

# Beyond physical presence: the real essence of community

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The study of Naila Kabeer strongly and clearly illustrates the fact that being a resident in a locality is not equivalent to being a part of the community. In this study, she considered the reason for the home-working preference of the Bengali women in the London fashion industry. It was found out that even if the immigrants are not present in Bangladesh, they are more strongly oriented towards their former community, if not completely tied to it. Thus, Bengalis feel isolated in the London community hardly feeling that they are a part of it. The widespread discrimination and racism in the UK further restrict the Bengali to develop a sense of belongingness in their new locality. The Bengali fully retained their culture and beliefs while working and living in London. This is reflected in the decision-making process within their families. Kabeer noted that there is an " overarching presence of 'the community' as a factor in shaping the lives and choice of the Bangladeshi women and of their families" (303). Almost all the decision undertaken by the Bengali is always affected by their concept and strong linkage to their community of origin. Bengali women's home-working decision, socialization, activities, and others are almost carried out because of their traditions. Thus, even if these immigrants are physically absent from their native land, they carry with them this " community" by showing its presence in all their actions. In contrast to Mexican and Central American immigrants, Bengali immigrants are not able to form a sense of belongingness in their new community. These new findings are consistent with the concept of an imagined community introduced by Anderson. An imagined community, as the term implies refers to a " virtual" community that exists only in the mind of the individuals forming it (Chavez 219). The Bengalis, in their mind, maybe living

in an imagined community. Their absence in Bangladesh does not hinder its influence on them nor prevent them from associating themselves in that community. In contrast, their presence in London did not necessarily assure their feeling of belongingness and inclusion in it.

Being a part of the community should not be based on the physical presence of an individual in the locality. Being a part of the community implies a deeper bond-something which holds the members together. It means being able to belong in the community and share its essential features such as tradition, culture, and lifestyle.