Chapter-5.

Labour, Gender and Exclusion among Roma Gypsy: Making a Case for Comparison

In the earlier case-study discussion, set in Pune in India, the changing dimensions of social exclusion of a particular group of urban municipal workers was explored. This example of case study shows how locally generated processes of identity-based social exclusions are articulating with internationally driven neoliberal policy prescriptions, leading to new forms of economic exclusion that, in turn, intersect with long-standing structural conditions that reinforce social exclusion. The second illustration of exclusion of Spanish Roma gypsies observes the problem most commonly faced by Roma/gypsy populations as racism and discrimination, low levels of education, high unemployment, health standards well below those of the mainstream population, and very poor housing conditions. Roma Gypsies are originally from different European regions, ethnicities and brotherhoods with community support and solidarity networks. In other words, Roma Gypsies perpetuate as the chronically poor, disadvantaged, economically challenged, exploited, stateless, anarchic, and unstable group. The condition of under development has not only persisted across historical time periods, it also extends spatially across large parts of the more densely populated areas of the globe.

This chapter is divided into four sections; first section deals with Roma issues and problems; second, their issues and problems which describes experience and anecdotes of socio-economic disadvantages and stereotype and its significant co-relationship between ethnicity, gender, and labour parameters; third, it also tries to trace out the role of voluntary associations and NGOs in their formal and vocation education and social inclusion in Spanish Basque state regime and; final an analysing different forms of processes of inclusion and exclusion. I focus on the narratives from Basque Roma in order to perceive subjective interpretations of exclusion.

As far as my experience regarding Spanish Roma/Gitanos is concerned, the fact that they are not fully integrated in Spanish community and consequently, the community is undergoing suffering and deprivation from enjoying better quality of life is sought
to be focused. Several generations ago, the majority of Roma lived in rural areas and small towns, but in recent decades many Roma have moved to urban areas. According to National Action Plan (NAP), Spanish Roma are in a very disadvantaged position in comparison to citizens of the majority societies: they achieve very low degrees of education, they are over represented in the lowest-skilled and worst remunerated segments of the labour markets, they are at a higher risk to live in poverty and they are one of the groups facing strongest patterns of discrimination. There have been different forms of discriminations underlined by various survey reports. The proposed theme of research on gitanos highlights the plight as “Stateless life” of Roma communities (living in ghettos or waste accommodation sites, no private property, no representative structure) and living stuck into status of “Second class citizenship”, “Unsociable behaviour” and “Illegal resident” so on and so forth.

5.1. Roma Issues and Problems: An Introduction

According to European parliamentary data (2004-2009), there are around 12 to 15 million Roma/gypsies living in the Europe; about 10 million live in EU countries. By the other sources, more than twelve million Roma have been located in many European countries around the world. Ironically, there is no way to obtain an exact number since they are not recorded on most official census counts. Presently, data provided by social sciences as well as genetic research suggests that 8-10 million Roma/Gypsies who live in Europe today are best described as conglomerate of genetically isolated founder populations. The EU consensus state policies have been recommending against continuing discriminatory treatment and exclusion of the Roma into formal and informal labour market. Furthermore, the problem most commonly faced by the Roma/gypsy populations are racism and discrimination, low levels of education, high unemployment (50-90%), health standards well below those of the mainstream population, and very poor housing conditions (Eurobarometer: 2007).

The immigration movement has affected local labour market in European countries and this is a topic of major concern for many immigrant-receiving nation. Europe is today the first continent in the matter of international immigration, in the 2005 counted on 65 Ms of international immigrants, followed by Asia 53 Ms and North America with 44 Ms according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) in the 2004, 56 million immigrants lived in Europe in Europe on which 27.5 millions are
active. The European States that were traditionally countries of emigration like Italy, Spain or Portugal are today immigrant receiving countries (Benamar: 2009). As in the case of other Southern European nations, Spain was an emigrant country until the late 1970s. In a relatively short amount of time, however, economic growth converted it and other nations of these regions into destinations for high numbers of immigrants. This process began in earnest at the end of the 20th century when Spain became important destinations in world (Reher; Silver: 2009). According to Spanish Statistical Institute, the high-immigration rate has been attracting to Spain; especially regions such as Madrid, Murcia, Valencia, Catalonia, la Rioja and Aragon compared to low immigration flow regions; Andalusia, Asturias, Cantabria, Castillo y Leon, Castilla-la Moncha, Extremadura, Galicia, Navarra and Basque country. But the case of the Basque country is worth mentioning, as it is a dynamic, industrialized region with low immigration rate, for example; Bilbao (5.5%), Vitoria (6.3%), and Donostia (4.5%). Since the early 1990’s immigration flows into Spain have been on the rise. In particular, the decade between 1998 and 2008 has been characterized by one of the largest immigration episodes in recent history among OECD countries. Spain has received the greatest amount of immigrants, mainly from Romania, Slovakia and Bulgaria. Over this period, the Foreign-born share among the working age population in Spain has increased from below 3% to almost 15%. Indeed, most immigrants are concentrated in a few Spanish regions that absorb about 83.5 percent of the immigrant population, i.e. Andalucía, Balearic Islands, Canary Islands, Cataluña, Valencia, Madrid and Murcia (Sara; Ortega: 2009). Likewise in Western Europe, Spain has also largest population of Romanian (Romanian as groups from Rome) next to France and Italy.

Spain is known as hub of mass immigration wherein there are 800,000 populations is only in the Spain country. At the start of 2008, the Romanian population was made up of 732,000 individuals, which represented 64% of all the groups coming from Central and Eastern Europe and 13% of all the foreign groups present in Spain (Cachon; Stanek: 2009). A recent study suggests that there are approximately 718,000 Romanians registered in Spain legally. The percentage of legal workers from immigrant status is divided among following sectors: in services (43%), agriculture (24%), construction (23%) and industry (10%). Subsequently, Latin Americans represent a largest immigrant population in Madrid, and gypsies (gitanos) have been
the most distinct ethnic minority group settled in Spain since last 15th century (Lopez & Beltran: 2009). Moreover, Spain is the country, after United States which received the highest foreign population, in absolute terms, in world. In the period 2001-2005, the average increase in number of immigrants residing in Spain was approximately 500,000 a year. As a result of rapid immigration process, foreigners currently represent 11.3% of total population of foreign workers in the country. Since 1990s, the strong concentrations in construction, agriculture, accommodation, food services and domestic service, have become one of the intrinsic characteristics of immigrant participation in the Spanish economy. In 2007, more than half (51.8%) of all foreign workers in Spain were employed in one of the four branches of activity (Cachon; Stanek: 2009). As far as the immigrants in Spain are concerned, majority of immigrants have engaged in Fishing (25.8%), Agriculture (31.5%) and Extractive Industries (42.5), such as; in mining, quarrying (construction), and mineral industries.

As far as the existing population of Roma/gitanos in Spain is concerned, there are no official statistics including ethnicity as a particular item; accordingly, exact numbers of the size of the Roma/gitano population do not exist. Most academicians and policy-makers, however, estimate that currently there are between 500,000 and 800,000 gitanos who are Spanish citizens. These figures do not include the approximately 40,000 Roma who recently, during the nineties, have been immigrating into Spain and who dwelling in shanty-towns (Chabolism) mainly in the outskirts of Madrid. As to the regional distribution of the Spanish gitanos, the southern Spanish region of Andalusia is the historically most important Spanish gitanos region. Currently, after the huge emigration since fifties and sixties to central and northern Spain, still nearly half of the gitanos live in Andalusia, both in rural and urban settings. Likewise, Andalusia (Mediterranean Cost) is known as “Home of gypsies” because it has over half of the 800,000 people in the Spanish-Roma population. Majority communities exist in Catalonia, Valencia and Madrid, but in these cases they live nearly exclusively in urban agglomerations. Further, the next section of this chapter portrays historical background of contemporary situation of Roma, their present deprivation and occupational sufferings.

5.1.1. Historical and Social Background

Primarily, this section focuses on historical persecution and occupational sufferings of Roma gypsies of Europe in general and Spanish Roma\Gitano in particular. Here, I
raise common questions regarding Roma history and their existence. Firstly, who are Roma and where have Roma been? and where are Roma now? At the European context, Roma is not a homogenous category. In generally, Roma-gitanos are best described as a cultural minority rather than as an ethnic group. In general, people to call up a term Roma Gypsy and Traveler’s have been attached represent a unique phenomenon in European history and culture. From their first appearance in the historical record over 600 years ago, the relationship between Roma Gypsies and mainstream societies has been marked by many tensions and changes. Roma Gypsies are now widely considered to be Europe’s largest ethnic minority. Presently, the continental population is estimated to being between 7 to 8.5 million and rising. There are Roma Gypsy and Traveller communities in practically every European country. Over three quarters of the continent’s Romal/Gypsies live in the former communist countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe. There are considerable differences between Romal/Gypsies in Central and Eastern Europe, Roma/Gypsies in South-Eastern Europe and Romal/Gypsies and Travellers in Western Europe in terms of their demographic distribution, and their historical, social, economic and cultural circumstances. Yet such divisions in themselves are arbitrary; there are just as many differences within countries as there are between countries. There is strong consensus among the researchers for the origin and migration history of the gypsies across the Europe during before 300 years. As far as academic literature is concerned, linguistic and genetic evidence indicates the Roma originated from Indian subcontinent. The cause of the Roma diaspora is unknown.

One theory suggests the Roma were originally low-caste Hindus recruited into an army of mercenaries, granted warrior caste status, and sent westwards to resist Islamic military expansion. Another theory suggests that perhaps the Muslim conquerors of northern India took the Roma as slave and brought them home, where they became a distinct community; Mahmud of Ghazni reportedly took 500,000 prisoners during a Turkish invasion of Sindh and Punjab. Why Roma did not return to India, choosing instead to travel west into Europe, is an enigma, but may relate to military service under the Muslim rules. Gypsies are descendents of Pariah classes who left northern India sometime between the fifth and tenth centuries. (Charnon-Deutsch: 2002). Before leaving India, Leland further speculates, Gypsies had intermingled with other groups like the Dom or Domar, a pre-Aryan group who reportedly were basket-
weavers, heavy-drinkers, carrion-eaters, nomads, shepherds, robbers. There are various literatures on European Roma gypsy identities and various communities that are known by names such as Gitanes, Manouche, Roma, Sintis, Travellers, Tsigan, and Yifti in different states of that continent. It is an extraordinary story that brings the Gypsies, as they are most commonly known, into close kinship relations with the people of Southern Pakistan and North-western India. It is witnessed that Roma’s aboriginality had in southern and northern provinces with predominantly under the Muslim invaders. The Roma are believed to have originated from Punjab and Rajasthan. Gypsy group is also consisted with Kalderash, Sinti, Manouch, Lovari, Kale etc. Many Roma themselves do not admit to their true ethnic origins for economic and social reasons. The Roma are a distinct ethnic minority, distinguished at least by Rom blood and the Romani, or Romanes, language, whose origins began on the Indian subcontinent over one thousand years ago. No one knows for certain why the original Roma began their great wandering from India to Europe and beyond, but they have dispersed worldwide, despite persecution and oppression through the centuries. In Spain, "gitanos," the term that almost all Gypsies of Spain use to identify themselves, is also the word that non-Gypsy Spaniards use. The Gitanos are monolingual Spanish speakers, and although some claim that an identifiable physical type exists, gitanos are in fact phenol-typically indistinguishable from other Spaniards. They are overwhelmingly sedentary, not nomadic. They derive their name (as do Gypsies, Gitans, Tsiganes, and Zigeuners) from the misnomer Egyptian." The term originated with the erroneous notion, dating back to Western Europe's early modern period that "gypsies" originally came from Egypt. Gitanos probably account for well over 99 percent of the Gypsy populations in Spain. They should be distinguished from Spain's tiny minority of Indic-speaking people, who are also glossed over in English as "gypsies".

In the Spanish context, it has historically been a multi-cultural society composed of diverse linguistic and cultural groups, and traditionally, for most part an emigrants’ nation. The Spanish term gitano and the French term gitan may have the same origin. In other words, it is witnessed that gypsy/gitano population has been in Spain since the early fifteenth century. Historically, long the butt of prejudice, official persecution and legal action under the Vagrancy and Social Dangerousness Laws, gypsies have been seen as social outcasts and linked to criminal behaviour. During the 1940s the
Franco regime* ordered the Guardia Civil to monitor and investigate gypsy behaviour. Furthermore, 1978 Constitution forbade racial and ethnic discrimination. Since then the government has adopted a more integrationist approach. Although hampered by a lack of information and research, the Ministry of Social Affair launched a special development plan aimed at ensuring that gypsies have access to social benefits and improved housing conditions (Corkill; Barberet & Garcia-Espana: 1997, p.177). There are signs that the gypsy population, which numbered some 330-350000 according to estimates for 1993 (Corkill; Arayici: 1998, p.254), is responding to encouragement from local, regional and European authorities by establishing associations to represent this minority groups. On the other hand, there has been a wide gap in bridging their educational, health, employment and general living conditions. In contrary, the widespread stereotyping is still common and overt discrimination continues. Gypsies are portrayed in public spheres as work-shy and inveterate thieves. Such prejudices have been stoked further by attempts to blame Spain’s drug problem on the gypsy community (Corkill: 2000).

Since end of 1980s, Western media have been looking very closely at the westward migration of eastern European Gypsies, speculating about the reasons for a movement variously referred to as an exodus, a "massive invasion", a "flood-tide". The Gypsies, who had suffered for so long under the Communist yoke,* seized the chance, when the Iron Curtain fell, to escape from an existence in which they were relegated to the margin of society and stripped of human dignity. Public opinion in the West was alerted by accounts of the programs to which Gypsies had fallen victim, witnesses testified to the horror they were subjected to in their daily lives, and international organizations flew to their defense. But now that Central and Eastern Europe has made the change-over to democratic government, the western countries are less generous in granting asylum, and precautions are being taken at frontiers in an effort to stem the flow of economic refugees. The tendency is now towards initiatives promoting repatriation and reintegration in the country of origin.

5.1.2. Roma Gypsies: A Rationale for Comparative Study of Stigmatized Identity

What is the problem and why is the Roma gypsy’s problem as an important part of this study?

Several countries like UK, Netherland, Portugal including Spain had earlier known as colonialist countries and former slave-trading nations and even today, Spain is known
as rich developed country on the world human development index. In Spain, the Gypsy ethnic group form the main cultural minority, one that has coexisted, albeit not always comfortably, with the rest of Spanish society for 500 years. However, although they have a visible presence in Spain, recognized for their own folk-lore and their impact upon Spanish culture more generally, their own ways are little known to the dominant majority. In other words, they have their own culture, traditions and community laws, all of them with more depth and complexity than is perceived by or revealed to outsiders. However, since most of Roma Gypsy people in Spain are economically deprived and educationally disadvantaged, it is important to note that the more general impacts of poverty and exclusion permeate many of the features of their culture. This is worth noting, given that, on trying to understand some of their cultural practices, it is often impossible to discern which characteristics stem from Gypsy traditions and laws, which characteristics can be attributed to being a minority group, and which have developed because of poverty and exclusion (San Roman, 1994). It is this confusion that has undoubtedly contributed to the creation and persistence of certain stereotypical images. There is considerable diversity found among different Gypsy collectives. It is true that all of these collectives share basic features and practices which enable them to articulate their identities around a worldwide Gypsy people, which extend it beyond national borders. These commonalties notwithstanding, differences and local diversity can be found by comparing collectives from different countries, different regions within a country or even different places within a city. These differences mainly refer to the degree of nomadism and settlement, and the kind of relationships maintained with majority groups. At an economic level, whilst most of them are predominantly in the lower social class, not all Gypsy groups are poor. Thus, we should be wary of conveying a misleading image of homogeneity which conceals the richness and diversity of Gypsy life. Nowadays, in Spain, most of Gypsy collectives are settled, not nomadic. They are, therefore, already in relationship with the institutions of the majority group. Gypsy relationships with the rest of Spanish society have oscillated across a wide range; from peaceful coexistence; through a strong assimilationist pressure at some moments, to explicit persecution at others. For that reason, it is not surprising to find among Gypsies a deep distrust of social institutions – i.e., the police authorities, judiciary, civil and military administration, education and the Church – all of which are perceived as being distant from and alien to their own culture.
The ethnicity studies underline the further general character of ethnic marginal groups; such as a low degree of economic activity, poverty, dependency on welfare programmes, poor health, non-conformist way of life, inefficient social organizations, low level of education, low self-esteem, and criminal behaviour, ghettoized fashion etc. It is witnessed that Roma/gitanos have been traditionally associated with legacy of flamenco singing, dancing and guitar music. Although much despised and discriminated against, “the Spanish government used the images of the gypsies as “one of the key ingredients in Spain’s touristic formula. In words of McVeigh (1997), the state became the key structuring elements of repression and reform for gypsies in Spain. The situation of Roma/gitanos in Spain, who have experienced discrimination and marginalization for centuries, is a particular case of exclusion. In addition, the living condition of a substantial portion of these groups (particularly in southern part of Spain) are poor, and its members live in greater poverty and lack stable sources of means of life. The low level of education, or its lack, and lack of appropriate job qualifications, which relates to their high level of unemployment, are seen as the main causes of this socio-economic situation. Spain’s traditional attitudes of intolerance distancing from Roma are also meaningful factors. In an ironical manner, the bias-motivated violence against Roma often occurs in an environment in which local political leaders speak openly of their desire to expel Roma minorities across European countries. Even as police and local public authorities are in some cases complicit in driving Roma from their homes and seeking their relocation to other towns or cities-or even their deportation-others holding national public office, too, characterized Roma as an outsider who are less than citizens and are unwanted. Moreover, the problems of marginalization are particularly severe in the central and eastern parts of Europe, where Roma have been suffered in the transition of countries towards market economies. The dilemma illustrates the social inequalities and the resulting social exclusion experienced by the Roma gypsies as a result of their stigmatized identity. Social partition is vitally important to identity and in turn to psychological and social survival. On policy point of view, how can Roma gypsies/gitanos gain a sense that they are valued as equal citizens in society and thus improve their status and sense of worth? It then considers, in the light of that examination, the prospects for the Gypsy peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. In fact, understanding of the Gypsies’ situation is fragmentary, based as it is on socio-
political considerations and a little statistics. The most widespread view of Gypsy peoples can be summarized as follows: *an ethnic minority, a mixture of ethnic groups, nomadic ways of inhabitancy, a disadvantaged social group, and a people whose way of life sets them apart* (OECD: 95:1). Thus their stigmatized identity and processes of exclusion and State efforts at inclusive policy offer an interesting case for comparison with Safai labour.

### 5.1.3. Reviewing the Roma Literature

Attention to Roma gypsies primarily combines into fields of sociology, anthropology and economics, but their main focus seem to have rested upon history, culture, genetically origin and disposition of housing segregation, educational deprivation and so on and so forth (Lopez & Beltran: 2009). Apart from these studies on Roma Gypsies across European countries, several studies in Spain mainly focus upon socio-economic and labour market situation of immigrants in the Spanish labour economy. From the overall labour market issues of several immigrants, there is probably a dearth of literature on Spanish Roma Gypsies (*los gitanos*) of Spain compared to immigrants. As a result, my thrust is to understand the small number of empirical studies which are available for Roma/gitanos for Spain. Therefore, the review of literature is divided in two major parts. First, there are various references which draw out the quality of life within Spanish context in order to understand different policies and processes of labour exclusion. Secondly, number of empirical studies on present working and living condition of the Roma/gitanos in Spanish context.

- Sara Rica`s (2008) study on “Social and labour Market Integration of Ethnic Minorities in Spain” gathers empirically the social situation of immigrants in general and *Roma gypsies* in particular. This project revisits the continuous occurrences of migration movements recorded by late 1980s and early 1990s in the specific Mediterranean countries, such as Spain, Portugal and Italy due to varieties of factors, firstly, their geographical proximity to immigrant-sending regions, e.g. Africa; secondly, the barriers in an immigration in traditionally immigrant-receiving nations during the 1950s, 1960s, and part of the 1970s, as it was the case of Germany, and thirdly the improved economies of Mediterranean countries. Highlighting comparison of ethnic minority group as Roma gypsies from other immigrants in specific country like Spain, this study explores that Roma are minority group immigrating into Spain for over 600 years. Ironically, this group is not recognized as an ethnic group, despite
their existence as largest communities and *Romani* request for social and political recognition. Even today Roma are being deprived from legal protection of their identity, culture, language and other minority rights. Importantly, it is involved the description of Roma labour market situation as an additional ethnic minority group, although there are no reliable nation-wide statistic about the situation of Roma in Spain. This study argues that regarding labour market situation of Roma in Spain, many *Romani* families are engaged in a combination of formal and informal employment; many are self-employed but are not registered as such. Street selling jobs take up an extremely high proportion for working *Roma* populations (between 50 to 75 per cent). About 20% of them are engaged in seasonal agricultural jobs. Furthermore, the situation could have been caused due to their marginalization and exclusion in the labour market, social, non-skilled education and linguistic barriers, economic barriers to prevent them to be not integrated in country’s labour force. Labour market status of discrimination was examined by looking at differences in occupational assimilation pattern depending on educational attainment. As far as gender employment gap is concerned, it varies from 15 percent for men to 4 percent for women. One of common prejudice about Roma is that they “do not work”, or even “would steal from their employers”. Consequently many company recruitment boards openly refuse to employ or even interview Romani applicants and so on. In conclusion, the study remarks that despite of many political measures that can and must be undertaken, as much as general attitude of Roma do not change because there is little room for the full social and economic integration of this ethnic minority group.

*Asociación Secretariado General Gitanos* (ASGG) led EU-supported *ACCEDER PROGRAMME*\(^5\) that initially incorporated the Roma/gitanos as a special target group for their economic and labour inclusion. This programmes aims to work with ACs and municipalities to secure employment for 2,500 Romani individuals over a seven-year period. “*ACCEDER*” branches opened in every participating municipality function as a network of parallel employment offices for *Romalgitanos*, providing training, and counseling and mediation services. The program is administered by the *Fundación Secretariado General Gitano* (FSGG) and financed by the EU and autonomous communities. It has over 150 full-time staff persons, who work in five member multicultural teams, and collaborators in 32 municipalities in 13 ACs.
Fernando Villarreal is a sociologist who works on issues of minority policy in Spain and across Europe. He is currently international officer of the organization of Fundación Secretariado General Gitanos (FSGG). Under his coordination, ACCEDER PROGRAM led “Inmigración Racismo y Xenofobia: Pueblo Gitanos” study has been carried out into 14 provinces from Spain’s autonomous communities and its purpose was to monitor the improvement of living standards for the Roma communities in Spain. In addition, the final results also reviewed the high progress of Roma in the last 30 years in terms of their recognition as full citizenship (constitutional law, participation in elections, involvement in social movements), access to welfare state system (involved housing, education, and health), high access to integrated habitats (migration from rural to urban areas), and lastly improving recognition of the Roma community. The series of ACCEDER reports have strikingly come up with various reasons for labour market exclusions due to low educational level; pre-school dropouts; erosion of traditional professions and labour activities, poor housing and living condition; inadequate access and use (either due to abuse or shortage) from basic services; unprecedented prejudice, stereotypes and high level of social discrimination; and lack of cultural recognition.

Moreover, another comparative study “Roma Population and Employment” (FSG, 2007) has sought some important facts related to Roma labour market and their economic subsistence as follows:

1. The working life of the Roma population is longer: The Roma population joins the labour market at an early age and this is reflected in a 69.4% activity rate in the 16 to 19 age bracket. Departure from the labour market is abrupt in the case of the Roma population given that activity rates remain relatively high up to the age of 60 and fall off sharply as of age 65;

2. Unemployment affects the Roma population to a greater extent than it does the overall Spanish population with a global rate of 13.8% compared with 10.4% for the non-Roma population. In contrast to what occurs in the overall Spanish population, the largest proportion of unemployed Roma is in the lower age brackets: one fifth of unemployed Roma is under the age of 20;

3. Roma employment is characterized by instability at the workplaces. There are 3.5 times fewer fixed salaried workers among the Roma population vis-à-vis the rest of the Spanish population;
4. About 48.5% of working Roma Gypsies are self-employed (almost half) while this same rate for the overall Spanish population stands at only 18.3%. Of the self-employed Roma workers, half are in the category of “collaboration in family economic activity” which, in the best of cases, is poorly “standardized”. The Roma workers tend to work in marginal, low-skill sorts of activities generically included under the heading of services. Only 16% have fixed permanent contracts and lastly;

5. Only 15% of Roma workers make an effort to hone their labour skills and young people and women are more prone to this sort of training. Eight out of every ten unemployed Roma feel that a training course would make it easier to find a job. This figure rises to 86% in the opinion of those who have actually participated in a course. For gender, the Roma pattern is similar to rest of the Spain in general with a lower activity and employment rate for women. In contrast, the unemployment rate and proportion of temporary contracts and part-time employment is higher in the case of women. While inactivity predominates among Roma women between ages of 16 and 29, this trend begins to shift between ages of 35 and 49. Almost 53.5% of the Roma population claims to be inactive in order to take care of domestic responsibilities compared with 32.5% in the case of overall Spanish population. Less than 2.8% of Roma men take responsibility for household chores compared with 75.9% of Roma women. Roma women (93.8%) are worked a part-time claim “family obligations” as the main impediment standing in a way to full-time employment. Majority women (17.6%) take courses or participate in training programmes than men (13.1%). The Project could foster the labour inclusive policies into the Spanish development plans for gitanos and also have shown the hindrances to be not fully integration in the labour activities.

- According to Oscar (2007) “Sobre la identidad gitana su construcción panetnica: El Caso gitano en Barcelona”. Ph.D Thesis, Departamento de Teoria Sociologia. In this study, Oscar argues that globalization and international division of labour characterized by the movement of financial and material flows but also by the flow of people uncovers a new area to explore. He argues that world economic processes construct new common identities into small groups. According to him, Gypsy identity has undergone some major changes in recent years that required the development of new theoretical concepts. This study drives by the following hypothesis, Firstly, the invisibility of the Gypsy identity in public is more due to the fear of discrimination of
possible assimilation and/or acculturation with majority society. And secondly, ethnic boundaries of the gypsy identity are being reconfigured with the processes of globalization. Roma people are experiencing a shift in identification as a collective to a more localized identity goes beyond the different subgroups exist in the Gypsy people. As a result, the situation itself is not because the diffusion of trans-nationality penetrnicidad or Gypsy has been one of the claims is the Gypsy mobilization since the late sixties. The novelty lies in that this shift is also being piloted in the biographies of any person gypsy, not only in their political representatives. He categorized the segmentation of labour markets in contemporary Spanish society; there is a split in the labour market between technical jobs that require highly skilled and low paid jobs especially in the service sector, construction and agriculture. In the latter areas, there are a good number of immigrants whose descendants could get other jobs and achieve upward mobility if they get achieve a college education. The study does not use a term underclass to label Gypsies as such. The notion of underclass describes the structural position of Roma/gitanos only under specific historical conditions; at no point does this concept characterize all Roma. Rather, this term describes the experiences of the Roma ghetto poor during particular historical periods. Paradoxically, it is the upward mobility of some Roma that makes the concept of the underclass applicable to those left behind (Ladanyi & Szelenyi: 2006). Given investigations have focused on Europe have highlighted how, under communism, it attempted to apply a series of policies which had as objective to assimilate the Roma in a communist society also be noted that Roma gypsies and those who did not have such skills could get a job even if low-skilled working fields as mining, steel or construction. The economic crisis affects especially the most vulnerable groups of Barcelona society, including the Roma had only resort to street vending as one of the only options to get some income. Furthermore, Oscar worked with very few gypsies, he found that some gypsies use vans and go everyday to the flea markets. While concluding, he agrees the international division of labour is threatening small segments of ethnic groups who had been heritage of traditional skills. Moreover, traditional Gypsy more prominent presence at event has classified into two types, primary and secondary sectors such as peddling scrap collection and cleaning occupation etc.
The Basque Plan for Fully Promoting and Bringing about Social Participation of the Roma, according to plan (Asociación Vasca Para la Investigacion y Promoción Del Pueblo Gitano-CAPV & Administración de la Comunidad Autónoma Del País Vasco (2005), draws out pro-active policy survey in order to improve socio-economic situation of Roma/gitano families under different provinces of Basque country. This specific study went through about eight targeted areas are as follow: Roma culture participation, social and living condition, education, social affairs, integration and employment, health, housing and justice and public administration. This survey measured migrating arriving flow of Roma Gypsies/Gitano families and their persistent traditional employment under the Basque region of Spain since 60 years due to growing industrialization and urbanization of trades. Further, it shows that 3000 families were found in Alava (mostly in Vitoria-Gasteir), 8000 families in Bizkaia* (of those total families and, 3000 families were resided in Gipuzkoa provinces of Basque.) It was found that such arrived inhabitants have been remaining engaged in their continuous traditional occupations like street vending/scrap collecting (venta ambulante o chatarra). In addition, this policy survey also captures different situational forms of poverty and exclusion of Roma/Gitano families due to declining profitability of their occupations by escalation of sophisticated industrial technologies that has led to vast destruction of Roma ethnic traditional jobs such as; trade vending, collection of scrap-metal, paper and card-board. This accounts for the goal of tackling situations involving social exclusion and guarantee Roma people effective use and access to resources, services, and opportunities that are important to the quality of life of the Roma population and is nothing less than the reflection of a determined bid to advance towards a cohesive society. the assumption and adaptation of European directives and other guidelines are to be interpreted likewise as they are tools that will make their own contribution, from the viewpoint of promoting equal treatment, towards a society that will energetically fight discrimination. This Plan aims to resolve situations and to promote changes which stem from greater involvement of the parties in order to define a more harmonious relationship model between the Roma community and the society at large, a society actively orientated towards peaceful co-existence. Roma employment shows a gradual decline earlier than the national rate, a result of selective job destruction that began in Spain a few years before on 1989. Of course, the vast majority of the jobs Roma filled were unskilled jobs that turned out to be not productive in a market economy and were
destroyed in the first years of the transition. They were therefore stable jobs only under the socialist economy. As a part of inclusion plan, government seeks to assist and facilitate in access to economic benefits and other resources and opportunities against their social exclusion and unequal participation. On other hand, it has not only drawn holistic amelioration measures but it also adopted new inclusive method for getting rid from extreme poverty and ethnic seclusion. As a result, Basque administration has identified forms of gender division of labour and induced gender inequalities into those Roma families and heterogeneous communities as well.

➢ Tomas and Others (2004) “Erradicación del Chabolismo e Integración Social de los gitanos en Avilés: Investigación, evaluación y Propuestas.” This study evaluates process of eradication of shanty towns (Chabolism) in Aviles Roma communities due to native development policies. This study highlights the economic subsistence of the Roma in Aviles which is based on informal market occupations; such as purchasing and selling of scrap, street trading in textile industries, collecting waste articles etc. According to INEM-2003 (Instituto Nacional de Empleo) and Centro Municipal de Servicios Sociales, the proportion of Austrian (both male and female) communities were seen in following employment sectors: as many as 34% of Roma population is survived by scrap collecting jobs; subsequently 28% domestic workers; 10% petty shop owners; 6% junkyard; 7% retired pensioner; 6% unemployed and; 9% no specific occupations.

As far as women employment in Roma communities are concerned, they are basically engaged in cleaning, constructions masonries, gardeners, and painting works etc. The rate of female employability among the Roma communities is worse than male Roma due to restricted social norms and lack of education within them. Women are seen as traditional family worker. As a result, they have been victimized by various kind of violence. For labour exclusion, it is understood through common exclusion of minority by majority groups and dominant native people. That exclusion which begins mainly with work and ends up with affecting all springs of social issues; such are varied aspects as cohabitations, the participation, mutual understanding, among other. In general, the labour exclusion is impacted by lack of collectivity/unity, lack of educational skills – professional knowledge, competent, lack of work experience, and other socio-cultural problems.
M. Delgado’s (2004) an ethnographic survey study “Gitanos Pentecostales: Una Mirad Antropológica a la Iglesia Filadelfía” is done for Andalucía Roma gypsies, whereby it focuses on Andalucía region shows labour typologies within Roma groups wherein it shows following labour proportion; formal peddling-selling goods for living (52%), unregulated peddling (11%), unemployed (10%), stable employees (9%), informal economy* (6%), seasonal agricultural etc. From couple of decades in the European context, several studies may have focused on genetic (native vs. aboriginal, majority vs. minority), and other forms of cultural discourses among the Roma gypsies, but in the social sciences, there are vigorous studies which have been focused on socio-economic studies rather than such a crucial factors in modes of labour force.

Coraggio, J. (2007) “Gitano Legal Codes: Social Change, NGO’s, and External Legal System’s Influence on Governance of Spanish Roma Communities”. According to this study, Spain is in a unique position to lead efforts in this arena because of the relatively more assimilated social situations of gitanos compared to other Roma. Also, as an established European Union member with largest population of Roma in Western Europe, Spain also stands in a position to influence European Union policy towards all Roma of European Union states. (Coraggio: 2007). According to Coraggio, vast majority of gitanos had (50-80% are self-employed in occupations like selling goods; such as junk scrap for men and flowers for women, solid waste collection, and seasonal work; dealers, shop keepers or artists. Nearly, 6-16% Roma are antique dealers, shop keepers, or artist. Furthermore, 10-16% Roma population is engaged in new occupations; such as construction, public works or unskilled civil service jobs. Many Roma found mechanics or sell second-hand cars, natural progressions from their metal working and horse-trading day; such in entrepreneurial ventures.

Mariya Dzhengozova’s (2007) study on “Social Dynamic of group Identities: Living Together in the Neighbourhood” whereby the study has contrasted the dynamic perceptions in inter-group divisions among the immigrants as well as ethnic minorities and established natives in Spanish industrial town of Aviles. Here, the study’s approach is tended toward promotional bargaining and evolvement of social institutions could be able to reduce intergroup tensions within global neighbourhood communities and can be resolved the identical created, reproduce and reinforce
divides factors. Interestingly, study emphasizes that for assimilation of neighbourhood relations between alien/exotic and indigenous entities, there is inevitable but local-level need of social bargaining in common decision-making, changes in values, attitudes and behaviour in informal relationships and face-to-face relationship. On this basis, study observes the evolvement of social interaction between Romal/gitanos and non-gitanos in Aviles has remained continuous process. Furthermore, the study focuses on the configuration of group interaction in this area. Due to industrial development in Aviles onward 1950s, the unplanned migratory movements and construction of shanty towns was wound up for discriminatory situation between these opposite group origins. As a result, it was grown in deepening the segregation and isolation of historically separated Roma and other rest of the society. In mid 1970, the Roma community had been transiting into the demographic disorganization such as, high birth rate and short generational cycles. As a result, municipality of Aviles built “Initial Plan for the Integration of Ethnic Minorities” for the replacement of shanty towns into particular settlements (the promotional city of Valliniego) for them. That is why, it was the first official plan which could come into existence and become agreed for their re-location of families in Outskirts, but it proved reluctant and was poorly responded by the community itself. Here, it is pointed out that the acceptance of shanty towns and negative nod between Roma Gitanos and non-gitanos of Aviles had been continuously regaining the racial discrimination and ethnic difference. On the UN-Habitat led second plan, that also renounced the particular construction of settlements. Under this circumstances, the new social bargaining consensus was been rebuilt within the town council bodies and government NGO (FSGG) with social network for their settlement in normalized dwellings across towns. Both pre-involved plans such as “Promotional City” and outskirt ordinary settlements were abolished as per II plan-2007 and families were re-accommodated with decent flats. Here, the author tries to trace out that without involvement of Roma community in decision making process, it could not have accomplished the eradication of scattered shanty towns everywhere. Subsequently, a new configuration of social relations between both communities could deepen without reluctant. Importantly, the re-accommodated Roma tenant families were accepted by the non-gitano building owners with acceptance. In this context, this study shows that how significant are ethnic differences in the face-to-face interactions in the neighbourhood and how community tensions can be resolved without strict legal enforcement. On the one hand, the
owner-tenant neighbourhood and communicative relationship between Roma and non-Roma was being fostered potentially along with the role of intermediaries like municipal contractors and other agencies like media, awareness campaigns etc. Alternately, all these factors have been reducing negative stereotypes within non-Roma communities which had associated with Roma as a “thieves”, “lazy Person” and “immigrants”. Thus, a reduction in the importance of ethnic differences in everyday interactions has been observed. In other words, this “living together” project of author is finally led to some relative assumption such as employment chances, importance of formal education, access to local resources, continuous relocation policies for the Roma/gitanolgitana community of Aviles town. In whole study, she refers “Gitano” instead of “Roma” “Gypsy” due to internal differences.

Having reviewed contemporary literature on Roma/Gypsy for their various kinds of social exclusion intersecting processes of ethnicity, class, gender and labour, the study seeks to focus on labour market exclusion which has subverted life-chances of individual and community through life narratives.

5.2. Basque Roma/Gitano Ethnicity: Experience of Socio-Economic Disadvantages and Multiple Social Exclusionary Processes

This section presents narratives from interviews with Basque Roma respondents undertaken in Bilbao across different representative areas in which Roma population has predominantly settled down under different Basque Spanish and European Roma rehabilitation and housing policies. I focus in these narratives on labour participation and processes of breaking the cycle of exclusion; women and countering Roma patriarchal culture; women and processes of triple exclusion; and lastly adopted evangelism and integration of Roma pan-ethnicity.

5.2.1. Breaking the Cycle of Exclusions: Illustration in Social Participation

a) Mariano Ingel Jimenez b) Basilio Gabarri Jimenez, c) Ramon Borja Jimenez, d) Serafin Jimenez Jimenez (Interview Venue: Municipal Workshop, Sestao)

In order to understand the perceived social participation, these interviews were conducted with four Roma/Gitano workers at their workplaces. During the fieldwork at their workplaces, everyone seemed to be under pressure and so that no one could spontaneously open up their miseries about their works. The people who were interviewed, aged between 25-50 years, have had particular fix-term contract
government jobs (short-term) like painter, carpenter and plumber etc. in municipal workshop. They all were employed in these jobs since 6 months and the work contract was for one year. They all had studied upto primary education and had never gone to university education. All of them have had rental accommodation in Sestao where lot of Roma/gitanos and also non-Roma/payos inhabited in their neighbourhood. Generally, all interviewed people belonged to a family of four to five members.

Discussing the social and labour participation in mainstream jobs, Mariano and his colleague elaborates, ‘FSGG Vocational Training Organization offers us certain kinds of manual training “studying while working” nature which assign the private and public enterprises our job skills. FSGG Vocation Training Certificate permits the Roma to be acquired with basic technical qualification for repairing housing, rental flats, pipe-lines, painting the house, renewing the furniture and so on. Despite having good vocational training courses, we are finding our own employment by applying to municipal office and often enquiring about the availability of work. After finishing this Municipal official training, we will obtain degree and work experience so that we would be able to apply to find such employments in other factories and firms/enterprise. On the basis of this training and vocational job training and work experience, we will seek the jobs in the labour market. Before that we have to register our name in the Spanish work agency. To be eligible for such municipal training, there is no need to have particular educational qualification whether in college or from any vocational institution. It can be done by merely registering applicant’s name in the Spanish work Agency. About 40 of 200 applicants, in a year, are called for an interview and get selected for stipulated period of contract work. As far as the discrimination in work or on workplaces is concerned, they have neither felt any kind of discrimination on their work nor by the public places’.

As per as their perception over job security is concerned, Mariano and his colleagues further claim, “while getting an employment in future, although we have taken sufficient job training, we are not ensured of getting descent employment due to current economic crisis in the Spain and everywhere. Since 3-4 years, we face very bad conditions of employments in labour market. We may be optimistic about our job security till October as this contract valid but then after that we are not sure whether we could get a job or will remain unemployed. We are not negative about those things but quite positive and we want to continue this work. For getting employment we will
be doing all things which are applicable; i.e., help from our friends, by attending interviews, or by official ways. We generally work around 6 hours in a day and 35 hours in a week. We earn about 900 Euros in a month. We have had no paid contract employment since 6 years but we were employed under vocational training courses (for example; painting or carpentry courses etc) under contract basis which had been a same nature of works like carpentry, painting plumbing works and so on. During training course time in FSGG, we were also searching employments (job-seeking) side-by-side. Under FSGG as a vocational training organization in Sestao, we have earned lot of work-training as well as experienced things and we enjoyed our work. By this time, the public stereotype is somewhat reducing across all spheres of life. In our society, the Gitano Community relies on compatible trust and confidence (confianza) for their brotherhood. We believe there are all types of people; there may have bad gitanos, payos and likewise good and bad non-gypsies. Therefore we cannot make such differences within the groups. Bad illusions are widely against Gitanos, that those are thieves, criminal and drug dealers etc are embedded. But non-gypsies (payos) have also been active part in such bad activities. It is all about societal and traditional stigma. After all, the drugs are widely consumed by the white people. Taking upon hierarchies in work positions at our Municipal Training Center, we have a main boss who assigns our daily work and provides information to us. Generally, we all are on similar equal positions. In this Municipal workshop, there are total 8 contract workers work those consisting by 4 Gitanos and 4 payos (non-gitanos). While working here, there are hardly any chances to upgrade our positions. We also wish to be promoted as a supervisor in Municipal Departments. In doing so, we are completely unaware about the procedures to hold the superior positions under departments. But we all want to be the supervisor. As we are the Municipal contract workers, we are not liable to take the Renta Basica payment. Our wives are also working on same contract works so they cannot take it.

Some of them regarded that household works for women is nothing to do with the gender inequality, doing housewife job; preparing food, cleaning the house, bearing children is also tough. If our wives want to work, we will allow them to work. We do not believe in such differences, they argue. We also help to our wives when we are in the house during the off duty period."
Following these arguments they aspire meager optimism towards their children’s future, “We aspire about our children to be taking up the working jobs like a skilled worker/employee, machine operator, rather than work professionals like doctors, lawyers and engineers etc. We are resisting against non-gypsy perception or negative stereotype so that a generation like us may transform prejudices among whole societies. Although they do not take up technical or vocational skilled jobs, we would not be encouraging our children to be engaged in the chatarra or venta ambulante works. We have different attitudes towards things”. About leisure time, they spent time to watching movies and traveling to small villages and towns, they have been never abroad. We are members here in Health Club (Sports Card: deporte de futbol), but hardly play sports.

5.2.2. Feminization of Roma Labour in Cleaning Jobs
Over breaking the cycle of poverty, a series of intensive interviews with four female Roma janitors who work in Public Hospital (personas dependientes) demonstrates vibrant facts from their collective experiences. Primarily, the category of janitor is predominately occupied by female groups in Basque country where stands high population of old-age people probably pensioners and hospital sanctuaries (presidencia Sestao). Here I try to underline the process of feminization of Roma labour into cleaning and relevant forms of care-taking jobs. Importantly, these women are trained under FSGG ACCEDER Programmes called (studying while working).


Firstly, M.Fe Jimenez, 33 year old, stays in Sestao and left her education from pre-primary schooling. M.Fe Jimenez can somewhat read and write the Spanish language. She got separated from her husband. She has four children. She has no yet an opinion about future aspiration for her children in terms of their continuing education. She seems hardly optimistic about children’s future due to complicated family surrounding. Secondly, Rocio Mernandez, 38 years old, stays in Sestao; she can also somewhat read and write the Spanish language. She serves as janitor since 15 years in a public hospital. She got divorced four years back. She has two sons who are approximately aged 22 and 17 years. The elder son got married and stays separately. Presently, she stays with her younger son and he is studying. Thirdly, Concepción
Jimenez, 32 years old, dropped secondary education when she was in 13 years old. She has 2 kids and they are studying in both primary as well as secondary schooling. She aspires that her children should join the Police Department and another for nursing job and argues that they get university degree; they will have respect in the society. Fourthly and lastly, Dolores Jimenez, 36 years old, has 3 daughters and 2 grand-daughters. She has been suffering persistent poverty. Dolores says, ‘I have not at all faced any patriarchal discrimination. Three years back, my husband left the family responsibilities due to personal complications and is living separately with young daughter in rented house. As a result, I got a mentally depressed because of feeding my children and grandchildren in the family alone’.

Dolores Jimenez talks, I presently study how to read and write under FSGG inter-cultural program. This programme is designed for those Roma/Gitanos having little clarity in spoken Spanish. While talking of an incident of discrimination in the public space, Dolores remembers an incident; EROSKI Supermarket administration blamed and held me as a thief when I was buying things. I had not stolen anything. Payos easily commit apprehensions. Another experience had taken place in flat renting, once I had called up a payo flat owner when I asked for a rental flat, that time the owner agreed to allot it. When I arrived to see it and identified me as I am a Gitana/Gypsy, the owner suddenly refused me. That moment was again more distressful for me. Even in my present accommodated flat, I am always targeted and underestimated from our sources of livelihood and earning traditional ways. If anything happens around our residents, they directly blame us and call up police. They even avoid speaking with us over any incidents’. However she refused that racial discrimination at workplace happens. By FSGG work training, we receive work honour, dignity and moral respect as well. Generally we earn as much as 1000 Euros in a month. In leisure and even in holidays, we have never ever been the outdoor travelled as a tourist abroad and even not outside the Bilbao City. For the stress and schedule related to job and household works, we have to reach to hospital without having breakfast in the morning. After finishing all household works from preparing food to preparing children for school, without the help of husbands, I have to rush to go for duty on time. In this situation, we take outside food like coca-cola with sanitos’.

Dolores Jimenez and her fellow-workers clearly explain ¨Under the FSGG vocational courses for women in hospital assistant jobs for a year, these courses status are not
considered as an official degree course. We approached FSGG because we also want to work and to be independent women workers. As a janitor, we have to help the wheelchair people who are old-age dependents. We do not want to depend on husband’s income; we want to be independent women. Doing work, we support family income for regular food purchase. We participate in particular course training as a medical assistant in FSGG. FSGG contacted to the employers and some agencies for allocating certain contract jobs for us. As soon as we joined the courses, we get to direct practical training in hospital. The FSGG helps us to yield the intercultural exchange between people and confirms our labour integration and participation. We work in the job around 35 hours in a week and 7 hours daily. Most of the unemployed people, within both payos and non-payos, usually get through and enjoy free food several food distributing organizations in Bilbao like Red Cross and European Union itself. There are numbers of incidents which I have been experiencing in everyday lives. While talking of discrimination within society, we have to face discrimination several times when we go to market shops and supermarket. People feel uneasy to offer the services to us due to internal stereotypical identity as a gitana. Though we pay for stuff, sometimes shop supermarket owner pay more attention to our movements. Moreover, neighbouring attitudes of people seem kinds of racist distancing. Getting the flat on rent by government, the private owners of the flat enquire us about a lot. Some of payos dislike the gitano neighbourhood. We have to face lot of hesitancy by the owners. They openly expose their reluctant behaviour and deny the housing. People think gitanos are dirty unclean, and untidy. They are afraid of damage to furniture and other damages on the rented flat.

As far as domestic violence for women is concerned, they claim that there is a gradual change within the patriarchal mindset of community. Our husbands are more cooperative and friendly. Many women in the families are engaged in various self-employed and temporary jobs, we can feel some kinds of equality and freedom both in families and community too. A virgin bride restriction has been a long traditional practice in the Gitanos. We were also constrained by it. That is mandatory for the women which cannot be lost. Despite being women, Gitano women never feel such virginity test practice as a bad or discriminatory cultural trait. During the wedding, bride family regards her innocent as honour. In some cases of community, such practice is unimportant and is mutually ignored by couples themselves. All
interviewed women responded that due to challenging rapid economic crisis has led to hunger and affected job and social security assurances among diverse Spanish sections in general and the Gitano community in particular. This is affecting the restrictive practices like virginity tests. Everybody wants to survive in job labour markets and that is most important. The women are again isolated from mainstream Basque women’s participatory movements. However, we do not have the women’s association against the patriarchal discriminations; we hardly struggle against men’s domination at individual level. The typical patriarchal setting organized into community which consist of both male-female elders resolve family clashes or quarrels which are probably appeared in gitano families. From our views, if we are beaten by our husbands and boyfriends, we legally call up police. Being a Gitano woman, the family as well as domestic work is huge burden and we find no leisure time in week. Within community and outside community, Gitano women always encounter different kinds of anxieties in terms of children grooming, neighbourhood restrictions, misbehaving by racist people on market shops and restaurants and obtaining rental accommodation. Payos never like to be gitano neighbours. The hesitancy by the payos might have apprehensions about our crowdie family behaviour, possibility of unpaid the monthly rent, and uncleanness. Several times, we have to hide our identity but by our names they come to know out origin identity. Putting such blames on whole community is unappreciated and inhuman. There can be lot of incidents happening around this issue; but that does not mean everyone in Gitano community is guilty. This stereotypical racist behaviour has to be change and oblige equality. Without this change, we do not feel as if we are citizens of Spain and possess descent quality of life.

5.2.3. Countering Roma Patriarchal Culture: Narrations of Roma adult women

a) Baby Pilar Garcia (Interview venue: Deusto University Campus)

Baby, a single 20 year old girl, lives in the txurdinanga town in Bilbao city. She was born and brought up by the Spanish (paya) mother. Baby is a third year student in Department of Social work (Departamento de Trabajo Social) at Deusto University in Bilbao. She partly works with KDK on contract basis (Contrato). She does a part time work*59 around 9 hours in week (study and work status), and earned Euros 300 per month to support for her educational expenses. Her parents work as a social educator and interventionist in Roma organization in which they have to tackle on educational
problems of Roma/Gitanos. She has four sisters, and Baby stands in middle position. All of her sisters are studying. Her elder sisters got married and Baby also gets engaged in few months back. Baby’s boyfriend is also studying and belonged to Roma/Gitano community.

Baby urges, “Each Roma child should come up for university studies so that they can be equated and assimilated with others. My generation is quite practical but having no formal education. Most of Roma kids have to face several families and institutional obstacles to reach out to higher education as well as for basic schooling and vocational degree education. Gitano community are gradually show positive attitude toward their children’s education and they are motivated by community social workers. Although most of Gitano families are sending their children to university, there are lot miseries to understand Roma families’ social and household level”. In my neighbourhood, I have very few numbers of Roma neighbours but have more Spanish people and immigrants living around us. But where high numbers of Roma stays, they have many problems to face. The problems of our society is we have spate of disputes, vocal quarrels, clashes, contention, lack of housing but the police and firemen do not come to our ghettos. But I am not part of any political party but I would like to work for women in the gypsy community. Women are considered in the accession in KDK. I am wishing to be work for Basque government. These jobs are generally permanent. I may attempt and appear for government examinations in order to join the government services. We do not have reservation policy in education, service. I do not know about any aspirations in the future.

She asserts, “I never feel like a Spanish citizen because of my identity as a Roma. I have some Spanish friends who had/have in my school and in the university class. I do not have friends outside class and university. People never wish to be a friend of Roma because they must be having several illusions about us. They do not keep much more close relationships with us. The kind of relationship is with us as only “Hola!!! Hola!!! Adios!!! Adios!!! Not more words. People literally think us as an alien, exotic, traditional and barbaric people. There may not have the only racial distance but might have ethnic dimensions and apartheid.” Keeping desire in future, she exclaims, I get nothing in terms of help or social security from the state and community too. In the university, I always feel lonely due to my Roma identity and stereotype by Spanish university students and my classmates. I am not sure for my
future whether I could get a job or any kind of assistance. I want to work and voice up for my community’s welfare forever. For that, I have been casting my vote for the leftist political party where entire Roma Gypsies support.

While interweaving the gender, culture and identity, Baby explains; Roma/gitano culture has rigid patriarchal culture. Gitano culture is concerned about the wellness of men. Women are served to the men. Men in family can maintain public relations but women do family housework and take care of family. In our customs, elder people in family and community are highly respected. Kids in the families are much closed with grandmother and grandfather. After marriage, woman has to stay with husband’s family. Despite having good education within community, for me, I would also have to respect the predetermined Roma norms and values. I do not think I should be representing honour because I am a woman. It does not mean to forget our community values while making relationship with non-Roma (payos). We have our own pride being the Roma. Although I am educated and could reach up to university level, I cannot forget the norms and values which are preached in the Roma community. I am proud of our great Roma culture and customs. I need to maintain simultaneously our culture and identity too in any cost”. She also adds that if an unmarried Roma girl, she has a kid by pre-marital relations, loses face. She has to stay whole life without marriage.

Baby predicts, “Majority girls are generally engaged and get married very early when they are in adolescence (15-16 year old) in Roma culture. A family name for girls is merely adopted through the marriage practices. We prefer usually arranged marriage. We do not have dowry system. Divorce is rarely allowed in Roma community because our marriages are not through churches. If tension occurs, the elders belonging to both bride and bridegroom families decide to take an action whatever the compensation goes. We do not choose the matrimony marriage system. We hardly believe in arranged marriage system and also very rare marriage relations occur outside Roma community. When asked her that if you get marry with Spanish Payo, then which culture should you be adopted. She narrates that I am a woman; I have to obey and adjust with Spanish culture although I am educated. My family’s story is very complicated. Let’s see, my mother belonged to Spanish birth, she is not Roma. However, my mother has to follow the Roma customs. I regard a Roma culture
because even though I was born to a Spanish mother. However, I stay around the Spanish people, but I like to be maintain the gitano culture alive.”

When asking questions regarding satisfaction about public facilities, services by state government of Basque and satisfaction of working condition, she explained government of Basque is providing several services to the Roma (us), but on adhoc basis. My family does not have property, land. My father has a flat and car too. I am regular Internet user, she added.

b) Rebecca G Borja (Interview Venue: FSGG Office, Sestao)
Rebecca, a 21 years old girl, stays in Santurtxi-Bilbao with her non-Roma Gitano (payo) boyfriend since 2 years. She joined in November 2008 at FSGG as a trainee assistant by the Municipal registered contract for one year. Her task in FSGG organization is to help Roma/gitano men in general and women in particular in order to be participating and motivating in course activities, vocational training under various government welfare programmes (PROGRAMA DE ACCEDER) for Roma/Gitanos of Spain. Under FSGG Inter-Cultural Department, She also has to assist Roma/Gitanos kids in various cultural activities or enculturation/acculturation cohesion as well as helping them out from various difficulties in literacy by formal education. As for her unique understanding about aspiration in her life, although being a gitana girl, she was many times interviewed by various people, organizations, journalists etc.

She is an independent girl who reflected herself as a rebellious child in family by challenging status-quo. By giving an insight upon her gender point of view, she speaks up, “I grew up as a ‘black sheep’ who rejects the unequal gender norms prevailing within Gitano families in general. I took up various problems for women in the Spanish society. The family does neither understand my feelings nor recognizes my individual rights. My family members feel that I am not so familiar with Gitana culture, language, custom and I also do not have respect for elders or others in Roma community. Among Gitano families, girls are usually got married very soon as in age of 14 -16 years old. But I confronted with my family to be not getting married very soon. Rebecca continued and says, “I finished primary education in Instituto while I was in 12. Soon I went in Secondary ESO (12+) level education in collegio but I couldn’t continue it due to family problems. Then after, I had to take care of my
young sister and two brothers. Soon after, I joined Inter-culture mediator (Mediador Intercultural) course in 2005-06 under the FSGG Foundation which was started to implement the ACCEDER Program. I feel rejuvenated by educational atmosphere here under the foundation. Again I had to stay in home for my sibling’s caring purpose more two years. My father used to work as a market vendor when I was little. I began the work when I was 14 years old. Since after, I am engaged in 2-3 contract works alongwith doing study. Three years ago, my family shifted from Santurtxi to Rioja where my parents opened a restaurant. Thought the Gitano culture disallows gitana girls for working restaurant and bars, I worked as a waiter in Disco Bar (discoteca) meanwhile a year during night shift in Rioja. I am suffering much tension for my life aspirations by leaving the house a one year back. I worked in the night club with help of my friends under one year contract and it can be subsequently extended for another a year if I wish to continue. Still I am working partly in same bar. The bar work involves cleaning the floor, and also serving customers. I work on any task as required. I work in bar daily 4 hours and 20 hours in a week. I did not collect the unemployment benefits scheme (dole paro). Because of lack of time, I cannot continue my education. I have a dream, if I get an opportunity to study, I will prefer to study for law and human rights. I may join the university education but I do not have leisure time. If I get a chance to work in USA, I have a dream to work there. I do not want to wish to stay in Spain. I would say I like the British and American for their hard working mentality.

Rebecca answered, “I cannot say about job security. After doing many contract part-time jobs, I owned a flat, car in Santurtxi merely at the age of 21. I think I could acquire this because of detachment from the family and Gitano surroundings. I never think the life as easy as common gitana woman thinks. I personally see, whether gitana or Spanish background, the youth here be always seek to enjoy and indulge in alcohol and drugs too. In my case, I am, still 21 years old, never think like this because as I groomed in very conservative family atmosphere. I wish many Gitana kids to have good education and responsible for their own career. Many Gitano Families still living in joint family and do not have own house. Most of youth boys and girls do not think life optimistically. The problem of divorcee Gitanos women is seen very differently. If the divorcee woman wants to marry again, she is restricted to marry within Gitano community. She has to go outside community for marriage. If
she has kids, the gitano family does not allow her to take them with her. As far as health of Gitana women is concerned, they are not so much conscious about health. The fact is that under huge health severity, gitana women take the medical consultation in these matters. While working with Gitano kids, I also take care of them from primary health cause. On job security issues, she speculates with a positive glance and underlines, “Seeking any new contract job is not easily possible; it will take more or less 1-3 months to find new job. Until the new job, I will not let me off from my old job. Holding a strong hope will end up in good outcome for everyone. My principle struggle lot in everyday and life terms until the last minute and should not give up the hope as well. I believe in work ethics and also respect those people who hold such things. I believe hard work carries always worthy outcome. There is lot of difficulties in life when seeking good life partner, job, and pursuing study whether for man or woman. I came across from such kinds of challenging things in life, which still I have been facing, due to huge grievances and sufferings within the family and community. She further tells I do not have any problem with Spanish in-laws. They regard and consider me equal because I am an independent woman making necessary mutual adjustments. My boyfriend is 32 years old and bears well-matured personality. He works as an engineer in aluminum glass factory in Bilbao. I have two brother; approximately 6 and 14 years old and younger is studying High-School education (Instituto).

Rebecca feels, “I am not a conformist because I have lot of aspirations about my individual life. I believe every individual, whether she/he belongs to any group, religion or sect, has own decision rights to do different things while living into those settings. That means I do not deny the values as I know I born and brought up in Gitano family. Even I am a positive for some great Gitanos customs around us; my family segregated me from common decision makings about my intended career. When I would have children, I will not teach them like my family taught me from childhood for girl’s obligations, superior Gitano culture etc. I also will not tell them that we are from a Roma/Gitano community. I like to get mixed with Spanish people around me. That is why I do not like to stay in gitano community. Several times, I struggled with my family to be alone or alongwith my Spanish Payo boyfriend. They disallowed me. Since from that day, I never spoke with my father and family too. To be a virgin till marriage test, according to the Gitano traditional norm, families
prevents girls by all means. That is why I stay now with my boyfriend from one year. I left my house. I am in disagreement this bride virgin norm. These things have restricted girls because Gitano culture still has predominance of male child preference. My elder sister also married at the age of 15. I will not co-habit with my partner until I will not buy my own flat, comfort job and my partner would have same status”.

On persistence discrimination and stereotypes for Roma/Gitanos in general and Roma women in particular since several past decades, Rebecca claims, “I have had no personal experience of visible discrimination by payos. I never seemed to be getting discriminatory treatment by anybody, but exclusively by my family. Several years back, I used to be Gitana girl when I was with family, but now I never show my gitano inheritance. There might be a different experience to me, as I was ever not discriminated, due to my white skin colour and unique look than common Gitanos appearances and body-language. People still know me as non-Roma/gitana. I also like to make new friends. My several friends probably do not realize my personal identity as a gitana until I speak about it myself. After getting to know my Gitano identity, people do not react to me but praise me lot as I have given up the traditional lifestyle and cultural stereotype too”.

Rebecca could explain briefly on existing dowry system in Roma community, she elucidates, “As a form of bride price, my mother has bought several domestic commodities, goods when I was young. There is tradition in Gitanos to gift the household related things on the occasion of weddings, but no money is paid. She emphasized, “Gitanos culture is very communitarian for women in terms of her moral safety, restricted norms for women compared to Spanish individualist community. As I am with my Spanish boyfriend since one year, I feel more frustration and loneliness while communicating with in-laws and other people. When I feel lonely, I make an exercise individually and try to detach with my family as well as community disappointment, grief and adapting tension between me and my surrounding. It sees more elusive condition to accompany a close relationship with an outside culture.”

5.2.4. Triple Exclusion: Notes from Interviews

Ana Maria (Interview Venue: ASGIBA Roma Association)
Ana Maria, 40 years old illiterate woman, stays in Santurtzi. Ana works partly as a street vendor/hawker. Maria’s family consists of 8 members. She neither collects the House Rent Allowance (Renta Basica) nor Unemployment Benefit (paro); but her elder daughter is receiving it. For daily food, she sells goods like pyjama and clothes around 4 days in a week. Doing a vendor job in a week, she can little meet the needs of family. Such kinds of this irregular works hardly feed up the basics needs of family. Economically she is worried about the future but despite of all these problems they feel happy. Even Roma women although they want to express more but could not not express as they could not objectify all the problems.

Ana sorrowfully states; firstly while purchasing goods and commodities from public shopping spaces for Roma/Gitanos “one feels like an alien” especially women. Secondly, very often the extreme neighbourhood isolation takes place while asking for rental (alquiler) flat accommodation. On contrary, payos may provide the accommodation to immigrants and foreigner, but not to the Roma/Gitanos. My married daughter is undergoing indirect rejections by the payo flat owner when they identified her as gitana. Thirdly, lack of education and the gitano identity stands out as serious obstacles to be immensely excluded from even manual jobs. Often, even recruitments in manual jobs, whether as cleaning and housekeeping jobs, are denied. She elaborates, “I found there was a vacancy for cleaning job (for windows-doors cleaning) in a shop within supermarket. However I made sure that the cleaning job requires no educational curriculum, but only requires a ladder. Then I called up shop owner and got an appointment. When I reached to shop for an interview, the shop owner was glared toward me for a while and suspiciously asked my full and detail name as well as course done. The shop owner paused when he came to know my surname “Pilar” that traces a gitana identity. I requested and assured in generous way. I was turned down after I persuaded him about my working qualities. That is a tragic moment in my life. Such forms of humiliating practices that transmit through payos are caused subversion from progressive thinking and remain to be engaged in either traditional ethnic economy or claiming the dole, unemployment benefits (Paro) and house rent assistance (renta basica).

Ana deliberately shares her family status, “My opinion is that I do not expect that my husband should help in domestic work. There is no such domestic moral right sand obligation in Gitano culture for sharing domestic work. Keeping family well and
healthy must be the women’s responsibility themselves which gitana patriarchal culture preaches; I believe too. Long back, the problems of gitana women would face vast discrimination from physical to mental state by old patriarchal system. To me, in the country like Spain, Roma/Gitanos women have been somewhat coming out from domestic causalities. We can see some sort of visible breakthrough within minds of present generation. We usually go out to have a dinner; sometimes we arrange the picnics outdoor along with whole family normally in weekends. That is why there is nothing to do with domestic obligations to be bound with men. In some matters, husband shares the works in the family while sending younger son in school and so on and so forth. Cooking, cleaning, related illness caring and other primary essential responsibilities must hold by women as I do. On contrary, I think that coming new generation might be thinking differently. For example to say; my 16 years old married daughter is so modern. Thus she has different thinking as she is from other generation. She thinks that she can trust like that Spanish woman. She thinks she can go out with other people. She can smoke and can do anything that she wants. I hardly take part in several pro-gitano movements in Bilbao for gaining the basic rights. But as I have seen that several young women are more like taking the lead; they are helping the kids to study and they are going for the movement.

Ana expects the educational and livelihood status of her children to change. “We should start from our families to provide best education for children but discouraging chatarra, cleaning and selling jobs. Community amelioration can come into existence if they should not rely on old traditional practices and go by the educational way.” Anna faces problems due to her obesity and women did not seem to be too enthusiastic about taking care of their health.

c) Jesus (Interview venue: ASGIBA office)
Jesus a, 30 year old woman, lives in Cruces IIano. Jesusa is a divorcee woman and long-term unemployed. Jesus studied up to the primary school. Jesusa was divorced due to routine physical beating by her ex-husband; but now stays with her Algerian boy-friend. Jesusa’s family is of about 22 persons with, overt features of joint family; including her parents, a half dozen of siblings, and a dozen of small kids; nephews, nieces etc. Jesusa says, “Many times, we are unable to pay the flat rent because of over budget on meal buying rather than other needs of members. Moreover, flat owners seem reluctant to accommodate us when they see huge family size. Among
dispersed nature of family members, mostly female in the family collect house rent allowance (renta basica). Due to huge family size and unemployed men, there is a problem of space in the house. Moreover, her family is stuck in poor conditions and none of them were health conscious”.

Over the healthcare issue, she explains positive things such as the public hospital never treat Roma badly. Rather the health care attention is good than other basic public service-providing institutions. I am satisfied with medical treatments which are provided and insured free of cost to everyone. Presently I am affected by asthma disease. However, I remember an incident related to police’s negative mentality toward me due to me being a Gitana woman. I faced discrimination few days back, a boy flirted and abused me on the road by calling against my Gitana identity when I was getting back home. He might have been drunk. Immediately I contacted the policeman who was standing beside the road. First up all, the policeman suspected me that I am unnecessary complaining to him. He intentionally ignored my appeal. Rightly there he should have taken action but he might not have taken due to huge stereotypical nonsense. From that moment, I feel insecure to walk on the road alone despite the presence of police and existing laws against women’s humiliation.

She was complaining about too much discrimination from the society. She said she is not able to find a house in the general neighbourhood as the moment when people come to know that she is a gitana. They do not rent the house to her. Traditionally, the women Roma/gitanos have always had to face up situations of discriminations and marginalization, but it is the Gitana women who have suffered them most, since they have been subject to the threefold exclusion, being discriminated on the basis of gender, ethnic group and education. The difficulties they encounter everyday in the labour market, are a clear example. In addition, there may have several kinds of risks and denial in labour market over years and year lead insecure life-chances and working status. Keeping hope from getting an employment for gitana women become a utopian desire. As my experience can be a good illustration that gaining the manual jobs, due to poor skills and education, is nothing to do with degree or special skills, but enormous racism and negative stereotypes. Different Gitano associations have proposed many options for overcoming those obstacles which require the involvement of the Gitana women. For Gitana women, for example, discriminations take place everywhere based on market places, street, work and from neighbouring places where
they get contacted. By domestic practices, most of families wish the women to engage in only household responsibilities; such as cooking, cleaning, children and elder’s care etc. Women should have rights in the families so that they wouldn´t be victims of rigid patriarchal circles. Due to this tradition, women are more likely depend on the men mercy and chauvinistic behaviour. I think I have always thought quite differently than the gitana women. My opinion could be different on husband´s responsibilities in the families while sharing the works. I think my husband must help me in cooking, cleaning and other outdoor responsibilities.

5.2.5. Adoption of Evangelism as a way of Integrating the Roma Pan-Ethnicity

Tomas, Justin, Jose, Ramon, Alejandro, Justo (Interview venue: Philadelphia Evangelic Church, Portugalete)

This interview was organized with Roma Gypsies/Gitanos at a Philadelphia Evangelic Church (Iglesia de Philadelphia) in Portugalete-Bilbao. Within Bilbao, there are 1,20,000 Roma/Gitanos who have enrolled their Church memberships (Pentecostal). I have made some observation at evening congregation meeting where I approached to senior church authorities about my proposed research objectives and frequently visits to be familiar different problems of Gitanos. After a long discussion, they got convinced for it.

Tomas and his colleagues narrate, “Roma/Gitanos community is probably encircled by Baptist Catholic Christians from several decades ago. We did not find enough evidence, but our forefathers used to tell about it. In Evangelic Churches, we are proud of this place this is best thing that is happen in our lives. By our religion, every group and their religion we regard equal whether poor and rich, black or white, Asian. The evangelism is not a religion but we only pray to Jesus and not in other mediators like priest, religious leader. God will protect us. There should be: No food shortage! No fights! Only love. We have to struggle everyday for meeting ends up. Evangelism is considered to be as a spiritual preaching for Roma. As far as our knowledge, we have embraced and have been practicing evangelic catholic religion in 1971, but before that we had adopted Iran Catholic religion. At that time, we did not experience religion liberty, but now we have religious liberty in Spain. We had to face huge persecution when we had migrated from the India. By the adoption the evangelism, Gitanos acquired moral power as one of wide sect within catholic. In old time (14-15 Century ago), European Roma would worship the nature, plant and animals. When
Roma arrived in Europe, our forefathers had huge traditional knowledge about Ayurveda (plant medicines, herbal remedies, Vedic-surgeries). During those days, knowledge of practicing medicine treatments would transmit mainly within woman to woman. Apart from this, even today some of Gitanos have knowledge of palmistry (*Hassta-Rekha*) and fortune telling, black magic, threading ritual. Our respondents were also little bit familiar with ancient history of Dravidians of Tamilnadu (from Southern part of India), Rajputs from Rajasthan, Harappa Mohinjodado civilization, sumediya etc. Gitanos even know few Romany-Caló words of vocabulary; for instance, *Chandi; Sona-Calle*.

There were also few Roma Gitano families who inhabit around the Church vicinities who made clear, “We do not follow the Evangelic religion which majority percentages of Gitano community follow. If we practice the religion, we have to quit our alcoholic and smoking habits which always minimize our work stress and family frustration. Our wives follow best practices of religion than us. During festival, we together visit to restaurants with families and have food and greet and hug each other. No other festival’s rituals are celebrated by us. Even today, we do have a strong belief on joint family heritage that sustains our unity and goodness”.

Tomas glorifies the term “virgin matrimony/marriage” in terms of honour of Roma women is very important custom which is called virginity test. Talking over the Roma/gitano custom (costumbre) and conditions for women; some Roma women within the congregation hall took part in our ongoing conversation and proclaimed, “Women cannot escape from such kinds of setting in gitano families as a woman. In family, there is more concern about bride’s virginity till wedding (*boda*) custom. Wedding ritual lasts from three days to a week, proof of virginity of the bride being the high point of the ceremony. This test takes place at midnight on the first day, the moment when the bridal pair is considered to be husband and wife. A woman functions as the community’s strength and weakness since the man’s pride, honour, and disgrace reside in her. In effect, this makes her a hostage of the community; social control prevents her from attending school or anything else that does not constitute an extension of domestic life, such as fairs. Agreement between families- Gitano girls arrive to her husband’s house, and then some days later a girl visit to their home (*maica*).
5.2.6. Reforms in Industrial Area in Bilbao

Bilbao is the capital of Vizcaya Province of Basque Region, one of the three provinces which constitute the Basque Country or Basque Region. The Basques are a unique and ancient people located in northern Spain and southern France at the border of those two countries and the Bay of Biscay (Atlantic Ocean). What is named ‘the first industrialization’ of the city was based on mining, metallurgy and shipbuilding and was closely related to British demand for iron ore during the second half of the nineteenth century. Vizcaya became a most dynamic province in Spain. In economic terms, it was mainly dominated by protectionist and stagnant, policies, the latest of them stemming from the first period of Franco’s dictatorship (up to the 1950s). With the demise of the Franco dictatorship (1975), social work with the Roma community acquired a more non-confessional character. The Basque labour market is mostly made up of the service sector and some industry, although fishing is an important sector in some coastal areas. The secondary economy and labour market is relatively small but usually better paid than in other parts of Spain. Bilbao was founded by Don Diego Lopez de Haro in 1300. In the 15th century, the city of Bilbao had a population of 3000 inhabitants. Around the 16th century it became the main export port of wool from Castile to the northern European cities. But, it was 19th century’s Industrial Revolution that was crucial for Bilbao, as it became one of the wealthiest cities of Spain. During the Industrial Revolution, they began to take on a more prominent ‘world role’ due to large deposits of iron and coal along with their skills as ship-builders. Then during the Franco (Franco’s authoritarian regime) years in Spain (1935-1975), Franco actually encouraged businesses to move to the Basque Country in an attempt to dilute the strong Basque influence there. As a result, the autonomous region, the Basque Country, is now the most powerful economic region in all of Spain and many small businesses and industry dot the landscape -both in towns and cities as well as in the countryside. Traditionally, the Basques are known as fishermen (sea), sheepherders, and subsistence farmers. Until the early nineteen hundreds, their way of life was largely unchanged. During the first phase of industrialization in the Basque Country (1877–1910), this was one of the most industrialized regions of the northern part of Spain. From the start of the region’s industrialization, but especially during the 1960s and 70s, a significant shift in Bilbao’s demography took place, a seemingly direct cause of the boom of an urban industrial center, offering those willing to move the opportunity to be part of the blooming economic sector of northern Spanish
territory complete assimilation and the formation of ghettos (Zulaika, 2000: 263). Since Franco’s death in 1975 and the smooth transition phase towards democracy, the degree of social and political exclusion suffered by the gitano (gypsy) communities has been perceived and debated for the first time. During the last decade of Franco’s regime, the process of industrialization, urbanization, and massive rural-urban migration inside Spain deepened and transformed the century-old tradition of exclusion. There was a high concentration of Roma in some industrial regions; the collapse of heavy industry inherited from the Communist era has created genuine disaster areas where large groups of Roma are without work and where overall economic situation is difficult for the whole population. The informal labour market in Spain evolved along with the economic growth the country experienced since the 1980s. This growth enabled the local population to move into more high-skilled work, leaving a need for low-skilled and unskilled labourers, and thus a place for immigrants in the Spanish economy and labour market. In contrast, the now highly de-industrialized Basque Country, with its economy largely based on the tertiary economic sector, has had less immigration than the south due to the relatively smaller size of its informal secondary labour market. Because of the ongoing economic recession the Spanish and Basque labour market are going through significant change in terms of who are willing to do what and who are wanted in which sector. Unemployment in Spain is soaring at a record high of 18.83%. The autonomous community of the Basque Country has not been hit as hard. (INE: 2010)

5.2.7. Legal Site Prohibition Acts and Decline in the Roma Ethnic Economy
Globalization means many things to many people essentially it has involved a proliferation of the links between different national economics formed by a growth in world trade at a far faster rate than the expansion of gross domestic product and in particular a veritable boom in the size of overseas investment, foreign direct investment or FDI. According to Amartya Sen (2002) the forces of globalization are bringing new groups of people into economic, social and cultural contact with each other. Globalization is both a threat (especially a traditional ways of earning and living) and an enormous opportunity (especially in providing new ways of being prosperous and affluent). Likewise, the Europe has undergone major changes. A small number of East European Gypsies were able to begin commercial activities by taking advantage of new opportunities and capitalizing on legal loopholes during transition
period to establish proper businesses afterwards. Roma entrepreneurs are often involved in the used-car trade-buying, reconditioning, and reselling automobiles. In time police attention to semi-legal and illegal commercial activities increased, resulting in the ebbing fortunes of many a Roma businessman. In the mid-1990s peddling and street-vending were not only outlawed but regulations began to be strictly enforced in many cities and towns across the regions, jeopardizing the livelihood of thousands of Gypsies. Urbanization, industrialization, population growth, establishment of modern nations, and development of technology have posed a great threat to Roma/gypsies. Roma are caught in a cycle of unemployment, poverty and limited education attainments. Their traditional skills are not valued in a modern economy, and they have to face discrimination through employment and education.

Roma/gypsies/gitano is not an ethnic minority group coming properly from immigration, as the others mentioned before, given that they are present in Spain for over 600 years. Roma/gypsies were known to be skillful in working metals, such as copper, iron and gold and in breeding horses. Historically in Eastern Europe, they were also renowned for their music and dances, illegal activities, such as stealing, or unconventional occupations, such as palmistry and fortune-telling, were additional sources of income. The Roma have been experts in all forms of metalwork, whether it be as tinsmiths, coppersmiths, or silversmiths. Roma have not only been master metalworkers, but they have also shown great ingenuity in devising relatively light equipment, such as forges and hammers. These tools are necessary to their work and are specifically designed to be easily transported. Knife grinding, or blade sharpening, is a common occupation for many Roma, and Roma can be frequently seen sharpening scissors and knives with their portable whet-stone wheels on street corners. There is a new factor in the situation in relation to the industrial recycling metal scrap work. The recent Control of Pollution Act 1974 makes it an offence to deposit ‘controlled waste’ on any land without a license. By ‘controlled waste’ is meant household, commercial and industrial waste, and it seems likely that this will affect the metal scrap collector on unauthorized encampments not only in relation to waste scrap-metal but also in relation to their household refuse. The penalties are heavy: a fine of up to Euros 400 or imprisonment for up to two years. Though the Act was doubtless not drafted primarily with the Gypsies in mind, it could very seriously affect them. Certainly they will view it as another attack on their way of life. Few would be able to pay Euros 400 fine and might thus find themselves in prison for
pursuing their normal way of life. This Act is another example of legislation intended for other purposes but bearing punitively on the industrial metal collector. To avoid some of the offensive cases of discarded scrap local authorities should ensure that rubbish tips are easily accessible to Gypsies and that there are greater incentives for them to dispose of waste in this way. The present emphasis on the recycling of waste materials suggests that authorities should consider granting Gypsies legal access to scrap material abandoned on dumps, as is already permitted in some areas. Most Gypsies are involved in itinerant trade (60-70%), scrap metal collection, waste sorting and seasonal agricultural work. By linking the Municipal and European Law, I focus mainly on problems linked to itinerant trade and inevitable labour market exclusions.

To recycling sector and its recycling processes, a wasteland of industrial ruins (hundreds of acres) was a visible remainder of this industrial period in Spain. The change from the Industrial Society into the Knowledge-based Society brought not only a deep transformation of the production systems, the economy and society in general, but also a considerable increase of inequalities. Gypsies who engaged in this traditional activity have to overcome an increasing number of obstacles (regulations, inspections, taxes and prohibitions). Spanish Government reinforced act called Royal Decree 1010/1985 on the Itinerant Trade Act sets a number of conditions for being allowed to engage in this activity, which many itinerant traders are unable to fulfill. Furthermore, each municipality can impose a number of extra conditions and, in practice, many local authorities ban this kind of trade, which has forced many Gypsy families to work illegally or to become unemployed. Although they tended to be marginalized by mainstream society, Roma/Gypsies were traditionally involved in a number of specific occupations (such as training animals, collecting scrap metal, handicrafts, street entertainment, seasonal agricultural work, itinerant trade, etc) which enabled them to fulfill a particular social function and earn a living, whether they had an itinerant lifestyle or not. That is explained with external factors including the economic crisis, which began in 1970 and the demographic pressure exercised by the community (high birth rates and short generational cycles). Within their own society Gypsies can have dignity and respect; among house-dwellers they may be stigmatized and the type of employment available to them is of low status. A situation is improving with the industrialization of Bilbao but although the male Gypsy Objections to site provision for Gypsies are reinforced by discrimination against them
both in law and in practice. They appear to have a viable economy and there is little prospect of opportunities to earn a living disappearing unless the law makes it impossible for them to travel where and when those opportunities exist. It seems that this kind of economic collapse has occurred as yet among only a few families. On the contrary, in so far as they work with scrap metal, the increase in consumer durables among house dwellers and the constant demand for recycled scrap materials may enable more families to stay on the road.

According to Teresa Turell (2001), Spanish Gitanos are employed at a low professional and wage level. Their traditional trades have disappeared, as these were related to agriculture, trading and craftwork and these occupational areas have gone into serious decline, forcing Gitanos to accept other, inferior jobs. Nowadays, a large proportion of Spanish Gitanos are employed as manual labourers and many others work as peddlers. This does not mean that one cannot find Gitanos working in a whole range of jobs, such as taxi drivers, bakers, painters, mechanics, drivers, guards, salespersons, or even as doctors, teacher, parliamentarians, artistic, commercial, salespersons, nurses, craftsperson etc. However, the majority work in jobs with low profession; status. Furthermore, the percentage of unemployed is very high, only offset to some extent by socially unrecognized activities such as buying and selling scrap of begging. In the Basque Region, according to FSGG, gitano’s population is arbitrarily shown merely 13,000 including several sub-diverse Roma Gypsies with most of in extreme poverty and social exclusion as well as non-implementing their community development plans. Schooling is just one of the factors in a broader cultural change being experienced by Gypsy communities. Traditional jobs are no longer offering a way to make a living. The media bombard people with alternative ways of life, all of them stressing the pressure to consume and the provision of models of independent men and women. The ongoing global financial crisis has further increased xenophobic sentiments towards Roma people in many parts of Europe: immigrants and “outsiders” are often made scapegoats for wider societal ills ranging from crime to unemployment. Prejudice against those perceived to be “foreigners” has intensified and Roma represents the ones that are more deeply affected by this anti-immigration rhetoric. In the last couples years several changes have been taking place into Spanish Roma ethnic economy (San Roman, 1994: 91-101). First of all, there has been a reduction of paid work in the Gitano community is Spain. Secondly, there has
also been a decline of the trade of scrap dealing, particularly in Madrid and Barcelona, although it is maintained in areas of Spain (Galicia) where the Gitanos settled after the economic crisis of the 1970s. The economic slump which emerged in 1975 addressed to number of structural problems which basically consisted of restrictive industrial production based on the traditional iron and steel industries, shipbuilding and equipment goods, the sectors worst hit worldwide, and also on insufficient autonomy of the services sector, which was closely linked to industrial development. This situation had a considerable impact on society and the city itself. Its effects were the decay of an industrial system, high unemployment, (between 25% and 30%, reaching 35% in certain areas of Greater Bilbao), degradation of the environment and the general city framework, emigration and stagnation of populations, and Problems of social exclusion. In years to come, automation, robotisation and other forms of technological development will inevitably lead to a considerable reduction in the work force required by knowledge-based industries. Temporary work in the fields is no longer an option for Gitanos since it has been covered by poor payos (non-Gitanos) and recently by foreign immigrants. Selling of all sorts of products has been by far the most extended activity developed by Gitanos during these last 20 years. Clothes flower and shoe stalls proliferate everywhere, both into the urban and rural areas. In addition, there are also jobs related to the public administration which are open to members of the Gitano community who usually attend formacion professional (vocational training) and are then incorporated to the specialist fields of which they have become experts.

However, many traditional small family-run operations collect recyclable waste, usually newspapers, cardboard, and used glass. Although they are not as efficient as larger modern recycling operations, the government feels obligated to protect the livelihoods of families at the lower end of the economic scale. With the exception of recycling of paper and cardboard, Spain is behind other EU countries in recycling. According to Tecno Ambiente, a leading Spanish environmental publication, over 50 percent of the Spaniards separate their household solid waste to recycle paper products and cardboard. An estimated 74 percent of these paper products are recycled. A new program to be separated municipal waste at households for composting and recycling commenced January 1, 1998 in Madrid. The program involved 176 municipalities. A broad media campaign is being used to promote separating refuse
into biodegradable and non-biodegradable components. The government has given away 600,000 special garbage containers for biodegradable wastes and 78 million yellow plastic bags for inorganic waste. Spain is one of the EU members that have taken steps to apply stricter standards for new waste landfills in advance of any EU directives. New landfill sites using modern technology are being designed. In many cases, large companies which need recycling technologies, such as vehicle manufacturers, design and develop their own equipment in-house and contract out the manufacturing. Off-the-shelf equipment is generally not used for factory recycling in large industrial plants. It often has to be custom-made to the needs of the end user. Large industrial plants; such as vehicle manufacturers and large fuel burning installations, subcontract environmental technology design and consulting engineers dedicated to industrial waste recycling. Multinational companies are prime customers for this operation. The Royal Decree of October 1997 which allows companies to receive tax credits for investments in environmental technology, should stimulate the market. Although recycling of industrial waste is now carried out throughout Spain, it is a very young industry. As recent as 1989, recycling of industrial waste was not considered a viable business, and very few companies, if any, provided this service. EGMASA, the public sector corporation fully owned by the regional government, created a successful joint venture with private investors to recycle and treat industrial wastes. Other new private and public companies have started to enter this new lucrative trade created by environmental legislation. The Spanish Government has started to apply fines to enforce environmental legislation to protect the environment. As enforcement of environmental legislation increases, business opportunities for industrial waste recycling and treatment will undoubtedly increase as well. In addition, it seems that the progressive development of Roma society, in which the state and institutions are colonizing more and more spaces, are making impossible some of their strategies to make a living. To sell in markets without Town Hall permission condemns them to illegality; the sewers have been closed to public access; their nomadic ways of life has been progressively changing for a more stable and localize position in neighbourhoods. The focus mainly on problems linked to itinerant trade and its decline that have been proposed. Gypsies who engage in this traditional activity have to overcome an increasing number of obstacles (regulations, inspections, taxes and prohibitions). Royal Decree 1010/1985 on the Itinerant Trade Act sets a number of conditions for being allowed to engage in this activity, which many
itinerant traders are unable to fulfill. Furthermore, each municipality can impose a number of extra conditions and, in practice, many local authorities ban this kind of trade, which has forced many Gypsy families to work illegally or to become unemployed.

Having observing the strict industrial recycling laws and its consequence on Roma scrap dealing and industrial metal collection trades, following interview with Roma/gitano self-employed scrap collector would reveal his personal narrations about increasing income and occupational (selling and vending) devastation due to crackdown and physical surveillance under Bilbao Municipal Recycling laws which persist to be remained most stigmatized activities across industrial and public domains.

**Hantonio Pinto (Interview venue: ASGIB, Baracaldo)**

Hantonio is a 33 years old Roma worker who works as an itinerary buyer (Chatarra) and vending (venta ambulante) since seven years. He earns approximate 70 Euros in a week; and 400/500 Euros in a month. Hantonio’s family size consists of about seven members in which only men in the family works, but not women. He married in an adolescence age when he was merely 14 years old and has a daughter of aged 19 years. Hantonio has even a girl-friend who is from native Spanish origin (un paya). He discontinued school very early. He attended the school till 10-12 years and then left. He clearly states, “I wanted to change the house. To my family, my parents used to move from one place to another place in the search of employment and chatarra business. Consequently, I had to switch the school 3/4 times in a year. During those days, ever changing the school admission (as far as for Gitanos) was tended to be difficult. Whenever we sought some work opportunities, my family switched the locations of resident. To have adaptation in one school has seen lot of difficulties.”

A year earlier, he has had paid employment (Trabajo de Contrato) where he used to work as a gardener in the Portugalete Municipality (town-hall). His contract period was about six months and then the employment contract terminated. Yet, the contract did not renew twice in a year. While asking a question about job seeking method; *Which kinds of method have you used to be sought a job*; Hantonio replies, “I joined in gardening work through Portugalete City Municipal Council (ayuntamiento). The municipality employment register agency had called me and arranged an interview
and then offered a contract. Once the contract finished, I was terminated; since then I had to leave the job. Further, I am wishing again to work with municipality and I am still contacting with the Municipal employment agency. Further same contract job may not easily be offered because the priority is given to registered applicants. As I know there are lot of Gitanos queued in waiting list. I am still waiting for the office call.” The second question asked him; Could you find other Gitano youth attempt to find alternate work or do they tend to be remained engage in the same chatarra work?; he quickly adds that presently there are tremendous changes in the chatarra work. No one in Roma/Gitano Community makes an attempt to change their traditional occupation because majority of Gitanos in Bilbao are illiterates who never went to school. People wish to change their jobs but unfortunately lack of formal and vocational educational skills which are required in labour market prevent Roma to be engaged into same works”.

Hantonia gives details about his scrap collecting activities and ongoing sufferings in trades, he speaks, “I usually work around 3 days in a week but it depends on the collecting scrap articles, automobile wastes from Bilbao vicinities areas: Santurtxi, Portugalete and other parts of rural Bilbao where the heaps of sanitary (sanitaria) dump trash are found. Sometimes I have to do lot of work and even in night time if I do not find the scrap in a day. On a routine day, I leave my home for work at 9 am and come back till 8 pm and that is why the particular time for work does not matter for me and ultimately the scrap searching from scarp waste yard areas, picking and loading and unloading and numbers of quantity scrap articles become a necessity for our daily livelihood. We actually keep asking to the garage, shops and other metallic cutlery enterprises about the metallic trash. When we collect it we load in our goods-vehicles and sell it (recycle, repairing it). Moreover, we leave for work with all my cousins; we also walk away to remote areas villages for searching the trash. Such scrap trash involves old washing machines, chairs, sopa, furniture, freeze (anything which has return values). After collection, we make re-processes to the scrap, renewed and then resell to informal scrap dealers/factories. This vending work divides into various kinds of non-standard daily activities.* Generally I buy old vehicles and do repair and then they resell in the market. This work is not recognized by anyone and regarded stinky (unclean) by all societies and to being also disliked our neighbourhood presence. Under the vehicle traffic act, for disobediance of the codes of
conduct in public market places, he was once taken to jail for 3 years. But now he feels quite stable and calm due to ASGIB’s intervention to rehabilitate from criminal charges and custody.” Hantonio further continues, “I stay in Portugalete where having significant numbers of Gitanos chatarra workers sprawled out. We are not allowed to occupy urban space or any kinds shop holding to be legalizing trade matter. For buying and re-selling market informal activities, there are particular places and market corners have accommodated and through it we accompany our trade businesses. The work is having full of risks by the police and by people too.”

About job security issue, Hantonia reiterates the same fact and he slams, “The State labour policy categorizes their itinerant trades; therefore the police authority pressurize us and ask for the legal license permit and documents papers in market corner places. We are not able to produce such documents as it has not been allowed as a legal work under Municipal laws. I never feel job security in our itinerant trade. I also never feel stress or any other health miseries in my work because my work is of under self-employed nature. We do engage in this scrap collecting (chatarra and venta ambulante) works as an obligation (both in terms of persisting unemployment and not recognized our labour as dignified labour in the firm/labour market. Furthermore, this work is a source of single ethnic economy (traditional). If we abandon our traditional works, we may not get other free-lance jobs (No Work!! No Food!!). As a result, Spanish immigrants and foreigners may encroach on it’. That is why I feel a great job satisfaction to do such scrap collecting works. I would say the work of mine is more risky and have lots of risk; in contrary, the Spanish and other immigrants do not take up these works, there must be an illusion by them to be regarded polluting and unhygienic, illegal and so on. However, I do not have any kinds of trouble with my work. I like my work. I think to be not interested to explain the good/bad aspects/troubles/risks in the work/workplaces”.

Hantonio gladly speaks; ‘My girl-friend is from a native Spanish origin (un paya) who has taught me to operate so many things like computer messaging, and telephone automatic answering machine (Cotestador) and so on and so forth. She taught me basic skills and I am also curious to be learnt but the frequency of learning is quite slow. I get studied familiar to all technological things which are dispensable today.” moreover; I am a daily internet user. I also possessed a washing machine, television, computer, microwaves, furniture etc. But most of people in Roma/Gitano Community
do not have same kinds of amenities/things like mine. Roma are marginalized from the computer skills even though they may possess lot of other goods.”

Elena Dosantos Santos, Antonio Bautista Dosantos, Josue Bautista Fernanda, Juan, Fernando (Mittal Steel Factory - Metal Scrap Yard Area, Sestao)

A short interview was conducted with Elena and her fellow-male workers where all of them found outside the Mittal Factory yard. Among those Roma/Gitano scrap collectors, most of them were in a drunken condition and they were in poor conditions of clothing. All of them were from Sestao; but were originally from Portugal (called as ‘Portuguese Gitanos’) and immigrated in Bilbao since long back. When we reached their workplace, they weirdly suspected us something journalists. But when I described my own Indian nationality, some of them could gradually open up, but refused to allow photography or recording of the conversations. Some of them denied to respond to answers and suddenly backed to work. I could observe lot of miseries on such daily workplaces where these Roma scrap collectors are threatened and harassed by Policemen and the Municipal authorities. They had around four vans and one of van had things like old washing machines, wash basins of metallic structure; probably used ones or old ones, etc. The van also had other metallic scraps. They were quite loudly listened the Flamenco songs. During the interview, these Roma/Gitano scrap collectors seemed less curious to talk with us. They were gradually not very educated and almost half of them struggled even to write their names.

Elena (35 yrs) and Antonio (45 yrs) and their fellow-workers responded, “The working condition for Roma/Gitanos here is very bad. We are enormously facing the housing problems. Consequently we have to collect the house rental allowance/ renta basica. By doing so, we have been facing plight of discriminations across different public spheres from payos (non-Gitano). None of us have been in the university education”. Among them, Elena was little bit educated and had studied high school. She worked earlier at IKEA-Barakaldo in Furniture Company and Antonio has worked in Obaras federación de Funcionarios de las Obras as a shop cleaner/janitor (Sanitarias Del Estado). They were both terminated from job due to the economic crisis in the last year. Rest of the respondents had never been in school. Elena and her colleagues continued, “We are also struggling to buy everyday food for family that is why we cannot able to feed our children and pursue the education as well. We start the work at 10 am in morning without having fixed hours of work and then round up
to find the metallic scrap besides the factory yards. We generally collect metal from the industrial area yard. We never feel stress on workplaces because after all chatarra (scrap collection) is inevitable source of income due to our illiteracy. We neither feel stress in works nor shift the chatarra job. We have to earn sufficient money each day so that we will able to feel our families. We took part in protest against government for creating jobs for Gitanos irrespective of our traditional occupations like the chatarra work. Dealing with social security matters, the approach of government to Gitanos is so bad; gitanos are caught into extreme poverty trap. We are neither so much optimistic about us and our children’s education, nor even to be obtaining the housing and friendly connection with Spanish society."

Louis Motos, Aarón Motos (Interview venue: Cruces lane)
This interview turned out to be dangerous incidence for me, Rishu (an interpreter) and a Pakistani friend when Louis and Aaron were found with sharp weapons and they pulled it out to be threatened us. As we convinced them, we did not start discussion, unless they feel comfortable. This is quite risky incident for us. Finally they opened up to speak with us. In their interview, they spoke confidently against spate of discrimination in market workplaces, public hospital and while owning properties like flats, home etc.

Louis and Aarón, respectively 50 and 25 years old, both stay in Cruces IIano. They are fully engaged as a market vendor (vendedor). Aron has his own flat in Cruces beside his father Louis. They both stay separately with their wives and sons. Their whole family, including both Aron and Louis, consist of six members. Louis is the father of Aaron and they are both engaged into market street vending self-employed jobs. Aarón tells his last job experience, “Earlier I had been in contract work as a garage mechanic. Afterwards, I had received the (home rent payment) renta basica due to have job interval. Soon after that I had to produce necessary document papers for getting the renta basica instead of collecting the paro (unemployment payment). Louis and Aarón enunciate over market space access, “As a street vendor; we have to work in all days in a month. We work for 6 hours in a day from 9 am to 2 pm; that means about 42 hours in a week. These weekly flea markets are probably held at lunes cruces, bolveta and centro de Bilbao, but the huge market stalls are set up by each Sunday. We usually sell women and children´s cloths. The problem in this market selling is Police Department. Every day they torture to market-sellers like us who
have to face high risk and menace. Our family had started selling business with help of Ayuntamiento with Euros-200. We sell the clothes and other items in cheap and lump sum prizes to public compared to big shopping malls and garment stores. Such things are sold in open flee market on daily basis. The major problems of gitanos, for us, can be visualized as we have to face public access in terms of restricted open access by payos while owning flats (plaza), by asking rental flat, booking permanent market stalls, urging a descent job, accommodating public utilities like an adaptation in public schools, problems regarding to vernacular classes, by adjusting formal codes of conduct, absence of Gitano culture in class curriculum and so and so forth. Apart from these problems, we have to face the great xenophobia tendency of payos at common working and public places as well as neighbourhood isolations. Between Gitanos and Payos, they have not at all the social relationships. Integration is also not possible into all segments of gitanos. Louis and Aarón recite, “Spanish people in our neighbourhood never greet us, ‘Hello’, ‘Hi’. In Gitano community, we have a strong belief by having respects to each others as payos do not.

Arón tells an anecdote, by telling his experience of common stereotype from native payos when buying a permanent flat property, “I explain my case when once I was seeking the rental flat around Cruces. When Payo flat owner asked my name, and soon after he got known about me, he denied it. Before his denial, he could not recognize me due to my quite fair and white skin like payos. In Spain, flat owners probably curiously make sure your racial background either by asking your tenant’s name or skin colour complexions. In the first meeting, he failed to be recognized my colour identity. Then I sat with the owner to make the contract agreement of flat for a year and I also paid an advance payment for it. The rental flat agreement was also written by my initial name as “Aaron Moto”. During second meeting, while handing over the keys to me, he just reiterated and insisted to be told my family name. As soon as I told him my name as “Aaron Motos Jimenez”, soon he spelled out my name; “Jimenez” seems like gitano name. People probably get scared, when they hear the gitano identity; it is too much contaminated and scares us. The owner stood up and said, “I do not have any flat available, if I get to know something about any rental flat, I will let you know”. Finally he returned my paid advance payment. I could have lodged the complaint against him but I did not. This was notably not only worst experience in my life.
Arón emphasized that we are highly optimist people because many kinds of Gitano organizations in Bilbao are rigorously working for us; preparing our children for formal education, striving for economic assistance and resisting against the racist violence in Bilbao. We never went to university to study. Aron’s son studies in the public school. We hopefully expect for our children’s future to be obtained university education. Since I was continuous internet user; my internet connection is disconnected due to unpaid bill payment.

**Ezquce Borja, Jesus Borja (Interview venue: Philadelphia Church, Portugalete)**

Ezquce and Jesus stay in Ochorcoago. They work as a street vendor/hawker (*Venta ambulante*). They probably work into areas are in Bilbao, Santurtxi, and Portugalete. Actually they carry and pick up our goods by cars. We did not have any paid or contract job before. We are engaged in such occupations since 8 years. As far as occupations of gypsies are concerned, Ezquce and Jesus contend, “We still do not have modest prospect to boost ourselves up in development. We are really pushed out into margin due to ongoing economic crisis in which the government has not sufficient plans for gypsies. In future, we might have face lot of instability and agonies. To be bringing about change in society, Roma/Gypsies must get the fix-term employments for minimum qualified youths as well as the economic assistance those having long-term unemployment.

Ezquce and Jesus have studied up to two plus two levels (E.S.O). They all are married and even stayed out from their family. Both of them have a single kid. Ezquce and Jesus gladly speak, “Our kids are studying in the school. In public school, the Basque government provides scholarship for the Gitano kid, giving help for buying books, as well as paying fees and consultation with hygienic meal for kids. We are planning to send our kids for the good school and the university to be pursued higher education”.

As far as relationship contacts with non-gypsies are concerned, we have some friends from other non-gypsy (payos). The quality of life here in Spain for us is more or less satisfied are enjoying in the life. It means everybody has car, casa (house), sufficient food, employment and economic assistance by government. We are encircled by non-gypsy residents but never got discriminated by them. We strongly feel that we are the citizens of Spain. Furthermore, we would like to visit to India especially where our ancestors were migrated from north part of India; from Punjab and Rajasthan”.

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Since many of the interviewees had mentioned NGOs working for their inclusion, I decided to study some of the NGOs.

5.3. The Role of NGOs and Voluntary Associations: A Liberal Social Agenda

Among the European Socialist countries, the advocacy role of voluntary associations/organizations is regarded as an important element for participatory democracy. With the decline of State support in the welfare services, voluntary associations (sometimes known as the third sector) play an increasing role in provision of social services. The “intermediate sector” intervenes in consultation and employment structures which operate under the responsibility of NGOs and Civil Society Committees. Participation in voluntary associations such as political parties, churches, trade unions and professional bodies has been regarded remarkable in the integration of marginal groups such as immigrants and ethnic minorities into mainstream society and labour economy. Governmental response to employment issues affecting the Roma/gitano communities has been framed in terms of clichés and generalizations about lack of skills and different cultural attitudes towards work among Roma/gitano communities; little consideration has been given to the role played by racial discrimination, 1993 and as a result few strategic policy responses to the reality of discrimination have been developed. Roma Development Program*62 and Workaló Project*63 was initially conceived in mid-1980s, under Socialist government- “Political and Economic Mutual Support” (the first in Spain since 1930s), with the objective of providing a supra-regional coherency to action in favour of Spanish Roma/Gitanos.

In Roma Civil Society, there are roughly 600 Roma-gypsy associations working across the Spain. They include non-profit, inter-cultural and inter-racial organizations that have not affiliated to any particular creed or political party, Anakerando, Asociación de Gitanos de Navarra; La Majari; Asociación Nacional Presencia Gitana; Asociación Secretariado General Gitano; Kayo-dor-Kayiko; Iniciativa Gitana; Asociación de Gitana Baracaldo; Oripando Kalo Principios Gitanos, Romí Secretariado Desarrolló Gitano, Unión Románi, Soros Roma Fundación, ROMI SERSENI, Villela or Gao Kalo, ERPC, ASPROSOCU, CEPAIM, FAKALI and so on. They appeal that poverty and social exclusion among the Roma/gypsies had risen dramatically since the end of communism. Other European organizations involved in Roma issues now include the European Union, UN High Commissioner for Refugees,
UNDP, UNICEF, OECD, OSCE, Council of Europe, Open Society Institute, Ford Foundation, Mott Foundation, and transnational NGOs such as European Roma Rights Centre, European Roma Grassroots Organisation (ERGO), European Roma Policy Coalition and many other partnership organizations. There are various forms of promotional and policy actions are taken by Roma civil society organizations for Roma Gypsy inclusion:

- Assisting Roma gypsies to secure authorization to work, to reunify with family members, to naturalize and to obtain protection from persecution and from other immigrants-like situation;
- Providing public with formal education and outreach to Roma communities on a variety of issues;
- Offering language and citizenship test preparation classes;
- Providing translation services, home-ownership information and representation in labour and landlord-tenant cases;
- Advocating on community reform and their integration issues and;
- Funding community-organizing agencies.

**5.3.1. Roma Civil Society as the Mediating Institution: The Third Sector-Tool for Public Action**

In order to understand political advocacy by civil society organization, two reciprocal approaches have been used. Firstly, Duncan usefully distinguishes for service-delivery agencies, like ‘churches and service clubs’, and NGOs that advocate for greater government responsiveness to immigrant communities. But on the other hand, he also comments that community-organizing agencies often represent small cross-sections of the population, they lack ‘democratic legitimacy’. Their legitimacy rests on a methodology that allows community members to identify their own needs and to develop and implement strategies to meet them. In this process, immigrants receive the lesson in political socialization. Not just through formal education, but through experience and participation (Warleigh: 2009). A successful integration program will require the government to increase opportunities, to open its programmes and service to immigrants, and to enunciate a vision of openness to immigrant participation and contributions. It will require a coherent and coordinated integration policy. And it will require a strong, faith-based institutions, labour unions or mutual assistance agencies-offer immigrants experience in the practice of civic values, as well as a sense of
belonging, support and ability to influence the larger community. They serve as mediating institutions that allow immigrants to participate more fully and effectively in democratic society and to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on the identity and values that defines their new nation. They enable immigrants to participate in the core democratic endeavour of renewing their nation (Kerwin: 2009: 315). Secondly, Aptekar (2009) argues that civil society is the foundation of healthy democracy. While distinguishing political presence from the political weight into civic and political incorporation point of views, political presence describes the visibility of the organization among government officials, its connections to officials, it connections to other organizations for political activities and its perceived in the local government. The concept of political weight refers to actual activities of organizations rather than perception of them, such as having their interest represented in the local government and influencing the flow of power (not just resources) to other organizations.

To establish the participatory democracy and integration policy for ethnic-minorities, involvement of civil society is recognized by the European Commission as decisive both for the mobilization of expertise and the dissemination of knowledge required to develop public debate and accountability throughout policy process. The European Commission (EC) promotes the active involvement of Roma civil society in European decision making, such as through European platform for Roma inclusion. (Dominguez: 2004). Roma/Gypsies are given information about their rights and duties in the employment field, about different forms of help available from administrative bodies and about the functioning of institutions such as social security. Such information is provided by public administrative bodies in co-operation with NGOs, enhance the social integration of Roma/Gypsies. To many times, the third sector as replacement for government characterizes non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as a crucial “tool for public action” and key element in an emerging “third party government” structure. NGOs are well-known in the international community as monitors and advocates for improving labour standards and promoting government accountability. In some cases, these third sector organizations can also help mediate barriers that workers face in accessing their rights. Civil society organizations can raise consciousness about workplaces rights and may provide worker with information and resources to file claims. This assistance is not only limited to legal counsel. Private lawyers are a key resource for legal mobilization. Moreover, civil
society also plays a mediating role for promoting legal mobilization. These are the institutions are closest to local communities, and they possess a unique advocacy relationship to these communities that earns them trust.

In order to understand the nature and scope of NGOs working with Roma/Gypsy communities and their relation to social policy-making, it is important to differentiate between the different types that exist. The main thrusts of those NGOs included in my study were foundations or organizations of a specific nature. They worked where processes of oppression and discrimination were most evident i.e. with settled Roma/Gypsies and in particular with those living in Roma/Gypsy ghettos. They did not have formal political or religious aspirations although some did show support for a political party or expressed a belief in a particular religion. Unlike many other NGOs registered with the Union of Spanish Foundations and Associations, the NGOs I interviewed all had at least either a team of staff, an office, and/or current work. These NGOs come under a variety of names, including associations, unions, organizations, and foundations and tended to be small scale with short life spans and entirely dependent on external funding. With more in-depth participant observation, it was possible to identify four types of NGOs working in the area of Roma/Gypsies: those NGOs run entirely by Roma/Gypsies; those led by Roma/Gypsies but with a mixed ethnic team; those run by non-Roma/Gypsies that also had Roma/Gypsy members of staff and finally those run and managed entirely by non-Roma/Gypsies. The implicit agenda was ultimately one of ‘inclusion’ in that the minimization of ethnic tensions would rest upon the insertion of minorities into an existing umbrella of rights. This contrasted sharply with those strategies adopted by Roma/Gypsy led NGOs. Like FSGG, NEVIPENS ROMANI, INICIATIVA GITANA NGOs which are consisted with both Roma/Gypsies from different communities as well as non-Roma/Gypsies used the human rights discourse as their framework, but with the specific intention of targeting human rights abuses for Roma/Gypsies.

It is generally believed that the participation of disadvantaged groups within the NGO sector signals the way forward for both themselves and for society as a whole. Within the Western form of liberal democracy, NGOs are democratic institutions that enable the equal participation of disadvantaged groups. The extent of economic decline in Eastern Europe has been vast and has had huge implications for widening social inequality. This is a factor that must be taken into account when considering the
different roles open to NGOs in Eastern Europe. The economic crisis in Eastern Europe and the devastating impact of rising poverty and social inequality has raised acute concerns among national and international policy makers in terms of finding appropriate social policy responses. It is possible to observe a tendency among policy makers to move towards ideas of integration and equal rights at the expense of any questioning of the validity of market reform. In this context the existing NGO sector represents a particularly attractive model with its working premises of participation and community development, which are further enhanced by its claims to not only offer a refreshing alternative to the stifling bureaucracy of government but scope for filling gaps left by state withdrawal (Pinock, Katherine: 2002). Their concern in line with conventional ‘liberal wisdom’ rests on the belief that NGOs can enhance human capabilities and ensure that people make full use of them, thus helping individuals to help themselves (Fowler, 1998: 206). In this way, NGOs are eagerly held up as a key element of ‘human development’ having, in their view, a comparative advantage over government or profit making agencies as ‘instruments of civil society’ (Spiro, 1995). It also set the tone for the new social policy outlook; self-help as opposed to social welfare.

5.3.2. The Impact of the NGO Sector and Roma/Gypsy Organizations

One of the many roles associated with the NGO sector is its potential as service provider, referred to by some as the ‘welfare-state model’ (Snavely, 1996). NGOs are praised for their role in enabling the participation of citizens in various aspects of society and, in particular, civil society. This aspect of NGO activity is seen as an important contribution to social policy-making in the identifying of needs and legitimizing policy. However, the extent to which NGOs actively enable full participation has, at times, come under scrutiny. One key argument is that, ultimately, ‘participation’ as practiced within the NGO sector aims to mobilize local communities rather than wider society. The tension between the different perceived roles of NGOs, i.e., enabling ‘change’ and building on ‘tradition’, has taken on particular resonance in the light of recent social policy debates on ‘new’ dimensions of poverty or ‘social exclusion’. NGOs still rely on traditional ideas of participation. The traditional stages of participation included: information sharing, consultation, decision-making and, the most advanced, initiating action, that is, the very concepts still used today (Paul, 1987). By doing so, following interview case studies of Roma Gypsy Organizations
have drawn invariable questions against rising social exclusion in Spanish Basque Roma Gypsies (los Gitanos Vasco) with special reference to Bilbao City. In the Basque (Bizkaia) local context, the discourse of social exclusion in Roma Gypsy issue could be rigorously understood by studying various strategies of Roma Civil Society Organizations.

1. Asociacion De Kale-Dor-Kayiko (Kale-Dor-Kayiko Association-KDK)
2. Asociacion De Iniciativa Gitana (Iniciativa Gitana Association)
3. Asociacion De Mujeres Gitanas De Euskadi (Euskera Gypsy Women Organization)
4. Fundación EDE (EDE Foundation)
5. Asociacion De Gitana De Barakaldo (Baracaldo Gypsy Association)
6. NEVIPENS ROMANI (NEVIPENS ROMANI Foundation)
7. Fundación Secretariado Gitano (Roma Community Development Foundation)

In what follows, I seek to map two of these organisations Kale-Dor-Kayiko Association (KDK) and one gypsy women´s association.

5.3.3. Kale-Dor-Kayiko Association (Interview Date: 3 June 2010)

Kayo-Dor-Kayiko Association set up in 1989 as a first Roma Gypsy/Gitano Cultural Organization in Bilbao in order to promote the education to Roma children in Bilbao (Bizkaia). The meaning of KDK is connoted by various ways; such as ¨Gitanos y gitana del mañana¨; ¨Gitanos of tomorrow¨; ¨Oriented toward the present¨. Since about 20 years, KDK basically aims to naturalize formal education system for Roma children into primary to secondary level of formal schooling. It tries to remove the problems regarding adjustments with non-Roma in the school and colleges. As a part of programme, KDK has undertaken various projects by studying health condition of women in Roma household within Bilbao.

Mr.Oscar Vizarraga, a renowned personality, is a president of Kayo-dor-Kayiko Association (KDK) who belongs to Roma/Gitano community. By communicating with KDK officials at Txurdinaga-Bilbao, Oscar enunciates the prior history of KDK, “Since before 1984, the idea to be formed Roma/Gitano organization was proposed by some our first generation literate people (ex-founders) involving my father and grandfather. My grandfather and his father used to be most respectable personalities in gitano communities in Bilbao. During those days, my grandfathers and their colleagues had tried to unite those dispersed Gitano families and also convinced them
upon their universal identity as a nomad sect from India. There is considerable diversity found among different Gypsy collectives for their unification and homogeneity. They wanted to march the social movement of gitanos at least in Bilbao outskirt areas. By the time, they got training while working part-time in restaurants. With carrying strong desire, the ex-founders of KDK went to do study across various parts of Spain and rooted cornerstones. The ex-founders incorporated the Gitano families in Bilbao and spread over message for everyone to be mobilized for their citizenship rights and formal recognitions as a minority group. As a part of mobilization, ex-founders walked especially in villages where majority of Gitano families inhabited and integrated them by offering basic training especially into rural part of Bilbao (Euskadi). Those days, the quality of life of gitanos was worst; and they had no civic sense too. As such difficult situation, ex-founders had to suffer a lot in confrontation with mainstream payos/payas for claiming civil rights. After all, the ex-founders probably contributed for community by initiating the *social intervention* and *negotiation* strategy. They were identified to non-Gitanos as social workers, educators and professionals. KDK also promotes by a politicized collective, composed of intellectuals and members of Gitano associations. We support their complete assimilation and the formation of ghettos. We are helping out those Gitano families’ who are living and working and health condition and educational adaption is in dire within the slum ghettos. We negotiate the children’s education those have virtual problems of their denial and no space, seats in the schools since many years although Bilbao region occupies significant numbers of public schools. In the last forty years, the gypsies have adapted to the different economic and social circumstances that have affected them but which, for the majority, have brought them no escape from the marginal situation in which they live. We also stress in individual perceptions in which what they want to say. The quality of life (*la calidad de vida*) of Gitano families primarily is worst in terms of their concentration within the community ghetto culture, problems of neighbourhood accommodation (living together in cultural and social harmony with others), inadequate Medicare and risky undocumented works. It means the discrimination in public housing policies, natural mobility and the development of shanty towns (*poblados chabolistas*).

On previous march protests (*manifestacion*) against Roma after KDK’s establishment, Oscar continues, ¨It is all over seen that the Gitanos have not had an attempt for
unified demonstration or even they do not have habits to march protest. They have to be more demonstrative but they are not used to it. I remembered that KDK arranged a demonstration against the drug trafficking. It is a false blame on all Gitanos that the drug trafficking offences are supposedly done by Gitanos in Spain. Over a decade ago, some Gitanos were blamed and accused by government in such drugs-related offences and trafficking. But now KDK has almost washed away such works among the Gitanos. As a result, Gitano is now almost free and liberated from drug traffickers and drug-peddlers. KDK complained against the government for not being committed in such kinds of offensive occupations. The government is still engaged in accusing the Gitanos. We demanded the Basque Government to set up a drug addiction centre but government did not agree to it. Consequently, KDK took a charge to push off some 2-3 trafficking Gitano families from communities and thereby have claimed for drug-free community in Bilbao. However, there may be little bit percentage of population still engaged in such works due to food survival but not majority population. Alternatively, large population of Gitanos are engaged in scrape collection-chatarra (20%), vendors and peddlers-venta ambulante (70%); market-selling work, (15-20% families in cartoon, junkyard collections); 1-2% in factory work; (1% farm seasonal work). Very rarely families are having business professions and other professional jobs like advocates, factory workers, and contract workers in town halls. There are numbers of Rumanos Gitanos (from Romania immigrants) who are engaged in begging, but not Basque Gitanos because it’s against the community feelings). Apart from these occupations, flamenco artists have large population in Spain; more in Madrid and Andalusia. Occasionally, we have been arranging the flamenco art festivals in Bilbao.” Oscar reiterates, “After making lot community efforts like holding protest, marching, Spanish and mainstream population become somewhat agreed to acknowledge citizens rights for gypsies. Unfortunately, Gitanos are still living in the Spanish cities as like before when they arrived from elsewhere. Oscar differentiates the labour inclusion and says, ”Most of the Basque Gitanos families should take other kinds of jobs as source of incomes. For that wherever they live in good or bad condition, our attempts are to incorporate them in training. In Spain, the implementations of such kinds of empowering project, sponsored by EU and Spanish Programmes, for Gitanos have begun in few years back. But in contrast, Gitanos from Romania have some kinds of securing pattern even though they migrating toward Spain. Probably in the Spanish cities, we have been seeing the rights
of city civilians and citizens like other immigrant communities are not fully entitled (an active citizenship and enfranchise) even though they have been in Spain several centuries ago.

Kale-Dor-Kayiko works in education field for Roma integration. It actually promoting kids from Gitanos families to enable and acquaint them with the school environment and another work is to acculturate and socialize kids to remove their language barriers. Among the Gitanos families, diverse languages like Calo, Rumano etc. are found and there are historical dissimilarities in the vernacular language of the Roma gypsies in Basque country. In Gitano Communities children are encouraged to show initiatives and independence at an early age. They learn participating in the communities’ economic activities and observing adult verbal and non-verbal communication skills. The main features of traditional Roma education in the family observes that traditions are transmitted orally; all life revolves around the family, where one learns to be a Roma; the education of a Roma child is practical, experiential, learning by doing; sentimental relationships are especially important; education is collective: everyone learns from the elders and they teach the younger ones; important values are: experience, initiative, solidarity, one’s word, respect for one’s elders, defense of the family. In mainstream education, by comparison, they learn in an enclosed classroom where they are rarely able to initiate or create their own learning experiences. Due to the increasing high demands of industrialized societies, vocational and technical literacy is become vital for masses. However, education systems are at present failing to meet the needs of these children and resulted in low participation rates of Gitano children in mainstream schools. A Basque scholar Felix Etxeberri (2002) has explained the problems within Roma/Gitano education planning, "Historical phases of Roma education in the Basque region as further: total exclusion, without schooling; adaptation classrooms; bridging schools; special classrooms, remedial education, curricular diversification; integration into ordinary classrooms. But today, a main problem for Roma at school relate to regular attendance and the gap for many Roma children between their educational level and chronological age. There are several reasons for the lack of regular attendance: the interest of many Roma children is limited to the basic learning of the ‘three R’s’ (reading, writing and classroom; lack of resources for Roma families: poor housing conditions, unstable work; poor nutrition arithmetic); Roma do not see their life,
customs, personal or direct experiences, or way of life reflected in the lack of health care, drug abuse, etc; lack of communication between the school and Roma families. However, Spain’s civil society has long been seen as fragile and has not been well organized internally. During the 1999–2000 school years, teachers received a special training programme under the auspices of the Kale dor Kayiko Association. This training helped the teachers gain more insight into Roma culture and customs. It also gave them a better understanding of the impact of culture versus marginalization and poverty. In the coming years, the teachers will learn more about Roma culture, since it is felt that more in-depth knowledge is needed. Given the problems associated with carrying out a census, and identifying groups and their mobility, it is no easy task to know with certainty how many school-age Roma reside in the Basque region. The estimate is 4500. Since the exact number is unknown, the Basque regional authorities have had difficulties developing an education plan to address the needs of this community. One major development in the last two decades is that Roma are now allowed to attend school. This was not the case 20 years ago. At present, almost all Roma children in the Basque region attend school (approximately 1.5–2% of the 200,000 pupils enrolled in schools here). The majority of Roma families receive both public and private aid in the form of financial assistance, clothing, school materials, school cafeteria grants, etc. These grants are given in addition to those given to eliminate shantytown dwellings, help with home improvement and promote integration into the workforce. Although almost 100% attend primary school, school failure rate is estimated to be 85%. It is rare to find Roma children in secondary schools and almost none receive a university education. As a result, KDK has launched some training courses which integrates two processes: first is to set up the teaching professions and train the professional staff in order to be acquainting the Gitano culture as well to be learned them how to deal with gitano kids so that will have a familiar with their traditional survival. Another process is to find out various ways of segregations within schooling drop-outs for their acculturation/enculturation into mainstream schools and sensibility. Besides, it also views to seek appropriate educational models for kid’s better integration affairs in the alternate schooling. Adversely, the school denies the Gitano culture and alternately the behaviour psychology and interest of gitano kids. KDK works as a bridge to train the public school teachers in ground reality in the society and methods of adapting them to be adapted the schooling cultures. The observed tendency in pre-school teaching in
recent years has been that the truly bilingual models (B and D) have encountered the most support in the Basque country, and the same tendency can be observed in primary and secondary schools. A key question regarding the education of Gypsy children would be to examine the basis on which decisions are made for children to be included in compensatory education, especially if its implementation is segregatory in nature. Felix Etxeberria studying the role of KDK and has noted a statement by KDK in which KDK officials narrates, “By mentality and heart, we are gypsies. Education is most important things. KDK has an objective demand as normal but especially formal education that specifies: we are the roughest point for the Basque government for the Spanish government and the level of Spanish country; we take reference from them for education. We are the only organization which is dealing for the formation of education of Gitano kids. We are asking for the same education and we want the identity to be considered within the same framework. We do not want anything separately. We have also to foster the demand for separate formal school education. Such school will obtain the social level in which the kids would be trained to prepare for formal schooling in common public schools called “Pre-School Education.” The result in the schools is to create the ghetto culture for the unified numbers. Both the group will share their cultures as a whole and mitigate the mainstream views against gitano stereotype. Therefore, the KDK has started off the separate school for the Gitanos in which gitano can practise their culture. It proposes the exchanges in the intercultural aspects by both sides. The Basque Government has a recent plan for gitano kids for collaboration called as “Plan de mejora del la escolarización reuniendo Gitanos” (the better schooling for gitano girl students) which contemplates the bilingual class trainings and various types of practical activities. On the other hand, the program also contemplates the intercultural education (pre-schooling- intercultural curricula development) to be overcome the problems of class adaptation by their cultural affinities (for example, the practice of flamenco dance); and creating ideas for fostering democratic citizenship. It also teaches diverse technical pedagogies having more modern tips which make kids up very practical. Such kinds of implementation strategies are done by the KDK from their pre-primary education up to secondary education. It proposes that, by this system of teaching, training and intercultural programs, the sense of how to live and learn is transformed. However these pedagogical tools are still practising on. We may be called in English for such course strategies “life-long learning”. KDK learns the kids
from 3 years and upto 5 years in pre-school education. As the kids finished the formal pre-primary education and go for continuing the primary education in public schools, KDK is also intervene between teachers and kid’s families. By intending training through formal education for kids, while KDK tries to mitigate various stereotypes in education so that while pursuing university degree he/she must be positive and taking struggle. Such pedagogical attempts, by using the intercultural traits and educational modern tools for them, can be intensified our objectives”.

While observing the problems of Gitanos from similar ways, Oscar notes, “Even though 40-50 years of consistent efforts at reaching education to gitanos kids, severe problem faced for associations like us and KDK have realized that there is no information counted and maintained by Municipal at where and which locations the gitanos are dispersedly living. If we, the organizations, do not know where and how the families are concentrated and even there is no information about the ratio of poor schooling enrolment of those families so that we may intensify as well as expand our efforts. We serve to protect the informal way of furnishing schooling education under the project and it also guarantees to be met the good environment and space into the Spanish schools and also motivate them to be acquired profession like doctors, engineers, social educators, painter, housekeeping works etc. Still we are having problems to bring out these kids from their traditional families and work culture. In Andalucia, the schooling project for the gitanos shows more effective which compared to Basque country. In Basque country, the slums dwelling has been eradicated 20 years back by the municipalities and Gitanos who were earlier staying in scanty housings were forced from those areas and rehabilitated in the rented houses. Today the Basque Country, classroom linguistic models under Spanish compulsory education, educational reforms, and plans that are meant to integrate all students, among other reasons, helps to explain the difficulties encountered in the integration programs with Gitano children. This approach lays out to dedicate special attention to gitanos to their “integration”; “understood as a somewhat magical formula, but lacking clear criteria, the training needed to prepare good professionals or necessary resources. From the critical standpoint, there is still a long way to go to reach an intercultural education with gitanos, while numbers of problems remain unresolved-organizational chaos, excessive idealization, the charitable approach, and the need for a change of attitude. The Basque Department of Education sanctions the
amount to \textit{Vocateria publica} as in financial institution to arrange and monitor the project details and its validness. Any organization which works with Gitanos has to present their project before this institution.

As far as political identity for Spanish Gitanos is concerned, Oscar argues, “We have proposed the ‘\textit{National Assembly for Gitanos}’ in 31 May, 2009 in Madrid. It aims to gather the different groups of gypsies across various geographic regions of Spain in order to propose the demands for equal political representations and participation of Gitanos across autonomous provinces in Spain. This Gitano assembly intends to be a political organization; a federation and a confederation on national level and it also equally intervene upon the parliamentary issues of Spain. It will also engage with pressure group to monitor the values and numbers of political representations in any government organization. In other words, it will be over the political representations, it will be over at any organization, federation. It will be the biggest and higher authority for Spanish Gitanos. The formation of this national Gitano assembly is a primary stage and we hope it can be converted into National political party. It can be happen. Since last several centuries, there has nothing any national level organization in Spain, excepting being existence of small organization, which could raise up the Gitano issues for their equal political participation. These small organizations could not pay their attention or compel the government over the Gitanos representation issue. We want the assembly because any Gitano organization should not be under pressure in another gitano organization for the demands of Gitanos and should not be infringed the rights of their sister organizations. Rather we may rule out monopoly of predominant Gitano organizations into various similar demanding issues. That is why we intend to form a national assembly behalf of all voices of Gitano organizations across the segments. And we want that assembly should execute the orders; not follow like projects, these organizations should give the necessary demands to political parties to organizations. By the time, we have also a plan to promote universally the international Romani (Romano)-Gitano language. It does not mean the Spanish gitanos has to dismantle their Calo/Catalan as old regional linguistic dialects because it does not have the grammar. The Romani language consists of Sanskrit and Rom. The promotion of Romani language will again represent and intervene in the sensitization traits for Gypsies on International level. By the establishment of Romani as the universal spoken language of whole gypsies in Europe, our demand will be to
recognize the Romani language as an official language and ultimately reinforce schooling curriculum and examinations. It will become a single communication language for gypsies across the whole European continent. By doing so, gypsies across world will be identified by their identity and cultural heritage for different cultures. Simultaneously, this assembly will also propose the demand of Romani language for the same in Spanish schools without distracting their own regional languages. The recuperation of language will help out Gitanos for their unified Romany nature. The assembly with help of municipal towns resolves the problems of exclusions from various government schemes and restored funds for Gitanos in Basque Country. Then the equality in terms of homogenous language, identity, culture and political stand by assembly will not manifest the negative stereotypes, xenophobia, discrimination and racism too.

5.3.4. Euskera Gypsy Women Association (Interview Date: 28 May 2010)

Carmen Borja, 50 year old unmarried women, is president of a Euskera Gypsy Women Association. Carmen holds a president post from December 2009. Carmen had never been in university education. She had to take in formal education on the street because she grew up in immigrant communities. Carmen says, “The aim of Euskera Gypsy Women Association is to improve the social condition of the women and make her equal in male dominant society. For male Gitano/gypsies, they hold narrow-minded tendency toward the pursuance to female Roma/Gitano education; therefore we try to do our best to give opportunities to these women. Roma male dominant system is quite rigid to understand women’s education rights. Carmen proposed, for Roma women, there should be modest opportunities in studying, late-night weekend parties, and freedom to have coffee with friends in restaurants. Women must have rights and freedom for their own. For entitlement of these equal rights, I remained unmarried. I believe in freedom in terms of employment, individual rights and staying with my parents and in my home. That is why I did not remain interested in such marriage institutions where I could not have got such kinds of freedoms. In addition, If we want to increase the formal education and opportunities for Gitanos, there is need to have training centers, study atmosphere and appropriate syllabus. People think that the gypsies do not have educational aspirations’ they are always fighting in the classrooms; they are barbarous and so on. In the villages, the government should provide more educational facilities. In Gitanos, majority of people
do not have jobs, training education and as a result their life become more
challengeable for them and even they do not encourage to their children for the
education. And therefore the community progress is remained unsolved because
parents are less interested in children’s education. Education grows and makes us
brighter. Therefore, Carmen further states, “Social exclusion of Roma/Gitano can be
seen into various stereotypical forms against a group or community within society.
The apartheid discrimination is experienced by all kinds of groups such as blacks,
whites, and other brownish people. As far as discrimination in gender and women is
concerned, it is said that women face triple exclusion due to their biological and
social constructed reality by the society. Exclusion is seen by a sex, by racial ethnic
group, and by an educational illiteracy.”

While discussing forms of gender discrimination, the precarious situation of Gitano
community; and their long-term unemployment; Carmen responds, “The Gitano
women movement in Bilbao is more dialogical in transforming sexual and racial
inequalities; it is also compelled to hear their voice to mainstream Spanish women’s
movements. The challenges that several women are being asking liberation from areas
like education and work so as they may fight against male chauvinistic tendency and
male domination. Roma Gypsy women still enjoy a limited freedom due to forceful
engagement into works, household responsibilities, child-care and elder’s care-taking.

For Carmen, Gypsy women face discrimination in different ways. She narrates,
“Gypsy culture is typical than other communities. But I have not been facing any kind
of discrimination because I have working with the payos/payas, making friendships
with other non-gypsy companion. I think I am a normal person like them. In every
community, there are bad and good people so it does not mean that all the non-gypsies
are bad people. It depends to what extent you are involved with them. In gypsy
culture, there are several positive and negative rites and rituals may generate the
discrimination and that is why the discrimination occurs for the women. In other
words, one has to respect to each other culture as well. I am quite optimistic about my
future and everyday life as well. To the community’s optimism, we have several
people who have been marginalized due to several reasons. Roma/Gitanos are being
discriminating based on social stigma, race, cultural distancing, and community
stereotypes. Payos discriminates us by several ways.
I openly discussed with Carmen about the importance of bride virginity constrain as the patriarchal norms which Roma/Gitanos follow. She elucidated, “Our gypsy culture in Europe is everywhere similar, united and typical. As far as our Basque Gitano tradition and marriage ritual is concerned, Gitanos hold a strong belief; women are not supposed to lose her virginity till marriage. But in other parts of Spain, Roma Gypsies do not follow such tradition and customs like virginity bride. She added, “A Roma/Gitano girl cannot step out once she gets engaged in marriage, she cannot keep relationship with other people; on contrary she has merely freedom to dance and sing, to speak for herself in the community itself but not outside. Being a virgin for gypsy women in gypsy society is to be seen as the traditional patriarchal norms and cultural tradition. Over the centuries in the history of gypsy communities, our gypsy religion would not allow women to be stayed separate and self-decisive. But we women too like to keep such balance to be control the norms of family cohesion. In Gitano community, women may choose their boyfriends or husbands; but within the Gitano community. It depends on couple’s sense as far as their virginity is concerned. They may decide for their virginity loosing matters. But if woman or girl stays single, unmarried in community or without having any male relations, she has to be virgin for her goodness and future relations. The marriages in the gypsies are traditionally supposed to be pure and holy.”

Having narrated the history, life narratives and civil society assertions on multiple exclusions faced by Roma Gypsies, it is apparent that this case offers a good comparison with Safai Labour. The racial and caste stigma, the stigma attached to cleaning and waste collection work as traditional occupation; the policies of the State in the context of economic globalization leading to prohibitions on traditional forms of labour and anxieties about outside groups encroaching on this occupation offer a range of comparable similarities. The multiple exclusions experienced by Safai labour women and Roma women also offer interesting similarities and differences. Most importantly in both cases, the efforts by the State to positively intervene for bringing Safai labour and Roma Gypsies into mainstream run contradictory to the economic policies since 1990s; while Safai labour has followed the path of unionization. The Roma politics is overwhelmingly occupied by civil society groups and NGOs of different varieties working on issues based politics. In the subsequent chapter, I seek
to translate the qualitative information from both cases for comparison and also present the quantitative data on labour, job satisfaction, gender and exclusion.