the uneducated ones. Farwa's mother was educated and wanted her children to be educated. Through the close interactions in an extended family, she could influence the other mothers in the family as well so that other girls in the family were also educated. In Farwa's family, unlike Ahmar's family, boys were already being educated. According to Bourdieu (1977), the *habitus* of an agent generates such strategies, which are aimed at 'the preservation or improvement of their positions with respect to the defining capital of the field' (Jenkins, 2002:85). Thus, Farwa's family already possesses a capital, that is educating boys, and they aimed at improving their position in the field by educating their girls as well; whereas Ahmar's family did not possess any such capital at all and therefore resisted it in order to preserve their position in the field.

It seems that when the mothers are educated, they are able to transfer this capital to their daughters, as in the case of all the three female participants (see Reay, 2000; Stevenson and Baker, 1987; Bogenschneider, 1997). They regard education as a weapon that will help their daughters fight the vicissitudes of life.

Shabana's story illustrates this. She had a nikkah (marriage contract) with her husband when she was only a few days old. Rukhsati (the ceremony of sending the bride to the groom's house to live there with him) never happened. Problems arose when Shabana wanted to study. Her in-laws wanted the rukhsati to take place, so that Shabana would

go to their house and live with them. But Shabana's parents made it clear that they wanted their children to study and they would not do Shabana's rukhsati since she was only a teenager then.

Shabana explains:

> My maternal family was educated, my uncles used to get their daughters educated so my mother had this interest in getting her daughter [Shabana] educated. She said that [her] children [Shabana and her siblings] should also study. My mother wanted that the problems she faced should not be faced by her children.

Not only do such educated mothers think, but they are actually able to develop more favourable conditions for female education in the field. The children develop a *habitus* which understands the importance of education. Farwa recalls: 'I had seen members of my family ... always busy reading, I saw my mother, my father, my sister, who was a poetess. They used to write, they used to read. I did not like that.' But then Farwa started reading and developed an interest slowly and gradually. Therefore the capital owned and the *habitus* developed at home eventually resulted in her obtaining a PhD. By contrast, the mothers of both the male participants are illiterate, which resulted in their sisters being uneducated as well.

Generally, my participants see education for the two genders differently. The education of girls is always less important than the education of boys. Shabana decided to give up the thought of doing an MPhil because the money it costs would be enough for the education of two of her brothers, which she found more important than her own. Neither of the male participants considers female education a priority (see Section 6.2 and 6.3). Therefore, when it comes to getting education, what matters is cultural capital and not economic capital. It seems that, in the case of my participants from economically low families, cultural capital can work without the support of economic capital (see for instance Reay, 2004a). However, lack of economic capital meant that my participants had to struggle a lot and face great hardships, but they were ready to bear this pain to get education. Bourdieu explained school success by the amount and type of cultural capital inherited from the family milieu rather than by measures of individual talent or

achievement (Reay, 2004a). Therefore, in order to implement Bourdieu's model of practice in the educational field, it is important to consider both capital owned and *habitus* developed. My research shows that cultural capital plays a significant role in the parents' decision of educating their children. However, it does not seem to affect achievement in the case of my participants since they struggled to gain education out of personal interest, and due to experiences during early and later socialisation (see also Dumais, 2002). This is further discussed in following sections.

The early socialisation of a child in the field develops *habitus*, due to acquisition of capital and a response to that. The next section will discuss the *habitus* developed by my participants in the field and its effect on their life.

7.3 *Habitus* developed through time

Habitus is primarily 'one's view of the world and one's place in it' (Dumais, 2002:45). *Habitus* can be anything between 'the language use, skills, orientations, attitudes, dispositions, and schemes of perception that children are endowed with by virtue of socialisation in their families and communities' (Lin, 1999:407). *Habitus*, as used in this study, is a subjective but not an individual system of internalised structures. Bourdieu (1977) argues, and I agree, that being a product of chronological experiences, dominated by the early life experiences which continue to structure and restructure it, *habitus* continues from restructuring to further restructuring. Therefore, whenever an agent moves to a new social structure with different recognised capitals, the *habitus* builds upon new structures and understandings of the field. Agreeing with Bourdieu, I found that the *habitus* of my participants developed mostly from the interactions in the family and in the village during childhood and adolescence. My participants, as they make further contact with the world and move to a different environment, shift away from the initial *habitus* and adapt to a new field.

The five young men and women in this study possessed different quantities of the various forms of capital which affected their attitudes and reactions to the world and life in general. Their possession of certain types of capital allowed them certain choices, as opposed to those available for the capital that they did not possess. But, from another

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perspective, the types of capital that they did possess limited their choices, since a choice that suits one type of capital might not suit another type of capital (see Reay, 1995a). Moreover the kind of capital in their possession and its quantity positioned each agent in the force field. Swartz (1997:73-74) declares that 'they become objects of struggle as valued resources'.

My participants formed their *habitus* through their particular socialisation within the family and their encounters with the outside world, typically in the village. Each of them had to face restrictions, boundaries and limitations imposed by their parents. Sometimes these boundaries were those of gender, as in the case of the female participants, when they were forbidden to do certain things because they were girls; and in others, the boundaries were those of age, as in the case of Abdur Razzak, who was not allowed to go out of the house on his own and play with other children. He understood the reasons of these restrictions much later. He says,

> Children used to go to filthy water, we were kids. There are many muddy fields and irrigation and sewerage ditches, as it is a *kacho* (rural) area, so we might fall. We were mischievous and could fall from heights etc, so they [parents] were worried … about death even. They were careful and did not want me to be hurt. One gets hurt by playing in shrubs; there are thorns ...

The worst thing for little Abdur Razzak was that other children in his village who did not study were allowed to play in the mud. So Abdur Razzak not only had to go to school but also he was not allowed to play in the neighbourhood. From the beginning, he was told that he was different from other children, children who play in filthy water and do not go to school. (This attitude of parents was also expressed by Ahmar, who noticed while still being a child that he and his brother were different from other children at school; see Section 6.2, Ahmar's story, for details). Abdur Razzak was told that he had to study and this proved very important later in his life. Later, he understood the importance of education and knew it to be the only solution of the financial problems of his family.

By contrast, Farhana did not listen to her mother when it came to playing in the neighbourhood. She always followed her whims. Though with the passage of time, her whims led her to a different direction. She explains, 'when I used to get scolded on going out, then in sorrow I would recite the Qur'an, read its explanations, I got more inclined towards it then'. And soon Farhana understood her mother's principles too,

> My mother was like this that she would not want us to go out a lot, girls should not roam around. Like, they are simple people who want their daughters to be respectable. They don't want to let us live as it is, she wanted us to spend life in an honourable way. She would never tell us to put make-up on or get a hair-cut. She never told us to change ourselves, she let us be the way we were [simple].

Her mother's attitudes during Farhana's childhood and teenage years (that she must grow up specifically as a *simple* girl, whereas she expected her mother to tell her about putting on makeup) left a clear mark on Farhana's life. She was not able to get settled with her classmates and colleagues from the city at university and when she had a job. She found herself to be different from them in many ways.

Farwa, however, continued to remain determined and assertive. She was a natural rebel. She did what she thought right, not what anyone would tell her, even if it were her mother. Her attitudes were encouraged and discouraged at the same time. On the one hand, her mother gave her a good hiding from time to time when she had overstepped the mark. On the other hand, she knew that her father and many male members of the family admired her tomboy behaviour. 'There were other girls who used to roam around with me. But ... I was pretty bold ... Because of my father and other male members of the family; when they saw me, they said, "Farwa is very bold, she fights with other children and wins." Then they appreciated that a lot ... .' This approval by at least some members of her family helped her later in life and enabled her to pursue her interests in spite of the many obstacles she had to overcome.

Thus the attitudes of parents and relatives helped shape some lasting aspects of the personality of both Farhana and Farwa and remained part of their *habitus* throughout.

Although Ahmar's childhood is completely different, the role of parental attitudes and expectations can be noticed in his case as well. He was responsible for everything from a young age. He, along with his brothers, helped his father in building their brick house. He used to work in the fields and, Ahmar says, 'when came the flowering season for cotton, we used to collect it and sell a kilo or so, to buy our books, and that would be it'. Accordingly he was never questioned about that, his father was too busy with his job (not in the fields) to notice. His mother approved because she knew that her sons wanted the money for their education and that they would not waste money on idle amusements, and, indeed, they never did. 'By internalizing the social structure and one's place in it, one comes to determine what is possible and what is not possible for one's life and develops aspirations and practices accordingly', Dumais (2002:46) suggests. Therefore, all my participants draw upon the actions and attitudes of their parents towards them while positioning themselves, and they all continue from there in their personal lives as well, when they have to make their own decisions.

All the three female participants said that their fathers love them dearly. Their mothers were from socially higher families than their fathers. Also the mothers of each of the three were educated, Farhana said:

> My mother's family … she is Qureshi. That family is also educated. My mother studied till 5th grade. Her father was a 'Sahib' (Sahibs are external inspectors at primary and secondary levels in village schools); there used to be Sahibs in those days. My grandmother is also literate; my maternal uncles [mother's brothers] are also educated. One of my uncles was a director, director in sports. He has retired now. The other one works in the railways department and another works in education.

Shabana said that her parents would not take them to weddings and other gatherings in the village believing that that would disturb their education. Even when Shabana was ill, her father would not allow her to skip school. 'In his opinion, if a child misses school once, it can easily become a habit ... .' Her teachers used to praise her example to other children. Thus the significance of education was an important capital transmitted at an early age to my participants, both female and male, despite the fact that the support for continued education varied later on. (This can be compared to Aqeel in the pilot study,

whose parents did not take his early education seriously, so that he quitted university even though his parents wanted him to continue).

My participants developed their *habitus* through early socialisation at home and in the village, and it continued to develop throughout their lives with more socialisation. Nevertheless the greatest impact remained that of the attitudes and expectations of parents and relatives during early life, and they will largely determine the character (*habitus*) of the adult person.

However, when *habitus* encounters an unknown field, the agents find themselves disconnected and in a vacuum. They then transform themselves and adapt as soon as possible to the requirements of the new field. This gives them a deeper understanding of the power relations and their own position in the field of power. When my participants moved from their home setting to university, they faced symbolic violence, resulting from the disjuncture. This is discussed in the next section.

7.4 Symbolic Violence

My participants plan to make a place for themselves in the existing social structure through getting higher education. Due to their particular cultural capital, my participants did not bring the kind of *habitus* with them needed in the city. They had the right attitudes and were very keen on getting an education but they were short of language skills and confidence to participate actively in university life (see also Lin, 1999).

The capital owned and the *habitus* formed from early socialisation onwards determine the strategies that agents implement in the field. In the field of education, the strategies activated by the parents of each of my five participants included their insistence on education and curbing all those activities which could prove to be hindrances to early education. This resulted in understanding the significance of education and continuous effort for getting education on the part of my participants. Still, in order to have more possibilities at hand and generate effective strategies to continue their education later on, my participants needed relevant capital. My participants did not have the right kind of

capital or not enough of it for what they wanted to achieve. Therefore they faced problems.

My participants felt themselves to be different from others because of their appearance or social standing. When Ahmar joined a college in the nearby city, he and other friends from his village felt embarrassed because they used to wear Shalwar Kameez, while the other boys were in trousers and shirts. Not just their western clothes but their coming from English-medium schools made Ahmar feel inferior. Similarly when Shabana joined university, her uncle told her, 'some people will come in Mitsubishi Pajeros, some will come in other big cars, some will have fathers who are professors there […] but you don't have to wish the same for your father. Just think of your studies, you don't have to pay any attention to all those cars and that show-off stuff'. When Shabana was at university, she noticed: 'everyone was from good families (economically and socially), it was just me who was from a poor family. But even then, I never let them feel that I am a villager or that I am poor'. This gave rise to *Split Habitus* (Bourdieu, 2003) (Bourdieu's humble family and his elite school developed split *habitus* and made a critic out of him who could see and talk about the injustices in society). As a result Shabana behaved differently in front of her university friends and her friends in the village. Farwa also reported the same.

The notion of *habitus* helped to expose the relationships of my participants and other people from their background to the dominant culture. Wherever they went; my participants were carrying their capital, esp. cultural capital, with them. This limited their choices. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence helps us to understand their resulting 'misery of position' (Bourdieu, 1993a). By accepting the rules made by the dominant class, the dominated class accepts that dominance (Bourdieu, 1984:165). By participating in the social order as it is, the dominated recognise that 'they are beaten before they start'. However, no other choice is available to them. They have to participate whether they like it or not.

Bourdieu (1986:244) very clearly states, 'the scholastic yield from educational action depends on the cultural capital previously invested by the family' and on '*type* and

prestige of educational institution attended' (Swatz, 1997:193; original emphasis). His theory of social reproduction and cultural capital affirms that the culture transmitted in the dominant class is supported by the educational system (see Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). This, in turn, means that members of the dominated class can never compete on an equal level with those of the dominant class, as their *habitus* is incompatible with that expected in school. Therefore, the dominated and the dominant 'do not compete from equal starting points; thus social stratification is reproduced' (Lin, 1999:394).

In the social hierarchy, all are competing in the same job market, which identifies and acknowledges the capital owned by the privileged class, since the rules of society are laid down by this class. All parties (teachers, students, curriculum designers, parents, job seekers, organisations, their selection boards and bosses) by and large take these rules for granted and consider them legitimate. This is an example of symbolic violence inflicted on the dominated class in general and on my participants in particular. My participants dealt with this symbolic violence by acquiring more symbolic capital, thus transforming their *habitus* and making it more useful in the new field.

The discussion in the next section will show in more detail how my participants manage to survive in the field, which is governed by laws which are designed to maintain their low social standing.

7.5 Logic of Practice

People inherit their social class (Sayer, 2005a), but it determines their personal, social, cultural and economic ranking. The social, cultural, linguistic and academic capital that my participants inherited had no symbolic value. My participants are aware of their disadvantaged and dominated position and want to move up in the social strata. Through 'new creative responses' (Reay, 1995a:356) to the changing social field they created a *habitus* which helped them to survive.

Choice is at the heart of *habitus*. But by default each *habitus* offers only a finite number of choices. That is why my participants had to develop their own ways of progressing through life. Abdur Razzak, for instance, chose his schools, made his own decisions and

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acted like a free agent except when circumstances forced him to leave university. On that occasion, he did not have any choice, at least in his mind, but to renounce higher education and re-join his family, which needed his support. He followed the current and flow of life as it came to him. Ahmar, by contrast, gave up contact with everyone at home. Shabana continued to be herself regardless of her social class. She mingled with other women and made lots of friends, though with a split *habitus* (behaving differently in her different environments). Unlike Shabana, Farhana preferred her own shell. However, their starting situation was not the same. Bourdieu (1981) discusses the adjustment made by agents between their 'subjective vocations', i.e. what they want to do, and their 'objective missions', i.e. what they are expected to do. They combine the two modes of behaviour, choosing the former when they can but obeying the latter when they have to. Therefore, in terms of Bourdieu (1990a), their *habitus* tends to produce acceptable behaviours in keeping with their capital and field and to eliminate all those behaviours which are incompatible with them. Thus 'practice has a logic which is not that of the logician. This has to be acknowledged in order to avoid asking of it more logic than it can give…' (Bourdieu, 1990a:86).

At other times, my participants went through moments of activation of their capital. Abdur Razzak activated his social capital and got help from the principal of the school where he studied. Ahmar gave tuition while being a student at the same tuition centre, activating his educational capital. Shabana made use of her *habitus*, her good nature, in settling down when she came to university. 'I make friends very easily with everyone. I am liked very much by all, given a lot of love. I don't know whether it's due to their pleasant behaviour or mine. But I make friends very easily even with passers-by in the street', explained Shabana. Lareau and Horvat (1999:39) stress that 'to be of value in a given field, social and cultural capital must be activated'.

Another way of adaptation to *habitus* is also visible in my participants, especially in Farwa and Farhana. When coming to the University of Sindh, each of them realised that 'there is a lot of difference in the environment of the village and the city. The village girls and the city girls are very different', as Farhana noted. Farhana was uncomfortable at university: 'I used to feel a little uneasy. Our social setup was completely different

and in the city the girls are of another type, they are different. I used to stay quiet, would not mingle much…' In her discomfort, Farhana adjusted her *habitus* by being quiet, as she realised that she could not socialise with the women at university. Shabana and Farwa, unlike Farhana, made themselves at home in the university and made some friends. Farwa had to become less assertive and stubborn in order to adapt her *habitus* to the new field. She said:

> When you are at home, you can do anything, your family will forgive you, owns you, but outside home it is not like that. There is always a punishment ready for whatever you do wrong (against the accepted ways/norms). So this brought changes to my personality. After that, the aggressiveness of my personality, lack of self-control, the feelings of inadequacy ... I took control of that myself and all these factors were responsible, the whole context helped me towards it [calming my aggressive nature].

My participants came from a disadvantaged socio-economic background; their *habitus* did not equip them with the skills and confidence needed to cope with the modern urban world. But, unlike their counterparts who gave up, they transformed their *habitus* through a 'creative discursive agency'. Flowerdew and Miller (2008:203) define creative discursive agency as, 'how individuals are able to initiate or take advantage of opportunities for the creative development of their discursive practices'. My participants are cast in a reactive role, due to the power of social structure: class condition, capital composition, *habitus* etc; thus, unable to initiate any positive action, some of them utilise their creative discursive agency in order to counterbalance the weight of social structure (for a supporting argument, see Collins, 1993). Ahmar and Farwa developed creative discursive agency to cope with issues of confidence, language skills and most importantly appearance and style. Through creative discursive agency both of them responded interactively to the demands of the social field and finally made a better position for themselves in society.

My participants were ready for the transmutation of their *habitus*, triggered by some personal or collective predicament in the lives of each of my participants. Ahmar knew about the quarrels in the village and, when he was slapped by a policeman, he decided to become an officer in the Armed Forces.

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Farwa knew that everyone in the family except her was fond of studying, but that was not enough to induce her to study in earnest. Several events moved her to change her *habitus* and study vigorously. First Farwa won a speech competition at school and received lavish praise. Later her elder sister began to study medicine and thereby set an example. As a result of that dual encouragement, she threw herself into her studies and now has a PhD and is an assistant professor of psychology.

Shabana decided to get divorced and, after overcoming various obstacles, succeeded. Now becoming educated was her only way to re-gain respectability and to prove herself.

The *habitus* of Ahmar, Farwa and Shabana allowed individual agency and when they applied it, they succeeded in transmuting their *habitus*. Abdur Razzak's *habitus* was deeply influenced by bigger social structures and therefore did not allow him enough agency to transmute it. What made him give up on the studies he had started were the demands and values of his old *habitus*, concerns not only for the poverty of his family but even more so for their safety, since they lived close to an area infested by dacoits, thieves and bandits, and the women and children of the family needed the protection of a young male. Abdur Razzak's father asked him to give up his education for the sake of his family but did not force him to do so. Abdur Razzak made his own decision. Thus, 'while the *habitus* allows for individual agency it also predisposes individuals towards certain ways of behaving' (Reay, 1995a:354-5).

My participants were trying to activate their capital and transform their *habitus* in order to gain access to education and thereby to more prestigious jobs (Reay, 1995a; Di Maggio, 1979). In spite of all these creative efforts, each of them was constrained by the limited choices available for connecting to her/his new environment. In spite of their limited capital and their resulting limited choices, my participants were able to transform their attitudes, dispositions, skills, and self-image, i.e. their *habitus* and social view. In this respect, my observations confirm Collins's (1993) view that individual creative, discursive agency (including activation, negation and transformation of *habitus* and capital) can be effective (though not always possible) in coping with one's social world

despite the larger constraining, reproducing social structures outlined by Bourdieu (1977).

7.6 Summary

This chapter has discussed my participants' lives with reference to Bourdieu's Theory of Practice. Bourdieu (1973) argues that transformation of *habitus*, the activation of existing capital and accumulation of more symbolic capital can provide ways to overcome the obstacles typical for people in deprived positions.

Socially and culturally, all of my participants carried similar capital when they entered the new field of university. Their capital did not carry symbolic value. Besides, each of them had a complex set of issues- problems, obstacles- to deal with when they arrived in the new social field (city, university, higher education). In their own families and villages, they were being dominated by parents and elders who were used to making decisions about their lives and did not like them to meddle with the decisions made. However, once they came to university 'symbolic violence' was imposed on a greater and much organised level. None of the capital they brought from home was acknowledged, but they accepted the challenge of competing with those having acknowledged capital.

While navigating their way through society and various social systems already existing, my participants not only utilised their existing resources (capital) but also transformed their orientation towards using those resources (*habitus*). They made choices available and suitable to their situations. With every new encounter in their environment, they modified their *habitus* by creatively using reason and logic or by activating their capital. *Habitus* helped to explore the possibilities that made my participants continue living in face of adversity, when many from their background give up, in order to achieve the life they aspired to. Thus, as Bourdieu says, their *habitus* continues to grow.

8

A Close Look at Individual Voices

In villages little girls do swim and we used to swim too. There used to be some boys with us as well. We were kids of course with childish thoughts so nobody stopped us. There was no restriction on that. They used to come and tell my father that your daughter keeps bathing all the time. The women of the village would do that. I got a lot of beating as well because I used to be out of home all day [smiles].

(From Farhana's Interview, a female participant)

8.1 Introduction

Gregory (cited in introduction of Conteh et al., 2005:xxii) says that ethnography deals with culture, but cultural practices are constantly changing. Therefore ethnography often needs a second methodology (in this case narrative analysis) to answer the questions that remain unanswered by the ethnographic rules, 'this is sometimes referred to as "multilayering" or a "multilevel approach" to our analysis'. I also apply the technique of narrative analysis to selected stories from the interviews in order to give the reader a flavour of individual voices. But more importantly, it would deal with those personal aspects of a person's life which were described in the review of literature earlier as one-to-one interaction, small-world lives etc (see Section 4.3). By analysing individual stories 'a world of practical interest to man, familiar world, a world taken for granted' would be explored (Luckmann, 1970:580). Like Schutz (1962) and Luckmann, I understand, despite the infiniteness of the world around, the individuals' interest in the routine of their daily life and its impact on their thought pattern.

The last two chapters presented the stories of my participants. They were gathered through life story interviews conducted in Sindhi. I transcribed and translated the interviews (see Appendix 9 for a sample). I then turned them into third-person narratives

in order to make them easier to understand (see Chapter 6). Transcribing an interview distances the transcription from the original interview. Translating the transcription into another language increases the distance, and even more so if the target language belongs to a culture which is different in every respect (see also Section 5.3.4.1). In Chapter 7, I discussed these stories and the original interviews in detail using Bourdieu's theoretical framework. Focussing on the details of the stories inevitably obscures their essence. To bring out that essence I conducted a narrative analysis of selected portions of the interviews, as I had done with the pilot study (Chapter 3).This will help readers to better understand the small worlds of my participants.

Narrative analysis will help my readers to understand the interaction of my participants with people and objects around them, as narrative analysis is accepted to 'take the perspective of the teller, rather than that of the society' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:250).

In this chapter, I shall discuss the literature of narrative analysis, I shall briefly discuss Labov's model of narrative analysis, which I have used for my narratives in this chapter and in my pilot study (Chapter 3), I shall analyse two extracts from the interviews of Ahmar and Shabana. Ahmar's story is characterised by issues of self-respect and motivation. His mother's slap was enough to convince him that in order to be respected by other people, he needed to get education. Shabana's story is based on her internal and external conflicts in the court room where there was a hearing of her divorce case; and how she remained steadfast to her plea. The chapter ends with a summary.

8.2 What is Narrative Analysis?

Bruner and Weisser (1991:129) point out that narrative and story-telling is one of the oldest forms of literature.

It is expected that the behaviour, tone and style of the narrator are part of an effort to be seen and viewed in a certain way by the researcher during a narrative interview. Narrative analysis, along with different types of discourse and conversation analysis, is a method of analysing the linguistic features and syntactic structures of narratives. Narrative analysis highlights significant structural patterns within speech or texts, and

offers useful insights into the differing styles of the narrators and their vision of their lives in their small worlds. The meaning, context and perspectives of the narrators become clear to the researcher (McCall and Wittner, 1990). This provides a better understanding of their interactions with people, objects and situations on a one-to-one level.

White (1981) explains that narrativity allows displaying real events with coherence, integrity and fullness. Denzin (1989) defines 'narrative' by the following features:

- It has a sequence of events,

- It has a unified plot (a beginning, middle and end),

- It makes sense to, and arouses the interest of, the narrator and the audience.

I do not agree with Denzin in the following point. I admit that any sequence of events with a beginning, middle and end can be a narrative. But not all narratives start at the beginning of their story; they sometimes start in the middle or with a climax or at the end. A murder story, for example, can start with the execution and then relate what led to the murder and then to the execution.

Coffey and Atkinson (1996:55) find that stories are 'highly structured (and formal) ways of transmitting information'. They also point out the creativity and distinctness in them. They say that the researcher can use narrative analysis to discover the order and style of presenting the events of the story along with the significance of those events in the life of the characters.

Coffey and Atkinson (1996) suggest that the analysis of the story can be function-based, context-based or structure-based defining their effects on the individual. Mishler (1986) notes that all approaches to narrative analysis deal with syntax, semantics and pragmatics but different investigators concentrate on different aspects. Labov emphasises structure. Agar and Hobbs (1982), emphasise referential meaning and coherence. Researchers follow personal tastes when choosing their model for narrative analysis. Table 8.1 shows the major schools of narrative analysis.

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- Holistic-Content - content of a single life story understood fully.
- Categorical-Content - content analysis by making categories and comparing more than one life story.
- Holistic-Form - plot and structure of a single story.
- Categorical-Form - stylistics and linguistic characteristics, metaphor, passive etc and their uses.

Lieblich et al. (1998)

Figure 8.1   Four Major Divisions of Narrative Analysis

I shall now discuss Labov's model and then apply it to two narratives (stories) from the lives of my interviewees. With the help of Labov's model, I explore structural aspects of the narratives I have collected. I do this in order to understand the impressions other people leave on my participants and to find out how different events affect their lives.

8.2.1 Labov's Model of Narrative Analysis

Labov and Waletzky (1967:20) define narrative as, 'one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which actually occurred'. Therefore, the main question posing to narrative analysts is how the sequence of words is related to the sequence of events.

Labov's model of narrative analysis, called Evaluation Model, is structure based. Cortazzi (1993) notes that Labov's model helps understand personal experience through internal structure of the narrative. Kearney (2003) arranged the models of Longacre (1976), Labov (1972) and Brooks and Warren (1949), all are structure based, in the form of a table (see Figure 8.2), in order to emphasise their similarity, though they were developed independently. Kearney stresses that individual styles and differences among individuals can easily be seen in their styles of narration through these frameworks.

Figure 8.2	A Comparison of Theories of Narrative Structure	
Longacre	**Labov**	**Brooks and Warren**
Aperture	Abstract	
		Exposition
Stage	Orientation	
Episode		
• Inciting moment		
• Developing conflict	Complication	Complication
• Climax		Climax
Denouement	Evaluation	
Conclusion	Result	Resolution
Finis	Coda	

<div align="right">Kearney (2003:137)</div>

I pointed out in Chapter 3, Section 3.5, that the models of Narrative Analysis by Labov (1972), Longacre (1976), and Brooks and Warren (1949) are based on Aristotle's ideal tragic plot. Labov (1972:369) explains, 'A complete narrative begins with an orientation, proceeds to the complicating action, is suspended at the focus of evaluation before the resolution, concludes with the resolution, and returns the listener to the present time with the coda'.The model is called 'evaluation model' because of Labov's emphasis on the evaluation in a narrative (Figure 8.3). Evaluation highlights the meaning of the narrative and clarifies the perspective of the narrator. The emphasis on evaluation in this model is an important reason for my choosing this model.

Labov (1972) admits that his model is simpler than the actual structures of stories. Therefore, Labov himself, and also Cortazzi (1993), Coffey and Atkinson (1996) and Kearney (2003), point out that these elements occur in a different order, some of them occur repeatedly, and others do not occur at all. Mishler (1986) especially notes the appearance of clauses signifying Orientation and Evaluation at various points. The presence and absence of the elements depend on the situation and reflect the narrator's

style. It also depends on the cultural differences between the narrators since stories are told differently in different cultures. In brief, scholars agree that it is not essential to find the construct exactly as it is presented by Labov.

Labov, 1972:369
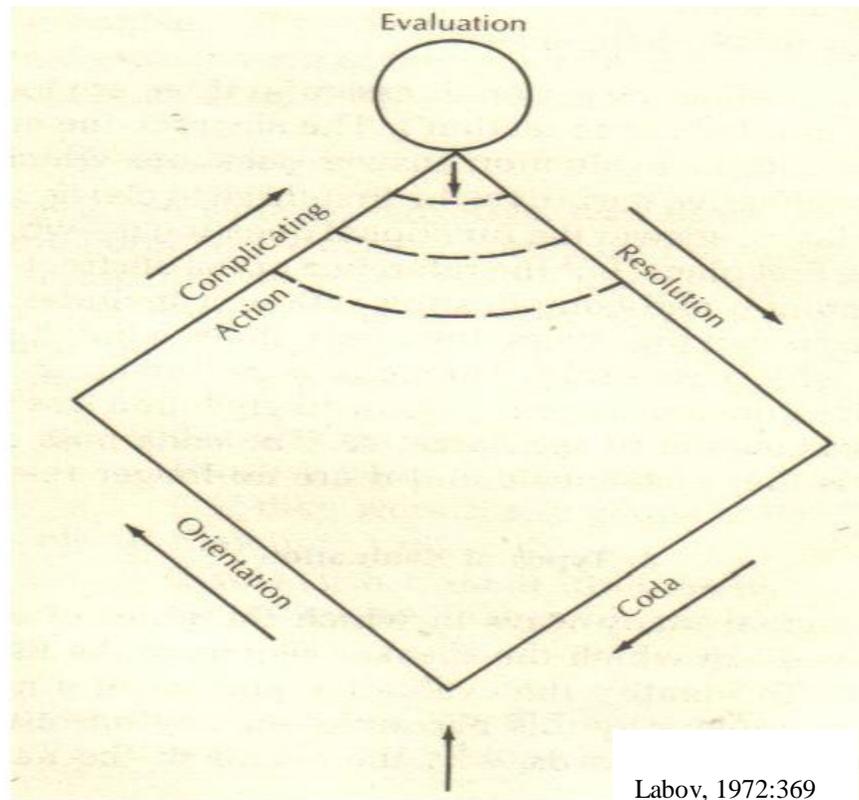
Figure 8.3 Evaluation Model of Narrative Analysis

It is therefore not surprising that the two stories analysed in this chapter are not as simple as Labov's model. All the elements in Labov's model are visible in the stories, but the plots are more complicated. My narratives belong to a very complex culture with a well-knitted structure of relationships, traditions, rituals etc. The individuals narrating these stories are surrounded by other people, situations and customs, all of which are more important and larger than they. I shall now analyse Ahmar's story, followed by Shabana's story.

8.3 Self-respect and motivation: Ahmar

Pendleton and Chatman (1998:733) discuss 'small world lives' as, 'lives that are played out on a small stage. The everyday reality of such lives is characterised by commonness or routineness. The small world lacks sweeping surprises or catastrophic problems, at least as these are commonly defined.' However, in their small-world lives, some events left marks so deep that they changed the lives of my participants entirely. One such event is analysed in this section. I will do this as follows. I shall

- quote (in translation) the story that I am going to analyse,

- describe the story,

- give the actual story as narrated by Ahmar in Sindhi,

- analyse the story.

> I … my age was of around four or five years. Then I ... I mean, my mother gave me this thought that 'you have to study.' I used to feel a fear, because my elder brother was in school then, he told me, 'dear, teachers beat.' This made me afraid; I thought 'they beat? Is it really like that? Probably it is all about that, probably it is all about beating.' I once went to school I saw a teacher slapped a student. I thought 'it is really all about that so I ran away in the break time.' After a lot of time, around a year, I grew older, then my mother said, 'we would not tolerate you at home any more'. But I was not going, I was not willing at all, so she gave me a sharp slap. And after that slap I … means, think of that as the first and the last slap I had [smiles]. I then went to school. It had been around two weeks at school when I realised that, I mean, 'it's not altogether like that. It's not like that for people who study.' After that I, my brother, who was there a year before me… my brother and his classmates were there since a year, within 2 to 3 weeks, I excelled them. That means, I became their classmate. In almost a year, I mean ... Almost ... in a year I passed two classes, class 1 as well as class 2. When I reached class 3, Mashallah I worked very hard, I was very keen to study since the beginning. I would turn on the light at night to study. After that I … my teacher asked me to teach class 1 and 2 both, like 'you teach both the classes.' There used to be just one teacher and there used to be five-six classes, I mean, class 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. I used to teach class 2 as well.

In this story, firstly, Ahmar builds this vision of the surrounding world through interaction with his brother, and interprets the entire process of education as based on beatings by the teachers. Next, Ahmar sees his self on the basis of interaction with 'important others', his mother in this case (Mead, 1934).

Ahmar came well-prepared and brought notes with him. I especially chose this part of his interview because he starts the interview with this story. It is evident in all the interviews that, while each participant started with her/his childhood, they all start with an incident which has remained very important in building their personality (their self and their *habitus*). Such incidents are the filters through which they see the world. Ahmar has two stories/decisions which are crucial to his life and determine what and where he is today. Firstly his decision to avoid contacting his family when he was at university (no doubt, his biggest and most important decision); secondly the story narrated above which I will analyse in this section. Ahmar fondly talks about how he started his education, how his interests developed and his motivation increased. All this is in the form of a complete story, another reason why I chose this part of the interview for closer inspection.

Ahmar uses English vocabulary during his narration in Sindhi. Such 'code switching' is common in Pakistani society. People from a good educational background use English words, phrases and sentences in their everyday conversation. English is a symbol of the educated classes.

As I collected the stories in Sindhi, therefore I would like the reader to have a look at the actual story narrated in Sindhi, presented below in Sindhi script.

آءُ، تقریباً چار پنج سال منھنجي age هُيُ، تہ مان... مونکي ٽورو معنيٰ اهو خيال منھنجي mother ڊنو تہ توهان کي پڙهٽو آهي، مونکي پوءِ، خوف هوندو هو، چاڪاٽ تہ منھنجو وڏو brother اسڪول ويندو هيو. هو چوندو هيو يار استاد ماريندا آهن. پوءِ مونکي اِهو خوف هوندو هيو، مون چيو ماريندا آهن! الاءِ چا چڪر آهي، الاءِ اهوءِ ٽيندو آهي، الاءِ مارِ ٽيندي آهي، مان هڪڙي دفعي اسڪول ويس، پو مون ڊنو تہ استاد هڪڙي شاگرد کي چ... ٿڦڙ هنئين، مان ڊنو تہ هي تہ واقعي اِئن يٰ آ، مان break مِ يجي آيس. پر پوءِ ڪافي time کان پوءِ، سال گزري ويو، مان وڏو ٿيس، تہ پوءِ منھنجي امي چيو تہ هاٽي توهان کي وڌيڪ برداشت نہ ڪنداسي گھر. مان نہ وجان پيو، willing يُ نہ هُيَس. هڪڙي ٿڦڙ مونکي ٺاهي هڪڙي هنيائين. انھي ٿڦڙ کان پوءِ مان معنيٰ اِئن سمجھيو اها پھرين ۽ آخري هُيُ. اُن کان پوءِ مان اسڪول ويس، تہ اسڪول مِ مونکي بہ هفتہ ڪي ٿيا هياتہ مونکي ڳالھ سمجھہ مِ اچي ويُ تہ معنيٰ اهڙي ڳالھ ڪانھي ڪا هروپرو، پڙهئ وارن ماٽن لاءِ ناهي اِئن. پوءِ آءُ پنھنجي پاءِ کي، جيڪو مون کان تقریباً سال اڳي اتي، منھنجو brother plus هن جا classmates سال کُ اڳ مِ پڙهن پيا، آءُ بن ٽِن هفتَن مِ اُنھن کي excel ڪري ويس، يعني انھن سان گڏ پوءِ انھن جو classmate ٿي ويس. تقریباً معنيٰ سال مِ... تقریباً... سال مِ بہ ڪري ويُ class 1 بہ ۽ class 2 بہ. جڏھن آءُ class 3 مِ پھچي ويُ ماشاء الله مان ڏاڍي محنت ڪندو هيس، پھريون يُ study جو شوق هو، رات جو بتي باري بہ پڙھندو هيس. تہ پوءِ مان، استادن چيو تہ هاٽي توهان class 1 ۽ 2 بنھي کي پڙهايو، بنھي کي توهان يُ پڙهاءِندا ڪيو. استاد هڪڙو يُ هوندو هيو، پنج چِہ class هوندا هيا معنيٰ class 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 پوءِ آءُ class 2 وارن کي پڙهائيندو هيس.

We now turn to the analysis of Ahmar's narrative.

Following the example of Kearney (2003), I am breaking the narrative into poetic lines in order to give it the rhythm of real speech, instead of putting it in prose form which would flatten it and make it lifeless. But I am not dividing the narrative into poetic stanzas though I did it in the beginning. I do not intend to count the lines in each stanza in order to find a pattern, because I find this approach less influential due to unpredictability in the breaking into lines. I did not try to impose any larger divisions since I agree with Kearney (2003:139) when he says, 'We can always be tempted to tailor such things to suit our purpose of finding neat patterns and correspondences'. I do not think that any such divisions would make the stories easier to understand.

1.

Orientation	I… my age was of around four or five years.	
	Then I ... I mean,	
	my mother gave me this thought that	
	'you have to study'.	4
Complicating action	I used to feel a fear,	
	because my elder brother was in school then,	
	he told me that	
	'dear, teachers beat'.	8
Evaluation	This made me afraid;	9
Complicating action	I thought 'they beat!	
	Is it really like that?	
	Probably it is all about that,	
	Probably it is all about beating.'	13
Complicating action	I once went to school	
	I saw that a teacher slapped a student.	
	I thought 'it is really all about that'	
	so I ran away in the break time.	17

2.

Orientation	After a lot of time,		
	around a year,		
	I grew older,	20
Complicating action	then my mother said	
	'we would not tolerate you at home any more'.	
	But I was not going,	
	was not at all willing,	24
Resolution	so she gave me a sharp slap	25
Evaluation	And after that slap I ... I mean ...	
	think of that as the first and the last slap I had.	27

3.

Resolution	I then went to school.	
	It had been around two weeks at school	
	when I realised that,	
	I mean, 'it's not altogether like that.	
	It's not like that for people who study.'	
.	After that I ...	33
.		
. Evaluation	my brother, who was there a year before me…	
.	my brother and his classmates were there since a year,	35
.		
Resolution	within 2 to 3 weeks,	
	I excelled them.	
	That means, I became their classmate.	
	In almost a year, I mean ...	
	Almost ... in a year I passed two classes, class 1 as well as class 2.	
	When I reached class 3,	41
Evaluation	Mashallah I worked very hard,	
	I was very keen to study since the beginning,	
	I would turn on the light (lantern) at night to study.	44

Resolution		After that I …	
		my teacher asked me to teach class 1 and 2 both.	
		Like 'you teach both the classes'	47
	Evaluation	There used to be just one teacher	
		and there used to be five-six classes,	
		I mean, class1, 2, 3, 4, 5	50
Resolution		I used to teach class 2 as well.	51

With this story Ahmar begins his interview and his life story. He seems to be contributing systematically towards the development of his story through his conversation (Cortazzi, 1993). The story is narrated in simple style. Though Ahmar made some pauses, here and there, the story went on smoothly. The reason behind that can be his notes that he wrote before the interview. Yet his narration was still spontaneous. With a relaxed tone and in a light mood, Ahmar laughs away the incident of being slapped.

The story is divided into three parts. In the first part, Ahmar gives the orientation and the complicating aspect of the action. His evaluation comes while he describes a complication. Ahmar moves on to the second part of story without giving any result for the first part. The second part forms a more or less a complete story which can stand on its own. This part contains orientation, complicating action, resolution and evaluation. The third part is the resolution of the whole story. From time to time it includes an evaluation by Ahmar. This is typical of his culture. Again and again he tries to make sure that the listener is following him and therefore explains the situations.

The first command of his mother to Ahmar was: 'You have to study'. This sentence of his mother is contained in the orientation, but it is also the focus of the whole story. Ahmar describes how he was introduced to going to school by his mother and his brother. The fear aroused because of his brother's views about beatings by the teacher complicates the situation. The complication grows because of his thoughts. Ahmar

thinks about the school environment even before going there for the first time, and he believes that school is nothing but being punished. His fears are at last confirmed when, on his first school day, he sees his teacher slap a child. Ahmar could not think of any other solution but to run away from school immediately and stay away for as long as he could. This shows a little boy's fear of school. He kept on avoiding school for a year. It seems that his mother sympathised with him and also wanted to allow him some more time at home before starting formal education. So she let him be for around a year. After that, however, she felt she had to put her foot down. When Ahmar resisted, she gave him a slap, thus resolving the issue from her side, i.e. telling him that not getting an education was not an option. Ahmar was now between a rock and a hard place: would he prefer to be beaten by his mother or by his teacher? His comments on the incident during the interview are quite extra-ordinary. At such a young age he realised that he was not respected at home, by his mother, because he was not getting an education. So he decided to study. Ahmar's evaluation at the end of the second part of the narrative explains: 'think of that as the first and the last slap I ever had'. Ahmar's mother started an issue in the orientation in the first part, and its resolution is presented in the third part of the narrative.

As Peterson and McCabe (1983:60; cited in Cortazzi, 1993:46) argue, the purpose of narratives is not only to convey factual information, but also, and more importantly, to communicate to the listener the importance of the narrated events and their expected interpretation. This is what Ahmar does time and again through various words that signify evaluation in the above story. Especially in the third part, he interrupts his story and gives an evaluation. Ahmar says that he was able to outperform his brother and his classmates, even though he was younger than they. The emphasis on his elder brother and his friends is significant (very effective emphasis). Ahmar was the youngest among the boys he knew at school, and he proved himself better than them. In the second evaluation, he appreciates his own effort and hard work. In the last evaluation of the story, he explains the situation in the school, which only has one teacher to teach five classes.

The story is very well formed. The purpose of the story is the importance of self-respect as a motivator for Ahmar. This is visible throughout his career. He discusses the main point of the story at length in the last part.

- He dedicates the whole first part to explaining his fear of school and justifying it. He explains it first, through his brother's words, which kept haunting him whenever he thought about school, and then through personal observation when he actually sees it during his first attendance at school.

- The second part of the story is the climax. After a year had passed, he was still unwilling to go to school, but his mother insisted. She used all means at her disposal to make Ahmar understand, by hook or by crook, that he could not skip school any more.

- The third part is falling action, fitting the rules of the Aristotelian ideal tragic plot. Ahmar puts a lot of emphasis on explaining and evaluating his early days at school. He explains how he worked hard and was rewarded for that.

Ahmar's main purpose of narrating this story is to talk about his motivation and that he was motivated by his wish to be respected. That's why, he tackles the topic at the beginning of his interview. He became aware of this desire first in relation to his mother and his family. As time went by, his craving for respect was extended to his classmates, his teachers and his friends.   .

The next section will analyse a story from Shabana's narrative.

8.4 Choice and circumstances: Shabana

Shabana started telling me about her marriage and her divorce case in court before the interview started. In the interview she described how she and her family got settled in the city after overcoming many obstacles. But her struggle in court to obtain her divorce was not over yet. At this point she starts the narration that I shall analyse in this section.

My case [in the divorce court] was still going on. We went to the judge one day, the boy [her husband] also came there, I did not know him so my mother told me 'He is your ...' [blushed with a smile]. I said 'I would not look at him'. But my mother insisted to look at him once at least. I said, 'No, what if I look at him and I like him then I would be in a fix'. My career, my family would be destroyed. When I looked at him I liked him, 'O God, what should I do' [I thought]. But ... as it is said, whether your heart desires or not, I had to get rid of him. Later it should not be like this that my parents [who were of old age and] my brothers were young, who would take the thorns out [of their lives] [literal translation]. Obviously the family would grow, my parents would not be supporting me. My life is already a mess so I should not [think of my husband], I thought. We went to the judge, judge said, 'You are married, you should talk to each other in solitude, whatever you may decide.' Then we talked in solitude, he said, 'Don't do like this, it's a matter of my honour, think of that, don't make people laugh at us, we would do whatever you would want.' I said, 'If that is the case then if you would marry me then I would not live with your parents.' He said, 'I would not leave my parents.' I said, 'Then neither will I.' I said, 'You would have to understand as well. The proposals had been fixed by our grandfather, he now lies in his grave.' So [my husband] talked of angels etc. I said to him, 'Look, grandfather is now dead but I am alive.' Our cases went on for a long time; the judge used to convince me a lot but then I told myself whatever may happen I would stick to my decision. I refused him. They used to say to me 'You really are a lawyer.' I used to think that even if nobody [lawyer] defends my case, I would do it myself. I even said to my lawyer, actually, the two lawyers talked amongst themselves, right! So, I said to him, 'Beware, don't talk to the other lawyer at all, you don't have to talk to him.' He was amazed that how the girl is talking, but I said, 'No, it's my right, if I won't talk then who else will?' Amma [mom] was scared what would happen. I said, 'Amma, we have not filed a case against them, they have done it against us, now I have the right. If they had not done it then I would have compromised but why did they defame me.'

Luckmann (1970:580) says, 'Living in his "small life-worlds", man may perceive the receding horizons of the *Lebenswelt* acutely or dimly' (Husserl's term *Lebenswelt* [German] means 'Life-world'). In the above story, Shabana explained how she met her husband for the first time - in court. She describes some of the incidents around that time. Her parents were worried about their daughter and their honour. They wanted her to abandon her wish for a divorce and join her husband. They tried hard to convince her in order to save their family honour. They were worried about what other people would say. While reporting another incident earlier during the interview, Shabana mentioned

that her mother spelt it out to her unmistakeably, 'You are a daughter, it does not matter if your life is destroyed ...' The 'conservative' attitudes of all the people around her made Shabana (like her parents) extremely sensitive to the opinions and expectations of her community. Her family honour (*izzat*) depended on what 'the neighbours' or relatives might think, say, or do; this troubled her deeply: should she conform, or defy them? Everyone, from the judge to her parents, wanted her to withdraw her divorce case. Therefore she stopped her lawyer from talking to her husband's lawyer. Shabana stuck to her decision and finally got her divorce. At another instance, Shabana also talked at length about how everybody tried to force her to join her husband. Her in-laws persistently harassed her family, and her parents nagged her and pleaded with her to save their family honour. Shabana stuck to her solitary decision without a soul supporting her.

Below is the story as it was narrated in Sindhi,

منهنجو ڪيس به هلي پيو۔ Judge وٽ اسان وياسين، هو چوڪرو به آيو۔ مان
چوڪري ڪي نہ پيٴ سنجاتان۔ امي چيو"اهو اٿئي تنهنجو"مان چيم"مان هن ڪي نہ
ڏسندم" چيائين، "چو؟ ڏس تہ سهي!"مان چيو"نہ اگر ڏسانس ءِ مونکي وٽي
وجي؟

پوءِ مان تہ قاسي ويندس۔ منهنجو معنيٰ جيڪو career آ، منهنجي family آ، اِهي
تہ تباه ٿي وجن! منهنجي family آ، پلا هڪڙي منهنجي زندگي برباد ٿي۔ ابا
مان هن ڪي ڏنو مونکي وٽي ويو! هاٽي چا؟ چوندا آهن نہ، دليو يا بي دليو، مونکي
هن ڪان جان چڏائي هئي۔ سياٽي اهو نہ ٿئي تہ منهنجا پيٴ ماءِ، پائر نندڙا، پوئي
ڪندا ڪير ڪيدو؟ شادي ٿيندي تہ پوءِ، ظاهري ڳالھ آ family تہ وڌي
ويندي نہ۔ منهنجا ماءِ پيءَ تہ مونکي ڪونہ support ڪندا، پوءِ منهنجي تہ
زندگي اِني تيل آ، تنهنڪري court وياسين Judge وٽ ويا سين۔ Judge چيو "نہ
بابا، توهانجي شادي ٿيل آ، توهان ڳالهايو اڪيلا، اسان وچ ۾ نہ ايندا سين۔

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توهان ڳالهايو، پوءِ توهان جي جيڪا به ڳالهه آهي." پوءِ اسان کي اڪيلو ڪمري ۾ ڇڏيائون. چوڪرو چوي "ايئن نه ڪر، منهنجي عزت کي ڏس، اسان تي ماٿو نه ڪلائي. جيئن چاهيندين، اوُنءَ ٿيندو." مان چيو "جيئن چاهيندم ته پوءِ تون اگر مون سان شادي ڪندين، ته پوءِ توکي پيءَ ماءَ سان گڏ نه رهڻو هوندو!" مونکي چيائين "مان پيءُ ماءُ کي نه ڇڏيندم." مان چيم، "پوءِ مان به پيءُ ماءُ کي نه ڇڏيندم." مان چيو، "ڏس، اهو توکي ڏسڻو پوندو." ته چيائين "ڏاڏي جا رشتا ٽيل آهن، ڏاڏو قبر ۾ آهي، پوءِ هُنَ کي چا چوندا ملاءِ، هيئن هُونءَ ؟" مان چيو، "ڏاڏو ته مَري ويو، مان ته جيئري آهيان، منهنجا پاڳ مون سان." مان چيو "نه!" پوءِ ڏاڍا cases هليا. تمام گهڻا هليا. Judge مونکي ڏاڍو چيو، ماٿن به گهٽو چيو. مان چيو ڪجهه به ٿي وڃي، مان پنهنجي ڳالهه تي قائم آهيان. پوءِ مان انهن کي چيو. پوءِ مونکي چيائون "تون واتَ وڪيل هُونءَ ئي آهين."

مان چوان پيءُ منهنجو case پليٽ ڪير وڙهي نه وڙهي، مان پاڻ وڪيل آهيان، مان پاڻ case وڙهندس. مان وڪيل کي چيم، پاڻ ۾ ڳالهاءِندا آهن نه وڪيل، وڪيل کي مان منع ڪيم. مان چيم، "خبردار جو فلاڻي هن وڪيل سان ڳالهايو اٿئي!" مان چيم مطلب "توکي هن سان ناهي ڳالهاءِتو." وڪيل حيران ٿي ويو چوڪري مون سان چا ٿي ڳالهائي. مان چيو "منهنجو حق آهي ، منهنجو right آهي، مان نه ڳالهائيندم ته ڪير توڙي ڳالهائيندو." منهنجي ماءُ چوي "نه، قري وڃ." مان چيو "ڏس نه امي، case اسان هنن تي نه ڪيوآ. اسان تي case هنن ڪيوآ. هاڻي ته مونکي اختيار آهي. هو case ڪن ته مان ايئن ڪيان ها ؟ هنن چو مونکي بدنام ڪيو."

As I have done with Ahmar's narrative, I am presenting Shabana's narrative with line breaks where she paused. In addition I have created 'stanza breaks' where Shabana moves from one structural aspect to another (e.g. abstract to orientation) or where she describes a new incident or thought. I have also added line numbers for easy reference. My main purpose is to investigate the overall structure and determine how effectively

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Shabana is able to narrate the story by following that structure. Now follows Shabana's story structurally presented.

Abstract		My case [in court for divorce] was still going on.	1
1.			
	Orientation	We went to the judge one day,	
	Complicating Action	the boy [her husband] also came there,	3
		I did not know him	
		so my mother told me	
		'He is your ...' [blushed with a smile].	
		I said, 'I would not look at him.'	
		But my mother insisted to look at him once at least.	
		I said, 'No,	
		what if I look at him	
		and I like him	
.		then I would be in a fix'.	12
.			
.	Evaluation	My career, my family would be destroyed.	13
.			
	Complicating Action	When I looked at him I liked him,	
.		'O God, what should I do' [I thought].	15
.			
.	Evaluation	But ... as it is said,	
		whether your heart desires or not,	
		I had to get rid of him.	
		Later it should not be like this that	
		my parents [who were of old age and]	
		my brothers were young,	
		who would take the thorns out [of their lives].	
		Obviously my family would grow,	
		my parents would not be supporting me.	24
	Resolution	My life is already a mess	
		so I should not [think of my husband], I thought.	26

2.

Orientation	We went to the judge,	
	The judge said, 'you are married,	
	you should talk to each other in solitude,	
	whatever you may decide.'	30
Complicating action	Then we talked in solitude,	
	he said, 'Don't do this,	
	it's a matter of my honour,	
	think of that,	
	don't make people laugh at us,	
	we would do whatever you would want'.	36
Resolution	I said, 'If that is the case,	
	if you would like me to come with you,	
	then I would not live with your parents'.	
	He said, 'I would not leave my parents.'	
	I said, 'Then, neither will I'.	41
	I said, 'You would have to understand as well.	
	The proposal had been fixed by our grandfather,	
	he now lies in his grave'.	
	So [my husband] talked of angels etc.	
	I said to him, 'Look, grandfather is now dead	
	but I am alive'.	47
Coda	Our cases went on for a long time,	
	judge used to convince me a lot	
	but then I told myself whatever may happen	
	I would stick to my decision.	51

Coda	I refused him.	52

Evaluation	They used to say to me	
	'You really are a lawyer.'	
	I used to think that	
	even if nobody [lawyer] defends my case,	
	I would do it myself.	57

I even said to my lawyer,

actually, the two lawyers talked amongst themselves, right!

So I said to him, 'Beware,

don't talk to the other lawyer at all,

you don't have to talk to him'.

He was amazed that

how the girl is talking,

but I thought 'No, its my right,

if I won't talk then who else will.'   66

Amma (mom) was scared

what would happen.

I said, 'Amma, we have not filed a case against them,

they have done it against us,

now I have the right.

If they had not done it

then I would have compromised

but why did they defame me'.   74

The structure of Shabana's story is simpler than that of Ahmar's. However, due to individual and situational variations, internal structure and function of narratives are bound to vary (Labov, 1972, Longacre, 1976; cited in Cortazzi, 1993). In Shabana's story, we have an abstract of the story right at the beginning. This abstract comes from the second half of the sentence preceding the story. In the abstract, Shabana states that she is going to talk about her court case. The entire story describes two scenes in the court room (see Table 8.4). The first depicts Shabana's internal conflict and the second her external conflict with her husband. The first scene is Shabana looking at her husband for the first time and the complication arising from that. There comes a simple orientation to the situation of this story by describing the setting in court where her husband also attends. The complication starts when Shabana's mother asks her to look at her husband. The tension builds from paragraph to paragraph. The complicating action is building up layer upon layer and keeps progressing. The complication reaches its climax when Shabana looks at her husband and likes him. Shabana regularly refers back

to evaluate her actions, thoughts etc. She described her choices to me. Eventually she made the well-considered decision, that she must continue with her divorce case and stop thinking about her husband (or the pleas of her mother), since her life was already in enough of a mess as it was. She didn't need a husband and in-laws to make it worse.

The second scene is the conversation between husband and wife. Shabana gives an orientation: the judge asked them to talk to each other in private and decide their future together. Her husband asked her to live with him in the house of his parents.

That was a complication which had to be resolved. Shabana tries to resolve it by demanding that she and her husband live as an independent nuclear family, in their own house and not in the house of his parents, where she would be in a minority of one, surrounded by people who for years have shown how vindictive they could be, where she would be a breeding machine and a drudge, and where her mother-in-law would have the whip hand of her. In Pakistan and India, mothers-in-law have an even worse reputation, and can be more violent, than in European culture. Her husband refuses that compromise, which is conceived on equal terms for both of them. He does not want to leave *his* parents. Shabana argues, 'if you don't want to leave *your* parents, then why should I leave *mine*?' But he insists on the customary arrangement that the wife joins the extended family of the husband. This was not acceptable to Shabana because she knows how dangerous it would be for her and how utterly powerless and helpless she would be in that situation.

The coda to scene 2 is that the court proceedings went on for a long time but Shabana decided to stick to her decision.

'I refuse him' is the coda of entire narrative. The final evaluation is a flashback; Shabana tells me how she behaved at different times. Unlike in Ahmar's narrative, where flashback is a part of the story with its own elements, the flashback of Shabana is kept as evaluation. This flashback does not help to move the plot along; it is only a description of her past actions which she narrates after giving the resolution of the actual narrative. These flashback scenes came as an evaluation for the interviewer.

Abstract	1. Orientation Complicating action Evaluation Complicating action Evaluation Resolution	2. Orientation Complicating action Resolution Coda	Coda	Evaluation
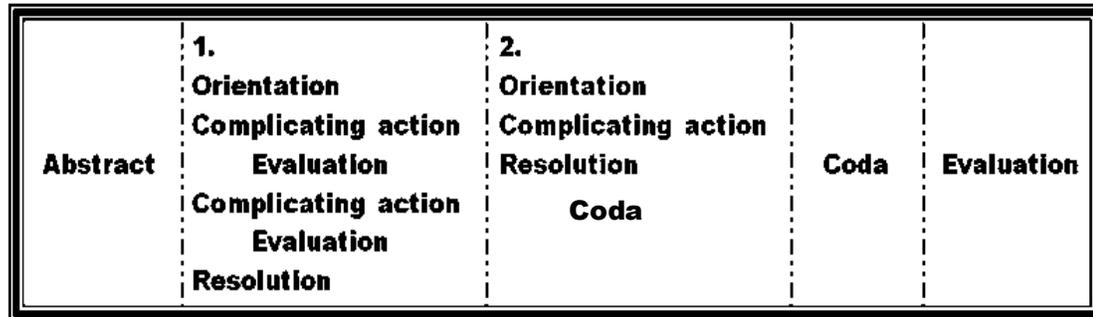
Figure 8.4 Narrative Structure of Shabana's Story

Her evaluations are beautifully placed and narrated. Shabana gives a vivid picture of the situation in the second evaluation of scene 1. She describes that, if she were to join her husband, both her parents and her own newly formed family would suffer. She foresees 'thorns' in the lives of her parents and siblings. 'Thorns' are symbolic markers used by Shabana to describe the problems and hardships in her parents' lives. She also knows that she will have children one day, and she is concerned about them. Shabana is quite blunt when she reminds her husband that their grandfather has passed away and they should be more concerned about living people, i.e. herself, than about the dead.

Many such cases exist in our society, when a promise once made to a now dead father or grandfather has to be kept when children have grown up and when keeping that promise in circumstances which have now changed may ruin their lives. It is a matter of priorities: whose rights are more important, those of the dead or those of the living.

In the final evaluation, she explains how she once warned her lawyer because she feared some underhand dealing. Likewise, she explains the situation and her stance and the reason behind it to her mother, consoling her that divorce is the best, or probably the only, option for them.

Shabana's is an economical and powerful style of story-telling. The narrative fulfils its function quite well. In these two scenes, Shabana vividly portrays what everybody thinks about her divorce and how everybody implores her to drop this plan and to preserve the honour of the two families. Nobody approved of Shabana's decision to get

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a divorce, in spite of the fact that she had been so badly tormented by her in-laws. This situation shows how the society suppresses women and the parents of a daughter. For her husband, the fact that his wife was asking for divorce impinged on his personal honour. That is why he requested her to withdraw her divorce petition, but he was not ready to accept her conditions, to offer an acceptable *quid pro quo*. Shabana, the most vulnerable character in the story, is a female, a married woman asking for a divorce to which she is legally entitled. The whole narrative shows a social order biased against women. It shows how Shabana bravely faces both the internal conflict going on in her heart and mind, and the external conflict in the court room.

8.5 Summary

Self-narration has been a common and popular genre since time immemorial. The behaviour, tone and style of the narrators, along with their usage of words and framing of sentences, placement of phrases and clauses, mark their individuality. Through their style, narrators try to send their message to the audience. Through narrative analysis, the interaction of the narrators with, and their understanding of, the world around can be explored.

There are different types of narrative analysis. They can be classified on the basis of content and structure. All types deal with both content and structure but they differ in how much emphasis they place on one or the other of these two aspects. For analysing my data in this chapter, I used Labov's model of narrative analysis. It is called 'evaluation model' and emphasises structure. It was inspired by the Aristotelian ideal tragic plot. The components of this model are abstract, orientation, complicating action, resolution, evaluation and coda.

In this chapter, I analysed an excerpt of Ahmar's story taken from the beginning of his interview. It is a self-contained narrative and reveals a motivator for many of his actions throughout his life. It was his mother's first slap that made him want to go to school and get educated. Ahmar describes how desire to be respected motivated him to want to learn and study. The story comprises all the elements referred to by Labov, but it has a more complex structure.

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I then analysed Shabana's story. Though simpler in style, Shabana's story reveals deep-rooted cultural trends in Sindhi (Pakistani) society. Here situations are larger than individuals; customs are more important than human life. Shabana's language, her blunt style, and her minute descriptions make the scene come alive in front of the reader.

These narratives resulted from their self-contemplation and introspection. They show

- the relations and interactions which my participants have with other individuals in their social environment (Mead, 1934),

- how they appreciate their social experience, accept their social roles, consider their social limitations, sympathise with their social positions,

- the small world lives of my participants and the reality of their everyday life.

By their interaction with each other and the world around them, my participants transformed themselves through a process of meaning making.

9
Concluding thoughts

When I was in the 8th class, all of a sudden my father's business was shut down. After that my father told me that I had to take the responsibility [of the entire house]; this caused a great change in my life. I was a young boy then, what could be expected of me. Father asked me to leave studies and start working at some shop. Then I made my decision. I told him that I would do whatever he would be asking for; I would work in the shop and would go to school as well. From then on, I used to be at school till 2 o'clock and after that till 9, 10 or even 11 at night, I was at the shop [where I worked]. Then at night, for an hour or so, till 12 or 1, I used to study. At that time there came a great change in my life.

(From Abdur Razzak's Interview, a male participant)

9.1 Introduction

This research studied the lives of seven young men and women collected through life story interviews, two in the pilot study and five in the main study. What they have in common is that they all come from poor rural backgrounds and all aspired to raise their standard of living (except one from the pilot study). My intention was to interpret the meaning that these persons give to the social world around them. The study looked closely at the decisions they took, at how these decisions affected their personalities and at their outlook on life. It discussed the strengths and weaknesses, chances and choices, hardships and struggles that they encountered during their lives. In short, this study explored their entire lives.

I started this report by describing personal experiences which made me want to do this study. In the next chapter I detailed the context of my research. I stepped into the field to acquire some first-hand knowledge and conducted a pilot study, which gave a clear focus to my research and enabled me to determine the key research question. It also helped me in choosing Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism as the theoretical framework for my main study. Blumer's work induced me to have a closer look at the small-scale interactions between individuals and I

decided to do this with the help of Labov's model of Narrative Analysis. After this preparation, I was able to collect the data for my main study and to analyse them. The chapter on methodology discussed the entire process in detail. I conducted the life story interviews in Sindhi (my native language and that of my participants). I transcribed them and translated them into English. The content of the interviews needed to be presented in a comprehensible way for my Western readers, since they came from an entirely different culture. I did this by writing them down in the form of third-person narratives. In the succeeding chapters I discussed the stories in the framework of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Labov's Evaluation Model of Narrative Analysis. These two methods of analysis enabled me to expose the interaction of my participants with the bigger social structures, and in the small worlds of everyday lives respectively.

This chapter forms the conclusion of the thesis.

9.2 My Theoretical Understanding

Through the pilot study I discovered some of the main concerns of people in rural Sindh trying to free themselves from poverty, e.g. strength to carry on, desire to be socially accepted, hope for a better future, limited choices etc. They led me to Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and to the theory of Symbolic Interactionism (SI). Bourdieu's conceptual triad and his theory of practice helped explain the issues in the larger social field of this study. SI, on the other hand, helped to clarify the impact of individual interaction.

My sociological position is that structure and agency can only be comprehended in terms of each other. Both Blumer (1969) and Bourdieu (1984) hold that the relation between individual and society is reciprocal. I presented Bourdieu's views on structure and agency (the much debated divisions in sociological research) and explained how Bourdieu uses the concept of *habitus* to present a middle path between structure and agency. He thus rejected the objectivism-subjectivism dichotomy. On one hand, *habitus* is an embodiment of structure and, on the other, rejects structuralist determinism and, with a limited number of choices, provides agency (Krais, 2006; Nash, 1999; Reay, 2004b). This notion of *habitus* is important for my theoretical position. In the case of SI,

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my stance is that, even in the most extreme conditions of life, there is space for individual choice. But choice is limited by the social structures within which people live. People always face social constraints, but they handle them in different ways. Human behaviour is neither fully determined by structure, nor is it completely free. When human beings act they can make some free decisions, but their choices are limited. Human behaviour is, therefore, partly determined by structure and partly free.

'For Bourdieu, every individual is a socialized individual' (Krais, 2006:129). *Habitus* consists of various dimensions of the social structure and slowly develops throughout the lives of individuals. Their *habitus* acts within the limits of their social context.

However, people have some inertia, a tendency to continue with whatever is incorporated in them since early socialisation, or transform it. Therefore a *habitus* acquired and found useful in a village environment may continue to show its steering power when a person moves to a city environment and impede a person's actions in that new environment.

Habitus, therefore, is a product of early socialisation but changes with later experiences. This feature of *habitus* makes it creative, and not just a rigid set of rules. The tendency of *habitus* to be in constant flux, to be ever changing, makes it a method (Reay, 1995a, 2004b). Change and continuity are equally significant in SI. In SI, 'self' is considered to be in an ongoing process of formation through choice of action. Human behaviour is not only a response to external structure, but it is formed through a relation between subject and object. Socialisation plays an important role in the development of self, even though it depends on the role of the individual and the social distribution of power and knowledge. However, it is only later in life that the options become available. Therefore, SI can also expect human behaviour to be creative, emergent, and often unpredictable.

Bourdieu's framework explained the power struggle in the field, with the symbolic violence inflicted upon my participants both at home and in society. By using their creative discursive agency, my participants tried to cope with the problems. In doing so, they transformed their *habitus* in order to acquire more symbolic capital. *Habitus* is

therefore at the heart of my theory. I used *habitus* with the understanding that it adapts and accommodates, and also transforms itself (Reay, 1995b). It was an attempt to

- extend the concept of *habitus* to explain aspects of a complex Sindhi society, and

- to address the issue of agency among the rural and deprived classes.

Habitus and cultural capital are conceptual tools which revealed a blend of possibilities, promises and problems for examining and interpreting the lives of the participants under study.

By contrast, Symbolic Interactionism (SI) views reality as contextual. SI depends on such constructs as role-taking, understanding the situation and awareness of context. It discusses how meaning-making and interpretation are significant in one's views of the social world. By interacting with people one can understand the social phenomena and all social dealings. Between every action and reaction is interpretation. No reaction is the predictable result of an action. The observer or recipient of an action has to interpret the significance of the action and then has a choice of how to respond.

The two theories helped me in understanding different aspects of the lives of my participants. Theory of Practice helped in looking at the bigger picture with power, dominance and struggles as the basis, and SI helped in viewing the small worlds of every-day interaction, which were equally important in making choices. The two theories supplemented each other, as Bourdieu's framework lacks individual interactions and meanings, and SI lacks appreciation of the social structures and social change etc.

9.3 Reflections on the Research and Research Questions

> The beginnings of the ethnographic study are often rooted in anger, even fury, and, as such, are partisan. A chance encounter with a book, a classroom incident, a teacher, child or parent's remark will often be enough to spark a deep-seated anger or an unanswered question from deep in our own past, which initiates the study. (Gregory, cited in the introduction of Conteh et al., 2005:x)

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My study also resulted from such autobiographical incidents discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis. However, the pilot study helped focus the research. Thus, the big question was:

How do some people from poor rural backgrounds in Sindh try to progress to a higher standard of living?

Although the importance of established social structures in the world around my participants is undeniable, their daily interactions clearly helped to form their understanding of their disadvantageous social position. Through their interactions with the people around them, and their interpretations of people's attitudes and behaviours towards them, my participants realised the importance of education, money, power and social status. They realised that they had little or nothing which could earn them the sort of respect they wanted from people around them, especially from people in authority, e.g. the village policeman, the *wadero*, the relatives, who were economically better, perhaps the money lenders or the shopkeepers. Obviously they could earn respect from people who were equally poor, equally weak by being morally good, but not from the people whose respect they wanted. Therefore, they decided first of all to get education to improve their unfavourable position in the pecking order of society. Through education they expected to move towards a better life.

When discussing the stories of my participants, I found that the development of *habitus* starts with early interactions within home and surrounding. As a person is further socialised, *habitus* adapts and is transformed. In the case of each of my participants, they transformed their *habitus* by using creative discursive agency and by activating the capital they possessed. They acquired more symbolic capital, which enabled them to deal with symbolic violence. During this process, a limited number of choices were available and utilised or not utilised.

Cultural capital is a non-economic asset inherited from parents etc. This study demonstrated that cultural capital is more valuable than all the other forms of capital because it enables people to protect and improve their positions in the field. The most important cultural capital transferred to my participants is the significance of education

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(not the education itself). It is the knowledge that education is important, that it is the key which opens innumerable other doors (to jobs, to income, to contacts with influential or useful people, to new friends, etc).

From their parents, my participants inherited this idea that education is important, though their parents were not as educated as they are. But they, the parents, had learnt about the *value* of education from their own parents. That was the cultural capital which they were then able to pass on to their own children, and to activate, when the time was ripe. Their children were able to imbibe that knowledge from their earliest days.

Cultural capital is more important than economic capital for people who want to get education. The parents' (and other elders') cultural capital, e.g. the education they have received and their attitudes, help to determine the decisions they make about educating or not educating their children. This is how cultural capital is passed on from generation to generation. Sadly, in the field my participants belong to, education of women is always considered less important than the education of men, even though mothers are better positioned than fathers to pass on education (cultural capital) to their children, including boys. This fact impedes educational and economic advancement over generations until one woman breaks, like Shabana, the vicious circle.

A person's view of the world and her/his initial position in it depend on the actions and attitudes of their parents. Given half a chance, people do what they like to do, but there are many occasions when they have no option but to do what others expect of them. Through individual creative, discursive agency, individuals can transmute their outlook of the social world and their position in it, despite the larger social constraints. Such a transmutation is possible because of the kind of day to day interaction which affected the thinking of my participants. I managed to figure those out by using the theory of SI.

In order to understand the social reality from the participants' point of view, it is essential to look at the everyday happenings in their lives, including a slap, a word of praise, a question, a remark, any ordinary incident. The daily interaction of my participants with the individuals and artefacts around them lead to the process of

meaning making and interpretation, which not only helped them in understanding their position in the society but also deciding their future stance.

In the course of analyzing the data, the following key issues emerged which are recast as three questions below. The first question was:

Why is it important to improve their social status?

The only purpose for my participants in life was to acquire a life which they did not have before. They wanted to be respected as human beings and wanted a life which enables them to make ends meet and not to have to worry about the basic necessities of life. They wanted to escape from the miserable conditions in which they and their kith and kin had been living before. They simply no longer wanted to be the wretched and the miserable that would be either pitied or agonised. Rather, they wanted a life which would give them respect in the village and in the society generally. My participants unanimously agreed education to be the only way to help them avoid a menial life for themselves and their families. And therefore, my participants preferred to struggle in the face of adversity despite their underprivileged position because they wanted to improve their social position.

This leads to the next question:

How do familial and social backgrounds affect their lives?

My participants belonged to the deprived classes. They have inherited their social status and they are expected to transfer it to their future generation. The environment, both at home and in the village, left a lasting impression on their personalities. On the one hand, the attitudes at home and in the village made them aware of their low social standing and, on the other, they helped them to decide their path in life.

Their background equips them with the basic understanding of which path to take by giving them an appreciation of the significance of education. However, it could not provide anything else which could help them in getting education. Therefore, regardless

of the support from home and village, instead of staying where and in whatever condition they were born and submitting to their fate, they took the first step towards improving their standard of living and their life style. They made those difficult choices, which were important for their future.

This leads us to the last question which is:

To what extent is it important not to quit?

The lives of my participants show that consistency and perseverance, determination and persistence are very important in life. Despite all hurdles and hardships, my participants didn't give up. They chose paths which were not usually taken by people around them.

Despite the non-supporting and often discouraging attitudes at home and in the village, my participants moved on. Though some times they were wavered from their path to progress by their personal failures or their responsibilities back home; yet they never completely gave up. They kept revisting to their goal of progressing towards better life and they continue to be determined not to quit. They have decided to continue their struggle until they achieve a better standard of living for both themselves and their families. It is their unflinching willpower and their persevering desire to improve their lives that is responsible for fueling the continuity of their effort, otherwise anyone in their place with slightly less determination would have turned back and given up the thought of progress keeping the hardships they faced.

9.4 Implications

Since I am using a case study approach, this study treats the experiences and circumstances of each participant as individual, and they should therefore not be considered as universal. My research focuses on individuality. This is an ethnographic study, and its purpose is to give voice to my people. Therefore this research, being a qualitative investigation with in depth data acquired through life story interviews, lets us hear the voices of common people from rural areas of Sindh. I hope that this project will

bring them to the attention of the wider academic community. This is the most important aim of this study.

The findings of this research may prove useful in future. I hope they will

- not only help readers to understand the living conditions of underprivileged people in Pakistan in general and in Sindh in particular,

- but also provide a concrete example of the efforts and struggles which people from deprived backgrounds throughout the world have to make to improve their living conditions.

I said 'throughout the world' because what is happening in rural Sindh is just one manifestation of what happens in many countries throughout the world.

My study shows how social structures and policies and practices created by the dominant people to serve their purpose impact on the experiences of the subjugated. Such insights could prove particularly useful. The implications of my research fall into three categories:

- context (Sindh/Pakistan),

- theory (Theory of Practice and Symbolic Interactionism) and findings (Habitus and Narrative analysis)

- and further research

9.4.1 Implications in the Pakistani Context

There seems to be a lack of research in Pakistan in which life story interviews are used. My thesis might create a precedent and encouragement for using this technique. There is hardly any research investigating education in rural areas of Pakistan, especially in Sindh. Findings from this study are useful for understanding the role of home culture and the socio-economic background of people from poor rural areas. This study gives hope even to poor people who have few opportunities. Even such people can sometimes

take steps which enable them to overcome tremendous obstacles and can improve their lives and embark on worthwhile careers.

This study can help policy makers, socio-economists and the government of Pakistan to look into factors which cause many of the problems in the lives of people from rural areas. They can then introduce plans and programmes for rural development which can improve economic conditions of the rural people and the education system.

9.4.2 Implications of Theory and Findings

This study applies my theoretical framework comprising Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism to my research data from the Province of Sindh. This can be considered as a contribution to theory since my research has extended the application of the perspectives of both Bourdieu and Blumer to an Eastern context and applied it to a very different culture. It shows that Bourdieu's theory can be applied to a vast range of areas. However, it had to be somewhat adjusted since no framework can entirely fit and explain all human actions. That is why I also used Symbolic Interactionism to supplement or extend Bourdieu's framework. My particular contribution to theory is using the two techniques together in such a distinct context.

An important aspect of my participants' lives has been explored through narrative analysis. Structural analysis of their narratives in this thesis made it necessary to translate them from one language and culture to another. They are still quite coherent and are compatible with the pattern of Labov's model. This suggests another important proposition namely that narrative analysis, especially through Labov's Evaluation Model, may be possible in other world languages as well. However, a narrative analysis was made only of two extracts from the main study and three from the pilot study, due to time and space limitations. Analysis of more extracts would provide deeper understanding of the personalities and styles of the participants and also of the transferability of Labov's model to other languages and cultures.

9.4.3 Implications for further research

Like all research projects, this study is limited in its scope, and further research is needed. This research used case study and life story interviews, which provided deep insights into the experiences of the participants. However, since I had only seven participants, my insights were limited to the actions of seven people. My research gathered the stories at a particular time in the lives of the participants. But nobody ever steps into the same river twice, as Greek philosopher Heraclitus says. Therefore, if a similar study into the lives of the same participants were to be conducted, they would have moved ahead in their lives, more and richer data could be gathered, and they could add to the existing understanding of their lives or reveal completely new perspectives. Likewise, adding a few more participants could also prove to be very interesting.

Since the participants of this project came from a relatively homogeneous background, rural and poor, it may be interesting to replicate this study in an urban setting or with participants from both a socially and economically sound background and a poor background.

Life story interviews were my only tool for collecting my data. Interviews with family members and friends and participant diaries could also provide interesting insights. Likewise observations in the field can also prove worthwhile for future researchers.

Sindhi society has complex structures, employing heterogeneous criteria of social differentiation, of which class, gender, religion, language, and the rural-urban dichotomy are easily visible. However, this study does not explore any of these in depth. There is scope for future research taking different directions. It will be necessary to extend Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* to explore each of these in different ways (Cicourel, 1993; McClelland, 1990; Sayer, 2005b; Weininger, 2004; all cited in Reay, 2004b). Especially the gender differences prevailing in my field are worth investigating, as they prescribe different roles for males and females in rural areas. Since gender did not come as a strong division in case of my data, I suggest that future scholars might like to do gender focussed studies which would be a completely different work. This might require use of a different theory and of different tools of data collection and analysis:

'To ask one question is to look in one direction, to ask a different question is to look in another direction ... The questions lead the focus of a research' (Gusfield, 2003: 128).

Finally, this research raises certain issues which can be addressed in future research; for example:

- rights versus duties,

- choice in decision making,

- the role of the co-education system in encouraging female education,

- children's lack of interest in education,

- parents' lack of support of children who want to study,

- the significance of curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

This study also paves the way for future studies exploring the bigger social issues, like the feudal system, the different quality of educational provision through private schools versus government schools, or schools in cities versus village schools, class-based society, language empowerment etc.

9.5 Concluding Remark

The most important part of my research is my participants. They come from a deprived environment and heroically try to pull themselves by their own bootstraps out of the morass they are in. The thesis rests on those emotional moments of the interviews when my participants laughed with joy, or shed tears while telling their stories. Their enthusiasm, their eagerness and their seriousness in telling the best and the worst of their experiences showed their willingness to tell the world about their lives.

My research interpreted the lives of my participants, guided by the key research questions. It highlights the hardships and struggles that they faced because of their poverty. It showed that the family and village may, or may not, be supportive, but each

person has to make his own experiences, his own choices, forge his own path and his own fortune. My participants continued to advance towards better living conditions because they wanted it so and because their desire was strong enough to overcome all obstacles. For each of them, education was a stepping stone to a more satisfying life, and it helped them to improve their social standing and that of their families.

Being a purely qualitative study, studying five cases in depth (apart from two for piloting) is one of the greatest strengths of this study. Studying the lives of these young people gives great insights into the day-to-day concerns of people from their background. It also helps to explore the trivialities of life, those minute details which any other kind of data would not reveal. It helps to interpret situations each of the participants confronted and appreciates the choices each of them made.

Habitus formed the core of my findings. My participants carried limited symbolic capital from a restricted field of early socialisation with their position as dominated agents. However, as my participants grew up and moved into the new fields of higher education and jobs, they were confronted with the symbolic power of the dominant class in those fields and used creative, discursive agency to transform their *habitus* and improve their life chances (see also Section 7.5). They managed to find at home a little of the cultural capital that they needed as a starting point in order to seek social success through their own additional creative efforts. I described the symbolic violence meted out to my participants and discussed it in terms of their logic of practice. Each of my life stories describes a process of learning. My participants learned as they were exposed to these bigger social structures and processes and through small scale interactions. They discovered the impact of power, the role of education and of social approval. Through a number of incidents in their small worlds while interacting with people around them, they recognised the choices available to them.

So I come to the end of my study and of my discussion of my participants. But they are still alive, alone, in their 'struggle for survival' and seeking a better life. Shabana stands for all of them. Some people have to bear not only their share of the burden, but the whole burden all by themselves.

It had become obvious that Shabana's visions of a good respectable life and those of her mother were utterly incompatible. The two women would have loved to compromise but they just could not. No compromise was possible. Society, in its rigidity sanctioned by tradition, would not have permitted it. It was a truly Hegelian tragedy: Shabana had two conflicting duties, the duty to develop her Self and the duty to follow the precepts of society. Like Antigone, whichever duty she might choose, she would offend against the other, become guilty and attract punishment or at least suffering. But she had to choose. Her choice was heart-rending.

Shabana was alone with her choice, her decision. Shabana wanted to console her mother in this terrible hour when she stepped into a vacuum, utterly alone. She alone had made her decision, and she alone would have to bear the consequences. I conclude my thesis with the words she spoke to her mother (at the time of her divorce case), and they are still echoing in my mind:

> Don't worry Amma (mom), let all the worries be mine.
> Forget about me. Just think that you never gave birth to a daughter.
> Or think that the daughter you gave birth to, is not linked to you anymore.
> Don't worry about what our neighbours might say about me.
> What do they know about your anguish or mine?
> Forget about them and their heartless gossip. Who are they to judge us?
> You did what you could for bringing me up. I love you, Amma.
> Only Allah is entitled to judge, and Allah, unlike our neighbours, is merciful.
> Don't think about what will happen to me. Allah will take care.
> Don't worry about the future. Forget our disagreements.
> Let Allah take care. I love you ...

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Appendix 1- Maps of Sindh during Different Periods of History
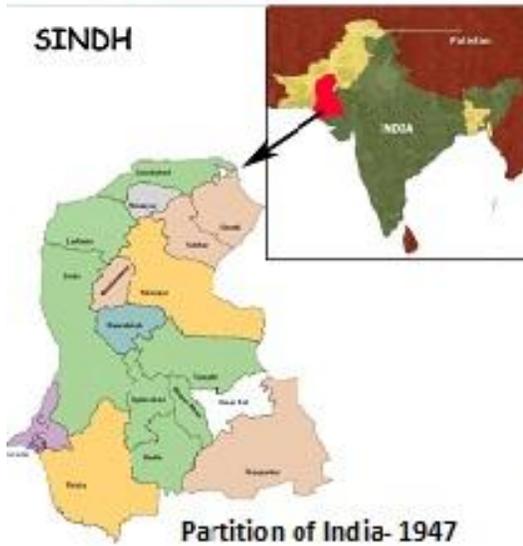
Appendix 2 - Education System in Pakistan

Public education system is under the Ministry of Education. It is free for everybody at primary (till Class 5) and secondary level (Class 6 to Class 8) and even at university level, it costs very little in comparison to private education. Except in the cities of Hyderabad and Karachi, the primary education in all government schools throughout the province of Sindh is in Sindhi language (in the rest of the provinces even primary education is in Urdu, which is not the mother tongue of the local people, because none of the other provincial languages is developed enough). In Sindh alone, English and Urdu are introduced at Secondary level. The condition of schools in villages is poor, with sometimes only a single teacher teaching all the classes, with all children either sitting on floor in one hall or in the open.

Privately owned educational institutions (schools, colleges, universities) are independent. They are very expensive. The better the institute is the more will it cost, tearing the society apart. The standard of education in the private sector is far better than that in the government sector. Every private school has its own syllabus until Class 8. Both English and Urdu are taught from the beginning, and many private schools do not teach Sindhi at all.

After which for Class 9 and 10 (Matriculation or SSC) all the students from government and private schools appear in exams with uniform question papers taken by Board of Secondary Education from the syllabus prescribed by the Board. And for Class 11 and 12 (Intermediate or HSSC), they appear in common exams conducted by Board of Higher Secondary Education. However, recently private schools have introduced the Cambridge system of Examination, in which both syllabus and exams are decided and conducted by Cambridge University, UK. These are 3 years of O-levels, instead of two years of SSC and 2 years of A-levels instead of 2 years of HSSC. The students following Cambridge system do not usually head towards government universities for higher education. They, rather, intend to study in private universities or go abroad (usually UK, USA and Canada) for education.

After their Intermediate (HSSC or A-levels), students take a path in a university for Bachelors (undergraduate degree) from a public or private university. Yet the greatest concern is that graduates from both of these education systems look forward to the same job market which of course chooses the best among them.

Private Exams:

Apart from studying regularly in schools, colleges and universities and appearing in exams conducted by respective Boards and universities, students can also opt for private exams. For their SSC, HSSC, Bachelors and Masters, these students study on their own without any regular teaching. They register in one of the schools or colleges and appear in the exams. The exams for private student (who do not take regular classes of their courses) are conducted separately with different question papers from the regular students. However, the syllabus is same. The written exams of SSC and HSSC are validated (sponsored) by concerned boards and those for Bachelors and Masters by the universities. However, they are conducted in affiliated colleges (examination centres). When compared to the UK, it can be considered as a sort of Distance Learning Programme, or with external students at universities, though not exactly the same.

The system of private exams is introduced, so that those young people who work full-time for the financial support of their families or those who do not have access to academic institutions can also continue with their studies. However, anyone can study privately regardless of their socio-economic and academic status. Many students do one degree regularly and other privately by only appearing in the exams, in order to have a better chance in the job market.

Everyone, degree awarding universities and exam conducting colleges, know that external students do not study seriously. The students bring notes etc with them and find answers and copy them from their textbooks or guides. Some examination centres do not allow students to cheat quite as openly as that. Therefore, candidates have to be careful and hide from invigilators, otherwise they will do 'copy case', as we call it here. But others allow cheating, guide books, notes, etc, openly, and sometimes the invigilators

even help students in finding the answers because students have not studied for a whole year, and many of them do not even know where to find an answer in the book.

Appendix 3 - Classrooms in Different Types of Schools

Appendix 4 - Nikkah, the Islamic marriage

Islamic marriage is a civil contract, called Nikkah, between husband and wife. When this contract has been signed by both parties (prospective husband and wife) and by their agents (e.g. their parents), then the partners are fully married with all rights and obligations of a married couple and their off-spring will be legitimate. The Nikkah agreement is therefore more than an engagement (the promise of marriage). Being married (e.g. by Nikkah) is not the same as consummation of the marriage. It also does not necessarily mean that the people so married immediately live together. This is quite unlike the perception in Western (non-Muslim) countries, where the word 'marriage' immediately conjures up images of living together.

In villages, amongst the uneducated people, such a Nikah is deemed to exist between the two children, even babies. It is never ever considered that a Nikah would yet have to take place at a later date. By Islamic tradition, a Nikah is only valid if both partners consent. But such subtleties are often ignored by the people and even by the religious authorities in the villages. Child marriage, such as this is, does not mean that the two partners (the children) automatically live together as husband and wife. This can happen years later and not before both partners have reached puberty.

Living together in Pakistan and similar countries means that the girls go to the house of their husband or in-laws, since girls when getting married join the family of their husbands. The time when a married girl joins her husband will be determined by the parties concerned (parents, in-laws and perhaps the girl herself) and is a separate and conscious decision. It is not automatic. This move of a married girl to her husband's house for the first time is marked by a special ceremony called 'Rukhsati'.

Letting agents (e.g. parents) make marriage contracts on behalf of children who are so young that they cannot even remotely understand the significance of the event and cannot give informed consent has its parallel in the common Christian practice of paedobaptism (the baptising of babies) through which they are received into the church.

Appendix 5 - Major distinctions between Ethnographic and Experimental enquiry

Ethnographic Enquiry	Experimental Enquiry
Phenomenological base	Positivist base
Seeks to understand human behaviour from participants' frame of reference	Seeks to learn facts and identify causes
Systematically observes recurring patterns of behaviour as people engage in regularly occurring activities	Sets variables that need to be understood in relation to each other some (independent) can be manipulated to determine their effects on others (dependent)
Identifies and describes phenomenon from beginning to end across cycles	Test relationships
Develop hypotheses grounded	Preformulates research

Kamil, M.L., Langer, J.A. and Shanahan, T. 1985:27

Appendix 6 - Child Marriage in Medieval Europe

Child marriage in order to form alliances and protect family property was also common in feudal families in medieval Europe. (The traditional preference in *ordinary* Muslim families for marrying relatives is similarly motivated.) Examples:

- King Richard II of England was 15 when, in 1382, he married his first wife, Anne of Bohemia, aged 16. After she died, he married again, in 1396. His new wife was Isabella of Valois, aged 6. He was 28 by then. The marriage was concluded for political reasons and it was hoped that it would help to end the Hundred Years' War between England and France.

- Saint Elizabeth of Hungary (= Elizabeth of Thuringia) (1207-1231), the patron saint of many an English Elizabeth, Liz, Betty, Eliza, etc, was promised in marriage when she was four years old. NEW ADVENT, the Catholic Encyclopaedia, writes: 'In 1211 a formal embassy was sent by Landgrave Hermann I of Thuringia to Hungary to arrange, as was customary in that age, a marriage between his eldest son Hermann and Elizabeth, who was then four years old. This plan of a marriage was the result of political considerations and was intended to be the ratification of a great alliance which in the political schemes of the time it was sought to form against the German Emperor Otto IV, a member of the house of Guelph, who had quarrelled with the Church. Not long after this the little girl was taken to the Thuringian court to be brought up with her future husband and, in the course of time, to be betrothed to him.' (Source: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05389a.htm accessed on 30 March 2013).

- Chaucer's Wife of Bath, an ordinary woman (she owned a cloth-making business) was 12 when she married the first of her five husbands.

Appendix 7- Seven Moments of Qualitative Research

Moments	Period	Focus	Output
The traditional period	Early 1900s – World War II	Offered valid, reliable and objective interpretations	Researchers wrote objective accounts which reflected the positivist paradigm.
The modernist phase	Post-World War II – 1970 and still present today	Social realism, naturalism and slice of life ethnographies	Formalization of qualitative methods. Rigorous qualitative analysis.
The blurred genres	1970-1986	Symbolic interactionism, constructivism, naturalistic inquiry, positivism and postpositivism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, critical theory, neo-Marxist theory, semiotics, structuralism, and feminism.	Diverse ways of collecting and analysing empirical material. Computerization was influencing data management and analysis.
Crisis of representation	Mid-1980s	Anthropological challenge, critical feminist theory Issues of validity, reliability and objectivity became once more unsettled and open to discourse.	Writings became more reflective. Issues regarding gender, class and race emerged. Writing becomes a method of inquiry through successive stages of self-reflection.
Postmodern period	Late 1980s-1990s	A struggle for making sense of the crises.	Struggle to represent the 'other'. Reflections on the responsibility of social researchers strives to punctuate all texts.
Postexperimental period	Late 1990s-new millennium	Fictional ethnographies, ethnographic poetry and multimedia texts.	Researchers seek to connect writings to the needs of society.
The future			

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2000b:12–18; cited in Tobin G.A. and Begley C.M., 2004: 390).

Appendix 8 - The Map of Interviews

Interviewee*	Date of Interview	Length of Time	Language**
Ahmar	29/07/2010	49:24***	Sindhi
Abdur Razzak	13/08/2010	1:33:07	Sindhi
Shabana	17/08/2010	1:44:50****	Sindhi
Farhana	17/08/2010	57:50	Sindhi
Farwa	19/08/ 2010	1:31:39	Sindhi

* Interviewees are arranged in the order the interviews were conducted

** Although the language of the interview was Sindhi, the interviewees were using English vocabulary, as they commonly use in their everyday life.

*** Ahmar had rehearsed his story prior to meeting for the interview and he brought notes for the interview to remind him of events and incidents.

**** Shabana's was the longest interview.

Appendix 9 - Sample of Interview Transcription

<table>
<tr>
<td colspan="4">
<p align="center">a. LIFE STORY INTERVIEW WITH: Abdur Razzak</p>
<p align="center">ON: 13/08/2010 AT: 10:00 am</p>
</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.
#</td>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I was born in Samdhan my father brought me up, my parents. My relatives suggested that I should be sent to a private school. I got admission and received concession in fees there. I was studying at Pir Rajan's school, he is son of Pir Illahi Bux and Pir Mazhar's [Education minister] brother. He was retired core commander. I could not continue in the school because they were raising fees. This was in 2001. My father wanted to stop my education then but due to my interest he agreed to let me continue in another school. By that time many private schools had started in the nearby town of Bhan Saeedabad. The school I went to, was up till 5th class, so they wanted to take me in 5th whereas I had already passed my 5th, so I was not ready to waste one year as I was not weak in studies. I did not go to school for few months, then my cousin got me admission to another school in 6th. My life changed due to my education and my father is responsible for getting me educated and bringing me to this stage of life. Even now I am thankful to him but if he were alive he would have got me more education. While studying in 6th, my father got me a job at a shop of motor bikes to study and learn the skill at a time. I worked for around three years. Then one day, the principal of my school saw me working, so he assured me</td>
<td></td>
<td>Father is very important and is present in everything he did or did not do.

Though his father wanted to discontinue his education yet Abdur Razzak is thankful to father for agreeing to his decision of continuing education.

Strength to continue/struggle.

Mehran University is Engineering university and Sindh University is the one all my participants belong to, it has a variety of disciplines.
Probably talking about self-finance. In government</td>
</tr>
</table>

| that on passing matric he would give me job in the school. He used to give me Rs. 2500-3000 salary. I used to work in school and take tuitions and did intermediate. Then I gave entry test for Mehran University and Sindh University. In Mehran I was short of few marks and they were asking for 10,000. But I could not afford. I got admission in Mathematics department at Sindh university. I studied for a month or two hardly but I realised that my family had financial problems. My father used to say it is up to you, but I decided to go back. I gave test for Benazir Youth Programme, and I got selected to be trained as ECG Technician. It was one year training in Nawabshah and on completing it I returned to the same school and became clerk till date. | | universities in Pakistan, seats are divided on the basis of merit and self-finance. The students on self-finance pay a lot more (10-15 times more) than those on merit every year.

Father did not encourage him to study. No family support in favour of higher education. |

b. LIFE STORY INTERVIEW WITH: FARHANA ON: 17/08/2010 AT: 11:00 pm			
S.#	Participant	Researcher	Comments
1.		You don't have to tell me your name. Please start.	
2.	Ok. Our origin is, I mean, I belong to a village we started our education there where there was not even a school for girls. We had to go to the same school with boys. Me all my sisters, we are seven sisters, we all studied there at our village. My father was a teacher and my paternal grandmother belongs to a landlord's family. My grandfather		She studies in boys' school, that is something she feels like starting her interview with. The caste difference is important in her life.

	is a Pathaan and my grandmother is Thebo.		
3.		How was the system of your household?	
4.	We have a lot of freedom in our home. Like its there in the villages that you are not allowed to go out of the house, it was not the case with us. We used to roam around. We went to study. We studied till the 5th grade at our school then after that we went to a nearby school. We used to go there on foot, it was 6 miles away. We studies there for 6, 7, 8 class. We completed 6th to 8th there and then there was Mehar city, 3 miles away from our village. We used to go there on a tango (horse-cart), studied there with other girls. After that there is another district Khairpur Nathan Shah near our village, there used to be a boys' college. I studied there. After studying from there I got admission in B.Pharmacy in Sindh University. I studied there for four years. I found that very tough, the annual system there was difficult. Many students used to leave but I could not leave from there. I was very fond of medical, wanted to be a doctor. Because of that I went into B-Pharmacy. When I completed B-Pharmacy, I applied for jobs etc. I did not get a job then that's why I did Masters. I also did an internship at Karachi in Sewaliogy, it's a pharmaceutical company there. After		Mehar is a town/ small city.

	that I went into Public Administration.		
5.		You have got a Masters in Public Administration?	
6.	Yes I did my Masters in Public Administration, in Human Resource Management. There was a law passed in the times of Musharaf by the local government. I contested in that and won a project. I became a UC, Cousellor. Then our project came- Senan Farm Water Management Project. I applied for that, and the interview, no, the test was taken and I was 11th on the test. Interview was taken then, it was taken by Sabhago Khan Jatoi. I got selected in that for five years. Five years got completed then they kicked us out. And now we are like this, unemployed.		
7.		Oh… please recall the time of your birth. How was the atmosphere of the house? How many other siblings were there?	
8.	I did not have brothers then. My grandmother was wishful that a boy be born, She used to keep saying that there will be a boy, there must be a boy. Like it is a tradition in villages that there should be a son.		Same as Farwa

9.		It's not just in villages, it's also in the cities. It's so in our part of the world everywhere.	
10.	Yes, I was third among my siblings and my brother was born after me.		
11.		Oh… I am also third and there is a brother after me.	
12.	After me there was my brother and after him I have this sister [her sister came with her for the interview but she was sitting in a different room at the time of the interview]. She is also educated. Everyone has a Masters degree at our home.		

Glossary 1 - Terms from Sindhi/Pakistani context

Alhamdulilah: Thank God

Amil: Government officers before the days of British rule in Sindh.

Autaq: A guest room for male guests, usually found in houses in towns and small cities in Sindh, with an entrance from the street and another from inside the house.

Bania: Rich Hindu traders and bankers who used to lend money on interest.

Bazaar: Shopping market

Bride price: Money the groom's parents have to pay to the bride's parents for giving them their daughter. It is an established custom in many communities, but not as widespread as dowry. Bride price turns a daughter into an asset for a family.

Charpoys: The equivalent of a camp bed in Pakistan and India, and they are in daily use in almost every household. They consist of a wooden frame on four legs (char = 4, poy = legs) and ropes strung tightly across the frame. Sindhi word for Charpoy is Khatt'a.

Dowry: The bride's parents have to give money or other assets to the groom and his family. A daughter is a liability in communities where her families have to pay a dowry when they want to 'marry her off'.

Hafiz-e-Qur'an: One who has memorised the whole Qur'an. They are respected greatly, as the religion says that a Hafiz-e-Qur'an would have not only his, but also his parents' sins forgiven.

Hari: The cultivator, peasant or tiller of land.

Imam: Prayer Leader.

Inshallah: By God's will, God willing, If God will.

Kacho: Rural, an area where there are ditches, dunes and swamps, open drains etc.

Mashallah: Praise the Lord

Muhajirs: Immigrant from India at the time of partition of India in 1947.

Namaz: Prayer

Nikkah: Ceremony in which marriage contract (Nikkah namo) is signed by both bride and groom and their witnesses (in villages usually no document is signed, rather it is word of mouth). This is similar to the ceremony in church in Christianity.

Pakistan Resolution: On 23 March 1940, a resolution was passed that Muslim majority provinces will be carved out of India and will form an independent Muslim country.

Panchaait: 'Fiver-Committee', a council of village elders.

Partition of India: On 14 August 1947, British handed over the Indian sub-continent to its people, and ended British rule over it, yet they divided the land into two countries, Pakistan and India.

Qur'an: Muslims' holy book.

Rukhsati: The reception given by the groom and his family, in which bride is given away. After this ceremony bride goes to her husband's house to live with him. No physical relation is expected to exist before this ceremony between husband and wife, even if they have signed the marriage contract.

Sahibs: External inspectors who come to conduct exams, both oral and written, at primary and secondary levels in village schools and confirm that a child can move to next class. Also they come for school inspection annually to check the progress of school and children.

Shalwar Kameez: A loose trouser and long shirt (National dress of Pakistan).

Surmo: A black powder, put in eyes with the help of thin metallic rod called sarai, it gives the look of eye liner or mascara

Tasbeeh: Reciting prayer on a rosary, counting the beads, a form of Muslim worship.

Wadero (also Zamindar): Landowner (Zamin = land, dar = owner), who hire poor people to cultivate his land.

Glossary 2 – My understanding of terms used in the thesis

Agent: Individual, anyone who is part of the society and has to stick to social norms.

Capital: Assets available for use in the production of further assets. In Bourdieu's terminology, these include social class, customs and traditions, friendships etc, apart from money and other material things. Because these are also expected to benefit or at least place an agent in the social hierarchy.

Creative, discursive agency: Activation, negation and transformation of *habitus*.

Dispositions: A spectrum of cognitive and affective factors: thinking and feeling etc, everything from the classificatory categories to the sense of honour.

Field: Any one social space with accepted social norms, which are equally accepted by all agents as the rules of life in that field.

Habitus: Dispositions that are formed through early socialization, however, continue to develop and change throughout life.

Interpretivist approach: A research approach through which researcher gathers information from the participants and interprets it from the perspective of the participants. Interpretivists deny generalisability in social science research.

Matrices: Enclosures within which something originates or develops

Middle class: Non-manual occupation, being a civil servant or having any white collar job in public or private sector.

Participant's frame of reference: Looking at the data/field from the participant's point of view, as in interpretivist approach.

Piloting: Administering the plan through a trial group (two participants in my case) before launching into the main study.

Reflexivity: Understanding the role of researcher and her/his significance in the process of research.

Reliability: The condition when a test measures consistently, regardless of any physical conditions (a positivist approach).

Social space: The whole world or practical space of everyday life.

Subjective interactions: People react to other people in a subjective way and that their responses are not based on objective events but on their perception (interpretation) of these events.

Symbolic Interaction: Understanding the action of any individual by the interpreting the action and reacting to the interpretation.

Triangulation: The use of two or more methods of data collection or data analysis in a research study.

Trustworthiness: Trusting the words of the participants and accepting the data provided by them without doubt in its truth.

Validity: When a test measures accurately what it intends to measure, it is valid (a positivist approach)