

The Bangladeshi Perspective: The Case of Married Academic Women Pursuing
Foreign Degrees

By

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Abstract

According to the global gender gap report (2012) published by the World Economic Forum, over the last two decades women's empowerment in Bangladesh has benefitted from the active participation of both rural and urban women in all the sectors of economic activity for sustainable development of the country. Informed by theories of discourse (Foucault, 1972; Gill, 2008; Mitchell, 1993; Russo, 1976), this research explores the lived lives of urban married Bangladeshi female academics, specifically, those academics who have been involved or wish to be involved in higher studies in a foreign country. Since there is a dearth of research on Bangladeshi married academic women's participation in higher studies abroad, this study endeavours to explore their motives and experiences in pursuing foreign degrees, the barriers encountered, and their strategies for overcoming them. This case study (Yin, 1994) investigates the phenomenon of study abroad through the narrative accounts of five married academic women from Bangladesh at different stages of study abroad (pre-departure and planning; in progress; and completed). Within the framework of the discursive construction of identity (e.g., Ivanic, 1998; Lakoff, 1973; Tannen 1994), accounts of four participants were elicited through semi-structured interviews. As an in-progress, married, female, Bangladeshi graduate student myself, I reflect on their accounts in relation to my own experiences with study abroad. The study suggests that academic women's participation in a foreign degree program depends to a great extent on how they construct the meaning of identity-shaping discourses in their "private" and "public" lives.

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Chapter 1-Introduction

1.1 My Personal Experience with the Research Issue

I have chosen to begin this thesis with a personal reflection, which takes into account the entire experience of conceptualizing, undertaking, and writing about the case of married academic Bangladeshi women pursuing foreign degrees. As the reader will discover, the findings from the personal accounts of the participants in this study (including my own reflections on my experience of studying in a foreign country without my immediate family), have helped clarify why many of my married female colleagues from Bangladesh, despite having interest and potential, did not pursue a higher degree in a foreign country. Before undertaking this research, I often wondered why some did not realize their dreams of studying abroad. I was primarily motivated to undertake this research in order to find an initial answer to this question.

After coming to Canada to pursue my M.A. degree, a part of me became extremely happy for being able to get a break from my busy schedule of academic and private life and pursue my long cherished dream of studying abroad for career advancement and the learning that would come from the exploration of a new place. However, along with this feeling of joy I also realized that another part of me was crippled with feelings of guilt and depression for leaving my only daughter (who was only four years old at the time) and my husband back home in Bangladesh. As time passed, the competing feelings of joy and sorrow became even more intense, which often made me feel ambivalent about my decision to undertake a foreign degree program without my family members.

Indeed, as a married woman (with a child) enjoying the pursuit of my career choice, I was positioned both as independent and career-minded (a positive view), and as desperate and selfish

(a negative view), by myself and others. Living with such contradictory messages was difficult at times for me. On the one hand, I am the kind of person who loves being independent, spending quality time alone, enjoying and exploring my creative strengths; and on the other hand, I like connecting with and caring for my loved ones. Though I knew my purpose of staying abroad was important and valuable for my career advancement, during my period of study in Canada I was often led to think that it was simpler to live only as a stay-at-home wife with no large, personal goals to chase for. I am saying, "I was led to" because I think the ambivalent space that was created within me was not fully framed by my personal thoughts, but to some extent was due to how others positioned me as a wife and mother. This feeling of not being able to justify to myself what was right for me both as an academic and a married woman and mother, I became a victim of mental conflict. Since my motherly/wifely feelings of love and my determination to complete my degree in Canada (which required me to stay away from family members for some time) co-existed and competed, rather than replacing one with the other, the conflict between them had created this contested space within me. Some questions that I asked myself before undertaking this research were: Is a good woman a selfless person who puts her husband/child first and lives through them? Or, is a good woman someone who is economically independent and has an identity outside the roles of wife/mother? Or, can a good woman be both? If a woman can be both then why am I feeling ambivalent despite having the opportunity to pursue my dreams? Is the conflict totally of my own individual creation or is my context (Bangladeshi female, academic, married wife and mother) also responsible for it? Since I was keen to begin to explore initial answers to those questions, I undertook this research.

In sum, my experience of staying abroad without family members motivated me to carry out this research. Though it may not be useful for other married women who have the goal of

studying abroad to advance their careers in academia, it will at least help me to clarify my own situation as a mother/wife and an academic. However, I also believe that those who are in my shoes may have had similar experiences and might also benefit from this research.

1.2 Why this Research in the Bangladeshi Context?

The statistical profile of women in Bangladesh (BBS-Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2011), shows that the number of female teachers in tertiary education has increased, and those female academics are mostly satisfied with their jobs (Ali, 2009). However, Ali's (2009) findings also paint a rather gloomy picture of the career advancement of academic women in the private universities of Bangladesh, particularly in terms of promotion and further academic development. Her research and other pertinent literature (e.g., Amin, 1997; Nasreen, 2003) reveals a dearth of studies regarding the causes behind the poor participation of academic married women in professional development through degree programs in a foreign country. For example, Mitchell (1993) notes that:

Society has a collective value system that still supports traditional roles for men and women. This value system views women who achieve in non-traditional ways as exceptions to the rule. Many women feel like superwomen because they are expected to perform their best in multiple roles (p. 118).

Using a case study approach (Yin, 1994), my thesis attempts to investigate the experiences and accounts of several married female Bangladeshi academicians who took a non-traditional step, by taking a break in their careers to pursue higher education in a foreign country without their family (in some cases even without their children). This study intends to explore

the experiences of these academic women who unlike many of their married male colleagues, cannot afford to bring their spouse (in some cases children) to the place where they are pursuing post graduate degrees for career progression. An understanding of what encourages married Bangladeshi academic women to enrol in post graduate degree programs, the barriers they encounter, and how they overcome these challenges to pursue their degrees (particularly when the degree required them to live abroad without their family), may potentially motivate and/or discourage other female academicians to undertake degrees for professional advancement. This research is also expected to illuminate the incipient inequalities that exist in educational opportunities of female academics in higher education in Bangladesh.¹

1.3 Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to explore the ways in which the social relations in the working lives of married female academics are limited by gendered discourses of Bangladeshi society, i.e., making gender based distinctions in language, such as, common parlance which explicitly or implicitly defines women as motherly by natural instinct (Tannen, 1994), particularly when they involve or wish to involve themselves in a foreign degree program without their family. In order to explore this issue the study is guided by the following questions:

- a. What encourages married female Bangladeshi academics teaching in university to choose a foreign university for advanced degrees even though this often means separating themselves geographically from their families for a substantial period?
- b. What barriers, if any, did they encounter while studying?

¹The researcher has used postgraduate degree and higher study synonymously to refer to Master's degree and PhD degree. Academic career development, career aspiration and pursuing higher studies are used synonymously.

c. If there were barriers, what strategies did they employ to overcome them?

1.4 Why this research?

The findings of the study may allow Bangladeshi married female academics to better understand their academic potential. It may suggest the presence of a glass ceiling with a potential impact on career progression and strategies that have been used to overcome this challenge. The findings of the research study might also support less confident Bangladeshi married female academics as they address difficulties they may encounter in fulfilling their career dreams. Ultimately, it is hoped, the study's findings may encourage greater participation of married female academics in professional degree programs and inform their personal development. This outcome may not only benefit individual Bangladeshi females, but would be of benefit to the country as a whole (e.g., *The global gender gap report*, 2012, p.110; UNESCO, 2012).

1.5 The Researcher as a Participant: Personal Reflection and Learning

I am a participant in this study because like the other participants I am also a married female academic (with a child) studying in Canada without my husband. Including myself as a participant has not only helped me to form a better perspective of the data and connect with the participants more easily, but also helped the participants to narrate their experience with less hesitation. Moreover, my personal experiences were also shared with the participants while conversing with the participants during the interviews. This sharing of personal stories of mine, indeed, helped to break the invisible wall that generally exists between the researcher and the participant. I kept a journal to keep record of my thoughts and perspectives on the semi-

structured questions that were set for my participants. The journal helped me to relate my experiences and perspectives with that of the findings of the interviews in the results and discussion section of the research.

1.6 Organization of the thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter sets out the introduction to the research issue, explains why I chose to do research on the issue, research questions and the significance of the study, and clarifies why I will be an active participant in the study. Chapter Two contains the literature review, which discusses the position of women in Bangladesh and across many other countries in light of relevant literature and situates the study within the theoretical and empirical framework that informed it. Terms are defined which are of importance in interpreting the outcomes of the research. In addition, this chapter also describes the purpose of using participants' narrative accounts for exploring the research issue. Chapter Three outlines the overall research design, provides additional details about the participants, and describes procedures and analysis. Chapter Four presents the results and discussed them in relation to the literature. The final chapter, Chapter Five, concludes my thesis by identifying implications of my research, limitations, and suggesting areas for future research.

To begin my exploration of the research questions, in the following chapter I review the literature which informed the study.

Chapter 2- Literature Review

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, my study explores the motives behind pursuing foreign degrees, barriers in pursuing foreign degree and strategies for overcoming barriers of a small group of married academic women from Bangladesh. My research has been guided by three main research questions which focus on the factors that encourage married female Bangladeshi women teaching in universities to join foreign university for advanced degrees, lay out some barriers they encounter while studying abroad, and consider the strategies they employ to overcome these barriers.

In order to address the research questions I have drawn on literature that provides background on the Bangladesh context and the position of women. Key terms that are used in the thesis are defined and related to the literature (theoretical and empirical) which informs them, and which in turn defines their use in this study. In addition, the use of narrative accounts in exploring the ways in which the social relations in the everyday working lives of Bangladeshi married female academics are gendered (see below) is examined.

The following section will introduce these key terms to clarify their use in subsequent sections. They are further examined and discussed in Chapter Two:

2.1 Key Terms:

2.1.1 Discourse

There are various definitions of discourse, but most researchers agree on the fact that discourse is a form of signs/images and codes of language that produce meaning specific to culture and history (Gee, 2014; Foucault, 1972). In other words, discourse refers to the totality of codified language (vocabulary) used in a specific context, such as academic discourse, legal

discourse, medical discourse, religious discourse, etc. According to Foucault (1972), the discourse of any institution establishes its orders of truth by the contradictory discourses it contains. For example, Foucault argues (1972, p.167) that no one is a total victim of dominant discourse, but are also capable of positioning in terms of accepting, resisting and transforming discourse.

Discourse, as defined by Foucault, refers to,

ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them.

Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern (Weedon, 1987, p. 108).

2.1.2 Dominant Discourse

According to Foucault (1977), "some discourses have shaped and created meaning systems that have gained the status and currency of truth, and dominate how we define and organize both ourselves and our social world" (p.165). In other words, Therefore, discourse establishes its truth or reality in a specific context over time, through practice and reinforcement within various social systems, such as the media, the state, religious doctrine among others. As a result, some discourses become dominant whereas some become marginalized (Marks, 1997, p. 88). However, Foucault (1972) also states that even the discourses that are marginalised have the potential to resist and alter the dominant discourses. My research paper which specifically focuses on women who are married and academic will only look at the dominant discourses

prevailing in the two spheres (private life/home and public life/academic institution) of its participants.

The two most dominant discourses of womanhood of contemporary times in Bangladeshi society are: the selfless wife/mother and the best of both worlds wife/mother. The patriarchal society of Bangladesh defines a "goodwife" and a "good mother" as a "selfless", dependent, submissive and loving wife/mother who stays at home (Nasreen, 2003). On the other hand, The dominant discourses of "best of both worlds wife"/"mother" are assertive, selfish (in the sense that they value the need of having an identity beyond wife and mother) (Hughes, 2002). Thus, within the "selfless mother" and "selfless wife" discourse, marriage-hood and motherhood is constructed as an essential and intrinsic part of adult female identity (Ireland, 1993, p.5). Therefore, the dominant discourses of a good wife/mother contradicts with the dominant discourses of "best of both worlds wife/mother. However, my research is concerned with those women, who deviate from stereotypical women as defined by Bangladeshi patriarchal society (Kabeer, 2005), struggling to gain a measure of independence by "juggling" a career with part-time mothering or wifely roles. In order to become "best of both worlds wife/mother" those deviant women in Bangladesh have to defy the traditional dominant discourses of "selfless wife/mother" by creating new discourses of womanhood who balance her priorities in life (Kabeer, 2005).

2.1.3 Institutional Discourse

According to Maclver and Page (1956 as cited by Clark, 1973), society is a system of usage and procedures of authority and mutual aid of many groupings and divisions, of controls of human behaviour and liberties. In simple terms, institutions are mechanisms of a society. For

example, the family, bank, medical, school/universities/academic, etc., are institutions which evolved to govern society. Each institution has its acceptable modes of behaviour and styles of communication that help propagate the society in which it is situated (Clark, 1973). Therefore, an underlying similarity of various types of institutions is that they all reflect the values of the society in which they are positioned. Social relations that are codified into institutions, as suggested by Foucault (1972), have power within them. Therefore, each institution produces its own discourses as it interacts with its social relations and these in turn reflect and reinforce the dominant ideologies that support and maintain these institutions. However, Foucault (1972) also suggests that the dominant discourses may be replaced by new/alternative discourses when challenged. And by challenging the dominant discourse people seek to bring institutional change, which thereby reflects the changing values in a society. For example, one of the dominant discourses of the academic institution is to become a "successful academic" (Marks, 1997). The formation of a successful academic entails undivided devotion to the university (Northcutt, 1991), builds a reputation through research and publications, is 'career-oriented', and has a linear career path (Harris et al, 1998). Although it is not explicit in the institutional discourse in Bangladesh, not at least in the university where I work in Bangladesh, that the 'successful academic' should be a man, the conditions it sets forth for the academics is often hard for married female academics to meet. It is hard for married female academics in Bangladesh to bear all those qualities of a "successful academic" since another institution of our society, which is the family discourses, portrays married women as "submissive", "caring" and "selfless" wives and mothers (Marks, 1997; Kabear, 2005). The dominant discourse of the family (institution) will be discussed in detail in the following section on gendered discourse.

2.1.4 Gendered Discourse

According to Tannen (1994), society tends to assign men and women some specific roles based on their gender. For example, in a patriarchal society, as explained by Kaplan (1992), men are seen as the breadwinners of the family whereas women are expected to play the role of a good wife and a good mother who stay at home taking care of the family members (Ivanic, 1998). There are many dominant discourses within the position of a good wife and a good mother that differentiate the roles of women from that of males, but in my thesis I will explore only two of the most dominant discourses of womanhood (Sharpe, 1994) in Bangladesh context: the selfless wife/mother and the best of both worlds wife/mother (Marks, 1997). The patriarchal society of Bangladesh defines a "goodwife" and a "good mother" as a "selfless", dependent, submissive and loving wife/mother who stays at home (Nasreen, 2003). Thus, within the "selfless mother" and "selfless wife" discourse, marriage-hood and motherhood is constructed as an essential and intrinsic part of adult female identity (Ireland, 1993, p.5). The dominant discourses of "best of both worlds wife/mother" are of being assertive and selfish (in the sense that they value the need of having an identity beyond wife and mother) (Hughes, 2002). Therefore, the dominant discourse of a good wife/mother contradicts with the dominant discourses of "best of both worlds wife/mother". According to Ireland (1993, p.12), it is hard for women to become the best of both worlds wife/mother because the wifely/motherly image of women has been made so powerful by the patriarchal society that it has been ingrained in their minds, and thus it becomes hard for women to become anything else other than a full time mother and wife. Since these discourses of a good wife/mother and best of both worlds wife/mother co-exist and compete, rather than replacing each other, the conflict between them creates 'ambivalence' (Blättel-Mink et al, 2000) within which women must decide how best to

fulfil the good mothering and wifely roles. However, the dominant discourses of the selfless wife/mother, as suggested by Foucault (1972), can be resisted by the introduction of new discourses. This view of Foucault is relevant to my research as I want to explore how married female academics from Bangladesh manage to pursue their dreams of obtaining a foreign degree without their family (husband and in some cases without children) despite being a mother and a wife.

2.1.5 Cultural Capital

As defined by Bourdieu (1979), cultural capital is having non-financial assets, such as education and social and intellectual knowledge, that give people social mobility but these assets are not related to income, net worth, or any financial measure (p. 10, 12). Cultural capital falls into three categories: institutionalized (education or specialized knowledge), embodied (personality, speech, skills), and objectified (clothes or other belongings). Possessing such assets was considered important for children who grew up in non-wealthy but well-educated and intellectually-sophisticated families. For example, in less developed areas/villages in Bangladesh, as discussed by Kotalova (1993), a woman of the elite class was groomed in dressing, cooking, music, dance, religion, behaviours, etc. not to become the breadwinner of the family, but to find an eligible husband whom she would obey as the breadwinner of the family and please him with her enhanced sense of etiquette. On the other hand, the male counterparts of these women of similar age and background are groomed in art, literature, etc. to become leaders and gaining social respect, which enabled them to marry women from affluent families (Kotalova, 1993). Therefore, men's involvement in pursuing higher knowledge or degrees for obtaining social recognition, power, status and acceptability also strengthened their chances of

getting desirable jobs, marriages, and business contacts. In relation to this discussion, I would also like to briefly describe Human Capital theory (Schultz, 1961) as it is also connected one's career aspirations and pursuing knowledge. According to Human Capital theory (Schultz, 1961), acquisition of knowledge raises the value of a person's human capital; thus, it increases the person's employability and expertise.

Having provided a brief discussion of the key terms, in the following sections, I discuss the Bangladeshi context by drawing on the relevant literature.

2.2 The Bangladeshi Context

2.2.1 Impact of Social Discourse on Bengali Married Women

Social changes in the last few decades in Bangladesh have encouraged a significant percentage of women from all classes to work in the traditional and non-formal sectors of the economy. In recent years, due to economic pressures and the dissolution of extended families in urban areas, many more women are also working for wages than in the past. Women are leaving domestic spaces to work not only in industry, but also in the expanding service sector, for example as bank clerks, teachers, office workers, etc. They do this not only for personal satisfaction and self-identity but also for wages in order to contribute to the family. Now, I think, the contemporary Bangladeshi women's aim to pursue a career for earning their living is a major ideological shift in terms of social and religious beliefs because, as discussed in my definition of Cultural Capital theory, even today in various less developed regions of the country women are expected to limit their knowledge within household chores. Therefore, women who come out of the house to pursue a job and earn money for living deviate from the traditional women who

lives through taking care of the family members and thus, create new discourses of womanhood. Despite this change in the discourse in the Bengali society of women's capabilities and rights to participate in works outside the home for earning a living and not for luxury, there still exists tradition bound societal discrimination against women and their career advancement (Nasreen, 2003).

The following section will discuss the Bangladeshi patriarchal society (and gendered roles) and religion, in order to illuminate the mindset of the tradition-bound Bangladeshi society.

2.2.1.1 Patriarchal Society and Gendered Role

After surveying the available literature (Gardner, 1994; Kotalova, 1993; Rozario 1992; Beech, 1982) on the status of women in Bangladesh, it seems that the passive subordinate demeanour expected of married women today, is not unlike that demanded of all women in patriarchal societies of the 19th century in many other parts of the world (Russo, 1976). The labelling of a "good woman" is still grounded on the 'legitimate' and proper modes of speech, demeanour and behaviour, expressed by downcast eyes, inclined head, graceful steps, docile voice, controlled laughter, and silence (Kotalova, 1993, p.73). Any woman who fails to comply with this idealized demeanour is labelled as a bad woman (Kotalova, 1993, p.73). Gardner's (1994, p-5) study of the Bangladeshi context argues that like many other cultures of the world, Bengali culture also sets codes of modesty for women to be labelled as "good", and identifies some traits of female demeanour that are counted as unacceptable femininity, such as too much talking or giggling. Other studies by Rozario (1992) and Beech (1982) confirm modesty as a critical component of feminine virtue, which may be further attested to by a popular Bengali

proverb- "modesty is the adornment of women". Though the extreme seclusion of women from the outer world is fast waning in Bangladesh, the notions of a "proper woman" and "good wife" still tend to constrain women's movements, social contacts, and free expression in Bangladesh (Nasreen, 2003). In a more comprehensive sense, as suggested by Nasreen (2003), the idealized notion of "good" and "bad" women is a clichéd instrument employed to make women take as little space in the world as possible.

The social structures of Bangladesh generally favour the norms of a patriarchal society (Rozario, 1992), and set extremely restrictive codes of behaviour for women. In my view, Islam, which is the religion of the majority of the population, is only partially implicated here. Because Bangladesh is so heavily influenced by patriarchal societal structure, religious practices are adopted and modified in relation to patriarchal control and subordination of the female population (Hossain & Kusakabe, 2005). The societal structure tends to idealize Bengali women as cherished and protected daughters, wives, and mothers, whereas men are entrusted with safeguarding family honour through their control over female members (Kalam, 2014). Control is exercised through complex social arrangements which ensure the protection—and dependence— of women (Khan, 2007). Therefore, Bengali society portrays women as being self-sacrificing, with the primary role of carrying out the duties of wife and mother. However, the participants of my study clearly deviate from this social expectation, positioning themselves outside these traditional social norms.

Kandiyoti (1988, p.275) notes that the age-old idealized picture of Bengali women actually subordinated them within an intensely hierarchical system of gender relations which denied women access both to social power and to autonomy over their own lives. He further states a number of elements, such as the organization of the family, kinship and marriage,

inheritance patterns, gender segregation, and ideologies surrounding these practices, are identified in this "classic patriarchal" system as the key mechanisms through which social controls over women are maintained and reproduced.

Looking into the status of women in a relatively 'homogeneous' country like Bangladesh, it is observed that there is a great deal of difference among women in, for example, class membership, level of education, perception of life, rural-urban location, religious affiliation, and personal life circumstances (Kabeer, 2005). As a result, it may be argued that the designated boundaries for women do not apply equally across class lines or within different religious and ethnic groups. However, it is a common observation that women become the victim of certain associations between gender and other aspects of life, regardless of their social or economic background across social groups. For example, the control of women's dress, movement, where they go and with whom and for what reasons, has long been a feature of Bengali women's lives. Traditionally, the sanctioned place for women is in their homes. What is sanctioned also reflects on the definition of women. For example, the literal Bengali word for "woman" is "angana" (meaning women at home), "GhorerLaxmi" (Angel of the house) and "obola" (meaning weaker sex or weaker vessel). On the other hand women who do not stay in the home or step out of the standards of societal norms are often associated with negative connotations such as "patita" (fallen), "barbilasini" or "janapadbadhu", all of which mean 'public' (Nasreen, 2003). Some popular Bengali proverbs also reflect the connection between the definition of "woman" and home; such as, "A woman adorns a home (ghorershovanari), or "A wife's heaven lies under the feet of her husband (shwamir payer niche strir behest)" or "A woman who leaves the house in rage is deemed to become a prostitute".

2.2.1.2 The impact of religious discourse on the lives of women in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a Muslim dominant country where more than 90% of the population is Muslim. Islam entered Bangladesh around the 13th century. However, Bangladesh is recognised as mainly a moderate Muslim country where the followers of the religion are influenced by a mixture of local pre-Islamic practice and behaviour. Even after the establishment of Islamic practices, the country continued to be influenced by its former colonizers (e.g., India, Britain, Pakistan). Bangladeshi people mainly originated from 2 countries, mainly India and Pakistan. Since all three countries are now part of the Indian-subcontinent, there prevails a lot of commonalities in terms of their food, cultural festivals, clothing, and language despite their differences in religion.

Besides that Bangladesh was once a colony of the British; therefore, Bangladeshis have incorporated norm and values from different nationalities who vary in religion and culture; so, it is common amongst many Bangladeshi people to observe cultural fusion to a great extent in their everyday lives starting from their languages to clothing styles to celebration of festivals and so on. As a result, there exists a great cultural diversity among the followers of Islam within Bangladesh. Bengali has drawn words from many languages (e.g., Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, and in more recent years, English). The clothing style is mostly a fusion of western and eastern fashion for large numbers of females. Even when it comes to religious or cultural festivals, there is a mix of both Islamic and Hindu traditions.

The following sections, of Purdah and Purdah: Segregation of Women in Public Space, will discuss the impact of religious discourse on the lives of women in Bangladesh in further details.

2.2.1.2.1 Purdah

The practice of seclusion and the veiling of women was inaugurated by the Persian culture, but later it was adopted by both Muslims and many Hindu practitioners in India and Bangladesh. This practice of veiling and restricting women's movements outside the home (strictly requiring women to cover their bodies with loose and body-covering robes) is a system known as "Purdah". Though people in general are liberal Muslims (Rozario, 1992) in Bangladesh, there are also groups of people who practice the "Purdah" system strictly in order to protect women from becoming the objects of sexual desire of men other than their husbands (Papanek&Minault, 1982, p. 7). According to Amin (1997), this guarded behaviour of protecting women's sexuality is a form of subordination which is done to preserve the hierarchy within the patriarchal family.

The "Purdah" system reiterates the politics regarding spatial allocations of women. This broader conception of seclusion applies to women of all major religions in Bangladesh, though the extent of some symbolic expressions may differ (Amin, 1997; Rozario, 1992).

In Bangladesh the status of women has risen significantly over the last few decades, but there are still a significant number of women who are under male domination and unable to leave the house except under the guardianship of a male guardian (Amin, 1997). And when they do go outside, they cover their entire body in loose clothes. Since these women have no role at all in determining their own lives; they are seen as nothing more than a commodity, property of the males of the family, and as owners, the men have the right to make decisions for them. The purpose of focusing on "Purdah" here is to understand the spatial and behavioural restrictions imposed on women, the various interlink ages between the forms of "Purdah" and the wider socio-economic and ideo-cultural structures of the society. Regardless of religion, South Asian

people in general value the purity and chastity of women and strongly believe that the family's social status tends to define appropriate female behaviour.

The practices of "Purdah" have evolved in contemporary Bangladesh as many women now use the veil by personal choice and are not secluded to any great extent. However, the essence of "Purdah" system continues to be pervasive in the minds of people in various forms even today. The following section will discuss the continued existence of the "Purdah" practice in segregating women in public space to highlight its impact on women's physical and psychological containment, and its effect on their mobility in different ways.

2.2.1.2.2 Purdah: Segregation of Women in Public Space

In explaining segregation of women in public space Spain (1992, p.15-16 as cited by Nasreen 2003) states,

Spatial segregation is one of the mechanisms by which a group with greater power can maintain its advantage over a group with less power. By controlling access to knowledge and resources through the control of space, the dominant groups' ability to retain and reinforce its position is enhanced.

Although the women of contemporary Bangladesh face lesser obstacles in terms of their spatial mobility, the ideology of separate sphere of the 19th century is still evident when it comes to defining the proper place for a respectable woman. The society considers home to be the legitimate boundary for women where they would provide care and comfort to her husband and children. The ideology of separate spheres defines women as physically weaker, yet morally superior to men. This concept was reinforced by religious views of the "Purdah" system.

However, although a very small percentage of women are strictly secluded from contact with unrelated men nowadays, most are still generally expected to cluster with the same sex groups. For example, even in co-educational schools girls and boys sit in different rows not always by choice but because of the social norms.

According to a survey on violence against women, jointly done by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Population Fund (2011), women's access to public places, such as educational institutions, market places, public transport, parks or workplaces, restaurants, etc., has undoubtedly increased all over the country, regardless of urban or rural setting, but at the same time the rate of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces have also increased not only within the urban and rural areas of Bangladesh but across the world (BBS-Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Since loitering in public places by women is considered improper, it is a fairly common experience for Bangladeshi women who use a public space for various purposes, such as to attend school or workplace, to encounter derogatory remarks from men. In line with this, Gardner (1995) argues that the harassment of women continues even in the 21st century as our society still holds on to this ideology of separate sphere where public space is considered a male property; thus, harassing women on the street is a logical response to women's exhibitionism, since they deserve it. As a result, the fearsome reality of women's freedom of movement increases the tensions of aspiring women and limits their access to essential services and recreational opportunities.

2.2.2 Bangladeshi Women and Education

In spite of much political and economic instability, Bangladesh has the eighth lowest gender gap in political empowerment in the world (Islam, 2011; UNESCO report, 2012). This anomaly is even more evident as we look into the long (over two decades) leadership role of women in Bangladesh, especially, the fact that Bangladesh has had a female head of government for longer than any other country in the world.

According to the report by the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information & Statistics/BANBEIS (2012), the Government of Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in the education sector in the last two decades; in particular the enrolment rates of female students in primary, secondary and university levels of education has increased remarkably. In the early 1990s, primary school attendance among children increased significantly due to compulsory free primary education and supplies (including books and uniforms). Later, the Female Secondary School Stipend Project (FSP), launched nationally in 1994 also helped in minimizing the gender disparity in education. This project pays tuition fees and provides monthly stipends for unmarried rural girls up to class 10 who attend recognized institutions, remain unmarried, maintain at least 75% attendance, and secure at least 45% marks in the annual examinations (a pass requires 35%). As a result, in 2005 nearly 50 percent of total secondary enrolment in Bangladesh was female (Raynor, Wesson, & Keynes, 2006). This project was primarily undertaken to improve the primary education sector, to be followed by developments in the secondary and higher education levels.

The government of Bangladesh also increased the recruitment of female teachers across the country as an indirect way of increasing the female student population (BANBIES, 2012). The undertaking took into consideration of the social and religious beliefs of the country which

to a great extent limit the access of women in education where majority teachers are male. The report of BANBIES (2012) shows that as a result of those initiatives, slowly but steadily female participation in education increased in Bangladesh. However, when it comes to university education the participation of female students is not very impressive as the female population at best represents a quarter of the total student body. Figure 1 shows the trend of female student enrolments in primary, secondary, tertiary, and professional schools from 1980 to 2008 (analysis based on data from BANBEIS 2010).

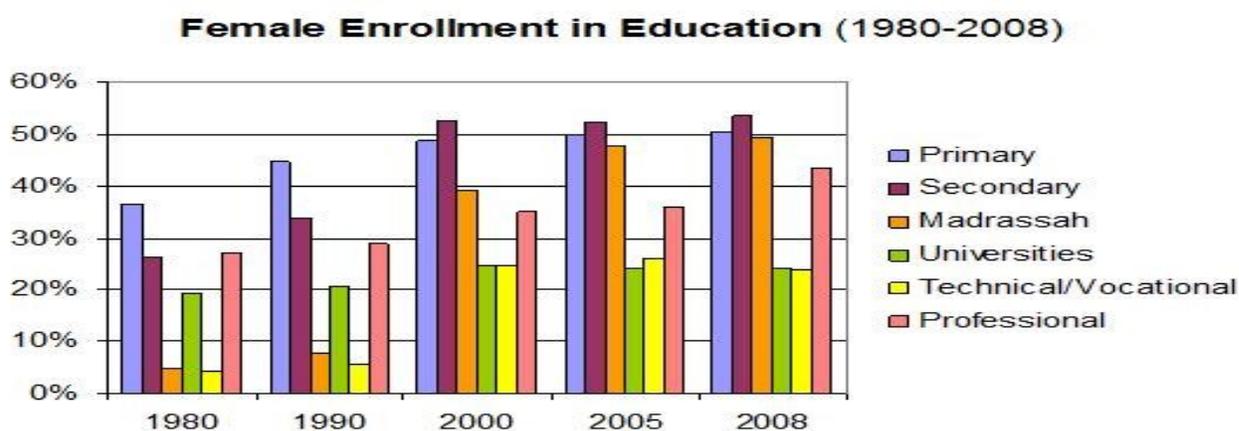


Figure 1: NGOs, Madrassahs[schools], and Female Education

2.2.2.1 Challenges of Female Education

Besides the general challenges of the Bangladeshi education system, such as insufficient number of schools or skilled teachers, and poverty, the female population also faces socioeconomic and religiously based discrimination in terms of access and equity in education. Though recent studies show that girls are enrolled in primary schools at a net rate of 94 percent (BANBEIS 2010), this data masks the rate at which girls drop out of school after enrolment. A UNICEF study shows that almost 1.5 million primary school-age girls withdrew from primary

education due to poverty, social pressure, poor access, health, and other issues (Nath, et al., 2008).

At the secondary level, over half of the girls reported their end of schooling was due to marriage, a reason cited by only two percent (2%) of boys. On the other hand, the main reason behind boys' dropping out was the necessity to earn money for their families (44%), a reason much less frequently cited for girls drop out (Nath, et al., 2008).

2.2.2.2 Impact of Social, Religious and Economic Challenges on Female Education

The adverse impacts of these issues, such as early marriage, responsibility of household chores and poor resources that limit girls' access and equity in education, also appear in university and professional education of women across the country. A significant portion of the female population end their schooling after grade 12 due to marriage, just as they would be entering higher education (BANBEIS, 2010). This normative behaviour, practice of early marriage of young girls, holds back innumerable females in both rural and urban settings from higher education and career aspirations. Despite these challenges, girls who manage to enter higher education face social expectations set by religion and the patriarchal society, and thus are led to pursue career (convenient to carry out as a wife or a mother) other than the career paths they would prefer (Hossain, &Kusakabe, 2005). So, it may be argued that the country has yet to eschew traditional mindsets about pedagogy and educational management, which have created a workforce that lacks the knowledge and skills of half of its population (approximately woman 50% of the total population). This section is relevant to my research as an understanding of the

mindset of the country in general about women's education within the country is directly or indirectly related to academic women's participation in higher education abroad.

2.2.2.3 Women Academics in the Workplace

Female employment in the private universities has increased over the last decade remarkably (Akhter, et al, 2008), although traditionally, females in Bangladesh are less privileged in joining the labour force due to social, cultural and religious norms (Hossain & Kusakabe, 2005) (as discussed above). According to a study conducted by Tabassum, Rahman and Jahan (2010), despite the increase of female participation as academics in universities, women are still marginalized, particularly in terms of promotion, pay, and other facilities such as affiliation with administrative responsibilities. Thus, in the socioeconomic context of Bangladesh, female academics are often treated as less powerful than their male counterparts and this long-established practice creates potential discrimination against them. As a result, it is common to find lower levels of career satisfaction and employee productivity (Ali, 2009) among female academics.

Although the number of married female academics has increased in private universities in Dhaka city since the last ten years, their predominance in pursuing postgraduate studies in a foreign country without their family (mainly husband and/or children) is a fairly recent phenomenon at the master's level. Data provided by the University Grant Commissions/UGC (2010) shows that the demographic shift towards a higher proportion of women at the master's level within the country began more than two decades ago; however, when it comes to pursuing doctoral degrees (both inside and outside the country) we see fewer women than men. The poor

percentage of female academics enrolment in doctoral degrees may suggest that a greater proportion of female academics may be engaged in managing family and raising kids.

2.2.2.4 Why a Foreign Degree?

In Bangladesh, the rate of unemployment is high among people with more than 16 years of education (Khan, 2007). The report presented by Khan (2007) also state that since the job market has become very competitive, a foreign degree is used as a screening mechanism in most job selections, particularly in selecting teachers at the university levels. However, only a small percentage of the Bangladeshi population can afford to obtain a foreign degree but this elite group gains an advantage over the rest who cannot afford a foreign degree. Thus a foreign degree is now in great demand.²

The mushrooming of vacancy announcements in Bangladeshi newspapers seeking foreign degrees from candidates attests to the power of the foreign degree for academics(Khan, 2010). Moreover, the advertisement by foreign universities and the number of counselling centres for admission in foreign universities in Bangladeshi newspapers also marks the importance of a foreign degree in Bangladesh education. This context of competing discourses of, "good wife", "good mother" and "successful academic", has been discussed to provide the background for the study of how many married female academics in Bangladesh have constructed their identities in relation to the socio-cultural ideals of womanhood.

²The craze for a degree from a foreign university in Bangladesh is so high that the university from the developed world does not need to be a famous one as many academic vacancy advertisements in Bangladeshi newspapers would testify.

The following sections of this chapter will present the position of women across other countries and the reasons behind using a narrative account for the study.

2.3 The challenges of Academic Women Across the World

The academic workplace has a discourse which exercises power and defines role relationships (Luke, 2000). Both male and female academics face certain common challenges, but women, simply because of their gender, often face additional challenges (Castleton, 2002). So, it is likely that married working women with children who go into the teaching profession will experience further obstacles. Gender lines are drawn right from the birth of a child and from that very moment society defines roles that mothers are supposed to play (Marks, 1997); women may not be viewed as suitable for certain professions and, in some cases, the only suitable role may be that of a wife or mother (White, 1999). Therefore, such stereotyped values may lead to the false belief that women cannot engage with or take charge of the additional administrative responsibilities of a full time teacher on par with male colleagues.

According to Bourdieu (as cited by Dumais, 2002), most women tend to use cultural capital to acquire husbands whereas men are more inclined to use cultural capital for educational qualifications and getting jobs. In light of this, Djajadikerta and Trireksani (2007) address the factors that cause the glass ceiling phenomenon in Australian universities for female academics which hold them back from advancing in their academic careers. Hantrai's (1990) study shows that many male teachers have a preconceived notion that women are reluctant to take any additional administrative responsibilities in addition to family commitments.

Now, I ask myself, are these educated women unaware of career advancement strategies or are they simply trapped by social expectations and conventions? Freire (1970) points out that

a powerful patriarchal culture may oppress the powerless, and to overcome such oppression women have to fight against it, on their own, and often at a great price.

2.3.1 Impact of the Societal Discourse on Women

A number of research studies have shown how educated women's sense of liberty and career options and advancement are limited by the institutional (e.g., home, society, workplace) discourse (Maclver & Page, 1956 as cited by Clark, 1973; Foucault, 1972; Northcutt, 1991) that constructs, shapes, and defines an institution. Darville (2001) examines relationships between literacy and power and demonstrates how education empowers women in taking the right decision at the right time to overcome challenges.

Mitchell (1993) points out that language regulates the way women should talk and act in life. The societies we live in engender different speech styles for men and women (e.g., Tannen, 1994), which consequently impact how we act in our life. Islam (2010) notes that the many cultural practices across the world only see women best suited to activity defined by the four walls of a house. In this regard, Malone (1999) argues that home-making gave a woman something to do that was essentially womanly.

In this vein, Darville (2001) quotes Levi Strauss who points out that, "literacy was initially developed as a tool of domination, writing was connected to power, it was used for inventories etc.; overall it was used by some to exercise power over the non-literate" (p.65). Other studies (e.g., White, 1999) also examine the power relationships which were defined by and through literacy and report that male dominated societies are likely to limit women's education so that men can exercise power over women.

Since the present research explores the lived lives of married Bangladeshi female academics who are studying abroad for higher education (or planning to study in the near future), it adopted narrative coding and grounded theory for interpreting the data (Cortazzi, 1993, p. 7 as cited by Saldaña, 2013, p.110). These methods were adopted since participants of the research as both producers and the by-products of discourse (Saldaña, 2013, p.111). This idea of individuals being the producer and the product of discourse is further explained by Foucault (1972) as he states that women are not simply positioned by the existing discourses of womanhood of a patriarchal society, but they also have the capability to position themselves within their desired identity by negotiating, resisting, or tailoring the existing discourses according to their needs.

Since the participants of this study are female, it draws on feminist thought (Benhabib as cited by Butler, 1999) to find out how these women negotiate with the concept of womanhood in their everyday lives. The signs, male and female that one is tagged with are socially and linguistically constructed, and there is evidence across the world of the structural and material inequalities to which women are subject (Butler, 1999). Womanhood is a manifestation of the culture, where cultural discourses are used to mark and maintain the differences between men and women in terms of their roles and position in the society (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). In other words, the society instils gendered roles, values or traits in the minds of people on the basis of what is normative for their sex right from birth. Therefore, womanhood is a cultural artefact mediating both men and women's thinking and actions. In this regard, Foucault, who defines discourse as " a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment" (as cited by

Hall 1997, p. 44), states that our perception about the gendered roles is sustained and internalized by the dominant discourses of our everyday lives (Foucault 1980, p. 131).

Foucault suggests that within societies there are discourses that are repeated and preserved; therefore, these discourses give rise to new modes of thinking, talking or acting. To put this in Foucault's words:

there is scarcely a society without its major narratives, which are recounted, repeated and varied; formulae, texts and ritualized sets of discourses which are recited in well-defined circumstances; things said once and preserved because it is suspected that behind them there is a secret or a treasure. In short we may suspect that there is in all societies, with great consistency a kind of gradation of discourses: those which are said in the ordinary course of days and exchanges, and which vanish as soon as they have been pronounced: and those which give rise to a certain number of speech-acts which take them up, transform them, in short, those discourses which over and above their formulation, are said indefinitely, remain said, and are to be said again. (1970, p. 56-57)

Therefore, some discourses are highly pervasive and long lasting, and it is often hard for people within a society living in the society to think outside the box and resist those discourses. In line with Foucault (1970), it may be argued that, the discourses of womanhood or the subjective roles assigned to women by the society have been so naturalized over time and practice that these values and practices are accepted without question as feminine, or as a natural part of woman's identity (Butler, 1999; Walkerdine, 1998).

However, the conventional roles of women have changed over the years across the world as a body of women continued to question the rights and roles of women set by patriarchal societies. Undoubtedly, the kind of oppression women face today is to a great extent different

from that of 19th century women who had no legal rights, were confined to the home, and bore children from maturity to death. Thus, what is liberating at one time may be a factor of oppression at another. So, discourse is performative as it constructs and changes individuals' subjectivities according to time and overall setting (Walkerdine, 1998; Butler, 1999). Accordingly, Foucault (1980) asserts, women are not merely passive victims of dominance as there is also resistance to the exercise of power.

The relevance of this argument for this thesis is its capacity to show how the discourse of gender inequality, which is a preserved and long lasting discourse of the Bangladeshi culture affect married female Bangladeshi academics' working lives and aspirations of pursuing foreign degrees, and how these women alter the existing discourses to produce new discourses in order to construct their desired identity. To explore the issue of discourse of gender inequality , my research looks at the discourses produced by the sample participants who position themselves within the discourses of the academic institution, home and the society at large. This discursive approach was adopted in order to facilitate the study of how gender inequality in academia is socially constructed and discursively defined and potentially maintained (maximized), ignored, or minimized.

The interviews that provided the data for this study were semi-structured and were based on three pre-prepared questions regarding learning experiences and what these meant to them as married academics woman.

However, the researcher also asked a few more questions about participants' responses to their learning experiences. These additional questions allowed the researcher to find out how these experiences shaped their perceptions and actions. The researcher collected the data from

the participants' narratives for analysis in order to identify some of the main discourses that were evident in their narratives.

2.4 Why a Narrative Account?

Since the present research aims to examine the lived lives of married female academics, it has adopted a narrative approach of telling stories (Chamberlayne et al., 2000). This narrative approach lends itself to a qualitative enquiry to capture the data within stories. Since surveys with "Yes" and "No" questions or quantitative analyses of behaviour are not sufficient to capture the magnitude of the complexity of the issue and the meanings the individuals draw from their experiences (Riessman, 1993), I adopted this narrative approach of 'telling stories' to offer a space in which participants of this study could narrate coherent stories of their perceptions of life and career aspirations and how they "made sense" of the experiences they have encountered during the learning period in a foreign country (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995, p. 2 as cited by Saldaña, 2013, p.109). In the context of researching issues of identity, power and education amongst married academic women in Bangladesh, it seemed particularly appropriate to use a narrative approach, such as women's stories, to capture the essence and complexities of their lived realities. Close attention to the stories of the participants in this research illuminate their resistance to the stereotypical discourse of womanhood set by traditional Bengali patriarchal society.

In other words, applying this story metaphor, I aimed to construct texts within a particular context and demonstrate how contemporary academic women make sense of events and actions in their lives by examining their stories, and the recurrent discourses and ideologies (Riessman, 1993). Rustin (2000, p.45) opined that stories of individuals cannot lead to a large-scale

generalisation, but the stories of the individuals or groups of people can still hold a certain level of resonance with other people's experiences, themes and issues that can be highlighted for general consideration.

Poststructuralist theory, focus on this dialogic nature of social discourse and draw on close examination of both what is said and what is not said. To quote Bakhtin (1994, p.276):

The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance, it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue.

In contrast to positivist notions, that deal with randomly drawn samples and statistical analyses, this narrative approach, which is influenced by poststructuralist theories, is concerned with the discourse produced by individual participants to construct individual subjectivities, as well as the situatedness of interview responses. Narrative approaches, as suggested by Riessman (1993), portray the life stories in a orderly way which may otherwise be essentially irrecoverable. Therefore, these stories of the participants in a given time, which are essentially individual constructions of their experiences, have limitations that may affect objectivity in presentation. These stories of the “self” are important in understanding how these married female academics construct meaning of their experiences, construct subjectivity, construct themselves, and resist and potentially transform discourse in everyday life.

This chapter provided background to the study by discussing the literature that informed it. The background was important to understand the need for carrying out this research in the Bangladeshi context, specifically for married academic women today. The next chapter will

further discuss the research method used to address the research questions guiding the study. The research questions are as follows:

- a. What encourages married female Bangladeshi academics teaching in university to choose a foreign university for advanced degrees even though this often means separating themselves geographically from their families for a substantial period?
- b. What barriers, if any, did they encounter while studying?
- c. If there were barriers, what strategies did they employ to overcome them?

Chapter 3-Method

In order to address my research questions and explore why and how (Yin, 1994) academic married women in Bangladesh pursue post-graduate studies without their families in a foreign country, I have adopted a qualitative research design and followed a case study approach. Amongst researchers case study has a wide variety of interpretations. However, they all (Duff, 2008; Yin, 2003) agree on the fact that a case study provides a detailed account and analysis of one or more phenomena. For Yin (1994), "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (p.13)."

3.1 Participants-Overview

Five married female academics, including myself, were participants in this research. The other four participants were recruited using a purposeful sampling strategy in order to develop an in-depth understanding of the participants' lived experiences (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 126). The selection criteria were based on place of birth (Bangladesh), job experiences in post secondary institutions in Bangladesh, and finally on their experiences of getting into post-graduate programs in foreign universities and completing graduate degrees prior to returning to Bangladesh. All of the five participants are married female academics (some also have children). They were all selected from a private university in Bangladesh. With the exception of one participant, NR, the other four participants (4) were all studying or had studied in the Faculty of Arts and Education. Three of the participants are still pursuing their postgraduate programs in Ontario, Canada. One of the participants went back to Bangladesh after completing her Master's

program from a university in Ontario, Canada. And the fourth participant has never lived outside Bangladesh for academic purposes, but she wishes to study abroad for pursuing a doctoral degree. Names of all the participants are pseudonyms, NS, SS, FS, NR and Tahmina Anwar (myself). All the participants are in their thirties and their husbands' are their contemporaries. Short biographies of all five participants are given below:

3.1.1 Profile of Participant-NS

NS is a lecturer in the department of English and Humanities at a private university in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She is now on study leave in order to pursue her PhD (Faculty of Education) from Queen's University in Ontario, Canada. Her father is an officer at a Bank in Dhaka. Her husband, who was her year mate and childhood friend, works for a private company as a software engineer in the same city. Before she got married in 2009, she completed her MPhil from India immediately after completing her Master's degree (M.A. in English language and Literature) from a private university in Bangladesh. She has participated in many conferences outside the country without her husband and two-year-old daughter.

Before starting her PhD in Canada in Fall 2014, she refused a PhD offer from a university in the UK in 2013 as her daughter was less than six months old at that time. She plans to bring her daughter and husband to Canada, after completing her comprehensive exam. Since the exam is quite rigorous and demanding in terms of time and effort, she came alone to Canada. Her mother is taking care of their daughter. Her husband stays at her mother-in-laws' place and he tries to visit their daughter almost every day at his mother-in-law's place.

3.1.2 Profile of Participant-SS

SS was 26 years old when she went to Italy on a full scholarship to pursue a one year diploma course after finishing her Master's (M.A. in English) from a public university in Bangladesh. She returned to Bangladesh after completing the program and joined a private university in Bangladesh to teach Foundational English courses as well as some linguistic courses. She got married to an IT engineer, who happens to be the Head of IT of the same university where she works. Although they worked in the same institute, they only had a virtual relationship before getting married in 2013. In fact, she got married only a month before she left Bangladesh for Canada to pursue her Master's degree. Right after marriage she came to know some facts about her husband that contributed to a rift between them. Given that she was mentally prepared to join her program at a university in Canada in the department of Education (University of Lethbridge), and she had not reconciled with her husband, she decided to leave Bangladesh for a while and pursue her degree in the meantime. Particularly, she thinks her career prospects in the field of teaching without a foreign degree or a PhD from abroad is very limited.

Before she got married her husband also expressed his dreams to pursue higher studies abroad. However, after marriage he was not happy about the fact that she was leaving him behind in Bangladesh to pursue her own study. He urged her to leave her study and return to Bangladesh. Since the relationship was going through a rough patch, she had no choice but to return to Bangladesh in the middle of her program. Unfortunately, once returning to Bangladesh she was forced by her husband to resign from her job in Bangladesh. This actually made her realize that she should return to Canada to resume her Master's before her admission was cancelled. After returning to Canada her relationship with her husband was further affected.

Especially, since the geographical distance increased their differences. Although it was difficult to manage the geographical separation from her husband or other family members, SS was quite satisfied with her professional achievement. It may also be noted that her younger brother, who got married before her, also lives in Canada but in a different province

3.1.3 Profile of Participant-FS

FS, completed a Master's program (Linguistics and Applied Linguistics) from York University in Ontario, Canada. She resumed her teaching in a university in Bangladesh after completing her Master's. Her father is a retired professor, who worked at a public university in Bangladesh after completing his PhD in UK in the 1980's. Her husband is also a teacher in a public university in Bangladesh, and got his PhD from a Canadian university. He also worked as a visiting professor at a university in Vancouver, Canada. She first came to Canada for her Master's in 2009, just after a month of her marriage. However, as soon as she landed in Canada she found out that she was pregnant. Since it was increasingly more difficult for her to take care of herself and focus on her studies at the same time, she had no other choice but to leave Canada. After returning to Bangladesh she stayed at her in-laws' place with her husband. But her relationship with her mother-in-law was not good. As a result, she moved to a separate house with her daughter while her husband stayed with his parents. He didn't want to move as he didn't want to leave his aged parents alone. At the end of year 2012, FS came to Canada (Ontario) again with her two-year-old daughter to pursue a Master's in a new program. She was in contact with her husband during her stay in Canada. Moreover, this time her husband was also living in Canada for academic purpose but in a different province (British Columbia). However, he visited FS and their daughter twice before he returned to Bangladesh.

3.1.4 Profile of Participant-NR

NR finished her Bachelors and Masters degree from a public university in Bangladesh. She has about a decade of teaching experience in various private universities in Bangladesh. At the time of the interview, she was not only a faculty member in the department of English at a private university in Dhaka (Bangladesh), but also held a very responsible administrative post. She considers a PhD from a foreign country important for her future career prospects, but she expresses her doubts in accomplishing it due to her family commitments. Her father is a businessman and he is one of the people in her life who always inspired her to pursue doctoral degree. Her husband is an engineer who works for the government and has no intention of doing further studies abroad though he often visits various countries to attend training programs related to his profession. At the time of the study, they had been married for nine years and had a six-year-old daughter.

3.1.5 Profile of Participant-Tahmina (researcher)

I, Tahmina, am an M.A. student in Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies. Besides being the researcher of the study, I have also included myself as a participant or participant-researcher in the study since my academic career, marital status, experience as an international student in a Canadian university and other conditions match the participant selection criteria of the study. Moreover, my experience of studying abroad in a foreign university as a married female academic with a child helped the participants feel comfortable sharing both their good and bitter experiences with study abroad, as I too had had similar experiences. In addition, while interpreting the data in light of the relevant literature, I could also relate my experiences and

perspectives to that of the findings of the interviews with the other participants in the results and discussion section of the research.

I have more than five years of teaching experience in the department of English at a private universities in Dhaka, Bangladesh. I had my B.A. and first M.A. from a university in Bangladesh. I also did an E-certificate course from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. I have a few publications and attended international conferences inside and outside Bangladesh. I am keen to pursue further studies in Canada in order to enhance teaching expertise, widen my knowledge, gain personal satisfaction, and for career advancement.

I am married with a six-year old daughter who is currently living with me in Canada. My daughter, who was living with her maternal grandmother in Bangladesh, came to Canada after living in Bangladesh without me for more than a year. My husband is self-employed and lives in Bangladesh. My mother was a school teacher, who left teaching more than two decades ago to accompany my father to Canada for his doctoral studies. After returning to Bangladesh she did not resume her work as she got busy raising her three daughters; and thus she performed the role of a "selfless good mother".

3.2 Research Tools

The following sections describe the tools that were used in interpreting the data as well as the materials that were used to conduct the interviews.

3.2.1 Semi-structured Interview Questions

I have used semi-structured interview questions which were prepared before conducting the interviews to elicit answers to my research questions. This allowed me to be prepared and appear competent during the interview. Moreover, this semi-structured interview questions also allowed my participants the freedom to express their views in their own terms (Smith, 1995).

3.2.2 Journal

I kept a journal to keep record of my thoughts and perspectives on the semi-structured questions that were set for my participants. Since I was both a researcher and a participant of this study the journal helped me to keep a balance between both perspectives. With the help of the journal I could relate my experiences and perspectives to those of the participants. My journal entries helped me to reflect on and interpret the findings of the interviews, reported in the results and discussion section of the research. The journal reflections in relation to the unfolding narrative accounts are consistent with Bakhtin's notion of dialogism as it relates to and interacts with the voices of other participants (Frank, 2005) .

3.2.3 Tools for the Interview

To interview my participants I used Skype, which includes a variety of communication options like audio and video calling with other Skype users, telephoning landlines or mobile phones as well as providing messaging and file transfer capabilities. Then, I downloaded an

application called "quick Voice Recorder" from my android phone to record the interviews conducted over Skype.

3.3 Procedures

As indicated above, semi-structured interviews were used to gather data regarding participants' views of the barriers to career advancement. This interview format was selected as it allows participants to discuss each of the questions from a personal perspective, whilst allowing the researcher to probe particular areas of interest (Smith, 1995). The interviews were informal in nature, but the researcher had pre-prepared questions based on her personal study abroad experiences to engender a lively discussion of the respondents' experiences. After receiving ethics approval (Appendix-B) from Carleton REB, an email (attached to the email was an invitation letter) was sent to a faculty member of the Department of English in Bangladesh, who agreed to act as my contact. I confirmed that no further ethics approval was necessary on the Bangladesh side. The participants volunteered to recount their experiences in finishing international degrees and their responses were confidential. Once my contact agreed, he circulated the invitation letter amongst the faculty members of the university (approximately 300), inviting any faculty to participate as volunteers for my research study. Faculty who indicated their interest in participating were given my email address and Skype address. I recruited participants who: 1) were currently working and living in Bangladesh without a foreign postgraduate degree, but planning to study abroad; 2) were currently pursuing a post graduate degree in a foreign country, and 3) who had completed a post graduate degree in a foreign country and were now teaching at the university.

As discussed above, the selection criteria were based on a participant's place of birth (Bangladesh), their job experience in post-secondary institutions in Bangladesh, marital status, and finally on their experience of getting into post-graduate programs in foreign universities and completing graduate degrees prior to returning to Bangladesh. Then, interviews were conducted by Skype, recorded using an android phone application called "quick Voice Recorder", and transcribed for analysis in order to build individual case narratives (Yin, 1994), which for all participants allowed for the development of a meta-narrative of the phenomenon of Bangladeshi female academics' experience of pursuing higher degrees abroad.

The interview sessions typically lasted between 30 and 40 minutes. The participants talked about any challenges associated with current and multiple roles, cultural ideals of womanhood, and how they situate themselves in relation to these ideals as academics. The sequence and the wording of the questions varied during the course of the interviews to maintain the flow of conversation. Pseudonyms were used to safeguard anonymity.

In analysing the data the researcher looked for patterns in the transcribed text and examined both commonalities and differences in terms of the participants' responses to the questions. Participants reviewed and verified transcripts (Duff, 2008, p.170 cited this process as "member checking").

Though I was a participant in the study, I was also the researcher, so I did not contribute to the interviews as a participant. Since I did not have a third party to interview me as a participant, I kept a journal throughout my participation, in which I reflected upon my motives in pursuing a foreign degree, barriers encountered, and my own coping strategies. In my journal I responded to the semi-structured questions that the other participants in the study were asked.

My journal reflections will be discussed in Chapter Four, where I present the findings of the research.

3.4 Data Analysis

I used the verbatim interview transcripts as the source for data analysis. Though the interviews were conducted mostly in English, both the interviewee and I switched to Bengali at times. So, these responses were first transcribed into Bengali. Later, these Bengali sections were translated into English. Finally, I transcribed all the interviews in English and then reviewed the transcripts with the recording in order to check for accuracy of transcription and translation.

The interview transcripts were then analyzed through several rounds of coding. The coding method followed Saldaña's (2013) guidelines for coding. Saldaña identifies several types of coding which are used at different stages of the analytical process. The following were used in this study:

Narrative Coding: Based on the idea that people use stories to make sense of themselves (construct identity), this type of analysis explores the data and specifically looks for stories (Cortazzi, 2002 as cited by Saldaña, 2013, 108). Narrative coding can be conducted through diverse coding (thematic, structural), but I have used structural coding.

In vivo Coding: In vivo coding uses participants' own language. For example, while coding the researchers selects a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record to find "the terms used by [participants] themselves" (Strauss, 1987, p. 33 as cited by Saldaña, 2013, p.74).

Structural Coding: Structural coding applies a content-based or conceptual phrase representing a topic of inquiry to a segment of data that relates to a specific research question

used to frame the interview (MacQueen, McLellan-Lemal, Bartholow, & Milstein, 2008 p 104 as cited by Saldaña, 2013, p.66). The similarly coded segments are then collected together for more detailed coding and analysis (Saldaña, 2013, p.66).

Initial Coding: Initial coding looks for distinct concepts or discrete parts in the data, which form the basic units of analysis. Then these concepts/discrete parts are closely examined and compared for similarities and differences, and thus break down the data into first level concepts (Charmaz, 2006 as cited by Saldaña, 2013, p.81). Initial coding uses highlights, such as using multiple colors, words/phrases, to distinguish concepts and categories.

Focused Coding: Focused coding "searches for the most frequent and significant Initial Codes to develop "the most salient categories" in the data corpus and "requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytical sense" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46, 47 as cited Saldaña, 2013, p.155).

I examined the data from the transcribed interviews in two steps: i) using narrative, in vivo, structural and focused coding to create themes that emerged from each interview (Charmaz, 2006) and; ii) comparing my codes with those of the inter-raters for increasing the reliability of the analysis (Saldaña, 2013).

For the first round of coding, I used narrative, in vivo and structural coding for analyzing the interview transcripts. Therefore, while coding the transcribed interviews, I summarized relevant segments of text using a word/ phrase to relate to my initial research questions (Saldaña, 2013, p.67). I also used focused coding. This method of coding involved a stage of initial coding followed by a round of focused coding. I took earlier initial codes that continually reappeared in my initial coding and used those codes to sift through large amounts of data. I continued this process until I had segmented all of my data and have completed the initial coding. Next, I

identified relationships between the codes and grouped them into categories (Charmaz as cited Saldaña, 2013, p.155). It is likely that my interpretation of the data would be influenced by my roles as a researcher and a participant of the study. So, to confirm my first round of coding, a second round of coding was done by inter-rater (coders) and a reliability analysis was applied. Following Charmaz's (2006) modified constructivist grounded theory approach, I provided limited information about the research and participants to the inter-raters, as it might have influenced their coding of the interviews (Saldaña, 2013). Then, I compared my coding and analysis with that of two other coders for reliability (Yin, 2003) and calculated inter-rater agreement. The two other coders, who were ESL instructors pursuing doctoral studies at the time of the study, were experienced in the qualitative coding of texts. I asked them to code a selection of sample texts drawn from the interview transcripts, which I selected because they had contributed in substantive ways, in my view, to the overall themes and categories I had identified as part of my own analysis. The overall computed inter-rater reliability was 87%, which shows a satisfactory level of agreement (see Appendix F for details regarding the coding used to calculate inter-rater reliability agreement). The inter-raters were important in this case as they helped me to capture various perspectives of the research problem, and thus helped in increasing validity of the research as well as in considering counter-examples of interpretations (Duff, 2008, p.144).

In the third round of coding I used focused coding again (Saldaña, 2013) to connect the results of the data to my research questions (see chapter-4). Summarizing the responses using focused coding helped me to focus and identify the overall results of the study.

Having provided details on the method used in this research, in the following chapter I present the findings in relation to literature and my personal reflection.

Chapter 4-Findings and Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss the overall findings of the study in relation to the research questions, using relevant literature, on how married academic women are positioned and are positioning themselves within the discourse of an "ideal women" (Russo, 1976) who has multiple roles, such as good wife, good mother, and a successful academic. In Table 2, below, I have connected each of the research questions to the initial codes and focused codes I have identified, in order to provide an overview of the findings in relation to each of the research questions. . The focused codes are used as the categories and the initial codes as themes for each section (Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2013).

.Questions	Initial Codes	Focused codes
What encourages married female Bangladeshi academics teaching in university to choose a foreign university for advanced degrees even though this often means separating themselves geographically from their families for a substantial period?	dream of acquiring knowledge	Personal motives; Career development
	Influence of others	
	Participation in research	
	Developing self-identity	
	Setting an example	
	Career development	
	Problems with husband	
	Selfish	

What barriers, if any, did they encounter while studying?	Good mother	Impact of the institutional discourse; Financial stress; Effect on academic success
	Good wife	
	Successful academic	
	Effect on relationship	
	Psychological turmoil	
	Financial stress	
	Negatively affects academic progress	
What strategies did they employ to overcome the barriers?	Family support	Support network; Personal coping strategies
	Peer support	
	Faculty adviser support	
	Determination	
	Overlooking negativity	

Table 1-Research Questions, Initial Codes and Focused Coding

The findings, drawn from the participants' narrative accounts, are supported with direct quotations from the interview transcripts which illustrate how their construction of meaning from their experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Moreover, I have rearranged the participants' quotations in a logical manner (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 488) in order to relate their responses to each of the research questions. However, it is important to acknowledge that this overview of the findings is filtered through my own personal understanding, and it is likely that different readings by other researchers might identify and interpret the narratives differently.

4.1 Research question 1: What encourages married female Bangladeshi academics teaching in university to choose a foreign university for advanced degrees even though this often means separating themselves geographically from their families for a substantial period?

When asked this question, all participants recalled how they initially became interested in studying for a higher degree in a foreign country. A number of motivational factors (themes) were identified through initial coding from participants' narration, such as influence of others, involvement with research, dream of acquiring knowledge, self-identity, setting an example for their children, and dream fulfilment. To simplify the analysis, the motives are divided into two categories through Focused coding, which are: Personal Motives and Career Development.

4.1.1 Personal Motives

Personal motives emerged as one of the categories after Focused coding. All the participants were motivated to pursue a foreign degree for personal reasons. These personal reasons ranged from fulfilling the dream of acquiring knowledge to influence of others, participation in research, developing self-identity, and setting an example to career development. Many of those themes (personal motives) repeatedly reoccurred among the responses of the participants. These themes are discussed below.

4.1.1.1 Dream of Acquiring Knowledge

Overall, all participants acknowledged their dream of acquiring knowledge and mentioned that they believe the PhD is the highest point of education. However, within their

narratives, areas of tension and conflict coexist with areas of ambition and joy while fulfilling their dream of acquiring more knowledge.

Foucault (1980) says, "power to know" is not only oppressive but also "productive" in the sense that it produces pleasure for the person who seeks to gain knowledge (p.77). So, "power" which was merely a tool for the males in the 19th century (Foucault, 1980, p.79), as the findings of this research suggests, is now also a tool for the women to obtain joy. This explanation of Foucault's explanation is also reflected in NS's narration as she speaks of her thirst for knowledge which triggered her pursuit of doctoral studies abroad, "...I thrive on studying, researching or doing something substantial for my career advancement which gives me mental satisfaction." The joy of gaining knowledge is also found in NR's comment: "When I am at university I enjoy preparing myself for the classes, conducting classes and workshops, attending meeting and other university programs".

The data collected from interviews with the married female academics show that for them the gathering of knowledge for them is similar to a hobby, an exciting alternative to boredom at work or in family life. Their comments suggest that academic pursuits allow them to maintain connections with knowledge building, stimulation and growth, and to enjoy a time for the "self", but it is also apparent in FS's narration that a tension runs between her desire to be a "ideal woman" whilst succeeding in her academic career. For example, FS seems to express a strong sense of guilt when she thinks that people in her society will consider her to be a "selfish" woman:

After more than eight years of teaching I really wanted to give myself a break, a break which I can use to upgrade my skills and knowledge. You know what, I was actually tired

of teaching, really, I mean it (laugh)...I wanted to get back to study life and focus on my career...I needed some time of my own. People might think I am selfish but to be honest I also enjoyed studying, and going back to class as a student. (FS).

I too feel that I am able to be myself when I travel for work, which FS in her narration describes as an opportunity to get a break and enjoy doing some of the things exclusively for herself or for her career development which she would not normally have time to do. In my case, spending time on studies for building an identity and travelling for pleasure had been important before becoming a wife and a mother. I think FS was provoked to study abroad for similar reasons. Therefore, working in the academy, which has created a space for me to build a sense of self outside of the wife and mothering roles, has probably been the same for FS. According to Ivanic (2014), this forging of a sense of self outside of the ideal woman, who selflessly devotes all her time fulfilling the needs of the family members, such as, husband/children, is a form of resistance. According to Foucault (1980), this form of resistance, to quote FS "get a break and enjoy doing some of the things exclusively for herself or for her career development", defies the dominant discourse (selflessness) by giving birth to new discourse (selfish) of womanhood.

4.1.1.2 Influence of Others

Participants replied that their university teachers, parents, and later their participation in teaching ultimately sparked their initial interest in gaining a higher degree, such as a Master's or a PhD from the West.

For example, SS, attributed her initial interest in a foreign degree to "great teachers". She explained:

Pursuing a post graduate degree in a north American country was my dream ever since I started topping in my undergraduate years of study and the motivation to pursue the dream swelled up even more when I got into teaching profession...I admire my great teachers in the school and university who were knowledgeable, had excellent teaching skills and always supported my development and inspired me to perform better...plus, most of my university professors had degree from the west.

I was also inspired by my teachers. In my case, the influence of teachers was so great that I wanted to always live up to the expectations of my admired professors who encouraged me to pursue higher studies. My motivation to pursue foreign degree was also an influence of fellow colleagues. Another participant, NS, has confirmed the influence of colleagues on her initial motivation to pursue foreign degree and states that, "many of my junior colleagues are also finishing their PhD, mostly from the West, this further increase my desire to enrol for PhD". I can relate my experience with that of NS. Since it was difficult on my part to manage time for academic engagement I always felt the need to remind myself to not fall behind my fellow colleagues who are taking a break from work to pursue a foreign degree to upgrade themselves.

Moreover, all participants responded that their parents inspired them to achieve more than their parents had accomplished educationally. One of the participants in this research, FS, considers her parents to be a major influence in her decision to study in a foreign country: "...my parents, particularly my father who pursued his PhD at Imperial College, London had always dreamt that we sisters would also pursue higher studies for career advancement." This finding resonates with Clewell's (1987) study, which showed that parents in the US were extremely instrumental in encouraging female black graduate students to pursue post-secondary education.

One participant, SS, mentions that her father constantly inspired her to “go farther than me, your mom and everyone else in the family educationally.” NR narrated: “...My parents really want me to start a PhD. They are now telling me to start here in Bangladesh. But I am not interested in Bangladesh for a doctoral degree, as it will not be well acknowledged even within the country; thus it is not worth my investment of time, energy and money. I will actually wait for some time more and see if I can persuade my husband to move abroad for his work or study purpose.” I too have to credit my parents, particularly my father, in making me dream about pursuing higher studies abroad and later for being with me in my ups and downs throughout my stay in Canada for my degree.

Commenting on participants’ personal goals for pursuing foreign degrees, FS, mentioned a family tradition of foreign degrees: “my other two sisters also had their postgraduate degrees from the West.” Similarly, my own drive for pursuing a degree from abroad was further augmented by the senior members of my family. Many of my family members, particularly, my father and my maternal grandfather's, visit to North American universities for higher studies triggered my dream of pursuing a foreign degree. Participants (of my research) personal goal of pursuing foreign degree to live up to standards of the ancestors or to raise the status falls under the concept of cultural capital, which has been discussed in the literature review. All the participants, including NR who has not yet managed to pursue a foreign degree, have attested that their parents provide them with cultural capital by transmitting the attitudes and knowledge needed to succeed in the pursuit of higher studies abroad.

4.1.1.3 Participation in Research

May and Chubin's (2003) research states the importance of participation in research in encouraging female students to pursue graduate degrees. The data collected from the narratives of this study also provides evidence of the importance of married female academics' involvement and exposure to research related activities in their decision to pursue the doctorate or post-graduate studies in a far away country. According to participant, NR, her involvement in research, participation in conferences and workshops "inspires me to involve myself in further studies and expand my knowledge, skills and experience." Similar thoughts were also expressed by SS:

When I am in the department I come across people who are busy doing research, publication, attending conferences and so on. And naturally my zeal to perform as a better academician enhances in their company. We all know how much time one has to dedicate in building up an academic career.

SS also adds that her previous experience of studying in Italy for a diploma certificate also encouraged her to pursue a Master's degree from a North American country. To quote her:

Pursuing a post graduate degree in a North American country was my dream ever since I started topping in my undergraduate years of study and the motivation to pursue the dream swelled up even more when lived in Italy for about a year for my diploma course and particularly, when I got into teaching profession.

My personal engagement with academic activities, such as obtaining an e-certificate course from a North American university, attending international conferences inside and outside Bangladesh, and publications increased my motivation to pursue further studies in Canada.

4.1.1.4 Developing Self-identity

Another theme identified from the data was the development of one's identity -- to explore what one is capable of doing and to receive recognition. Indeed, as suggested by Leonard and Malina (1994), women academics with children often feel a need to disconnect themselves from their private life, such as their mothering role and responsibilities, while at work in the academy. NS, who left her two and a half year old daughter in Bangladesh, gave words to her feelings by saying, "... I want to be recognized for my own capabilities and want to develop my identity beyond my roles as wife, sister, daughter, and mother."

Another participant, SS said, "I want and enjoy taking care of my husband and other family members just like any other stay-home wives; but at the same time I want my husband to understand and respect my desire for academic advancement."

Therefore, it is evident from the experiences of these academics that unlike traditional "selfless woman" (good mother or good wife as discussed by Marks, 1997, p. 88) they expect to create a space within which they can build a sense of "self" outside of the mothering or wifely roles. Their desire to create a identity beyond a "selfless" mother and wife echoes Foucault's (1977) definition of power relations where he explains that academic women are not only positioned or shaped by discourse of "selfless woman", but are also capable of positioning in terms of accepting, resisting and transforming discourse by creating of a sense of "self" outside

of the "selfless" feminine roles of a mother and wife. However, the findings from the research question about participants barriers to pursuing a foreign degree affirm that building a sense of "self" for the married female academics comes with a high price as it creates a tension within the academic who sought to become a "good wife", a "good mother" and a "successful academic" simultaneously.

4.1.1.5 Setting an Example

Setting an example emerged as a theme in the study. Commenting on personal motives, one of the respondents, FS, mentioned "setting an example before the young as one of the main drivers behind her desire to pursue a Master's degree in a foreign country:

I may be selfish in the eyes of people around me but I think I am less selfish because my dream of pursuing the degree is not necessarily for my personal satisfaction, but I hope my choice will be a source of inspiration for my daughter, if not for other aspiring female academics.

Since I am the eldest child of my parents and the eldest among my cousins my parents wanted me to fulfil my dream and set an example before the young members of the family. My father always reminded me of a popular proverb in Bengali which goes as follows in English: "The youngsters follow the examples set by the elders". Such inspiration that the participants of this research draw from their parents, who are not necessarily economically very affluent but are educationally and socially savvy (as narrated in the overview of the participants and the narratives), relates to the concept of cultural capital of Bourdieu (1979).

4.1.2 Career development

All four participants in the study mentioned that a foreign degree is a prerequisite for career advancement and higher salary. However, in this regard, NR's explains how a foreign degree experience can serve as potential recruitment opportunities, promotions or getting administrative responsibilities:

PhD is important to me. It is important because the opportunities for development in [a] teaching job are limited to some extent after certain point. As I also work for the administration at this university I have seen many cases where a truly deserving candidate, say for the post of a lecturer, professor or even for administrative post, such as dean, proctor, vice-chancellor were disqualified simply because of the fact that they do not have a foreign degree, preferably from a north American country or do not have a PhD.

SS also echoes the views expressed by NR regarding the importance of a foreign degree for career advancement: "...I wanted to add something new in my career achievements and when I got the admission offer from the University I got excited that I was getting this break to advance my career...changing job or getting promotions become much easier after a foreign degree, particularly when it is earned from the west."

The narratives of the respondents not only speak of their concern for advancing career through pursuing foreign degree but also provide evidence of the everyday struggles they undergo while multitasking. The multiplicity keeps married female academics so occupied with daily responsibilities that they hardly manage time to apply for doctoral studies in a foreign country. NR, who wish to pursue a foreign degree narrates:

I am spending a quarter of my day travelling to and from work...this is very exhausting and breaks my concentration when I get back to work at office... I also want to go abroad for my PhD but to be honest I am afraid of taking that step as I know my husband will not accompany me nor will support me mentally or economically. Since I hold an administrative post beside my teaching responsibilities in the university; I often I have to stay beyond my regular office hours and sometimes I have to spare my weekends as well. This is not probably as big an issue to many as it is to my mother-in-law and some female colleagues who often ask me with a mocking tone how I manage time for everything. My mother-in-law once in a while would remind me in her condescending voice that my job is my fanciful choice and staying outside the house for work related duties outside the regular office hours is not as necessary as it is for my husband.

This response of NR, who is married with a child, makes it apparent that she is trying to develop her career through academic activities in Bangladesh, but the pressure of juggling the multiple roles of a "good wife", "good mother" and a "successful academic" often compelled her to stay at office for extended hours which was not only criticized by her mother -in-law, but unfortunately also by her fellow female colleagues. Therefore, it may be argued that she was being positioned by her mother-in-law and fellow colleagues, which affects her own positioning nature and leaves her with a feeling of guilt for deviating from the norm of the woman who stays at home to look after everyone in the family.

The objective of this question was to understand why married academic women take a break from their careers in order to pursue foreign degree away from their families. In examining the participants' responses about what inspired them to do so a number of motivational factors came into light. The factors (themes) that emerged from this study show that all the participants

are inspired to pursue a foreign degree either for increasing their expertise or for increasing their employability. This desire expressed by the participants echoes the theory of human capital, which has been discussed briefly in the literature review. According to Human Capital theory (Schultz, 1961), acquisition of knowledge raises the value of a person's human capital; thus, it increases the person's employability and expertise. Therefore, referring to one of the themes of this study, the need for skill enhancement is consistent with the theory of human capital as it also acknowledges the need to pursue higher studies for enhancing skill and employment opportunity.

In the next research question, I will discuss the barriers married female academics teaching at a university in Bangladesh face as they want to pursue their dreams of obtaining a foreign degree.

4.2 Research Question 2: What barriers, if any, did they encounter while studying?

Three categories emerged from the responses of the participants in relation to this question. These categories are, institutional discourse, financial stress, and effect on academic success.

4.2.1 Institutional Discourse

The discourse of the institutions (home and academy) emerged as one of the categories in this research. Within this category of "institutional discourse" two themes, effect on relationship and psychological turmoil (as identified through focused coding), will be discussed. These two themes (codes), effect on relationship and psychological turmoil, will be discussed in relation to their most recurrent discourses (discourses identified from raw data) to get a deeper insights into the participants lived lives as a student in a foreign country.

The table 2, below, shows the discourses identified from raw data, initial codes and focused codes for examining the category of “Institutional discourse”:

Identified discourses from raw data of all Participants	Initial Codes for all Participants	Focused Codes
Good wife: Selfless; submissive; caring; cooking, juggling the multiple roles of a wife, mother, and academic simultaneously with equal competence.	Effect on relationship	Institutional Discourse
Good mother: Selfless; able to cope; caring; cooking; having a job is fine only if the mother can manage to give proper attention to the child.		
Successful academic: Priority to academic development-publishing, researching, pursuing higher degrees, desperate; selfish.		
Best of both worlds: Guilt, depression, indecisiveness due to the ambivalent space within the contradictory discourses of "good woman" and "successful academic"	Mental turmoil	

Table 2: Discourses identified from participants' narrative

Some of the most repeated discourses identified in the initial coding were "successful academic", "good wife", "good mother", and "best of both worlds". It is evident from the narratives of the participants that the definition of "good wife" and "good mother" is to some extent still limited to women's caring and submissive nature, and these duties are so demanding that it leaves little room for women to create any other identities other than these two (Arendell, 2000). On the other hand, academic life, which favours masculinity, is also labelled as a "greedy" institution as it requires academics to give their hundred percent effort to become successful (Edwards, 2000). Since the institutions of the academy (public life) and home (private) are separate spheres, it is observed from the narratives of the participants of this research that they experienced role conflicts most frequently among their wife, mother, academic, and student roles during their years of higher study in the foreign country. During my study I have also experienced a number of barriers. After exploring the literature on the impact of role conflicts of academic women and by examining the data collected from this study it is evident to me that many of the obstacles I encountered during my study in Canada were actually due to the ways I often positioned myself or others positioned me within the discourse of "successful academic", "good wife" and a "good mother". In the following sections, I will reflect on my own positioning nature as well as others within the discourse of "successful academic", "good wife" and a "good mother" and its impact on the barriers I experienced while pursuing my degree in Canada.

4.2.1.1 Effect on Relationship

The geographical distance had a negative impact on the lives of all four participants who are studying or have studied in a foreign university. NR, who is working in Bangladesh and has not yet participated in any degree program outside Bangladesh, also expressed that she is

afraid of starting PhD in a foreign university as it may affect her conjugal life, "I am afraid that my decision may upset my husband". Though all the participants who studied or still studying abroad, mentioned that they relied on Internet connectivity to develop and support relationship with their spouse, it was evident from their experiences that these support systems were not enough to maintain a regular relationship. An excerpt from SS illustrates this argument clearly: "I always tried to be connected with my hubby over Skype, face-book, Viber; but after few months, actually after three months the communication-technologies were not enough to keep us connected". Similar to SS, my personal attempt to use technology for maintaining a friendly relationship with my husband also did not work. Since more contact with my husband produced more argument between us, we gradually limited ourselves only to telephone conversation and lessened our talk time. The more we talked the more I was reminded of the responsibilities I am ignoring as a wife and a mother. My inability to perform the roles of a wife and mother, which generally requires physical proximity increased my sense of guilt and depression.

Working wives often feel a "lack" within themselves (Hewlett, 1987 cited by Edwards, 2000). This feeling of inadequacy is also evident in SS's narrative. And she states that this feeling of "lack" within herself had a negative impact on her conjugal life while pursuing the foreign degree:

At times I wish I hadn't come to Canada for my study. Sometimes it is hard to stand the troubles it is creating between my husband and me ...He was always angry with me, used to shout for anything...then he told me to go back to Bangladesh if I wanted the relationship to continue... I am almost at the end of my program but I don't know yet what to do about the marriage. The arrangements of coming to Canada were done before I got married; I left Bangladesh for my study after one and a half months of my marriage.

It is still fresh in my mind that he was interested in getting married to me as he found me "independent", "intelligent" and was proud of the fact that I got admission in a Canadian University. But, sadly all my good qualities all of a sudden turned into negative qualities for him when I moved to Canada for study. He says "you are not at all a proper woman, not even a good wife as you lack feminine qualities...According to his definition I am not a good wife as I am neither a mother of his kids nor do I spend time looking after him or his family members. Well, many women called me a 'desperate women' with a very wry tone... I want and enjoy taking care of my husband and other family members just like any other stay-home wives; but at the same time I want my husband to understand and respect my desire for academic advancement.

SS draws on the narratives of "selflessness" (an intrinsic caring role of a wife as defined by Ruddick, 1999) and feels a lack in herself because she is neither a mother of her husband's child, which is generally believed to solidify marital relationship, nor is she capable of spending time with her husband in person, although she does highlight that she wishes to perform the duties of a typical stay-at-home wives and also expects her husband to respect her passion for study. This feeling of inadequacy in the mind of a 21st century woman is perhaps not surprising when discourses of good wife are so intricately linked to concepts of motherhood, morality, caregiving (Fengxian, 2012). However, it is also apparent from SS's narrative that she is not completely engulfed by the morals of 19th century "womanhood"; rather she emphasises that she would not want to stay at home simply as a house-wife. She resists that position, highlighting that it is not what she wants for herself. Thus, while she expresses a sense of lack at one point, the following moment she positions herself within the "new good wife" (Fengxian, 2012), implying that the natural course for wives is no longer to stay at home caring for their husband,

children or other family members, but to go out to work: to have it all. This reference to SS presents the contradictory and conflicting ways in which individuals are positioned/positioning within competing discourses (Hughes, 2002).

Similarly, FS also speaks of her mental conflict and its impact on her marital life while studying abroad. FS shared that she felt a conflict between her own expectations of her as an academic, who needs to be "ruthless and aggressive" to succeed (Harris et al, 1998, p.140), and her own/her husband's expectations of her as a mother, who needs to be selfless and caring (Hughes, 2002). FS worries that, unlike many colleagues, she does not have the opportunity to complete doctoral studies, which is evidence of the narrative of the 'successful' academic and the linear career path. She describes her inability to start the doctoral program after the completion of Master's as well as the interruption in the Master's program due to pregnancy. Indeed, she describes the situation for an academic mother as depressing. In the following excerpts of FS, the pull of the narratives of the "good wife" and "good mother" is evident, but these excerpts also explain her sense of guilt for not being able to pursue PhD and have a linear career path:

Despite knowing the academic stress a graduate student goes through he kept on increasing my mental pressure by always accusing me of leaving him alone in the country. I left him for my MS right after two months of our marriage. However, he didn't have any objection about the fact that I would be leaving him so early after the marriage as my preparation for coming to Canada were all done before we got married. But things started to change as time went by. I got to know after a month coming to Canada that I was pregnant. It was hard for me to continue with my study with the pregnancy, well the difficulty was escalated by his constant blaming game. I was always compared with

women who gave up their opportunities of career development for their husband and children...finally I had to discontinue my study and went back home after my daughter's birth. Then, after a year I came back to Carleton again in a different program with my one year old daughter but without my husband and completed my study. This time my husband was more understanding though at times we had serious arguments as I was unable to give him time due to my school work commitments and the responsibilities as a single mother... He was much more supportive the second time I went to Canada but even then it often seemed that our relationship is breaking down and building up every day. However, at the end of the program I returned to Bangladesh without enrolling for the PhD program as I wanted to spend some more family time. Besides that I was not prepared to handle further relationship problems with my husband. Need to breathe for a while.

Though I enjoyed the academic years at my university in Canada, but at the same time I was in a dilemma regarding my choice of enrolling into the Master's program in Canada without my husband and child. This dilemma perhaps produced a feeling of "guilt" and a sense of inadequacy in me as I tried to situate myself within the discourses of a "good mother", "good wife" and "the best of both worlds" at the same time. According to Marks (1997, p.89) the discourse of the good mother and wife compete with the discourse of "best of both worlds" and thus creates an ambivalent space within a person. Similarly, my feeling of "guilt" and "lack" was heightened within my ambivalent space as I had to decide how best to fulfil the good mothering role while also seeking to become a successful academic.

From the responses about the barriers the participants experienced while pursuing a foreign degree, it is apparent that all the participants of the research, including myself, defy the

dominant discourses (submissive, selfless) of a "good wife" and "good mother" in order to create a new role "best of both worlds"; and thus we have created new discourses (determined, self-fulfilment, selfishness, assertiveness) of "womanhood". The narrative accounts of each participant not only shows how they individually negotiate with the dominant discourses of "good mother", "good wife" in order to become "the best of both worlds" by creating new discourses, but also relate to and interacts with those of other participants. They thus, illuminate the similarity amongst the multiple voices in terms of their lived lives, perspectives and construction of identity. The multiple voices of the study and the competing discourses that the participants deal with work as evidence of the dialogic nature of discourse and thus the data analysis procedure of the study echoes Bakhtin's dialogism (as cited by Frank, 2005).

4.2.1.2 Psychological Turmoil

All the participants have mentioned going through psychological turmoil to some degree while studying in Canada without their spouse or children. According to Ruddick (1999) , across most cultures and countries the "selfless" image is the most dominant discourse within the discourse of "good mother" and "good wife". Bangladeshi culture, which embraces the structures of a patriarchal society, also portrays women as a "selfless mother" (Nasreen, 2003)." Since all the participants of this research were born and raised in Bangladeshi context, it is not unlikely for the "selfless" image of a "mother" and "wife" to be strongly rooted in their thought process. Therefore, when they deviated from the common discourse of "selfless" women by participating in higher studies in a far away country without their immediate family a strong sense of "guilt" made them think that have been unjust towards their families. In this regard, I

can refer to an excerpt of NS, who is studying in Canada without her husband and daughter. She said her sense of guilt is heightened:

sometimes I feel I have become so self-centered in pursuing my dream that I am making everyone pay for it. Because of my study my parents are putting all their effort in taking care of my daughter at this age whereas they are supposed to enjoy their care free relaxed life after raising their own kids. My little girl is missing motherly affection.

Similarly, though I was aware of the brighter sides of coming to Canada without my husband and daughter for handling the pressure of post-graduate studies, I was still sad for not having my dear ones around me. The silence of loneliness was often so hard to stand that I couldn't focus on my study. Another participant, NR, who lives in Bangladesh, also stated that she feels guilty as she:

often returns home late or end up serving same dish to my family members though I too feel that I should try new recipes more often like other stay home mothers. There are days when I hardly manage to make phone calls to my husband or my daughter who stays with her paternal grandmother during my office hours. I feel guilty for not being able to do lot of the things a normal housewife would do for the family members.

She feels guilty probably because she considers working at the university is something she does totally for herself and thus deviates from the concept of being "selfless".

The geographical distance between husband, child and other family members also escalated loneliness and guiltiness among all four participants who studied abroad. An excerpt from NS's narration explains the height of this sense of guilt:

My husband is living with my in-laws now. We three are living in three different places and suffering the pain of living apart. These thoughts of guilt sometimes become so intense that I can hardly concentrate on studies.

SS, explained that she was "totally depressed" and felt "guilty" for coming to Canada for studies as "it is hard to stand the troubles it is creating between my husband and me." Since she left her husband home, her sense of guilt refrains her from "indulged myself in recreational activities, refused to go in social gathering, going out for walk. Honestly, I haven't even visited any parks...".

Moreover, it was evident from the excerpts of all the participants that their struggle in managing time for becoming "the best in both the worlds", public life (academic institution) and private life (home), which is another dominant discourse within the discourse of "good mother" (Hughes, 2002) probably reminded them of their inability to juggle the multiplicity of roles with equal competence and thus raised their mental turmoil. An excerpt from SS best explains this state of the acuteness of the mental turmoil "I was constantly distracted by my thoughts of being an ideal wife and a successful academician. I really don't understand what's wrong in expecting to be the best in both the worlds of a good wife and successful academic".

Like me other participants of the study have also mentioned that the geographical distance not only produced a psychological turmoil in them but also on the spouse (husband) who stayed back in home country without the significant other. NS's response points this issue: sometimes he got pissed off and got mad at my choice of leaving them back home... So, in a way, in our relationship, everything was against typical stereotypical husband and wife role...he tended to avoid people who made fun of him for letting his wife stay in a

far away country, particularly, a country in the West where women enjoy a liberated lifestyle.

My husband experienced no less mental turmoil than I have. And I believe, after negotiating the literature (discussed in literature review), a big cause behind his mental turmoil was his nature of positioning me as his wife and the mother of his child. Since his expectations from me did not match with the stereotypical roles of a good wife and a good mother his psychological turmoil increased.

4.2.2. Financial Stress

Two of the participants mentioned that financial stress (theme) caused mental turmoil and negatively affected their studies in Canada. As both these participants were working back home with a decent salary they were self-solvent and did not have to ask for money from anyone. So, it was difficult for them to depend on the family members for economical support. SS said:

Besides his negative remarks I also had to deal with economical constraints. When I entered Canada I only had two hundred dollars in hand. I thought I will be able to withdraw my allowance for living expenses from university as soon as I enter Canada but it actually took a while. So, I had to borrow money from a friend of mine in Canada. I could not ask my father as he has already spent enough money on my wedding, didn't even ask my brother who lives in Toronto as he had his own family to run, and of course I couldn't ask my husband for money as we were not in an ideal relationship.

Another participant, FS, also confirmed financial stress as an obstacle on her way to degree completion. She said:

Asking for money from husband was not an easy thing for me ever but it became even more difficult when we were living apart...I hardly asked him for sending us money, I mean for my daughter and me, rather relied on my parents. This partial dependence on the family members for the financial resources increased my feeling of guilt and at times frustrations.

Financial dependency has always been an emotional struggle for me as well. I have always had a hard time taking money from my parents. Since I studied on scholarship at my university in Bangladesh, I didn't have to ask my parents for money. However, I am always grateful to them for helping me satisfy with all other needs and wants. With my husband, I struggle even more because this dependency typically involves receiving cash directly. Since I grew up with the belief that I am independent and equal to a male partner I could hardly imagine myself being financially dependent on my husband. We always contributed equally in our house. Since my husband considers my choice of coming to Canada entirely my personal benefit and satisfaction, I hardly ever asked for money from him. Since my scholarship from the Canadian university did not cover my living cost my father financed me as he draws satisfaction from the fact that his daughter is fulfilling his dream. So, it is not my husband who is to blame for not standing by me with economical support, but I think the problem of not being able to rely on my husband economically comes from my sense of independence. I am one of the people who feel indebted to anyone who help me out in any way. Besides that, my sense of independence is so important to me I don't want to lose it to anyone by simply relying on someone's earnings. And I think my participants of this research have also rejected to rely on their husbands economically as it may mean trading our independence for money. Moreover, it is apparent from the finding of

this study that no participants pursued foreign degree for monetary purposes, but rather all sought to become experts in their own fields of study.

4.2.3 Effect on Academic Success

All the participants who studied in Canada mentioned that their study life in Canada was negatively affected by various stress related factors. Hyun et al. (2006) also found in their study that almost half of graduate students surveyed had a stress-related problem that adversely affected their emotional well-being.

NS speaks of her heightened sense of guilt for leaving her husband back home; and her guilt "sometimes become so intense that I can hardly concentrate on studies." I can easily relate my experience with this situation of NS. It was hard for me to undivided attention in studies since I was often crippled with loneliness, guilt and a feeling of lack.

SS said her grades in her Master's program in Canada could have been better if the relationship with her husband was smooth. She speaks of the rough patch her marital relationship is going through while pursuing the degree:

then he told me to go back to Bangladesh if I wanted the relationship to continue. I was feeling very depressed and didn't know what to do, so without thinking much I went back to him in the middle of the program without any intentions of rejoining the program. However, eventually I was bound to return to Canada after a month's stay with him Bangladesh. He and his family were putting pressure on me to leave my job, do all the household chores.

According to Johnson (2008), one internal role conflict for the married academics pursuing degree programs abroad is between personal and academic roles. He further states that the role conflicts require enormous amounts of time and emotional energy which can lead to physical and emotional health problems, causing in turn even more stress and thus more conflict and problems for the students. Johnson's (2008) findings resonates with NS's experience "...upsetting comments and questions that were enough to spoil my motivation to pursue the degree."

Pregnancy was stated a factor affecting the degree completion by FS. She says:

I got to know after a month in coming to Canada that I was pregnant...It was hard for me to continue with my study with the pregnancy, well the difficulty was escalated by his constant blaming game... and finally I had to discontinue my study and went back home after my daughter's birth.

She also points to the need for family togetherness and its impact on pursuing PhD which requires long term commitment. To quote her:

at the end of the program I returned to Bangladesh without enrolling for the PhD program as I wanted to spend some more family time. Besides that I was not prepared to handle further relationship problems with my husband. Need to breathe for a while.

According to Fisher (1992), the success of a marriage relies greatly on geographical proximity. My personal experience and that of the other participants also support this finding of Fisher.

4.3 Research question 3: What strategies did they employ to overcome the encountered barriers?

The findings of this research identified a number of factors that facilitated the degree completion of the married female academics of Bangladesh. In addition to participant's personal motivation to complete the degree program in a Canadian university, combined factors of family support, peer support, faculty adviser support, and personal coping strategies influenced the persistence of three married female academics from Bangladesh. The facilitating factors (themes), family support, peer support, faculty adviser support, determination and overlooking negativity, were all unique for each participant. The facilitating factors (themes) are divided into two categories through focused coding for simplifying the analysis, i.e., Support Network and Personal Coping Strategies.

4.3.1. Support Network

When participants were asked to mention some of the factors that facilitated the completion of their degree program in a foreign country, three factors were frequently repeated amongst their responses. These supporting factors (themes) are discussed below in reference to participants' narratives and relevant literature.

4.3.1.1 Family Support

Bickman-Chavers (2003) suggests family support is the “primary source of support” for African American doctoral recipients. Bingman (2003) also found family support and encouragement contributed to the success of African American doctoral students. Similarly,

support, such as mental and economic, from family and friends was also identified as an important factor contributing to pursuing higher studies in a foreign country in this research. A study participant, FS, recalled how she could “call to my mother just to hear some motivational words you can do it kind of stuff also helped me get through the crisis moments.” She added that she was also inspired to continue her studies as "...my mother-in-law also said many good things about my capabilities and my opportunity to study in a North American University. FS also shared, “My sisters visited me twice in Canada. My youngest sister who lives in America stayed with me for a month before my thesis defence. Her presence was a great relief for me as I could fully focus on my study while she took care of my daughter and the kitchen." My hubby also visited us few times in Canada.” She also added the importance of economic support from the family in reducing stress.”

Participant, NS, recalls her parents’ contribution while talking about the factors that helped her to study in Canada and says "my parents are putting all their effort in taking care of my daughter at this age whereas they are supposed to enjoy their care free relaxed life after raising their own kids." NS also talked about her supportive husband on her decision to join the doctoral program and continue with it despite the problems that were created because of the strong geographical pull from Bangladesh. She explained:"...I must thank my husband for his support. Without him I wouldn't be able to continue my study..."

I also feel indebted to my parents for supporting me in all sorts of ways. I am also thankful to my in-laws and husband for giving their consent to pursue my dream.

4.3.1.2 Peer Support

According to another informant, SS, friends and classmates were great support during her studies. She explained, "...Without their co-operation it would have been impossible for me to survive. They always reminded me to be strong and have faith in myself. She also acknowledged the economic support from a friend during her study in Canada, and shared "I had to borrow money from a friend of mine in Canada. I could not ask my father as he has already spent enough money on my wedding, didn't even ask my brother who lives in Toronto as he had his own family to run, and of course I couldn't ask my husband for money as we were not in an ideal relationship." Even in my case, my friends have been a great support. My friends stood by me in my ups and downs. Without their support it would have been impossible on my part to continue my study, taking care of my daughter and work.

4.3.1.3 Faculty and adviser support

Faculty advisers were also identified as a factor influencing degree completion. In describing her relationship with her male faculty adviser, SS stated, "all my professors have been extremely supportive during the program of study. But I must thank my supervisor in particular who has been more a father than a supervisor. He believed in me throughout the period, even at times when I performed poorly and had no self-confidence. He knew my strengths and always reminded me of that. His motivating words actually helped me survive the bad times and focus on my study". This finding is consistent with other research in which positive teacher-student relationships influenced female students' persistence and completion of doctoral degree (Clewell 1987; Harrison 1996). I am also very lucky to have professors who not only showered me with their depth of knowledge but also astonished me with their affection. There were times when I

could hardly focus on my study and complete my assignments. If my professors had not understood I would have never managed to complete my degree requirements. What touched me the most is the fact that I never had to explain my situation to them; in fact, they read me and my situation more clearly than I could have read. They have been my true guardian angels throughout my study in Canada.

4.3.2 Coping Strategies

Coping strategies has emerged as a major theme in almost all four cases. All participants of the study shared a number of coping strategies, such as developing self-confidence, determination, resilience, tolerance, goal-orientation and self-competency, ability to tolerate obstacles and take appropriate decisions for overcoming obstacles that emerged during their stay in a far away country. These identified strategies were often unique to individual participants and often overlapped among the participants. The coping strategies employed by the participants are as follows:

4.3.2.1 Determination

All three participants who studied in Canada without their family (husband and in some cases without the child) emphasized the importance of one's determination in overcoming barriers. Participant, SS, also expressed her determination and faith in her capabilities/self-reliance, "I pushed myself to be as strong as for completing the degree as I had no other choice." In this regard, FS said:

Knocking down the hurdles were quite hard. However, I survived and eventually managed to get rid of the momentary pain and loss as I believed in myself and made sure I get back up again whenever I felt like giving up.

Although I often felt very helpless due to my loneliness before my daughter joined me in Canada, I tried to be strong and complete the degree.

4.3.2.2 Overlooking Negative Comments

It is apparent from the narratives of all four participants that the ability to act purposively is very important in order to gain academic success. The experiences shared by the participants clearly indicate several strategies, such as remaining calm in a crisis, logical thinking, and self-empowering and motivational beliefs, which enabled them to act purposively and to overcome the obstacles. This defence mechanism system as identified from this research resonates with Antonovsky's (1993) explanation of the ways people convert negative external factors into achievement motivation for gaining success. One of the participants', NS, account of her experiences of negative comments from the people in her social group illustrates her sense of self-empowerment and logical thinking coupled with motivational beliefs. All these strategies have assisted her in converting negative external factors into achievement motivation for gaining success. To quote her:

pay zero attention to negative comments and not to live life through the eyes of other people. Someone once called me "Macher Ma" (Mother of fish) as according to her I have completed my motherly responsibilities just by giving birth to my daughter. In her eyes I was selfish and my fault was probably attending many international conferences

outside the country without my daughter and husband and later leaving the country for an extended time without them. I did not argue with her rather I just let it go. I know I am neither a narcissist nor lack motherly affection; so, there is no point trying to make her realize that she wasn't right in judging me. I try avoiding contact with people who spread negativity in me. Many people, regardless of their educational background and social status, judged me and questioned me a number of times how I could even think of leaving my child and husband back home for study purpose and reminded me of their sense of affection for those relations "I could have never separate them even for a single day...Are sure your husband is not with other women?" and many more upsetting comments and questions that were enough to spoil my motivation to pursue the degree. But, I know myself and my purpose of leaving her. So, I simply overlook the negative remarks as I got to finish what I have started.

Similar views were expressed by another participant of this study. SS explained, "Well, many women called me a:

desperate women with a very wry tone. I have always pretended to not understand the insult as I didn't want to buy further negative vibe. When I was younger I was afraid of being different from others, but now over time I have matured enough to understand my needs and prioritizing them.

At the beginning of her program SS suffered from depression due to her feelings of a loss of control for not being able to be the person she wants to be in either her private life or academic lives, but she gradually learnt to control her emotions and act logically in order to make sense of her life.

One of the participants, NS, mentioned that she also derived motivation from the motivational discourses and positive changes that have occurred in gender equality in societies worldwide. This understanding motivated her to take the decision of pursuing doctoral studies in a foreign country without the family (husband and child). Her motivation helped her move towards her own empowerment and thereby overcome the challenges. She narrated:

It's true there are few people who like to undermine the capabilities of women, but I think the number of such people is now lessening. Moreover, there will always be people of different thoughts and ideologies. I actually do not care when people try to define my roles as I know they cannot change my perceptions of life.

Instead of regretting all the time away created by the geographical distance between her family and herself, she prefers to utilize this lonely period in a productive way: "I believe our temporary departure for the degree will not will quench my thirst for knowledge but will also benefit the family members in many ways."

Another participant of this study, NR, shared that:

I don't think there is any barrier nowadays that can actually hold back women from pursuing whatever dreams or career path they choose unless they engage themselves into the stereotypical ideology of being a good woman. I know if I want to do something I can always do that; For example, if I want to go abroad for my studies no one can stop me but I am not doing so as I am afraid that my decision may upset my husband. So, the degree may not be worth the distance that might be created between us.

In this excerpt, NR advocated for personal choice and freedom in decision-making. I find myself in her description. Before I could finally take the decision to enrol in a Canadian

University I actually held myself back from applying in a foreign university for a while. I too was afraid of losing the family bond, particularly with my husband, due to the geographical separation it would create. However, like NR I also think social norms cannot necessarily shape the lives of women of today unless the woman herself feels confined by the social regulations. By saying this NR and I not only position ourselves as liberated persons who are free to make choice despite the social pressure but also shoulder the responsibilities on other women to negotiate the regulatory forces within the culture. For example, in NR's words not attending a foreign university for the doctoral program for the sake of family togetherness is her personal choice and she doesn't see any problems in prioritizing the family over career or accepting the traditional life of "womanhood" as long as it is freely chosen.

FS also shared that she focused on the motivational discourses to overcome encountered barriers encountered while pursuing her Master's in Canada: It is seen in her response that she drew inspiration from her father's motivational discourse who "always said you can do whatever you want".

These new discourses of women's empowerment, such as their freedom of choice as derived from the excerpts of the participants, facilitate their empowering process and thus enable individuals to confront logically and constructively the obstacles in their lives.

While there was no evidence in the participants' narrative of a need to compromise femininity in the ways women experienced a few decades ago in Bangladesh as described in the literature review, all participants reported having experienced a tension between the desire to be a "good wife", "good mother", while trying to complete a foreign degree, which is considered an essential requirement for an academic to become a "successful" in Bangladesh context.

It is apparent from the narratives of the participants of this research that there is contradiction, conflict and ambiguity within the multiple positions in which academic mothers find themselves. For example, it is evident in participants' narratives that there is clear conflict between the discourses of "good wife", "good mother", who is caring/submissive/selfless, and that of the "academic women", who is ambitious/assertive/selfish.

The narratives of all five participants show that they are positioned by others as well as positioning themselves within the discourses of some traditional and more modern conceptions of what it means to be an academic, a good wife and a good mother. For example, NS expresses her desire to perform the traditional roles of a "good wife" and a "good mother" as well as her weary for not being able to perform those roles fully due to her contradictory academic role. At the same time she also expresses her wish to become the best in both worlds (Public/academic life and private life). Therefore, she simultaneously feels the pressure from others around her to position herself within the discourses of a "successful academic", a "good mother" and a "good wife", and also what she sees as 'herself' to be in all those roles, in other words to be best in both the worlds of academic life and private life. This contradictory feelings of NS resonates the concept of "segmented self" (Miller, 1983) as she tries to live up to contradictory prescriptions for 'caring woman' and 'productive academics'. I would argue that this "segmented self" of the participant, on the one hand, has disempowered her in constructing her true identities and has caused her mental turmoil while pursuing the degree abroad. And in the case of another participant, NR, the "segmented self" has held her back from pursuing higher degree in a foreign country; On the other hand, their resistance to the traditional discourses or their "segmented self" has empowered them to go against the traditional discourses to create new discourses and pursue their dreams of higher studies in a foreign country or that of becoming the "best of both worlds".

For the academic women, such as, the participants of this research, obtaining a foreign degree is a privilege which can only be pursued if domestic responsibilities are fulfilled. For example, those who had a child had to ensure someone would take care of the child during her stay in the foreign country. And in the case of NS it is found that the responsibility of taking care of the child ultimately went to her mother though her mother-in-law (NS husband also lives with her mother-in-law) living in the same city. The responsibility of caring for the child naturally went to her mother's shoulder because NS's choice of pursuing doctoral degree was exclusively for "herself" or for fulfilling her parents' dream, which has nothing to do with her husband or child or the members of the in-law according to the available definition of a "selfless mother" in a patriarchal society.

In order to understand how married female academics fought against the traditional discourses of womanhood/good mother/good wife, this research has looked into their coping strategies while pursuing their degree abroad. All participants who are and have studied abroad mentioned a number of coping strategies, overlooking negative discourses, family support and determination. These strategies describe the ways in which they communicated with the available discourse of womanhood. According to the statistics of Citizenship and Immigration Canada by McMullen & Elias (2011), the number of women entering graduate degree programs is escalating at higher rates almost every year. Therefore, it can be argued that female academics from Bangladesh who play multiple roles should familiarize themselves with some coping strategies to overcome the barriers for pursuing a higher degree without the family (in this case without husband and in some cases without children).

In this chapter I addressed the barriers married female academics encounter while they pursue a foreign degree or when they plan to pursue a foreign degree. This finding has helped the

researcher to dig out some coping strategies to mitigate the barriers a married female academic may encounter. The results of this study suggest implications for further understanding of the reasons behind the limitations the married academics face in pursuing foreign degrees, which will be discussed in Chapter Five. Additionally, in the final chapter I will discuss limitations of my study, possibilities for further research, and my own reflections on what I learned in undertaking the present study.

Chapter 5-Conclusion

My thesis aimed to explore the factors that motivate contemporary Bangladeshi married female academics to pursue foreign degrees, the barriers that they encounter and the strategies they employ to overcome these barriers. The findings of the research were informed by various rounds of coding, and relevant theoretical and empirical research. Despite some limitations, my research unfolds the impact of competing discourses (dominant discourse vs. new discourse of womanhood as defined by Foucault, 1980), as discussed in chapter 2, in shaping the lives of married female academics from Bangladesh who are in pursuit of a foreign degree. It is evident from the literature review of my research that the patriarchal society of Bangladesh, like many other countries of the world, stereotypes the roles of woman simply based on their gender. However, my research findings also shows that the same patriarchal society, which at times deters married academic women from pursuing foreign degree through its heavily "gendered discourses" expectations to take care of the family "selflessly", also acts as a facilitator in the form of support network from these women's parents, spouse, parents and in-laws (Ireland, 1993; Ivanic, 1998; Marks, 1997). One of the findings of my research was the role of parents, who are themselves well-educated, in motivating and assisting their daughters to pursue their dreams of foreign degree for enhancing social status and expertise. This finding resonates with the concepts of both cultural capital and human capital in terms of participants' willingness to raise their social status and enhance their expertise. The support from parents also reiterates the power distance within Hofstede's (2011) notion of cultural dimension. Since the participants come from a family where parents treat children as equals. However, in line with Hofstede (2011), the participants of the research encounter ambivalence during the pursuit of foreign degree may be because they belong to a country which generally considers the males more

powerful than woman. Besides the support from family members, another support mechanism for these women was the participants themselves. All the participants of this research shared some common strategies, such as developing determination, overlooking negativity to overcome encountered barriers. Therefore, they all have some common coping strategies which help them to reduce their dissonance and resolve their ambivalence to provide justification for their actions and experiences. According to various studies conducted in other parts of the world (Ruddick, 1999, 1998; Marks, 1997) to attest to married academic women's struggle in pursuing higher education. Therefore, the participants of this research who not only carry academic stress but also geographical alienation from their immediate family members are likely to experience intense mental turmoil and complex knots in the marital relationships. However, all the participants of the study who have lived abroad for foreign degrees believe that their purpose for staying abroad is important and valuable not only for their career advancement but also for the long-term interests of their larger family.

The next section, limitations of the research will be discussed. Following the discussion of the limitations, I will reflect on my own learning from this research. Finally, I will consider the findings of this study in relation to future research.

5.1 Limitations

Though the interview was conducted mostly in English, both the interviewer and the interviewee switched to Bengali at times. Before transcribing the interview in English I had to translate the Bengali section into English. So, it is possible that the translated section may lose some of the nuances of the original language. However, I used the strategy "member checking" after translating in order to avoid biases or misinterpretation (Duff, 2008). Moreover, it was also

important to let the participants have the freedom to switch between the two languages as it helped the conversation to flow naturally.

The findings of my study are limited in generalizability by the nature of qualitative research. I had only five participants and it is likely that a larger sample size could have portrayed a different scenario and provide wider range of coping strategies/encountered barriers or motivational factors.

Another limitation of the research is that all its participants were married female academics from Bangladesh. This was an issue because if, for example, the participants had been selected from various countries, I may have been able to draw more similarities or differences in terms of their motives, kinds of barriers and overcoming strategies. It may be assumed that the findings of this type of research will also be able to show whether there are any similarities/differences in the ways women are positioned/positioning within the social discourse of womanhood across many different countries.

Moreover, the fact that I was both a participant and a researcher of the study may have affected my results. So, the results and analysis are potentially influenced by my perspectives (Glesne, 1999). And, to avoid bias in my readings of the participant's narrative and ensure reliability of the findings of the data I had two inter-raters (coders).

5.2 Practical Implications

The result of the study, as discussed in chapter four, provided a number of strategies that may facilitate married academic women from Bangladesh or any other country in reducing barriers when they go abroad for higher degree. Through the narrative accounts of the

participants a number of dominant discourses that caused barriers on way to their pursuit of foreign degree have also been identified.

5.2.1 Motivational Factors

My research identified a number of motivational factors, such as quenching the thirst for knowledge, developing self-identity and career development, of Bangladeshi married female academics interested in pursuing foreign degree. The success stories of the participants of the study may motivate other academic women in the society who are still struggling to obtain higher education in a foreign country. Besides that, participants' stories may also change cynical people's attitudes towards married academic women's participation in a foreign degree. Most importantly, as women of the 21st century assigned with multiple roles, we can rework the meanings attached to being a good wife, good mother, successful academic as well as develop a reflexive understanding of the multiplicity of ways in which we/others position and are positioning ourselves.

5.2.2 Overcoming Strategies Drawn from the Encountered Barriers

Financial constraint has been identified as an obstacle by a number of participants in pursuing foreign degree. So, it may be argued that the government could promote the participation of women in higher studies by increasing scholarships for women pursuing higher studies abroad (Raynor, 2005).

One of the participants, NR, pointed out that her reluctance in joining a foreign degree program comes from her fear of "losing bond" with her husband due to lack of geographical distance, and the "struggles of migrating to a new place without a job". NR's decision of not

joining a foreign university without her immediate family members reiterates Bombuvela's (et al., 2013) study suggesting that when women see such realities, and that the penalty for career advancement is more than the pleasure of fulfilling a personal dream, they tend to limit themselves within the set structures of their everyday lives.

Another finding of the study is that the Bangladeshi women face a number of barriers from some dominant social discourses of womanhood, such as good mother/ wife, successful academic, best of both worlds, in their pursuit of a foreign degree such as: feeling of guilt/lack and ambivalence which negatively affects their psychological well-being and family life. The results also uncovered that all these feeling of guilt/lack and ambivalence which negatively affects their psychological well-being and family life are deeply interrelated with the way woman of the contemporary times position themselves or are positioned by others within the dominant discourses of womanhood. Participants also reported the strategies, such as overlooking negativity, determination, they have used to negotiate with the dominant social discourses that held them back from accomplishing the degree to overcome the barriers they encountered.

Since the barriers married female academics experience in the pursuit of a foreign degree are many-sided, starting from the financial stress, to academic stress, impact on family life, and to psychological turmoil, solutions to those problems should also come from various areas, both on the individual level and societal level. Accordingly, the family or the academic institution/government could support married female academics with scholarships or jobs (in the foreign country based on their experience) to resolve financial problems and academic stress while they pursue foreign degree. Finally, by identifying the dominant discourses within womanhood that act as barriers to Bangladeshi academic women's higher education in foreign

universities from an individual and societal level may address the problems like hostile relationships between husband and wife or other family members, problems of the feeling of guilt, lack and ambivalence, psychological turmoil, and academic stress.

5.2.3 My Intake from the Research

While I analyzed the findings of my research from the narrative accounts of the participants, NS, SS, FS, NR, I have also reflected upon my own experiences of being positioned/positioning myself/ positioning others within and outside of the academy. Involving myself as a participant has been very productive on a personal level. This activity helped me re-examine my own assumptions about academics, wives and mothers, and acquaint myself with alternative discourses in developing my understanding of positions/positioning literacy. Furthermore, an in depth understanding of the ways married academic females position themselves/positioned by others may also help people in general in the society. Therefore, disseminating the findings of my study, such as the ways successful academics negotiate with the dominant discourses of the society that deter them from pursuing foreign degrees, through conferences or workshops can be productive on a society level.

The striking resemblance between their experiences and my own convinces me that that further research in this area may conclude that our (5 participants of the study) were not isolated to the individual stories of these married female academics from Bangladesh. Later, I have concluded, we may be representative of many women who are struggling with multilevel barriers in their attempt to generate a solid educational career and better future through higher studies in a foreign country. Moreover, studies conducted by Raddon (2002) show that pursuing higher

studies, such as obtaining a PhD, for married female academics in developed countries across the world is a problem. I believe that only positive collaboration of people in Bangladeshi society can reduce the barriers and profoundly change the overall Bangladeshi attitude towards married academic women and their education in a foreign country alone without family.

The limitations of my research, in combination with its results and implications, should be considered when conducting future research in the area of academic women's participation in higher studies. As a result, in the final section of this thesis, I will suggest areas that should be examined for future research.

5.3 Future Research

To date, I have not come across any literature in Bangladesh context that explored this relatively new phenomenon of Bangladeshi married academic women's' participation in foreign degree programs. So there are number of areas in this phenomenon that can be examined in future research. For example, the generalizability of the themes that emerged from my research data and analysis may be tested in how well they resonate with the lived experiences of a larger body of population in similar situations and by future research.

This qualitative study has revealed a need for further research with a large sample to obtain generalizability. A larger sample can identify more factors that both motivate, and could deter married academic women from their higher degrees in a foreign country.

My participants were married female academics from Bangladesh only, who studied, are studying or wish to study abroad for higher degree, but I have not included male participants in

the research. Thus, the data reflect the perceptions of female only. Since the study does not reflect the perceptions of married male academics it cannot be assumed that the struggles these female participants have gone through for obtaining higher degree is simply grounded on their gender. Future research may include male participants to compare the lived experiences of the two groups differentiated by gender. This comparison may provide greater number of themes/coping strategies/personal motives/encountered obstacles. Moreover, a comparative study may also be conducted to explore whether there are any differences between the kinds of obstacles male and female participants encounter pursuing a foreign degree without their spouse. Future research in this area may seek to address questions like: Does the discourse of the society/religion/institution impact male participants' pursuit of foreign degree? If so, what are those discourses? Are those discourses the same as those identified for women participants in the study? If not, why are they different? How does one mitigate the differences?

An additional area for further research may be the inclusion of unmarried female academics from Bangladesh to explore whether there are any differences in their motives, barriers or coping strategies from that of the married female academics. Moreover, the findings of the study may also reveal how unmarried female academics position themselves or are positioned by others within the discourse of womanhood.

The literature review of this research discussed Bangladeshi cultural discourse and religious discourse in setting the scene for married academic women in Bangladesh. Results of his study did not indicate any religious restriction on women's education; However, the societal discourse is a considerable constraint to women's education, though one of the participant who has not yet made to pursue her dream of obtaining a doctoral degree abroad mentioned that if a woman is determined societal discourse cannot hold her back from chasing her dreams.

However, several studies (Azam & Marjuk, 2013) have shown that both religion and societal discourse are reasons behind women's poor participation in higher education in many Muslim countries, including Bangladesh. Future research in area with a larger sample could identify whether religion is a barrier to women's participation in a foreign country.

Finally, based on the findings and readings of my data I would argue that continued research needs to be conducted on woman's success as a wife, mother and an academic. Throughout my research I have identified a number of barriers academic married women encounter in their pursuit of foreign degree. For example, I have identified only a small number of dominant discourses of womanhood that are defied by some new discourses. But future research in this area (in Bangladesh context or elsewhere) may identify many more dominant discourses of the contemporary times that are being resisted or need to be resisted by married female academics or by people in general of a society for obtaining collective benefit.

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Appendices

Appendix A-Excerpt from my Personal Journal

My reflection on my Pre-departure Experience

Both my husband and I were very excited when I received an email saying that I have been ~~and~~ offered an admission in Master's program with scholarship at Carleton University in Canada.

I was very excited about the experience of study abroad because it was one of my dreams since my childhood. In fact, my excitement of dream fulfilment and completing the pre-departure engagements, such as admission formalities, visa processing, finishing the necessary official procedure at my workplace in Bangladesh and taking care of my family responsibilities, etc kept me so busy that I hardly got any moment to realize how I would actually feel living abroad without my immediate family members.

On September 3rd of 2013, the moment my plane left the runway, a mysterious tension started piercing me. The more the plane was going up, the more distance I started feeling with my family members. I was on the verge of breaking the togetherness temporarily and flying in search of something in an unknown place. Since the pain of departure was getting hard to bear at that moment, I was looking for consolation by looking back at my motives of leaving pursuing a foreign degree, my dream fulfilment, career advancement, my parents' contribution and sacrifice made me calm down and feel less selfish of my decision of studying abroad.

dream/thirst of knowledge

mentality
two mail

relates to
Anita's key's
theory of coherence

Appendix B-Ethics Clearance



Carleton University
 Research Ethics Office
 Research Ethics Board
 511 Tory, 1125 Colonel By Drive
 Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6 Canada
 Tel: 613-520-2517, ethics@carleton.ca

Ethics Clearance Form – New Clearance

This is to certify that the Carleton University Research Ethics Board has examined the application for ethical clearance. The REB found the research project to meet appropriate ethical standards as outlined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human, 2nd edition*, and the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research*.

Date of Clearance: March 30, 2015

Researcher: Tahmina Anwar (Student Research: Master's Student)

Department: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences\Linguistics and Applied Language Studies (School of

University: Carleton University

Research Supervisor (if applicable): Prof. Janna Dorothy Fox

Project Number: 102554

Alternate File Number (if applicable):

Project Title: The Bangladesh perspective: married academic women pursuing postgraduate studies

Funder (if applicable):

Clearance Expires: May 31, 2016

All researchers are governed by the following conditions:

Annual Status Report: You are required to submit an Annual Status Report to either renew clearance or close the file. Failure to submit the Annual Status Report will result in the immediate suspension of the project. Funded projects will have accounts suspended until the report is submitted and approved.

Changes to the project: Any changes to the project must be submitted to the Carleton University Research Ethics Board for approval. All changes must be approved prior to the continuance of the research.

Adverse events: Should a participant suffer adversely from their participation in the project you are required to report the matter to the Carleton University Research Ethics Board. You must submit a written record of the event and indicate what steps you have taken to resolve the situation.

Suspension or termination of clearance: Failure to conduct the research in accordance with the principles of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 2nd edition and the Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research may result in the suspension or termination of the research project.



Louise Heslop

Chair, Carleton University Research Ethics Board



Andy Adler

Vice-Chair, Carleton University Research Ethics Board

Appendix C-Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Participants: Those who are currently pursuing degree in Canadian University

Semi-structured questions for participant NS

- i. what encouraged you to study for advanced degrees in a foreign country?
- ii. What are you experiencing/did you experience during the period of study?
 - a. Did you encounter any barriers while studying?
- iii. Now that you are a full time PhD student in a far away country how do you balance your roles of a wife and an academic?
 - b. What helped (strategies/factors) you to overcome the difficulties?
- iv. Do you use any strategies for overcoming the challenges you are experiencing?

Semi-structured questions for participant SS

- i. What encouraged you to study for advanced degree in a foreign country?
- ii. What are you experiencing/did you experience during the period of study?
 - a. Did you encounter any barriers while studying?
- iii. Let me quote your husband from your response, "you are not at all a proper woman, not even a good wife as you lack feminine qualities". How do react to his remark or to put it in another way how do you position yourself within the discourse of a "Good wife" or a "proper woman"?
- iv. What helped (strategies/factors) you in pursuing your degree abroad?

Participant FS: who has completed Master's degree from a Canadian University

- i. What encouraged you to study for advanced degrees in a foreign country?
- ii. What are you experiencing/did you experience during the period of study?

- a. Did you encounter any barriers while studying?
- iii. What helped (strategies/factors) you to overcome the difficulties?

Participant NR: currently working and living in Bangladesh without a foreign postgraduate degree

- i. What would encourage you to study for advanced degrees in a foreign country?
- ii. So do you plan to start PhD soon?
- iii. Do you anticipate any barriers (such as social or academic discourse that holds you back from pursuing the degree) for participating in a foreign degree? If so, what are the assumed barriers?
- iv. a. Do you consider yourself to be engaged by the discourse of a "Good wife"?
- v. Do you think those household responsibilities are holding you back from your academic accomplishment or from becoming a "Successful academic"?

Appendix D-Sample of Coding

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format. The following questions were asked to participants:

Coding indicator

institutional discourses	financial stress	dream of acquiring knowledge	Overlook negativity
effect on academic life	effect on relationship	determination	
psychological turmoil	Influence of others	Family support	

The following is an example of the coding used throughout. "NS" stands for participant (pseudonym); "TA" stands for me, the researcher.

Interview with NS

TA: *Wish you all the best for the comprehensive. So, what encouraged you to study for advanced degrees in a foreign country?*

NS: *I personally enjoy experiencing new country and culture; besides that, the development of my teaching career also demanded PhD. My professors whom I admire a lot also inspires me to start PhD in the early stage of my career. Plus, many of my junior colleagues are also finishing their PhD, mostly from the West, further increase my desire to enrol for PhD. I was procrastinating in getting into the program for my daughter and other family responsibilities. And now that she is good to start pre-school I had to take this step. I knew it would be tough for me to study without the family around me, but I felt that I have the strength and the abilities to overcome the challenges. Honestly speaking, I thrive on studying, researching or doing something substantial for my career advancement which gives me mental satisfaction. I want to be recognized for my own capabilities and want to develop my identity beyond my roles as wife, sister, daughter, and mother.*

TA: *What are you experiencing/did you experience during the period of study? I mean, Did you or do you encounter any barrier while studying?*

NS: *Sometimes I feel I have become so self-centered in pursuing my dream that I am making everyone pay for it. Because of my study my parents are putting all their effort in taking care of my daughter at this age whereas they are supposed to enjoy their care free relaxed life after raising their own kids. My little girl is missing motherly affection. My husband is living with my in-laws now. We three are living in three different places and suffering the pain of living apart. These thoughts of guilt sometimes become so intense that I can hardly concentrate on studies.*

TA: *Now that you are a full time PhD student in a far away country how do you balance your roles of a wife and an academic?*

NS: I was not only a full time faculty at the university but also a full time mother and wife at home. And I enjoyed myself in all those roles. I tried to put my hundred percent love, care, energy and attention in whatever I did as a wife and a mother. I was focused and disciplined, I can hardly think of spending time watching soap opera while I was home!...(short pause)...Well, I am not physically there with my husband and daughter in Bangladesh now but I think I try to utilize whatever time I get after my school work by giving quality time to my daughter and husband over telephone and other social networking media. I know this is not enough but at this moment I don't have any other option. I miss watching cartoons with my daughter, playing with her, listening to the everyday office stories of my husband, outings with them. To be honest, when I look back at the way I utilized my time I really don't regret that I came in a far away country leaving them behind. I never regretted declining my PhD offer from a university in UK two years ago when my daughter was less than a year old. Now, that I have decided to pursue higher studies I am determined to give whatever it takes. I believe our temporary departure for the degree will not will quench my thirst for knowledge but will also benefit the family members in many ways.

TA: What helped (strategies/factors) you to overcome the difficulties?

NS: I know my hubby is more understanding than many of my male colleagues or husband's of my acquaintances. My husband understood my purpose of staying abroad and hardly ever complained...I must thank my husband for his support. Without him I wouldn't be able to continue my study. In the whole process of my study, my husband suffered a lot, both mentally, physically as well as socially. After 3 years of marriage, we are living separately. You know how people are, right?...they talk all non-sense. There was sarcasm from relatives and friends about him taking care of the baby in my absence; well, my mother and my mother-in-law, actually my mother looked after my daughter but most people usually credited my husband for taking care of my daughter. Well, I don't mind people doing that cause UMM)...(laughs)...sometimes he got pissed off and got mad at my choice of leaving them back home but I think it was natural for him to lose patience at times, so I had to bear his temper for our good...So, in a way, in our relationship, everything was against typical stereotypical husband and wife role...he tended to avoid people who made laugh of him for letting his young wife stay in a far away country, particularly, a country in the West where women enjoy a liberated lifestyle. In spite of all this, he used to know in detail about my work, what is going on etc... Plus, he was particularly interested in coming to Canada. Both my husband and daughter have got their visa to Canada and they will join me next year hopefully...by the way, my husband is actually trying to get admission in the same university where I am studying with scholarship! Well, even if he doesn't get the scholarship he will come once he gets the admission (said smilingly).

TA: Do you use any strategies for overcoming the challenges you are experiencing?

NS: Strategies?...well, my strategies are to be determined, confident, focused, disciplined and pay zero attention to negative comments and not to live life through the eyes of other people. Someone once called me "Macher Ma" (Mother of fish) as according to her I have completed my motherly responsibilities just by giving birth to my daughter. In her eyes I was selfish and my fault was probably attending many international conferences outside the country without my daughter and husband and later leaving the country for an extended time without them. I did not argue with her rather I just let it go. I know I am neither a narcissist nor lack motherly affection; so, there is no point trying to make her realize that she wasn't right in judging me. I try avoiding contact with people who spread negativity in me. Many people, regardless of their educational background and social status, judged me and questioned me a number of times how I could even think of leaving my child and husband back home for study purpose and reminded me of their sense of affection for those relations "I could have never separate them even for a single day...Are sure your husband is not with other women?"...and many more upsetting comments and questions that were enough to spoil my motivation to pursue the degree. But, I know myself and my purpose of leaving her. So, I simply overlook the negative remarks as I got to finish what I have started. It's true there are few people who likes to undermine the capabilities of women, but I think the number of such people are now lessening. Moreover, there will always be people of different thoughts and ideologies. I actually do not care when people try to define my roles as I know they cannot change my perceptions of life, rather I live my dreams for those who inspire me.

Appendix E- Research Questions, Initial Codes and Focused Codes

Questions	Initial Codes	Focused codes
<p>What encourages married female Bangladeshi academics teaching in university to choose a foreign university for advanced degrees even though this often means separating themselves geographically from their families for a substantial period?</p>	dream of acquiring knowledge	<p>Personal motives; Career development</p>
	Influence of others	
	Participation in research	
	Developing self-identity	
	Setting an example	
	Career development	
<p>What barriers, if any, did they encounter while studying?</p>	Problems with husband	<p>Impact of the institutional discourse; Financial stress; Effect on academic success</p>
	Selfish	
	Good mother	
	Good wife	
	Successful academic	
	Effect on relationship	
	Psychological turmoil	
	Financial stress	
	Family support	

what strategies did they employ to overcome them?	Peer support	Support network; Personal coping strategies
	Faculty adviser support	
	Determination	
	Overlooking negativity	

Table 1**Appendix F- Sample of Inter-rater Reliability**

My focused codes	Focused codes identified by other raters that
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	matched my coding
NS	*=code was repeated more than 2x
institutional discourses	1 1
effect on academic life	1
psychological turmoil	1
financial stress	
effect on relationship	1
Influence of others	11*
dream of acquiring knowledge	11*
determination	1
Family support	1
Overlook negativity	1
Inter-rater Reliability=89%	

Appendix G- Discourses identified from participants' narrative

Identified discourses from raw data of all Participants	Initial Codes for all Participants	Focused Codes
Good wife: Selfless; submissive; caring; cooking, juggling the multiple roles of a wife, mother, and academic simultaneously with equal competence.	Effect on relationship	Institutional Discourse
Good mother: Selfless; able to cope; caring; cooking; having a job is fine only if the mother can manage to give proper attention to the child.		
Successful academic: Priority to academic development-publishing, researching, pursuing higher degrees, desperate; selfish.		
Best of both worlds: Guilt, depression, indecisiveness due to the ambivalent space within the contradictory discourses of "good woman" and "successful academic"	Mental turmoil	

Table 2: Discourses identified from participants' narrative