

**A Sociological Study on Women, Veil and Empowerment in
Urban and Rural Bangladesh**

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Abstract

This study is conducted to examine whether there is any relationship between veil and women empowerment in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh. In this study the reasons for wearing veil, the reflection of empowerment indicators like participation in politics, decision making, participation in extra-curricular activities, property inheritance, educational attainment and control over personal income in the lives of veiled women, their perception on gendered division of labour, and their sense of aesthetics and expressionism have been investigated. Then this study explains whether the practice of wearing veil empowers or disempowers women in the context of Bangladesh. Several theoretical insights on gender socialization and gender relation have been adopted. In this study, qualitative method is employed to offer an elaborate description of the life experiences and the perception of the veiled women on women empowerment in the light of wearing veil. The responses of the female veiled students studying at different types of educational institutions like medical college, university and madrasa who come from both urban and rural areas are collected and the responses of some employed veiled women i.e., teacher, doctor and banker are collected by using case study method and then analyzed to uncover the problem of the veiling practice to the path of women empowerment in Bangladesh. The extent of occupational segregation in relation to their practice of wearing veil is substantial in the context of Bangladesh that more or less limits their chance of being empowered.

Abbreviation and Acronyms

BBA	Bachelor of Business Administration
BCS	Bangladesh Civil Service
BSS	Bachelor of Social Sciences
DU	University of Dhaka
DMC	Dhaka Medical College
HSC	Higher Secondary Certificate
MBA	Masters of Business Administration
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery
MSS	Masters of Social sciences
NGO	Non-Government Organization
SSC	Secondary School Certificate

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study explores the relationship between veil and women empowerment to investigate how the practice of veiling empowers or disempowers women in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh. Wearing veil is a popular practice among Muslim women in Bangladesh. There is a close relation between Muslim society and the practice of wearing hijab (one kind of veil). It may be conservative or liberal practice depending on the views of veiled women that needs to be understood in the context of Bangladesh. The practice of wearing veil in relation to women empowerment can be understood from existing literature and also empirically. Wearing veil can be a means of exploitation of women, be imposed on women by religion and may be an instrument of controlling women by the society. There may be different reasons for wearing veil i.e., societal pressure, concern for social security, intrusion of gender socialization, also the influence of religious norm. It is important to understand about the participation of veiled women in the realm of empowerment, to what extent this practice creates barrier to the path of their empowerment.

Charles Worth and Chinkin (2000) found that Islamic law and customs play a dominant role in regulating women and their bodies by which women's autonomy is increasingly being threatened. Many Muslim countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and Arab countries create barrier to women in receiving higher education in the name of religion (Haider, 1996; King and Hill, 1995; Norman 1984). They imposed "purdah" customs (covering head to feet) for the girls at the age of 12-13, that restrict their free movement in the outside world, they mention. But it is important to know whether women choose to wear hijab or it is imposed upon them; its implication for women empowerment in the context of Bangladesh.

Ali (1992) explains purdah system as an extreme form of male dominance. Women are excluded from outdoor activities and achievement and are scheduled to confine them within the four walls of female apartments of the house and are segregated from all men, except the closest male relatives by this system, he added. It includes the

internalization of values of shyness, timidity, honor and shame, he continues. Thus a male dominated society like Bangladesh becomes a hindrance to the perpetuation of their power, Ali insists. Purdah and other discriminatory practices create barrier to women's entry into economic sphere, Ali observes. This investigation will show to what extent the veiled women in urban and rural Bangladesh participate in the current stream of activities which have got implication for women empowerment.

1.2 Objectives of the study

This study is descriptive and interpretative. This study attempts to show whether there is any relationship between veil and women empowerment in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh following some objectives. The main objectives of this research are as follows-

1. To learn about the background and diversity of veil.
2. To examine veil as a dress code in relation to social process.
3. To investigate implication of veil for women empowerment.

The specific objectives within these broader objectives are:

1. Explaining the reasons of wearing veil.
2. Describing the reflection of empowerment indicators in the lives of veiled women.
3. Examining their perception on gendered division of labour.
4. Describing veiled women's uniqueness of the sense of aesthetics and expressionism.

1.3 Research questions

Every research work starts with a set of research questions. A research question is a question that guides the project and which is designed by the researcher in order to answer (Punch, 1958). In this thesis paper, the researcher has tried to answer the following research questions-

1. What are the reasons for wearing veil by the Muslim women in urban and rural Bangladesh?
2. To what extent empowerment indicators are reflected in the lives of veiled women?
3. What are their perception on division of labour in the light of veil and patriarchy?
4. What are the relationship of veil and their uniqueness of the sense of aesthetics?

1.4 Scope of the study

One of the main objectives of this study is to investigate the reasons of wearing veil by the Muslim women in the context of urban and rural Bangladesh. It is a concern for the researcher whether this practice is adopted voluntarily or imposed by anyone, whether it is practiced by Muslim women by realizing the meaning of Islamic norm or whether it is practiced due to the intrusion of gender socialization. The second objective of this study is to know the reflection of empowerment indicators i.e., participation in politics, decision making, participation in extra-curricular activities, educational attainment, perception on equal opportunity and control over personal income in the lives of veiled women. This study will also examine how veiled women perceive these indicators and their perception and/ or desire to participate in public domain. The third objective of this thesis paper emphasizes on the perception of veiled women on gendered division of labour. This investigation will also observe their views on performing domestic chores and doing jobs outside home in the light of veil. It will try to understand their views on male female equality – whether they demand male female equality or not. This study will partially offer an investigation of their sense of aesthetics and expressionism in terms of wearing makeup and fashionable dresses. It will try to know whether veiled women want to wear makeup and fashionable dresses or not. After examining the main objectives of this thesis paper, this piece of work will offer a comparative discussion on the perception of rural and urban veiled women according to the findings of this study.

The review of the existing literatures will also help to understand and to learn about the existing views on the issues which are actually dealt with this research. In fact, different sociologists have different impressions on the meaning of veil. Some

sociologists see the veil as women's subordination to oppressive tradition (Ashar, 1998; Moghadam, 1991) whereas others conceptualize it as a sign of an authentic local culture that empowers women (Ahmed, 1992; Hoodfar, 1991; Macleod, 1991; Mernissi, 1991). Sociological research in general defines veil as an instrument of 'traditionalism' within Muslim culture in relation to 'modern' value (Barber, 1995). However, in this piece of work, it has been tried to investigate whether there is any relationship between veil and women empowerment by studying some cases from urban and rural Bangladesh.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research offers an insight on the relationship between veil and women empowerment in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh. It is yet to be widely studied in Bangladesh. This issue has been explored systematically in the context of Bangladesh. As this issue remains unexplored, the researcher has conducted this study in a systematic way. The researcher attempts to show how the practice of wearing veil empowers and disempowers Muslim veiled women in contemporary Bangladesh that has not been previously explored.

Moreover, in Qur'an, Hadith, and other historical texts and tradition, the notion of female modesty is deeply ingrained (Ali, 2000; Kazemi, 2000). Therefore, women in Islamic society become subject to sexual segregation and restriction on the ground of religion and social norms, they observe. In Muslim society, men are seen as ontologically superior to women (Khan, 1983). It is usually supposed that a woman is compelled to submit to the men in his capacity as her "husband, father, or brother", Khan continues. This ideology of male supremacy pervades Islamic societies and believes to such an extent that it has signifies Islam as a religious patriarchy that confesses the form of hierarchical relationships including sexual inequality and places a sacred stamp on female subservience (Mernissi, 1996). In this regard, this study will offer an explanation on how veiled women in Bangladesh perceive their subservient position and whether they support male-female equality or not.

Roald (1999) mentioned that there are questions regarding "Muslim Veiling" that are understood by Muslim women from different angles. Muslim feminists inclined to discard headscarf and face-veil as an Islamic phenomenon while Islamist women adopt the practice of wearing veil in diverse forms and shapes as an Islamic

obligation depending on the particular Islamic orientation with which they associate themselves, Roald added. Domestic work is idealized in the Islamic framework, Roald continued. Islamic literature depicts women as housewife and as educator of her children as described by Roald. Such a woman is portrayed as an ideal woman in the Islamic literature (Roald, 1999). In this sense, this study will offer an insight on veiled women's perception on gendered division of labour in the context of Bangladesh and its implication for their empowerment.

Moreover, Hussain(1987) describe a verse of Qur'an 24:31(Surat An-Nisa) that a definite code of conduct for Muslim women to preserve and guard her modesty in terms of eye contact, dress, ornamentation, and walking style is clearly stated. Above author states that, it is compulsory for every Muslim woman to lower her gaze as a first step to guard her sexual modesty. Hussain further mentioned that it is also obligatory for her to abstain from presenting her adornment except to the extent of that which is apparent. She is required to cover her bosom to waist (to cover upper part of the body) and to avoid stamping her feet to expose what she hides of her adornment, Hussain added. This study tries to investigate how such obligation of Muslim women impacts on their sense of aesthetics and expressionism in terms of wearing make-up and fashionable dresses in the context rural and urban Bangladesh. Overall, this research will be useful reading for the students, scholars, female students and other researchers who are interested to know about the life experiences and thought of veiled women in relation to their empowerment in the context of Bangladesh.

1.6 Limitations of the study

Conducting research in any area based on objective knowledge and competence is a complex, complicated and scrutinizing activity. This study is conducted by following qualitative method. Case study method is used as the main data collection technique. The cases have been selected purposively. Moreover, it is not a quantitative study that has dealt with a large number of data base. It is true that, the researcher cannot cover a larger proportion of the study population due to time constraint. So, it is quite hard to generalize the views of veiled women in the light of empowerment by studying only thirty seven cases. It becomes a subjective judgment whether the practice of veiling is good or bad to the path of empowerment in the context of

Bangladesh. This study, however, tried to investigate this issue. All possible measures have been taken to avoid personal bias.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

This study contains eight chapters. The first chapter presents the context of the study, objectives, research questions, significance and limitation of the study. It offers why it is necessary to study the relationship between veil and women empowerment in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh.

The chapter two includes the theoretical framework and the review of the existing literature on this topic. To understand this relationship, several theoretical insights have been presented- Connell's argument on gender socialization, Parson's view on sexual division of labour and his model on gender role, Wollstonecraft's view on liberal feminism, Walby's notion of patriarchy and R.W. Connell's notion on the gender order. Moreover, summary of the existing literatures has been presented in relation to the research objectives. In this section, the relationship of veil and women empowerment in the context of Western society, then in the context of Middle East countries and then in the context of South Asia including Bangladesh have been presented.

The chapter three provides an overview of the research methodology followed by this study. In this chapter, a detail of the description of methodological strategies ranging from the selection of the research topic to the final stage of data processing and analysis has been presented.

In Chapter four, different reasons of wearing veil by Muslim women in Bangladesh have been presented. Actually, various reasons of wearing veil in relation to their empowerment have been explained in this chapter.

The chapter five explores the reflection of empowerment indicators (participation in politics, decision making, participation in extra-curricular activities, educational attainment, access to resources and control over personal income) in the lives of veiled women in the rural and urban Bangladesh. Then it will present whether the practice of wearing veil empowers or disempowers Muslim women in Bangladesh.

The perception of veiled women on gendered division of labour has been explored by the chapter six. It represents to what extent women engage in public sphere and whether they are segregated from certain occupations or not.

The chapter seven describes the uniqueness of the sense of aesthetics and expressionism of veiled women in terms of wearing makeup and fashionable dresses in the public places in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh. It explains the intension of the veiled women to wear makeup.

The summary of the findings of this study and a comparative discussion on the perception of veiled women in the light of empowerment in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh have been presented in chapter eight.

1.8 Summary of chapter one

This study is a complex and challenging task as it is concerned with investigating the insider perspective of veiled women in relation to women empowerment. Though the practice of wearing veil is strongly associated with Islamic norm, establishing a negative association of veiling practice with the contemporary stream of women empowerment may contradict with religious sentiment. In spite of this existing reality, this research will contribute to understand the implication of wearing veil for women empowerment in the context of Bangladesh.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

If we want to link theories to practices in sociological study, a better formulation of a theoretical framework is essential. Some sociological theories are explained below to identify their applicability on the relationship between veil and women empowerment in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh. To understand this relationship, several theoretical insights have been adopted- Connell's argument on gender socialization, Parson's view on sexual division of labour and his model on gender role, Wollstonecraft's view on liberal feminism, Walby's notion of patriarchy and R.W. Connell's notion on the gender order.

2.2 Theoretical Framework of the study

By studying gender socialization, origins of gender differences can be traced (Giddens, 2006). Various social agencies like the family and the media assist in learning gender roles, he explained. Thus biological sex and social gender can be distinguished by such an approach, he found. Both primary and secondary socializing agencies help children to internalize the social norms and expectations gradually in relation to their sexual identities (Giddens, 2006). Giddens insists (2006:460) that "Gender differences are not biologically determined, they are culturally produced." Moreover Giddens (2006) elucidates the functionalist notion on gender socialization in the way described below. Functionalists emphasize on gender socialization who describe how boys and girls learn 'sex roles' and the male and female identities – masculinity and femininity, Giddens added. Social forces determine positive and negative sanctions as observed by Giddens. Positive sanction is applied on a boy's behavior ("what a brave boy you are!"), negative sanction is applicable ("boys do not play with dolls,") as described by Giddens. Boys and girls learn and conform to expected sex roles by the help of these positive and negative reinforcements, Giddens continued. Inadequate or irregular socialization arises when an individual does not practice gender role according to his or her biological sex, Giddens mentioned. They are regarded as deviant, Giddens observes. This functionalist view asserts that social order is maintained through the contribution of socializing agencies which in turn manage smooth gender socialization of new generation as described by Giddens.

Such a rigid interpretation of sex roles and socialization is not a historical process as different agencies like family, school and peer groups may be at disagreement with one another as found by Giddens. In addition, an individual's ability to reject, or modify the social expectations surrounding sex roles is ignored by socialization theories (Giddens, 2006). As Connell (1987) argued-

“Agencies of socialization cannot produce mechanical effects in a growing person. What they do is inviting the child to participate in social practice on given terms. The invitation may be, and often, is coercive accompanied by heavy pressure to accept and no mention of an alternative....yet children do decline, or more exactly start making their own moves on the terrain of gender.”

Some sociologists emphasize that human beings do not always accept gender programming as passive objects or unchallenging recipients (Giddens, 2006). People can actively create and modify roles for themselves, he explained. Many studies have found that social influences determine gender identities to some extent, Giddens added.

Actually, gender socialization is so powerful that it cannot be easily challenged (Bourdieu 1990; Lorber 1994). It is the expectation of society from the individuals to act like ‘females’ or ‘males’ on the basis of their respective gender roles, they assert. These expectations are fulfilled and reproduced in the live practices of everyday life, they emphasized.

This study tries to investigate whether veiling practice of Muslim women in Bangladesh is adopted at their early age as a result of the intrusion of gender socialization or not.

Moreover, this thesis adopted the arguments of Bob Connell and Maistin Macan Ghail on gender inequality. According to them gender differences are hardly neutral-gender is an important form of social stratification in almost all societies. In this regard, Giddens (2006) avers that gender plays a crucial role on shaping the types of opportunities and life chances faced by individuals and groups as well as influencing their roles within social institutions from the household to the state. The primary responsibility for child care and domestic work is attributed to women whereas men bear the traditionally selected responsibility as breadwinner of family, he emphasizes. Consequently, there exists division of labour between the sexes leading men and women to assume unequal positions in terms of power, prestige and wealth, he continues. He further asserts that gender differences create social inequalities

according to their views. Sociologists are concerned with investigating to count for gender inequality, Giddens added. Many theoretical perspectives have been formulated to describe men's persistence domination over women- in terrains of economics, politics, the family and elsewhere (Giddens, 2006).

Considering this theoretical argument, the researcher tries to investigate to what extent veiled women accept division of labour.

Besides this, Parsons and Bales emphasize on functionalist approaches that focuses on the division of labour between men and women (Giddens, 2006). The functional approach views society as a system of interdependent parts which operates smoothly to promote social solidarity, Giddens insists. These perspectives on gender try to describe how gender differences contribute to social stability and integration (cited in Giddens, 2006). But this view has been criticized for neglecting conflict in society and also for producing conservative view of the social world (Giddens, 2006). Writers also emphasizes on "natural differences" school of thought tend to show that the division of labour between men and women is based on biology as found by Giddens. Women and men choose those tasks which are biologically suitable for them (Giddens, 2006).

The anthropologist George Murdock found that there is the sexual division of labour (cited in Giddens, 2006). It does not stem from 'biological programming' rather it is most logical foundation for the organization of society (cited in Giddens, 2006). One of the prominent functionalists, Talcott Parsons described the role of family in industrial society (Parsons and Bales). He was concerned with the socialization of children and declared that successful socialization is possible through stable and supportive families. Parsons demonstrate that a clear cut sexual division is effectively followed by the family where females play expressive roles for providing care and security to children and offering emotional support. Men, on the other hand, accept instrumental role as being the bread winner of the family, he added. Women's expressive and nurturing tendencies are needed to comfort and stabilize men, he explicates. The solidarity of the family would be guaranteed by this complementary division of labour arising from a biological distinction between the sexes (cited in Giddens, 2006).

This biological basis to the sexual division of labour has been sharply criticized by feminist claiming that there is nothing natural and inevitable in the distribution of tasks in society as explained by Giddens. According to them-

“ women are not prevented from perusing occupations on the basis of biological features ; rather humans are socialized into roles that are culturally expected of them” (cited in Giddens, 2006: 469).

The researcher adopt this theoretical insight to know about veiled women’s’ perception on sexual division of labour, natural differences between men and women in relation to their rights, duties and responsibilities.

Furthermore, this investigation adopts Parson’s model on gender role. In 1955, Talcott Parsons offered a model of the nuclear family while working in the United States referring a comparison between a strictly traditional view and more liberal view of gender roles (Connell, R. W. 1987). An extreme position gender role has been elucidated by this model, they described. Model A explains total separation of male and female roles while model B indicates the complete distribution of gender roles, he found.

Table 1: Parson’s model on gender role

	Model-A: Total role segregation (unequal gender role)	Model-B : Total integration of roles (gender equality
Education	Gender specific education, high professional qualification is important only for the man.	Co-educative schools, same content of classes for girls and boys, same qualification for men and women.
Profession	The workplace is not the primary area of women, career and professional advancement is deemed unimportant for women.	For women, career is just as important as for men, equal professional opportunities for men and women are necessary.
Housework	Housekeeping and childcare are the primary functions of woman, participation of the man in these functions is only partially wanted.	All housework is done by both parties to the marriage in equal shares

Decision making	In case of conflict, man has the last say, for example in closing the place to live, choice of school for children.	Neither partner dominates , Solutions do not always follow the principle of finding a concerted decision , status quo is maintained if disagreement occurs.
Child care and education	Women take care of the largest part of these functions. She educates children and cares for them.	Men and women share these functions equally in every way.

Source: Connell, R. W. 1987. *Gender and Power*.

In this thesis, the researcher adopts Marry Wollstonecraft's view on the issue of liberal feminism. Wollstonecraft preferred women to have personhood. She asserts that

“ women are not the “ toy of men, his rattle,” which “ must jingle his ears whenever, dismissing reasons , he chooses to be amused.” Women are not seen as “mere means”, or instrument, for giving someone happiness and perfection, she emphasizes. Rather “woman is an “end”, a rational agent whose dignity consists in having the capacity for self- determination as mentioned by Wollstonecraft” (cited in Tong, 1998:15).

Liberal feminism wants to establish gender equity in societal and cultural attitudes (Abott and Wallace, 2002). Historically, it demanded for equal rights for women including same citizenship rights as like as men, they describe. They want to reform existing laws and practices that ensure right to men and not women or which are conducive to protect women, they mention. Liberal feminists have fought for passing of laws to overcome discrimination against women and to provide women with rights in the work place such as maternity leave and equal pay (Abott and Wallace, 2002).

Abott and Wallace assert that-

“ in sociology, liberal/reformist feminists have been concerned to demonstrate that the observable differences between the sexes are not innate but a result of socialization and ‘sex role conditioning’ . The ways in which boys are treated differently, from about the moment of birth, arguably discourage women from developing their full potential as human being (Abott and Wallace , 2002:32)”.

Feminist researcher mentions that there is discrimination against women and they are traced differently from men that illustrate subordinate position of women in society (Wallace, 2002). Liberation of women can be possible through the establishment of equality between men and women and also through treating women as fully human, Wallace explained. Liberal feminists have challenged the notion that sexual division of labour is the best outcome of biological sex differences, Wallace described. In fact, by focusing on sex differences, gender roles, and androgyny, liberal feminists have a great dream for liberty, equality, and fairness of all (Wallace, 2002). Liberal feminism has played a crucial role on educational and legal reforms which enhance the quality of life for women as mentioned by Wallace.

In this thesis, the researcher has tried to investigate how the issues of liberal feminism are accepted and/or rejected by veiled women in the context of urban and rural Bangladesh.

Moreover, Walby's notion on theorizing patriarchy occupies an important position in this thesis paper as veiling practice may sometimes be a result of patriarchal attitude toward women. Giddens(2006) describes that the concept of patriarchy is crucial to many feminist explanations of gender inequality. According to Walby (1990:20), patriarchy, is “ a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate , oppress and exploit women.” She views patriarchy and capitalism as distinct systems which interact in different ways- sometimes consensus and sometimes in conflict – relying on historical situations (cited in Giddens, 2006). Capitalism seeks its interest through the sexual division of labour, she claimed. But at other time, capitalism and patriarchy stand in contrast to one another, she observed. Walby sees six structures of the operation of patriarchy which are interdependent, but interact with one another.

- Production relation: in the household domestic labour such as household chores and child care remains unpaid. This expropriated by her husband (cited in Giddens, 2006).
- Paid work: women are segregated from certain types of work in the labour market and they are given lower pay and jobs requiring less skill, she mentions.
- The patriarchal state: state itself shows patriarchal attitude in its policies and practices, she adds.
- Male violence: she sees male violence as patterned and systematic which is routinely experienced by women. The state also tries to ignore such violence, except in exceptional cases.

- Patriarchal cultural institution: the image of women is formulated ‘within a patriarchal gaze’ through various institutions and practices like media, religion, and education. Women’s identities and their standards of behavior and action are shaped by these representations.
- Patriarchal relations in sexuality: this exists in compulsory heterosexuality and in the double standard between men and women (in which sexual behavior is prescribed different rules) (cited in Giddens, 2006).

Walby differentiates between two forms of patriarchy-

Private patriarchy: an individual patriarch dominates women which occur within the household, she describes. It employs an exclusionary strategy as women are segregated from participating in public realm (cited in Giddens, 2006).

Public patriarchy: she defines it as more collective form of patriarchy as it ensures women’s participation in public life including politics and labour market but remain excluded from wealth, power and status (cited in Giddens, 2006). Walby asserts that-“liberated from the home , women now have the whole of society in which to be exploited” (cited in Giddens, 2006: 475). Moreover, Walby is a dual systems feminist or socialist feminist (Abbott and Wallace, 2002). Dual system feminism relates Marxist class theory to the feminist theory of patriarchy, Abbott and Wallace added. It attempts to unite all women against the oppression of and the class division between them, they continued. Dual systems feminists raise the question to the economic system as well as the relationship of men to women, they emphasized. Dual system feminists also raise the key question to the cause of male exploitation and domination of women as observed by Abbott and Wallace. Dual systems feminists argue that capitalist societies gives patriarchy a specific form, they mentioned. Though capitalism and patriarchy are viewed as two distinct systems, they attempt to develop a theory of capitalist patriarchy that will ensure a clear understanding of the ways in the capitalist system is regulated by male domination as found by Abbott and Wallace. They wish to break sexual division of labour in all domains that will ensure emancipation of women (Abbott and Wallace, 2002).

In this study, the researcher has attempted to investigate to what extent patriarchy hinders the path of being empowered by veiled women in the context of urban and rural Bangladesh.

This study adopts R. W. Connell's theory of gender relations. He has been particularly influential in Sociology as he formulated a complete theoretical account of gender (Giddens, 2006). R.W. Connell offers an influential theory of gender relations that integrated the concept of patriarchy and masculinity. Connell argues that it is the social power of men that creates and sustains gender inequality (cited in Giddens, 2006). Connells avers that-

“ gender relations are the product of everyday interactions and practices. The actions and behavior of average people in their personal lives are directly linked to collective social arrangements in society. These arrangements are continuously reproduced over life times and generations, but are also subject to change” (cited in Giddens, 2006:462).

Connell (cited in Giddens, 2006) further added that gender order is formulated through the interaction among three aspects of society namely labour, power and chathexis (personal /sexual relationship). Labour- the sexual division of labour is found both within the home (for example house hold activities and child caring) and in the labour market (issues like occupational segregation and unequal pay), explained by Connell. Power – it has an important contribution on the operation of social relations such as authority, violence and ideology in the institution, the state, the military and the domestic life, Connell mentioned. Chathexis- it is concerned with the dynamics within intimate, emotional and personal relationships, including marriage, sexuality and childbearing, Connell insisted. These three areas of society where gender relations are enacted which are structured on a societal level in a particular gender order, Connell emphasized.

2.3 Summary of chapter two

In order to investigate whether the veiling practice is voluntarily adopted or imposed by collective social expectation of a society, this theory on gender order is applicable. It is also important to know whether veiling practice causes occupational segregation leading to their limited participation in the activities of empowerment. Connell's notion of gender order can be applicable in this regard.

Chapter Three: Review of literature

3.1 Introduction

An essential early step of every research is the review of the literature. In this study, the researcher has reviewed a good number of literatures in the context of western countries, Middle East, South Asian countries including Bangladesh to conduct a sociological study to learn whether there is any relationship between veil and women empowerment in Bangladesh. Moreover, this helps to examine the reflection of empowerment indicators in the lives of veiled women in the context of urban and rural Bangladesh. In this chapter, the insights of existing literature in relation to the objectives of this study will be presented.

3.2 Explaining the reasons for wearing veil

The notion of veil is a complex topic with several meanings. There are various reasons for wearing veil. For instance, when the France disapproved veiling legally (in 1958), Algerian women start to veil and re-veil as a mechanism for political action rather than as a symbol of religious faith (Bulbeck, 1998). Lazreg (1994) found that women today still wear the hijab as a denial of the continuing influence of French colonialism and western notions, but more are defining it as a symbol of religious willingness and a sign of personal religious obligation.

According to Heddad and Finly (1985: 294), the veil is a useful cover for several reasons that carry several symbolic meanings. The replies (1985:294) they got from Muslim women who are asked for wearing veil fall into diverse categories:

Religious (an act of compliance to the will of god as a result of an insightful religious experience); psychological (an assertion of truthfulness, an arrival to the origins, a denial to the western norms ‘ a sense of peach’); political (a symbol of disillusionment with the dominant political order); revolutionary(an identification with the Islamic revolutionary forces that confirm the requirement of the Islamicization of society); economic (a symbol of prosperity , ‘of being a lady of leisure’); cultural (a community assertion to loyalty to chastity and modesty); demographic (a mark of being urbanized); practical (an instrument of lessening the

amount to be spent on the attire); or domestic (a technique to retain the peach as male members of the family insist on it) (Haddad and Finley, 1985).

It can thus be decided that, a veil may be a symbol of tradition, ethnic pride, and identity and /or an instrument of defending their modesty in relation to the cultural requirements whereas to many western women veiling may be a mark of repression and discrimination (Toppuraines, 2010). Unfortunately this insight is acceptable in some Muslim countries. We have to judge the argument related to the theological meaning of veil for a better understanding, Toppuraines mentioned. Engineer (2001:1) avers that there is no notion of hijab in the Qur'an in the sense of an order to cover the face of a woman. The advices of the Qur'an should be viewed in terms of women in pre-Islamic period, he described. There was no system of wearing veil during the early period of Islam, he continued. Engineer further added that, the introduction of veil appears to be indicative of an important modification of mind set or psychological pre-disposition. It is significant to examine when, how and why this paradigm shift occurred, meanwhile it appears justifiable to assume that there is much more to it than the observable thing or that is merely attributable to a Qur'anic command, Engineer described .

Engineer (1992:83) further asserts that there are three verses (33:32-33, 33:53, 24:31) in Qur'an which mentioned the meaning of hijab. Each is stated in the context of the prophet's consorts (i.e., the wives of the prophet, the mother of the believers) as observed by Engineer. One of these verses is given below:

“O consorts of the Prophet. Ye are not like any of the other women: if ye do fear (Allah), be not too complaisant of speech, lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire: but speak ye a speech that is just. And stay quietly in your houses, and make not a dazzling display, like that of the former times of ignorance: and establish regular prayer, and give regular charity; and obey Allah and his messenger (33:32-33, Sura Al' Ahajab).”

According to another verse, Qur'an commands men to talk to the messengers' wives from behind the curtain (hijab). This verse is given below (33:53):

“...and when ye ask (his ladies) ... ask them from before a screen... (33:53, Sura Al' Ahajab).”

The third verse (24:31, Sura An'Nur) among them enforces restriction on Muslim women in general which is as follows:

“And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments... that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty... (24:31)”.

Engineer (1992) mentioned that the jurists have usually used these verses to make hijab obligatory for all Muslim women. In these verses, there is no mention of covering the face or restricting women into the four walls of their homes to be supported as a Qur’anic injunction, but it is the judgment of a section of jurists, at most (Engineer, 1992:86). Engineer (1992) further describes that the past normative concept imposed restriction on women to protect their chastity that slowly became recognized as purdah, the veil itself. Chastity is defined as norm while purdah is contextual means to attain it as explained by Engineer.

Moreover, the practice of wearing veil is a matter of stigmatization in the western-mind set (Gole, 2003). The history of stigmatization of Islamic veiling came from the colonial encounters between the east and the west (Hoodfer 1993; Said 1978). They assert that, orientalist interpretations define Muslim women as oppressed and backward subjects who cover themselves as a result of being brainwashed or forced to do so. Wearing veil signifies obedience to a patriarchal authority and symbolizes Muslim women’s subordination and lack of agency (Afsar 1998; Hoodfar, 1993; Mernissi, 1991).

Williams and Vashi (2007) explains the reasons of wearing veil by Muslim women living in America. Many of the women among second generation Muslim women in America have made a conscious decision to wear veil, they have found. There were many reasons behind the decision to wear veil, they observed. Although it always involves a sense of religious requirement, it is assumed to be associated ‘with modesty’ as found by Williams and Vashi. The moral status of men and women will be violated if they reveal too much of their bodies, they insisted. This practice helps protect women from men and men from women, they described. They also observed that, some of the young Muslim women in America emphasize less on piety and modesty associated with wearing hijab, but more on other interpersonal issues about their visibility, social ostracism and public reputation. The decision to wear hijab by them is influenced by peer pressure and social expectations involved, they mentioned. Some of them maintained that they get the benefit of gaining more respect from men after starting to wear hijab; they are not treated as sexual objects

and are not subject to unwelcome flirting as found by Williams and Vashi. A hijabi woman can be easily identified- who they are and what group they identify with- thus makes clear their religious and community connections, they added. Schmidt (2004) has also observed the similar situation that young women wear hijab in order to be granted as religious and moral authority among peers. It is often heard that a woman with hijab can monitor her own behavior as she is representing Islam to others by adopting this practice, he added. Williams and Vashi (2007) mention that highlighting difference from the non-Muslims is an essential factor of understanding the identity function of hijab. In order to escape parental authority and supervision, many of them start to wear hijab and involve in Islamically oriented organizations on a temporal basis in America, they observed. The young women wish to take facilities that America can offer them, and still think themselves as good Muslims, they elucidated. Sometimes wearing hijab means an outward, public display of modesty and religious identity as observed by them. Consequently, these young women wear hijab as a cultural resource to provide some substantive meaning of their disagreement that difference does not necessarily indicates inequality, they added. In this way, they are constructing practical aspects of an American Islam, they described. Read and Bartkowski (2000) assert that these young women are vigorous agents who are capable, to some extent, of building their own lives. Wearing hijab helps them to do so and also keep them anchored in a traditional identity including the avoidance of potential alienation (Williams and Vashi, 2007). In this sense, Seikaly (1998:182) explains that, “ while the veil carries a religious significance , it is a social symbol as well; women have come to use it to fulfill other needs”.

By wearing hijab, Muslim young women in America try to make a practical and useful response to live in a connection between two cultures and as followers of a minority faith. This observation has been made by Williams and Vashi (2007) .They assert that Muslim young women are capable of carving out some autonomous cultural space with a public sign that visibly refuses the overly individualized culture of dominant American society and that gives them some scope to feel at home and to advance in both worlds.

Atasory (2003) explains the reasons of wearing veil by Muslim women living in Canada. Atasory is particularly concerned with examining the Muslim shaping of gender ideology about the practice of wearing veil by immigrant Muslims women in

Canada. Veiling practice by women is often assigned to the mobilization of traditional value against the ubiquitous influences of western culture, he described. This theme is frequently found in mainstream sociological studies that conceptualize cultural practices as being divided between the global and authentically local, he explained. Nevertheless, the veiling practices can be examined as part of the transnational dynamics of Muslims that demands for cultural authenticity instead of a locally rooted refusal of western culture as mentioned by Atasory.

But the situation of Turkey women is different from that of Canadian immigrant women. Turkey women believe that wearing a scarf and non-revealing cloth is a duty if a Muslim woman wants to take her faith seriously (Sandikei and Ger, 2010). Some of them aver that covering makes relations with men easier by declaring their lack of availability and protecting them from being defined as sex object as found by Sandikei and Ger. Turkey women want to wear dresses which are sexually less attractive and enable them to preserve the boundaries with men, they observed. A group of them raise the problem of indecency relating to modern society that refers to too revealing cloths, such as low- cut tops and tiny minis cart , ‘ too- free’ urban life styles, for example , the wild night life as mentioned by Sandikei and Ger . They maintain a distance from such ‘immodesty’ and experience comfort by wearing veil as described by Sandikei and Ger. Inspiration and imitation of other play a crucial role in influencing the decision to cover beautifully, they added.

Moreover, Donlon (2007) found that the west labels the Islamic head and body covering as an exotic cultural practice that they assume to represent at best, patriarchal oppression and, at worst, violent radicalism. Some Turkey women living in America state that they have more religious freedom in America than in Turkey, and their practices to cover head in an Islamic way is defended by the U.S. court so far, Donlon explained. But turkey prohibits veiled women to enter government buildings and educational institutions as explicated by Donlon. Conflict arise between two groups i.e., secular young women (secularist women) in urban areas in Turkey who do not use head covering and young Muslim women who try to negotiate tradition with modernity while wearing the headscarf accompanying long coat, Donlon continued. Donlon (2007) conducted a study on five Turkey educated women living in Baton Rouge and found that they have decided to wear veil according to their own wish and their decision to cover is based on the fulfillment of the command of Allah as well as their wish to practice democratic freedom. Donon

(2007: 330) mentions that “ in Turkey, despite the headscarf ban, the women are reassured the validity of this practice by the longstanding cultural traditions associated with headscarves, traditions usually borne by their grandmothers.”

Donlon’s purpose is not to construct a duality between gendered practices work in Turkey and in the United States. In perusing to be acknowledged as ‘modern Islamic women’, Donlon’s informants present how veiled women must negotiate Islamic tradition and modernity in both Turkish and U.S. contexts. It is hard for covered women to be seen as educated and modern in both countries as observed by Donlon. These women feel a definite problem to present Muslim women in positive and progressive ways as the large international argument on Turkish nationalism, secular ideology and the global attention attributed to intense religious fundamentalism, Donlon states. In Turkey, and especially in more urban areas of Western Turkey, young women who decide to wear the Islamic headscarf and long coat are more than a veiled threat to the rights of women: their bodies are often build as political sign demanding for an Islamist government according to the nations secularist hegemony (Donlon, 2007).

Macleod found a different image of veiled lower class women in Cairo than that of the veiled Turkish women. Macleod conducted a study on the lives of lower class women in Cairo who have veiling since the 1970s. She has found a new way to realize the contradictions involved in the assumption of the veil in modern society. The decision to wear veil is not always influenced by religious norm (cited in Cooke, 2000). Moreover, socio-economic constraints influence them to take the decision to wear veil, she described. She elucidates that it is essential for Cairo women to work if they wish to retain precarious lower Middle class status. As their environment is growing conservative, their working status is often accused of moral looseness when they stay away from their homes, she added. Everyone believes that wearing the veil reduces the chance of being harassed in the streets and in the workplace, she mentioned. At the same time, these women are respected by all, Macleod described (cited in Cooke, 2000).

Nawal El Saadawi, the Egyptian physician and novelist discards such notions of veil’s utility and attacks it as a symbol of sexuality. The body of women wearing veil is more attractive than those of non- veiled wandering on the streets (cited in Cooke, 2000). By adopting this practice, they have veiled their minds, El Saadawi added. El

Saadawi founded the Arabs Women Solidarity Association in 1982 whose mission is “removing the veil from the mind”.

“ El Saadawi has used the Quran and tradition to bolster her claim that the veil is not Islamic but rather a primitive symbol of slavery, emblem of the men’s commodification of the women he considers his property” (Cookie, 2000: 165).

Odeh(1993) elucidates that, the issue of veil has been a matter of contention in Arab countries, since the Iranian revolution of 1979. Iran and Arab countries witnessed strong fundamentalist movements, Odeh mentioned. Iran sanctioned veil and penalized those women who refuse to wear veil under the power of Iranian Islamists, as found by Odeh. Fundamentalist movements in Jordan, Algeria and Egypt organize many followers including large number of women whose acceptance of veil motivated their initiation into the movement where the question of the legal sanction of the veil has been intensely reacted by supporters and opponents alike (Odeh, 1993). Women’s relationship to their bodies was multi-layered and highly complex in the seventies, Odeh described. In a way, their bodies appeared to be a battleground where the cultural straggles of the post-colonial societies had taken place, Odeh emphasized. On the one hand, there is ‘capitalist’ construction of the female body where western dresses covered their bodies: ‘one that is sexualized, objectified, thingified’, etc., Odeh added. But in post-colonial societies, both capitalist and pre-capitalist (traditionalism) types of social formation co-existed simultaneously, there was traditional construction of these women’s bodies: ‘chattelized’, ‘propertized’, ‘terrorizes’ as representatives of family (sexual) honour, on the other hand, Odeh mentioned. These women experienced the co-existence in the female body of this double construction (the capitalist and the traditional) as highly conflictual where the first one presented women’s bodies as seductive, sexy and sexual and the last one seems to push them to be prudish, conservative and asexual(Odeh,1993). While the former was held up by the attraction of market (consumption of western commodities), the latter was held up by the threat of violence (if a woman violates the family sexual honour, she is severely punished, frequently by death), Odeh explains. This latter type is found in Arab as explained by Odeh. Consequently, women in Arab began to wear Islamic fundamentalist dress to complete the covering of their bodies and/ or to ensure their separation from men in the eighties, Odeh

continued. For Arab, “the segregation of the veil was only the completion of an already ambivalent separation between the sexes” (Odeh, 1993: 28).

Besides, veiling ensures social security to some extent on streets and public transport in Arab cities. Odeh(1993) observed that a significant number of working women or students or also young girls have to walk on streets and use public transport regularly to go to work, or to school and university. They experience teasing by men and some other kinds of harassment in public transport in Arab cities as described by Odeh. Odeh (1993: 29) asserts that “unfailingly subject to attention on the streets and buses by virtue of being women, they are stared at, whistled at, rubbed against and pinched”. If a non- veiled women raises objection against such thing, passengers may rebuke the women for her improper style of wearing dress and explain that if she could, such kind of harassment might not have occurred, Odeh mentioned. But it is not true for veiled women, Odeh added. The sense of ‘untouchability’ of veiled women is stronger than non- veiled women as observed by Odeh. If veiled women face this problem, they are more likely to threaten the man with self- righteousness (Odeh, 1993). Odeh have found that passengers also give them support by saying that a Muslim woman should not be treated like that. Actually, veiled women’s exposure to male intrusions is significantly less than the non- veiled as mentioned by Odeh. As an Arab feminist Odeh (1993) asserts that there are certainly a hundred million ways in which veil poses hindrance to the path of women empowerment. She claims that Arab women should be capable of expressing themselves sexually that they can ‘love, play and tease, flirt and excite’. Such acts are violently sanctioned in the Arab world and these acts carry normative weight, she studied. But Odeh prefers the acts of ‘subversion and liberation’. These women did not normatively see their sexuality in the ways of loving, teasing, flirting and seducing while other could do that, Odeh further mentioned. If Arab women accepted such deeds to enjoy their sexuality, they would experience violent sanction, Odeh emphasized. It was a kind of disempowering function of veiling because one perceived veil as threatening to its normative world and sexuality (Odeh, 1993).

Moore(1998) emphasizes that While the upsurge of religious fundamentalism in many Muslim countries may be viewed as being connected to a pressure on a women to become more ‘Islamic’ in their behavior and conduct, it is also significant to note that traditional religious symbols and practices may obtain fairly different meanings in different circumstances . For instance, though the veil is conventionally connected

to Muslim women's seclusion and inferior status, it worked as a powerful indicator of protest and resistance against imperialism and monocratic rule when large numbers of Iranian women joined in the revolution that defended the Shah regime, Moore further explains. On the contrary, many of the same women joined in a movement just two month after the shah's descent because policies were proclaimed to make veiling obligatory (Moore, 1998).

Rozario(2006) explains the reasons of wearing veil by Bangladeshi women. He observes that there are increasing number of women including University students, wearing the burqa, a system of covering connected to Islamist movement, and formerly non-existence in Bangladesh. Rozario identifies four types of reasons that women choose to wear the veil-

- State- instrument: women choose to wear veil because of instrumental reasons, i.e., urging parents to let them to study in university; protecting from harassment on the street; pursuing suitable marriage partners, Rozario emphasized.
- Personal identity issues: women's acceptance of Islam provides them with a meaningful framework within which they can pass their lives both at individual and at family level, Rozario mentioned.
- Collective or national identity: women view Islam as opposed to the decadent and immoral west, also the corruption and violence of contemporary Bangladeshi society as found by Rozario. "Adopting the veil can thus be a statement of commitment to a different kind of society (Rozario, 2006:377)."
- Status concern of middle class women: middle class women are not able to receive economic benefits of Bangladesh as like as lower class women. They admit a more overtly Muslim identity to justify their situation vis a vis social changes around them, Rozario explained.

Actually, the practice of veiling is adopted for several reasons by Muslim women. Not only the Islamic norm but socio-cultural aspects are influential in motivating Muslim women to wear veil.

3.3 Describing the reflection of empowerment indicators in the lives of veiled women

Over the centuries, it is a matter of intense debate between Muslims and Westerners whether the veil should be disparaged or secured (Haddad, 1989). He asserts that, every criticism made in the west, counter argument was raised in the defense of Muslim womanhood. The most noticeable feature of Islamic literature on women written during the 20th century is its ideological and/ or apologetic nature irrespective of the gender and the ideological orientation of the author, Haddad further mentioned. As such it indicates the symbol of the colonial experience, he described.

Most of the discourses seem to be beholden to ever-changing western values and norms (Haddad, 1989). Islamic literature appreciates western discourse in maintaining the importance of women empowerment, Haddad added. At the same time, Zyzafoon (2005) repudiates western norms that degrade women by treating them as sex object and contends that Islam has given them liberty and higher status. With each encounter, veil has achieved new connotation and significance because it has been appropriated as a sign of an identity endangered by ruthless enemy, Zyzafoon added.

But Haddad found that a negative image of the Muslim women living in America was created after the event of 9/11. He further described that, the Bush administration introduced an all-out propaganda campaign to gain the positive response of American public in supports of its military intervention in the Afghanistan against Al-Quida and the Taliban after the occurrence of 9/11. In the aftermath of 9/11, American public have increasingly acknowledged “the veil”, both in the form of Hijab (‘a covering of the hair’) and in burqa (‘a covering of the head and the face’), as ‘Islamic militancy, extremism, jihadism and oppression’ of women (Haddad, 2007).

Haddad (2007: 253) asserts that:

“The process of re-Islamicization has encountered in the aftermath of 9/11, as an increasing number of adolescents and young adults (daughter of the immigrant Muslim) are assuming a public Muslim identity by wearing the Hijab (the headscarf). This study finds that the Hijab has become a symbol of American Muslim identity- a public affirmation of trust in the American system that guarantees freedom of religion and speech, at the same time, it has become a symbol of anti-colonial solidarity and resistance to eradicate

Islam in an American environment that is increasingly seen as Anti-Islamic”.

Moreover, it is found by him that the negative association of headscarf with Muslim women affects even those who do not wear veil (but are Muslim). Bullock (2005) asserts that even some Muslim unveiled women suffer from negative stereotype of veiled Muslim women: first, their identity as a ‘non- scarf’ wearing women is eroded by the ‘universal image of the veiled women’ and second, they are guilty by association. They are treated with suspicion for being Muslim even if they wear dresses like modern women as found by Bullock. The veiled women affect Muslim men as well, Bullock mentioned. Any men walking with a Muhajjaba (women wearing a hijab) is at risk of being considered as a possible terrorist or may be a member of a sleeper cell seeking for a chance to destroy America or kill American, Bullock added.

Actually, veiled women get less chance to be empowered in the context of western societies as the occurrence of 9/11 has made them to be seen by American as terrorist. A negative image of the Muslim has been established and disseminated through several media and channels of western societies.

William and Vashi (2007) observe positive aspect of wearing hijab instead of its negative sides in the context of America. They aver that wearing hijab permits young Muslim women to build some cultural space for themselves. Second generation Muslim young people accepts this as a part of a larger identity project to maintain their dual identities both as Muslims and as Americans, they explained. Consequently, it provides them with a chance to be parts of both worlds, as observed by Williams and Vashi.

Actually, different sociologists have different impression on the meaning of veil. Some sociologists observe the practice of wearing veil as subordination of women to an oppressive tradition (Ashar, 1998; Moghadam, 1991) whereas others conceptualize it as a sign of an authentic local culture that empowers women (Ahmed, 1992; Hoodfar, 1991; Macleod, 1991, Mernissi, 1991). In this regard, Barber mentioned that sociological research in general defines the veil as an instrument of ‘traditionalism’ within Muslim culture in contrast to ‘modern’ values. According to the prediction of classical sociological theory, there is a decline in the significance of tradition which is created by the emergence of industrial capitalism across the world (Barber, 1995). ‘Traditional’ value will ultimately disappear

(Barber, 1995) as predicted by current sociological theory. New cultural meanings are becoming popular around the globally manufactured and consumed commodities (Ritzer, 2000). Contrary to this expectation, a large number of women are wearing veil especially young and highly educated throughout the world, including such non-Muslim society in Canada (Atasory, 2003).

There are a sizable number of literatures devoted to study Muslim veiling in Muslim countries (Abu Lughud, 1986; Afsar, 1998; Ahmed, 1992; Al Gindi, 1999, Gole, 1996; Hoodfar, 197; Mernisssi, 1991; Narayan, 1997). Atasory(2003) describes two fundamentally different perspectives by reviewing these literatures. The first perspective perceives the veil as a mark of women's subordination to men and represents veiled women as socially marginal individuals passing their lives inside home and family, Atasory further added. The second perspective views the veiling as a systematic instrument of female empowerment where the veil becomes closely related to the issues of economic resources, position and status, as explained by Atasory.

Actually, the first perspective defines the veil as a symbol of a retrograde Muslim tradition that ensures women's segregation from the public sphere (Afshar, 1998; Moghadam, 1991). In this sense, Atasory (2003) observes that women's unveiled position is seen as endangering men's morality as it is assumed to inspire female sexuality. So, it is the requirement for every woman to cover her body fully to defend men from moral and spiritual violation that exists in the sexuality of the female body, Atasory described. Thus Muslim women were supposed either to remain at the private sphere or to cover their bodies for maintaining their limited daily social interactions with non-related men in public domain, he found. Public domain is always viewed as suitable for male activity while women are supposed to limit their visibility in public sphere and to wear the veil in public places, Atasory added.

This strand of research is based on modernization theory that defines culture as locally bounded representation of traditional values in confrontation to modernity (Shanin, 1997). Since western life-styles, consumption patterns, and political and social values are spreading globally, a homogeneous world is created (Atasory, 2003). Consequently, the veil is assumed as a mark of spiritual backlash and central to a traditional culture's struggle in contrast to cultural homogenization as observed by Atasory. The first perspective has been criticized from different angles, Atasory added. It is true that Muslim culture is not totally homogeneous across the world and

the lived experience of women differs greatly within Muslim societies, Atasory mentioned. Kandioyoti (1991) has viewed that such a perspective defines women as passive victims of traditional cultures. In this same way, Mernissi (1991) has argued that Islam is depicted as an oppressive tradition that constraints women's pursuit of human rights including their full participation in the public domain of the economy, politics and education.

Scholars who describe the second perspective view that young and highly educated women in particular wear the veil as a matter of individual choice (El Glindi, 1999; Mernisi, 1991; Narayan, 1997). These scholars have emphasized on acknowledging the present realities of women's lives. By the side of religious consideration, and expression of personal taste, Hoodfgar (1997) and Macleod (1991), for example stressed that the veil is a strategic means related to women's increased participation in public sphere accompanying greater independence from men. They explained that, it thus gives a suitable cultural screen that women can use as they become more visible in public sphere of society. Macleod defines the veil as a mark of respect reminding men that women who wear the veil should not be subject to sexual harassment. Narayan further explained that Muslim women actively protect their use of veil, pointing out that it symbolically denotes their membership in a distinct culture. Ahmed (1992) asserts that the veil symbolizes the women's determination to go ahead on a Muslim road to modernity. According to Abu- Lughod (1998), this second perspective represents a more subtle relationship between the tradition and the modern. This perspective connects the veil in a reworking of the 'cultural' object that subordinates women, Abu-Lughod mentioned.

Both Ahmed (1992) and Mernissi (1991) explain a different view from that of Abu-Lughod. They assert that the veiling of a younger, more highly educated generation of women represent their desire to build an image of themselves as assertive, liberated women located within an authentically Muslim culture. This image is clearly eradicated from the passivity denoted by Muslim traditions for older and poorly educated women (Mumtaz and Shahed, 1987). This image is found among Turkish veiled women.

Sandikci and Ger (2010) observed that veiled women in Turkey wished to participate in public sphere without being isolated. They also wanted to place them in new Muslim community rather than being labeled as reactionaries as found by above authors. By reading and realizing the meaning of religious texts and interacting with

human actors, they actively select their personal *tisettur* (a modern style of wearing veil in the context of Turkey), they explained. They want to make their empowered and non- traditional status in relation to their individual interpretation and choice without being forcefully covered, as found by Sandikci and Ger. They further state that, this modern style of covering helps them to fulfill their will to be faithful and to fight with (re) stigmatization (imposed by the West) at the same time. Sandikci and Ger (2010:26-27) further insists that-

“ yet the quest for both religiosity and personally satisfactory looks and both collective and personal identity entails a struggle to resolve yet another tension : between religious modesty and fashionable , tasteful and beautiful appearance, both of which are embedded in patriarchal relationship.”

They emphasize on empowering aspect of fashionable *tisettur* (*a style of wearing veil in the context of Turkey*) and on differentiating themselves from the uncovered women who they define as being slaves of *televole*- style fashion (*Televole* denotes Turkish paparazzi media. It provide news from the lives of celebrities, usually involving pictures of scantily dressed females at nightclubs and beaches and expose the details of the love lives of the stars that assesses them in terms of their looks), they described. They want to be modern, progressive, and to become part of normal contemporary world instead of being backward as mentioned by above authors. Actually, they emphasize on accepting both virtuous and modern choices through which they feel comfortable and empowered as described by Sandikci and Ger. Sandikci and Ger (2010:30) further asserts that

“ the women in our study believe that covering does not constraint their self-hood. On the contrary, they perceive the boundaries of *tisettur* as empowering and enabling to become the women they aspire to be- moral, modern, and feminine and yet freed from the predatory male gaze.”

Moreover, they observed that veiled women in Turkey can participate in selected public sphere that emphasize on Islamic norms. *Tisetturlu* women get a wider opportunity to parade in and interact with each other by joining in businesses such as restaurants, hotels, and sports and beauty clubs catering to the Islamist consumers. *Tisetturlu* women have the opportunity to engage in Islamist companies by which they can build their career and also maintain their chosen life- styles as observed by them. Yuvuz (2004) found that Islamist actors are emerging with new mechanism of empowerment by the help of “new opportunity spaces”, more women can be

recruited by softening of *tisettur*. There is a symbolic relationship between the Islam and the market that challenges construction of Islam as religion in opposition to consumerism (Turner, 1994). But it is true that any society adopting consumerist and capitalist value excludes Islamic ideology where veiled women get less chance to be empowered (Sandikci and Ger, 2010). As a result, Islamist movement emerges in Turkey to embrace the market and consumption and uses them for its own interest, they insisted. The condition of women in Iran in the light of veil is different from that of Turkey.

Shavarini (2006) describes though the number of women receiving higher education is increasing in Iran, they are not expected to participate fully and grow academically like their male counterparts. The training and skill, they achieved through college education will never be utilized in the paid labour market, she added. They continue their study but nothing else to do as observed by Shavarini.

Besides, contact between sexes is clearly forbidden in Islam and it is monitored and tightly controlled in Iran, Shavarini mentioned. Shavarini (2006:205) emphasizes,

“Regardless of their socio-economic background, women indicated that they would not like to be dependent on their families and husbands and that they would like to be able to work. Finding a job is clearly equated with freedom, independence, respect and social status- all qualities in their opinion, of which Iranian women are deprived.”

As a result, a large number of Iranian women are excluded from outside workforce, found by Shavarini. The percentage of Iranian women working outside home for wages is only about 15.1. This amount is not only considerably lower than for Iranian men but it is among the lowest in the world, above author mentioned. There is a greater deal of influence on the lives of Iranian women made by two interconnected and distinct forces i.e., religion and tradition as observed by Shavarini. But the realities of Iranian women in the light of veil are not similar to those of Arabian women.

Cooke (2000) states that some Arab feminists are concerned with Islamic scriptural interpretation. They are looking at the gendered formation of Islamic epistemology, Cooke added. Cooke (2000:150) mentions,

“Some Muslim Arab feminists are examining the gendered formation of Islamic epistemology. The Qur'an and Traditions, or the authenticated sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad, are the symbolic capital and resources on which women are drawing to question misogynist social norms and male-dominated scriptural and legal authority.”

They are raising doubt to the fact that the Qur'an has been interpreted and the history has been recorded and approved almost entirely by men (Cooke, 2000). Fragues (2005) asserts that since the number of veiled women about the streets of many Arab cities is growing, many workplaces are relatively restricted for women. Female participation rates in Arab countries are lowest in the world, Fragues described. But the condition of women in terms of veiling in Indonesia is totally different from those of other Muslim countries, Fragues added.

It is true that many Islamic countries like Indonesia, Malaysia encourage women empowerment and thus accelerates the process of emancipation of women in those countries (Moghadam and Sidiqi, 2006). They define feminization of public sphere and civil society where women can be members of organizations and the media as well as participants in public debates. According to these criteria, a feminization of public sphere is emerging in Indonesia as women are becoming more outspoken and numerous in NGOs, religious organizations and media, they explained. Islam is not treated as monolithic here as observed by them. A democratization of religious knowledge and authority in many places including Indonesia has been made possible through Islamic revival (Harden, 2006). Actually, a distinct form of Islam emerges in Indonesia because of its encounter with other cultures and traditions as observed by Errington(1990). Furthermore, Indonesia historically has had fewer barriers for women in public sphere, Errington further described. By wearing hijab they can participate in all sectors of Indonesia as it is accepted as a national dress for Indonesia. So, the veiling does not pose any hindrance to the process of women empowerment in Indonesia.

Moghadam (1990) elucidates a comparative analysis in terms of female labour participation in economic sphere between the Islamic and non- Islamic countries. Female labour participation in non- Islamic countries as a whole is higher than those in Muslim countries as a group, Moghadam explained. In 1975, the percentage of female labour force was 21.3 in Muslim countries whereas non-Muslim countries had 36.6% of the labour force, Moghadam further added.

It is true that participation rate varies across Muslim countries in terms of both the overall level and the distribution of women's economic activity across diverse sectors denying the significance of Islam as a descriptive factor (Papps, 1992). In Egypt and Bangladesh, both men and women show their unwillingness to acknowledge the

definite and desired participation of women in income generating activities as these countries have low reported level of female participation in economic sphere (Papps, 1992; world bank, 1990).

In Bangladesh, the government has funded substantial amount of resources for the expansion of religious schools – Madrassas – and other Islamic educational institutions (Kabeer, 1991b; world bank, 1999). It appears that girls and women have not benefitted considerably from these expansions as observed both by Kabeer and World Bank.

It is clear that, veiling may work as a means of empowering and disempowering of women in different countries of the world. In western countries, veiled women face discrimination as being Muslim whereas Middle-east countries sanction veiling of women and support on women receiving higher education but impose restriction on their entry into public domain. The condition of veiled women in relation to their empowerment is yet to be investigated in the context of Bangladesh. For this reason, the researcher will investigate the reflection of empowerment indicators in the lives of veiled women in Bangladesh.

3.4 Veiled women’s perception on gendered division of labour

It is a bone of contention among Muslim scholars whether Islam ensures equality between men and women or not. Cooke (2000) explain that some of them find equality between men and women by addressing some verses in Qur’an while other finds subordination of women to men in a verse of Qur’an 4:34(Sura An-Nisa), which mention that:

“ men are the maintainer of women with what Allah has made some of them to excel others and with what they spent of their wealth. So, the good women are obedient and guarding (4:34, sura An-Nisa)”.

They claim that this verse specifies the superiority of men over women, Cooke mentioned. But the Islamist feminist in Arab world discards this notion that equal rights, roles and duties are similar to some ambiguous notion of equal value, Cooke explained. They support on gender specific roles and responsibilities, Cooke argued. In such a system, the role of breadwinner is equal to, indeed lower than the role of mother (Cooke, 2000). So, a clear –cut gender division of labour is found in that verse of Qur’an prescribing men and women with different roles and responsibilities.

Moreover, Odeh (1993) elucidates that the coherence of the veiled position has multiple interpretations in the context of Arabic society. The contemporary veil tries to address sexual harassment on the street, Odeh continued. It plays a crucial role on protecting women on their way to work and to school, Odeh added. So, it has relieved the uncomfortable daily lives of single, young women, who are going outside home for seeking work and education, Odeh found. Another meaning of veil is that women should stay at indoors out of men's way so that they cannot seduce men as found by Odeh. They should not engage in work outside home, their suitable and rightful place is in the house where they should play their respective role as wives and mothers, not as wage workers (Odeh, 1993). Thus veiling appears to be self-deconstructing as found by Odeh. It loses its effectiveness and therefore its attractiveness as an instrument when it seeks its normative vision by offering women to stay at home, Odeh explained. According to Odeh (1993:33),

“ even more paradoxically , fundamentalist ideology , as the inspiration for the rhetoric of veil, assumes that women should work only out of necessity, preferably work in professions that are considered feminine such as teaching, and nursing and once at work place they should minimize their contact with men to the greatest extent possible.”

Besides this, individual men and individual women should not be left alone either at their working hours or at break time, Odeh mentioned. Men are thought to be leaders in any context both inside and outside home, Odeh added. Women, who have accepted the practice of wearing the veil due to its empowering effect on the street as they go to work, can discover themselves extremely disempowered if the veil transmits its 'logic' to the workplace, she described. The career prospects of veiled women could be severely affected by the spatial and functional segregation between the sexes prescribed by the fundamentalist ideology of veil for work place, Odeh emphasized. Women are isolated from the position of power and decision making as they live and work in a world where men are already the decision makers and the top executives in the hierarchy of the workplace (Odeh, 1993). Distribution of equal responsibilities between men and women based on qualification, equality of promotion opportunities between men and women and day care facilities for women to rear their children are demanded by liberal feminist for these women to empower them as wage workers, Odeh mentioned.

It is widespread among Muslims in the Arab world that women should bear their responsibilities within the domestic domain which means housework and childcare as observed by Odeh. Some Islamists emphasize that receiving higher education is a religious obligation for both men and women, Odeh continued. In the Qur'an, 'men are given the explicit social role as providers of the family, Odeh studied. 'Men are responsible for (in charge of) women with what god has preferred some of them over others and by that they spent of their wealth (4:34, Surat An-Nisa)'. It means that men are biologically and physically different from women and are more suitable for hard work, Odeh explicated. The main theme of the gendered division of labour in the Islamist ideology is found in biological differences between men and women according to Odeh.

But Roald (1999) describes a different notion to this argument that differences between men and women in terms of gendered division of labour are created by socialization in the core family and in the wider society. Some Islamists assert that Islam is called "the natural religion" that provides with the understanding of the gender relations, Roald added. Hence, it is claimed that the gendered division of labour is 'natural' and 'right' and such division creates conformity with human nature, Roald mentioned. For example, god created women with a view to bearing and feeding the children; He also made them psychologically different from men and gave them more patience, gentleness and tolerance so that they may patiently bear the responsibility of child caring (Roald, 1999). Though domestic work and child caring are the main responsibility of women in most parts of the world, this work is treated as less significant than other types of works performed in the public domain, Roald explained. It is true that women's participation in labour market and jobs outside home to build professional career may create suffering to the domestic sphere and to the relations between children and women as found by Roald. Roald (1999) also proposed that liberation of women becomes possible through their participation in labour market that helps them to obtain power in labour market in public sphere rather than demanding power in their traditional domestic sphere.

Roald (2003) observes that the social change in Muslim societies is taking place accompanying an increase in female education in the Middle east (except for the Gulf states) and North America that was not accompanied by an increase in the need for labour force in the sixties where the necessity for the labour forces raised together with the rise of feminist ideas. Though fewer women in Muslim countries are

engaging in work outside the domestic domain compared to the women in Western countries, there has been pursuit of female empowerment in relation to the increase in female education, Roald added. But some Muslim women perceive female empowerment as creating disturbance in performing domestic responsibility, Roald continued. Jean Said Makdisi, a Lebanese researcher, has noted that though the western feminist movement has gained much popularity in Arab society for some of its achievements, particularly the advancement of women's legal, economic and personal domain, other women view that a substantial price has been paid for this liberation. Makdisi continues that high rate of female empowerment is associated with the breakdown of family, high divorce rate, the concomitant figure of juvenile crime, drug and alcohol abuse, as well as the alienation and depersonalization of modern society as like as those in Europe and western world. So, mothering with all its domestic responsibilities is essential for building an organized and deeper family relationship, Makdisi found. Female Islamists believe that the pursuit of empowerment lies within the framework of Islamic ideas, Makdisi described. Even among common Muslims, however, there is a concern for performing some traditional roles in gender relations especially when it comes to family issues as was noted by Makdisi (1996).

Roald (2003) asserts, as for gender relations, the Islamists adopt a basic traditional view on respective social roles of men and women. According to the Islamic sources, social roles for women are determined differently from those of men, he continues. Qur'an indicates that men should perform their duty as providers of their families while the role for women is not considered to have been prescribed in every categorical term and is therefore subject to new explanations (Roald, 2003).

Kabeer shows that whether the gendered division of labour is adopted by veiled women or imposed on them by their society or community in the context of Bangladesh. Family and kinship relationship in Bangladesh are formed according to corporate patriarchal values where the senior male household head hold the power, she avers. Since descent and property is transmitted through the male line, women are effectively left without property and genealogical irrelevance, she continues. Their degraded status within the family is further strengthened by purdah norm that hinders their participation in public sphere, confining them to reproductive responsibilities and those types of productive work that can be performed within the home (Kabeer, et al. 2011). Cain et al, 1979 found that a small number of educated

women from affluent urban families had the chance to engage in jobs constitutionally reserved for women in the public domain. These were honourable jobs which did not degrade the status for women and their families as described by above authors. A large number of poor women having little or no education, economic choices were severely limited and there existed powerful restrictions from their communities on their capacity to engage in paid work, they found. Most of them enclosed them to do home centered production of handicrafts or engaged in paid domestic labour, and engaged in processing of crops in the post-harvest period , in the homes of better off families (Cain et al, 1979).So, religion plays a diverse role in elucidating variations in empowerment indicators. Kabeer et al. (2011) conducted a study on “Does paid work provides a pathway to women’s empowerment? Empirical findings from Bangladesh (2011)”, and observed that wearing hijab and burqa represents the wish to abide by religious cultural norms instead of an instrumental motivation. Wearing burqa and hijab is related to greater moral standing of the community, they observed.

There is a clear cut sign of gendered division of labour in Qur’an referring men as providers of family and women as responsible for rearing and caring children. It is important to investigate how far the veiled women support or refute gender division of labour , whether they want to accept dual roles (performing domestic responsibility and doing work outside home simultaneously) or not in the context of Bangladesh.

3.5 Analyzing veiled women’s uniqueness of the sense of aesthetics and expressionism

Usually some veiled women try to represent them fashionably while maintaining their veiled position in the context of Turkey as observed by Sandikci and Ger (2010). They more or less aestheticize this practice in order to be modern and updated accompanied by abiding Islamic norm, they mentioned. Considering this situation, Sandikci and Ger (2010) examined how a stigmatized practice (veiling) becomes fashionably acceptable by Turkish women. The analysis of Sandikci and Ger mentioned that, at first *tesettür* (a kind of veiling by Turkey women) was willingly accepted by some middle class women and then transformed into a fashionable and ordinary choice for many though it was once a stigmatized practice in the secular

mind-set. They found that most informants shape their own veiling (tissetur) as they experience, believe and deemed to be modern. So, it is normal that there are different styles for each person, they continues. They try to aestheticize this practice to make them appealing whereas they want to be modest and refrain from looking sexually attractive, they added. They want to present them aesthetically and tastefully as observed by above authors. Sandikei and Ger (2010:29) states that “ In some..., aestheticization entails legitimation of beautiful, covering along with discrediting of both indecent , open , styles of dressing and rural/traditional practices of veiling”.

Actually, their private bodies are totally different from their public ones as explained by Odeh (1993) in the context of Arab society. They expose their bodies that are more colourful, lively, and sexual in the company of women once secured, Odeh described. They put off their veil and wear colourful dresses which make them fashionable, she added. They wear creative make-up to change their bland faces into the colourful one, Odeh mentioned. There is no relation between their private bodies and their public bodies (odeh, 1993). There is also another version of them who wears make up with veil, slightly tighter dress of veil which is colourful as observed by Odeh. Odeh defines them as more creative, fashion conscious in public who continually tries to subvert the blandness of the veil. They also keep contact with men, wander with men undermining the segregation that the veil enforces on the sexes, she continues. It is also common to find them wearing it for some days and putting it off other days as observed by Odeh. We find veiled women-

“at times colourful, other times bland, seductive and prudish, public and private. A veiled woman’s subjectivity appears much more complicated than the simple world of veil can possibly convey” (Odeh, 1993:34).

But Yegenoglu(1998) proposes the unveiling of women for the progression of Islamic societies. The emancipation of individual women and the progression of Islamic societies can be possible by removing veil of those women as described by above author. Yegenoglu (1998:132) explains,

“ unveiling of women became a convenient instrument for signifying many issues at once , i.e., the construction modern Turkish identity, the civilization and modernization of Turkey and the limitation of Islam to matters of belief and worship”.

Whereas benefits of modern female identity transmitted to unveiled women, veiled women with the Islamic garb possessed a traditional, rural and backward identity (sandikei and Ger, 2007).

In some countries like Turkey, Egypt, and Malaysia, where veiling is regarded to be a sign of backwardness, traditionalism, and more recently resistance to the West, fashionably covered women now represent a new position (Abaza 2007; White 2002).

3.6 Summary of chapter three

From the above discussion, it is clear that more and more veiled women (educated) are now representing them in a fashionable manner including their veiled position. They are creating their images with a mixture of tradition and modern in order to join in the realm of empowerment. At the same time, there are some veiled women who avoid wearing make-up and fashionable presentation of female bodies in public places.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Methodology is defined as the techniques and strategies employed within a discipline to manipulate data and acquire knowledge (Jary and Jary, 1991:394). It is a way of conducting research in a scientific manner. Neuman (1991) defines it as a process of making social science scientific. A researcher has to perform various steps prescribed by methodology for studying her research problem systematically. It guides researcher to study any problem including detail design of the study i.e., research objectives, questions, study area, process of information involved, data collection and analysis. In this chapter, the whole procedure of the research will be presented. In this thesis qualitative method will be used for getting detailed description, analysis and interpretation of the related issues.

4.2 Why qualitative method?

In this study, qualitative method is chosen over other methods because its features are best suited for this research topic. The reasons for choosing qualitative method are -it is concerned with understanding a particular social situation, event, role, group or interaction (Locke, Spirduso and Silverman, 1987) and it is suitable for gathering non-numerical data regarding people's feelings, experience, and ways of life. Another, perhaps more fundamental point is that for most qualitative researchers' action is based on interpretation: it involves people making sense of the world (Hamersley, 2002: 90). People do not simply respond in automatic way to the situations they feel, he added.

Again, this entails immersion in the everyday life of the setting chosen for the study; the researcher tries to study informant's world and through an ongoing interaction to uncover the informants' perception and meaning. For these reasons, this investigation will use qualitative method as a research procedure.

Moreover, veiling practice of Muslim women is common in urban and rural Bangladesh. Sociological research regarding the perception and position of veiled women in the domain of empowerment is yet to be conducted. To investigate their insider perspective in this issue, the researcher has adopted the qualitative method in

this research work in order to know why they adopt this practice either voluntarily or being forced by someone, whether it empowers or disempowers them in the context of Bangladesh, to what extent they prefer to wear makeup, about their choices of occupation and perception on gendered division of labour, and about the reflection of empowerment indicators(participation in politics, extra-curricular activities, decision making, access to resources, educational attainment and control over personal income) in the lives of veiled women, an in depth qualitative research approach is needed.

A veiled women's perception may be complex than that of non-veiled women. She may be caught in dilemma – whether she adopts Bengali culture or Muslim culture while ideologies of these two cultures are opposed to each other. Some of them may wear veil inspiring from ideological indoctrination of Islam who may maintain distance from celebrating Bengali festivals and cultural flavor while other group may occasionally unveil, wear makeup and Bengali dresses to celebrate Bengali festivals. But this other group may maintain veil at other time. Their decision to engage in a job may be a matter of anxiety and tensions because they may have to think whether they can maintain their veiled position or not. Actually, the researcher realizes that such a complex task could not be conducted without a close and a thorough study.

4.3 Sources of data

In this study, data have been collected from secondary and primary sources-

- 1) Secondary sources of information: secondary sources are books, reports, published research studies, newspapers, articles, seminar papers, documents available in the internet, government policies and plans.
- 2) Target group for primary sources of information: female students wearing veil and burqa at University level and also at Madrasa have been studied for getting information about their perception and participation in the activities of women empowerment project in Bangladesh. Experiences of employed women wearing veil in this respect have been studied.

4.4 The study site

As this study is comparative between urban and rural areas, cases from both areas have been studied. This piece of work has chosen Dhaka University campus; Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka; Rangpur Begum Rokeya University and Rangpur Karamatia Kamil Madrasa, Mahigonj as study areas. Female students wearing veil and burqa with urban and rural background studying in these institutions have been chosen as respondents. The reasons behind selecting these areas are as follows-

- Dhaka University campus has been selected as a research area because this area will be easily accessible for the researcher. It has been thought that there will be no complexity in getting respondents. A few female students wearing veil and burqa who are studying at Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka have also been studied.
- Two types of educational institutions like Begum Rokeya University at Rangpur and Rangpur karamatia Kamil Madrasa at Mahigonj, Rangpur have been chosen to make a comparison between the views of urban and rural veiled women.
- By considering time constraint, these research areas have been selected. It has been assumed that this study could be conducted in these areas within fixed time and budget.

4.5 Study population

In case studies, female students (age between 20 to 32 years, all cases are Muslim) wearing veil and burqa and studying at University and at Madrasa level including some employed women are studied. Respondents having some characteristics of-

- 1) Female students wearing veil and burqa at the University level coming from both urban and rural areas.
- 2) Female students wearing veil and burqa studying at Madrasa level.
- 3) Employed women especially- a) school teacher b) University teacher c) banker and d) doctor, all wearing veil and burqa.

4.6 Sampling Technique

“Occasionally it might be appropriate for you to select your sample on the basis of the researchers own knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of his research aims. This method is sometimes called purposive sampling (Babbie, 1990:97).”

This kind of sampling is based on the judgment of researcher. She/he will be aware on selecting cases purposively. Since all women in Bangladesh do not wear veil, the researcher selected the cases purposively. Researcher studied about 37 cases-

- 1) From Rabgpur Karamatia Kamil Madrasa at Mahigonj, the researcher studied about 10 cases . These are resident of a rural area namely Koshaituli at Mahigonj in Rangpur .
- 2) From Begum Rokeya University of Rampur, about 10 cases were studied. They live in different urban areas in Rangpur city.
- 3) From the University of Dhaka, 10 students were studied who live in Dhaka city.
- 4) From Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka, one case has been studied.
- 5) Another group of veiled women are studied who are employed in different professions like school teacher, banker and university teacher. About 7 cases have been studied.

4.7 Study instrument

With the help of supervisor, a check list for present work has been prepared to proceed with it for my further research. A well-organized checklist and field diary were used in this study. In this study, emphasize has been given on qualitative data regarding the perception and position of veiled women in the realm of empowerment.

4.8 Pre-testing the checklist

Pre-testing is necessary for finalizing the checklist. Pre-testing has done through a pilot study with a small set of respondents corresponding to those in the selected

cases of this research. But this result has not added to the final research findings rather it has conducted to overcome the limitations of check list to make the points in checklist clear and understandable to the respondents, to make the word and language easy for them, etc. some issues should be given importance:

- The probing techniques
- Use of easy words necessary for language
- The sequence of points
- The techniques and options for documenting responses.

After completing the pilot test, the necessary revision, corrections and modification have been made in the checklist. This study followed the following procedures-

- After making necessary corrections of checklist through this pilot study, it has submitted it to the supervisor for final approval
- After the approval of checklist in Bengali, it has been printed and translated later into English.

4.9 Data collection procedure

The process of gathering information from the respondents is called data collection (Nan Lin, 1976). Though there are various techniques of data collection, the researcher has employed case study method as the main data collection technique for this study. This method helps the researcher to gather information about insider views and perceptions. Case study method enables the researcher to uncover the inner perspective and to gain access to respondent's experiences, perceptions, feelings and knowledge. Since the researcher aims to interpret the views of participants, it has been better for her to use case study method with an open ended checklist for collecting data. Details of data collection process are stated below-

A) Time and access to the participants- the field work for present study has been conducted for a period from 3rd August to 8th September. After receiving verbal consent and gaining access to halls and houses, the researcher had tried to create such a situation where the respondents would be able to talk freely about their perception of women empowerment in the light of veil. Mobile phone was used for recording their responses so that the accurate information could be gathered.

B) Number of persons for data collection- my cousin help me to introduce with the respondents at Rangpur Karamatia Kamil Madrasa, Mahigonj. She helped me to conduct this study there. One of my friends reads in Rangpur Begum Rokeya University who helps me to get respondents there. Mobile phone is used for recording the responses of the cases.

4.10 Data processing and analysis

The process of data analysis includes searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials systematically that the researcher gather in order to increase their understanding of them and to enable them to present what they have discovered to others(Bogdan and Biklen,1992). After completing the case studies, the researcher jotted down their views recorded in mobile phone. Each case has given her impression in Bengali language. After writing down their views in Bengali language, researcher deducted unnecessary views and comments of the respondents. Latter the researcher translated those views into English. The researcher did not use the original name of the participants for maintaining anonymity. After that stage of transcription, the researcher presented the findings of the study following its specific objectives.

4.11 Ethical considerations

Social researcher must consider the rights of the respondents involved in any study (Baker, 1999). Thus in order to carry out a research project the researcher must consider the ethical aspects of their studies. In this study ethical standard had been more or less maintained in every stage of this research project. Views of the respondents were recorded after taking their permission. Any information was not disclosed by the researcher that would create harm for the respondents. The researcher was always careful about the issues of plagiarism. In the checklist, there was no personal question came in the course of taking their views, the researcher asked it with prior consent of the respondents. The researcher had not used the real name of the respondents as they wished to do so.

4.12 Definition of the relevant concepts

Defining the veil

Though the concept of veil has multiple interpretations in different religions and societies, this study focuses on the meaning of veil in terms of Islam. The English term “veil” is generally used to denote Muslim women’s head, face, or body covers that signifies their piety and modesty in Islamic sense (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia).

Empowerment

Rowlands describes women empowerment as a “process whereby women become able to organize themselves to increase their own self-reliance, to assert their own independent right to make choices and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination (Rowlands, 1997:17).” “A woman's level of empowerment is defined ... as a function of her relative physical mobility, economic security, ability to make various purchases on her own ,freedom from domination and violence within her family, political and legal awareness, and participation in public protests and political campaigning (Schuler and Hashemi,1994:65).”

Actually, women empowerment is a process by which women can establish control over their lives and resources through widening their choices.

Empowerment indicators

Several empowerment indicators used to measure the extent of women empowerment in the context of Bangladesh are as follows: participation in politics, decision making, participation in extracurricular activities, educational attainment, equal opportunity, equal opportunity, access to resources and control over personal income.

Gender

Gender is frequently based on a social division, but not necessarily concurrent with anatomical sex (Jary and Jary, 2006). Gender is defined as social and psychological attributes by which human beings are categorized as masculine and feminine (ibid).

Gender differentiation

“ gender differentiation is the process in which biological differences among males and females are assigned social significance and used as a social classification(Jary and Jary, 2006:254).”

Gendered Division of labour

Gendered division of labour between men and women in society prescribes women’s role to perform household activities and men’s role to ensure family livelihood (Giddens, 2006).

4.13 Summary of chapter four

This chapter is the methodological chapter of this thesis. In this chapter, the researcher explained the research design that the researcher adopted to conduct the study. The researcher also maintains ethical issues from the beginning to the end of this research.

Chapter Five: Explaining the reasons of wearing veil

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to investigate the reasons for wearing veil by the women in rural (Mahigonj, Rangpur) and urban (Rangpur city and Dhaka City) Bangladesh. This chapter mentions whether the practice of veiling is adopted voluntarily or being forced by anyone. Though the veiling practice is strongly associated with Islamic norm, it is necessary to know how Bengali women realize this norm. There may be some other reasons for adopting this practice rather than religious obligation. These may be the result of the intrusion of gender socialization, patriarchal attitude, and social expectation. This chapter intends to describe those reasons in relation to women empowerment.

5.2 Reasons of wearing veil

Veiling practice is common among the Muslim women of Bangladesh. There are many reasons for wearing veil that are found by studying about 37 cases. A woman may start to wear veil by the inspiration of her family without realizing its religious meaning whereas another may start to adopt this practice by inspiring from religious norm. Some other women may adopt this practice due to their 'collective social arrangements' in society expect them to do so while other may perceive it as a means of ensuring social security.

The Muslim women have long tradition of wearing veil in different styles. It is a matter of debate whether scriptural norms command Muslim women to wear veil or not. Engineer (2001:1) avers that there is no notion of hijab in the Qur'an in the sense of an order to cover the face of a woman. The advices of the Qur'an should be viewed in terms of practices women in pre-Islamic period, he added. There was no system of wearing veil during the early period of Islam, he mentioned. The introduction of veil appears to be indicative of an important modification of 'mind set or psychological pre-disposition', he continued. It is significant to examine when, how and why this paradigm shift occurred, meanwhile it appears justifiable to assume that there is much more to it than the observable thing or that is merely attributable to a Qur'anic command, he explained.

Engineer (1992:83) further asserts that there are four verses (33:32-33, 33: 53, 24:31) in Qur'an that mentioned the meaning of hijab. Each is stated in the context of the prophet's associates i.e., the wives of the prophet, the mother of the believers, he described.

The jurists have usually used these verses to make hijab obligatory for all Muslim women (Engineer, 1992). In these verses, there is no mention of covering the face or confining women into the four walls of their homes to be supported as a Qur'anic injunction, but it is the judgment of a section of jurists, at most (Engineer, 1992:86). Engineer (1992) further describes that the past normative concept impose restriction on women to protect their chastity that slowly became recognized as purdah, the veil itself, chastity is defined as norm while purdah is contextual means to attain it.

Some of the cases studied in this investigation start to wear veil by realizing the meaning of Islamic norm. They realize veil as mandatory (*Faroz*) for every Muslim woman. They have started to wear veil by understanding the meaning of *Sura Nisa*, *Ahjab* and some *Hadith* and some of them want to follow the styles of messengers' wives. In this sense, they have made a conscious decision to wear veil. Violation of this duty is regarded as sin in Islam. So, non-veiling status is clearly avoided by them. By the side of religious view, they also experience veil as ensuring social security for women in their locality¹. Similarly, Schmidt (2004) has mentioned that, young women wear hijab because they are more likely to be granted as religious and moral authority among peers. It is often heard that a woman with hijab can monitor her own behavior as she is representing Islam to others by adopting this practice as mentioned by above author. Emphasizing difference from the non-Muslims is an essential factor of understanding the identity function of hijab as explained by Schmidt. What has been observed by Schmidt can also be compared with the observation by made by few cases included in this study. For example- Ila asserts that

"I am a university student with urban background and I wear veil (burka and headscarf accompanying niqab). I started to wear veil at the age of 15 as it is mandatory (*Faroz*) for every Muslim woman. By realizing the meaning of Islamic norm especially some Quranic verses, I was inspired to wear veil. I became calm, modest, and polite after starting to wear veil. I perceived veil as giving social

¹Case studies 1, 26.

security. I experienced that dared boys did not tease me and almost all saw me with respect in my locality²”.

So, they see veil as empowering them in terms of ensuring social security and gaining respect by others. They explain it as a means of protecting them from dared boys.

Moreover, some of them wear veil as they are inspired by religious norm on women and also the inspiration from their families. They realize that it is the duty of every Muslim woman to wear veil. They also want to protect them from the staring of men by wearing veil (burqa, headscarf accompanying niqab). They feel easy in moving outside as their body shapes cannot be gazed by others (especially non-related males) by wearing Bengali dresses like- *Salwar Kamiz* and *saree*, it is not possible to hide the body shape, they believe. Anything increasing the appeal and beauty of women to men must be avoided and covered, they think. They only know that it is an Islamic norm but do not know its scriptural reference – the verses in Quran where the order of this practice is mentioned. They are feared at the staring of men³.

Their views are more or less similar to the observation of Arab feminist Odeh(1993) who mentioned that women’s relationship to their bodies is multi-layered and highly complex in the seventies. In a way, their bodies seem to be a battlefield where the cultural straggles of the post-colonial societies had taken place, Odeh explained. On the one hand, the western dresses which covered their bodies constituted the ‘capitalist’ construction of the female body: one that is sexualized, objectified, tingified, etc, Odeh continues. But in post-colonial societies, both capitalist and pre-capitalist (traditionalism) types of social formation co-existed simultaneously; there was traditional construction of these women’s bodies: chattelized, propertized, and terrorizes as trustees of family (sexual) honour, on the other hand, Odeh explicated. These double construction of females’ bodies seemed to be conflictual where the first one presented women’s bodies as seductive, sexy and sexual and the last one seems to push them to be prudish, conservative and asexual(Odeh,1993). Most of the top posts of almost all organizations and institutions of Bangladesh emphasize on the capitalist construction of females’ bodies in terms of recruiting female employees, while excluding the veiled women as they fall on the second category mentioned

² Case study 1.

³ Case studies 2,6,8.

above. The researcher has found this explanation by interviewing few cases from the University of Dhaka⁴.

Besides these, families in Bangladesh are patriarchal in nature where gender socialization is so powerful that can impose male and female with different roles and duties. It is clear on the speech of some of the cases studied who mentioned that-

We started to wear veil from our early ages due to the inspiration from our families. At that time, our parents, or brothers or sisters somehow influenced us to wear veil. It is easy to motivate one, when she read in High School. So, we have been motivated to adopt this practice while some of them wear veil as it is their family tradition. By seeing their mothers, sisters and grandmothers, they decided to wear veil⁵. In these families, girls' role of wearing veil is positively sanctioned. This represents functionalists' notion of 'gender socialization'. 'Gender socialization' (Bourdieu 1990; Lorber, 1994) is so powerful that it cannot be easily challenged. It is the expectation of society from individuals to act like 'females' and 'males' on the basis of their respective gender roles, they further mentioned. These expectations are fulfilled and reproduced in the practices of everyday life, they assert. This observation is also found in a case included in this study below-

"I come from a rural area and read in Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur. I have started to wear veil at the age of 19 because my family members encourage me to adopt this practice. My father thinks that a veiled woman will not do wrong deeds that violate her family honour. So, he wanted to see me wearing veil. I do think that in my every deed, moral judgment comes. I have latter considered that veiled position ensures social security to some extent- everybody in my locality respects me .Moreover, man usually leaves his seat in public transport seeing a veiled woman when she is standing⁶."

So, Veiling is also adopted as a means of ensuring social security and respect. It is also regarded as a sign of morality. It is clear from the observation of the above cases that at the beginning of adopting this practice, some of the veiled women do not know why they have worn veil and just know that their families tell them to do so. They begin to realize its religious meaning after passing two or more years of this

⁴ Case studies 19, 32.

⁵ Case studies 8, 22, 24.

⁶ Case study 5.

practice. Sometimes one's 'collective social arrangement' imposes this practice. One's community members expect women to wear veil especially in rural areas including some localities in urban areas. A veiled woman is treated with respect by her locality members.

In this sense, Connell avers that-“gender relations are the product of everyday interactions and practices. The actions and behavior of average people in their personal lives are directly linked to collective social arrangements in society (cited in Giddens, 2006:462)”.

There are some other reasons for wearing veil that is as follows-dared boys does not tease a woman wearing veil. Wearing veil makes women less attractive for men thus reducing the chance of eve teasing⁷. A veiled woman can go outside alone. Frequent changing of new dresses is not needed to go outside home. In this sense, it saves time. It also saves money. Frequent buying of many dresses is not needed in case of lower middle class family. It also facilitates in public transport as experienced by some of the cases. It protects women from the staring of men. These reasons of wearing veil are more or less found by analyzing few cases interviewed.

Tuli has stated several reasons of wearing veil. She reads in university of Dhaka and started to wear veil when she read in intermediate first year. The underlying reasons are- religious inspiration and family tradition (almost all female relatives wear veil). She believes that, wearing veil and burqa ensures social security for her. It reduces the chance of eve teasing. “I have not found any record of veiled women being raped, victim of acid violence and eve-teasing. Everybody has respect for veiled women and treats politely with them⁸.”

Almost all the cases find a close link between veiling and social security.one of the cases mentioned that-

“Wearing niqab can ensure best security for women as her face remains hidden by which men cannot judge her beauty⁹”.

When two girls walk on the street with one wearing three-peach and another wearing veil, the first one will be teased severely by dared boys while the last one can relieve

⁷ Case study 14

⁸ Case study 22

⁹ Case study 3

of such bad comments. She has noticed this event for several times¹⁰. What has been observed by them can be explained by the views of sociologist Williams and Vashi. The moral status of men and women will be violated if women reveal too much of their bodies (Williams and Vashi, 2007). This practice helps protect women from men and men from women, they found. Veiling is not always a means of ensuring social security as observed by some of the cases studied. It cannot be ensured without changing men's attitude toward women as mentioned by some of the cases living in Dhaka city. Some veiled women residing in Dhaka City do not explain veil as ensuring social security. In public transport in Dhaka city, veiled women are seen as weak to raise their voice against teasing and harassment by men. So, they are teased more than the non-veiled. Some of them experienced teasing, pushing and pinching for several times¹¹.

Moreover, Liza (wears *Salwar Kamiz* with headscarf), a professor of Dhaka University, does not see veil as ensuring social security and respect. The reason behind this is – a group of veiled women conducts wrong deeds violating the dignity of veil (its religious significance). So, this practice is no longer respected by others¹².

Respondents from madrasa have given different impressions on their reasons for wearing veil. Some of them state that a large number of women are receiving education from Islamic Institutions like madrasa in Bangladesh. It is obligatory to wear veil (burqa and headscarf with niqab) for women while attending classes. Some of the cases stated that they have worn such veiling for only their pressure from madrasa¹³. But in other public places, or outside home, they do not wear veil.

Another group studying in madrasa strictly maintains their veiled position. At first, their Islamic minded families encourage them to wear veil, then they adopt this practice due to institutional pressure and they begin to realize the meaning of veil as a religious obligation. Actually, most of the cases in madrasa emphasize on two reasons for wearing veil- inspiration from their families and institutional pressure to wear veil. But some of them are inspired by religious obligation- by realizing the

¹⁰ Case study 23

¹¹ Case studies 20,27.

¹² Case study 25

¹³ Case studies 16, 17, 18.

meaning of Hadith and Qur'an. They also realize that all Muslim women have to follow the wives of the Messengers¹⁴. But one of the cases from Madrassa has given different impression-

“I have not accepted this practice voluntarily rather my family strictly imposes it on me. Sometimes, I wish to go outside wearing fashionable dresses like my friends but cannot as my family will not permit me to do so¹⁵.” In this regard, radical- cultural feminist clearly opposes the practice of purdah. They define it as a means of controlling women's sexuality (cited in Tong, 1998). Wearing veil describes obedience to a patriarchal authority and indicates Muslim women's subordination and lack of agency (Afsar 1998; Hoodfar 1993; Mernissi 1991).

Moreover, some women voluntarily accept wearing veil as they see their sisters, mothers and grandmothers wearing veil. They mention that it is the tradition of their families to wear veil. Their guardians (especially fathers or husbands in terms of married women) expect them wearing veil. They abide by the norms and values of their families and always try to fulfill the expectation of their male guardians within their families¹⁶. “My brothers do not allow me to go outside without wearing veil. When non-related male guests come in our house, they order me to maintain veil in front of them¹⁷.” Their situation can best be explained by applying Walby's notion of private patriarchy. Walby emphasizes on private patriarchy where an individual patriarch dominates women which occur within the household (cited in Giddens, 2006).

Some cases have mentioned the role of political parties in Bangladesh on inspiring Muslim women to adopt this practice. Islamic political parties like- Jmaat-e-Islam and Hijbut Tahrir are influential in Bangladesh, they perceive. These Islamic parties encourage Muslim women to wear veil (especially to adopt conservative choices) and practice Islamic norm in every step of their lives, they have seen. A few cases mentioned that Jamaat –e -Islami women are active in their localities. They gain

¹⁴ Case studies 12, 13, 14.

¹⁵ Case study 28.

¹⁶ Case studies 29, 32.

¹⁷ Case study 29.

insight about the Muslim veiling by these women and motivate to adopt and also to continue this practice¹⁸.

Some veiled women have given different impression that non-veiled position is associated with moral looseness and degradation. They have seen some non-veiled women interacting with non-related males and falling in love affairs that are clearly forbidden in Islam. Members of their locality treat them as bad girls and have not given any respect to them, they notice. For them, veiled position teaches them to be reserved, modest and to monitor their own behavior according to the teachings of Islam¹⁹.

An opposite view wearing veil is expressed by Liza, a professor of the University of Dhaka that is mentioned above²⁰.

Besides this, sociologist Rozario(2006) explains several reasons of wearing veil by Muslim Bangladeshi women. Rozario avers that there are increasing number of women including University students, wearing the burqa, a system of covering connected to Islamist movement, and formerly non-existence in Bangladesh. Rozario identifies four types of reasons that women choose to wear the veil- he explained veil as a state- instrument where women choose to wear veil because of instrumental reasons, i.e., urging parents to let them to study in university; protecting from harassment on the street; finding suitable marriage partners . He also mentioned wearing veil as personal identity issues that women's acceptance of Islam provides them with a meaningful framework with which they can pass their lives both at individual and family level. He further explicated wearing veil as a sign of collective or national identity: women view Islam as opposed to the decadent and immoral west, as well the corruption and violence of modern Bangladeshi society. "Adopting the veil can thus be a statement of commitment to a different kind of society (Rozario, 2006:377)." It is also a status concern of middle class women that middle class women are not able to perceive economic benefits of Bangladesh as like as lower class women, Rozario mentioned. They accept a more overtly Muslim identity to justify their situation vis a vis social changes around them (Rozario, 2006).

¹⁸ Case studies 4, 30.

¹⁹ Case studies 9, 30.

²⁰ Case study 25.

By the side of Rozario's understanding, the researcher has found several other reasons for wearing veil by studying some cases living in urban and rural Bangladesh which are as follows:

Family: women start to wear veil at their early age through a process of 'gender socialization' within their families without realizing its scriptural roots. It is sometimes a sign of family honour and tradition in Bangladesh that the Muslim women have to adopt this practice. Sometimes it may be forced on women by the male member of their families.

Religion: women adopt the practice of wearing veil by realizing the meaning of Hadith and Qur'an. They see it as mandatory (*faroz*) for every woman. A woman takes a conscious decision to wear veil by realizing this Islamic norm rather than showing conformity to their families or the influence from their family members.

Political: some Islamic political parties are active in the political system of Bangladesh. They motivate women to adopt this practice.

Economic: some women especially in rural areas assert that wearing veil saves money as frequent buying of new dresses is not needed. They can do with a few numbers of dresses. This is true in terms of lower middle class women.

Social: sometimes 'collective social arrangements' in a society expect women to wear veil. Social expectation in rural areas including some localities in urban areas in Bangladesh requires women to wear veil. In these localities, veiled position is respected by all while rebuking the non-veiled women. Sometimes veiling is regarded as a means of ensuring social security. Dared boys usually do not tease a woman wearing veil. So, it is adopted as a means of avoiding harassment on the streets.

Educational level: a significant number of women are studying in Islamic institution like madrassa in Bangladesh where veiling in a conservative style is mandatory for women. Most of the girls studying here start to wear veil from their 7-10 years of age

when they have no idea and maturity to understand the meaning (especially religious) of wearing veil.

Other: women adopt this practice by themselves and/or being imposed by other as a behavior control mechanism. Most of them become calm, quite, and modest after starting to wear veil. It is often seen as maintaining chastity and modesty by women. Some women usually start to wear veil at their early age by imitating their friends wearing veil.

5.3 Summary of Chapter Five

There are multiple reasons for wearing veil by Bangladeshi women. Most of the women cannot take conscious decision (realizing the meaning of Islamic norm regarding the veil) to wear veil. This practice is usually adopted through their socialization process by their families. Moreover, madrassa education makes it obligatory for women to wear veil. In this sense, some of the women wear veil only for their institutional pressure. They practice it in attaining their classes but in other situations and occasions, they become unveiled. Some of them see veiling as having normative standard to guide one's behavior that teaches women to become calm, quite, and modest. A significant number of women in both urban and rural Bangladesh perceive veil as a means of ensuring social security especially protecting them from eve-teasing, while other women reject this notion by describing that veiled women in public places and transport are seen as having weaker mind to protest against any kind of harassment that makes them more vulnerable to harassment in those situation. Unless changing the attitude of men toward women, harassment of women on the streets and workplaces cannot be reduced. Walby's notion on patriarchy is applicable here.

In this study, the researcher used qualitative method to understand how the veiled women accept the practice of veiling. By interviewing several cases who are studying at University and madrassa level and some empowered (veiled) women engaging in different professions, the researcher investigated multiple reasons of wearing veil. Researcher found that veiling in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh is not necessarily adopted as a realization of religious obligation; it is practiced as an

intrusion of 'gender socialization', patriarchy, 'collective social arrangements' of a society, and involvement in Islamic political parties.

Chapter Six: Reflection of empowerment indicators in the lives of veiled women

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the reflection of empowerment indicators like participation in politics, decision making, property inheritance, equal opportunity, education and full control over personal income on the lives of veiled women. Veiled women may consider maintaining their veiled position in all public domain. So, they may select those sections in public domain where there will be no restriction on their veiled position. This may limit their chance of being empowered. There may be certain reasons of their low participation in the current stream of activities in women empowerment. This chapter aims to investigate those reasons by analyzing the reflection of empowerment indicators on the lives of veiled women.

The researcher has studied about 37 cases. Among them, 10 cases are taken from rural area namely Mahigonj, Rangpur; another 10 cases from Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur ; another 10 cases from Dhaka University, one case has been studied from Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka and the last 6 cases are the empowered (veiled) women who engage in different professions- teacher , banker and doctor . All of these cases wear veil with different styles. They also perceive women empowerment in different ways. The researcher recorded the speech of the cases and investigated the reflection empowerment indicators on the lives of veiled women. Some theoretical insights are applicable in the interpretation of this chapter. Giddens (2006) describes perspectives of gender inequality in which gender differences create social inequalities. Sociologists are concerned with investigating gender inequality, Giddens added. Many theoretical perspectives have been formulated to describe men's persistent domination over women- in the terrains of economics, politics, the family, and elsewhere (Giddens, 2006). Parsonian model on gender role shows the distinction between total role segregation and total integration of gender role in terms of education, profession, housework, decision making, childcare and education. Education- Gender specific education, high professional qualification is important for the man that carries total role segregation, he emphasizes. On the contrary, co-educative schools, same content of classes for girls and boys, same qualification for men and women can bring total integration of roles, he asserts. Profession- the work

place is not the primary area of women, career and professional advancement is deemed unimportant for women that leads to total role segregation of women, he added. On the other hand, for women, career is just as important as for men, equal professional opportunities for men and women are essential that leads to total integration of roles (cited in Connell and William, R. 1987).

While the chapter analyses the reflection of empowerment indicators on the lives of veiled women, it contains the arguments of both Parsonian model on gender role and the perspectives on gender inequality.

6.2 Reflection of empowerment indicators on the lives of veiled women

In Bangladesh, it has been found that it is impossible to achieve the goals of equality, development and peace without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspectives at all stages of decision making (Panday, 2008). Available data elucidates that women's organization, donors, and non-governmental organizations have inspired the government of Bangladesh to initiate quotas for women, he observed. Though quotas have increase the total numbers of women in political spheres, their representation in the decision making process has not yet been guaranteed, he found. They still face different social, cultural and religious challenges which restrict their participation and they are still neglected by their male partners (Panday, 2008).

The system of veiling may be one of the crucial factors for lessening women's participation in all sectors of the society. Sometimes it may enclose women within the four walls of a home doing only household chores if a woman gradually converts from liberal to conservative choice. Even a large number of women having their graduation completed may not want to participate in the activities of women empowerment.

Participation in political system

Most of the cases possess negative attitude toward the participation of women in political system in Bangladesh. "A woman cannot retain her character and modesty if she becomes active in politics. A woman cannot maintain her veiled position in the

political arena of Bangladesh. The veiling practice by existing political leaders is not adopted in a right way. Islam does not approve such kind of veiling²¹.”

“I totally hate and reject the political system of Bangladesh let alone participating in this domain²².”

“ According to Islam, a woman cannot be a leader of a country. It is clearly forbidden in Islam. So, a woman should avoid participation in politics. Such kind of participation of women is disliked by most of the veiled women²³. “Sharifa has given same impression like them. She rejects women’s leadership in political system let alone wishing to participate in this domain. Islam does not permit woman to be the leader of a country, she believes. This is defined as *Haram* by Islam, she thinks. So, as Muslim, we should abide by this norm²⁴. It is clear from their views that a woman cannot be a leader but a man can be as ordered by Islam. Thus, a clear-cut gender difference exists here which is similar to the argument of Giddens. Gender is a social construction which imposes differing social roles and identities to men and women (Giddens, 2006). According to the work of Bob Conell and Maistin Macan Ghail, gender differences are hardly neutral- gender is an important form of social stratification in almost all societies (cited in Giddens, 2006). Gender plays a crucial role on shaping the types of opportunities and life chances faced by individuals and groups as well as influencing their roles within social institution from the household to the state (Giddens, 2006). Moreover, another case has mentioned different reasons of rejecting participation in politics-

“I believe that political participation is not possible by wearing veil. There are some other reasons for which I do not like political participation by women- there are two dominant parties in Bangladesh who seek their own interest rather than the development of this country. There is no third better party to participate in it. Only a new and creative one can motivate me to participate in this domain²⁵.”

Moreover, a woman does not want to participate in political system in Bangladesh not only by considering her veiled position and modesty but also there are some other reasons which restrict her entrance into this realm. Sheela avers that political system of Bangladesh is not suitable for women. The chance and extent of harassment is

²¹ Case studies 1, 27.

²² Case study 1

²³ Case studies 3 , 24.

²⁴ Case study 23.

²⁵ Case study 9.

much more in such realm than in other realms, she emphasizes. So, a woman should not participate in politics, she thinks. If political system permits women wearing veil and burqa, they can participate in politics²⁶. In this sense, Atasory (2003) explains that public domain is always viewed as suitable for male activity whereas women are supposed to limit their visibility in public sphere and to wear veil in public places.

“Though the number of women participation in politics is increasing day by day, it is still relatively low because a woman has to maintain her responsibilities as sisters, wives, and as mothers. She has multiple roles to play. After maintaining these duties properly, a woman has less time to do jobs outside home. She may engage in jobs requiring less working hours. But it is totally impossible for her to be active in political system as there are massive responsibilities to perform. These will create disturbance in their domestic responsibility²⁷.” ‘Woman has to interact with large number of non-related males if she is active in politics. This violates the meaning of Islamic veiling. In political system of Bangladesh, it is hard to gain public opinion wearing veil in a conservative style²⁸.’

“As a citizen of Bangladesh, it is enough to have voting rights. There is no need to participate in political system of a woman in Bangladesh. Lots of risks are associated with our political system. All kinds of wrong deeds, a politician can do here. It is quite difficult to handle these risks as a woman. So, I totally reject women’s participation in politics of Bangladesh²⁹.” There arises a question- if woman do not participate in politics then who will do that? Men? This impression represents the disempowering aspect of veiling which is also found in the study Atasory(2003). There are a sizable number of literatures regarding Muslim veiling in Muslim societies (Abu Lughod 1986; Afshar1998; Ahmed 1992; El Gindi 1999; Gole 1996; Hoodfar, 1997; Mernissi1991; Narayan 1997). Atasory(2003) explains two fundamentally different perspectives by reviewing these literatures. The first perspective perceives the veil as a mark of women’s subordination to men and represents veiled women as socially marginal individuals passing their lives inside home and family, Atasory mentioned. The second perspective views the veil as a systematic instrument of female empowerment, Atasory explained.

²⁶ Case study 8

²⁷ Case study 10.

²⁸ Case studies 5 ,18.

²⁹ Case study 20.

Besides this, a woman should participate in a political system of a country according to the rule of Islam- a woman can be a minister rather than being a prime minister of a country³⁰. Salma, a madrassa student with rural background, thinks that women empowerment in Bangladesh is not taking place according to the command of Islam. She totally rejects women's participation in political system. Men are guardian of women in Islam, she believes. So, a woman is incapable to lead a country³¹.

“Some other cases blame democratic system as being a non-Islamic system. Consequently, they do not find any interest in participating in political system. Democracy is a man-made system. Without Islamic system, justice cannot be established formulation of constitutional laws of a country is directed toward preserving political interests of the elected party of Bangladesh. Under this system of ruling, women are treated as commodity. So, woman should not participate in the political system of Bangladesh³² .”

Ruba asserts that as a Muslim, everybody should participate in politics according to the rule of Islam. She thinks that it is essential to engage in political system as every step in our lives is determined by politics. She does not blame political system rather democratic system that creates injustices in all sectors of our society. So, the existing political system should be overthrown by establishing Islamic system, she asserts. Then women can participate in this domain where their modesty and respect will be protected³³.

From the above discussion, it can be said that almost all the cases that have studied in this thesis have no desire to participate in politics of Bangladesh. The factors behind these are investigated by the researcher-

Religion: Islam has played a crucial role in making decision by veiled women whether they participate in politics or not. According to the rule of Islam, women cannot be a leader of a country; men are the guardian of women. Considering this rule veiled women avoid participating in this domain. Furthermore, women in politics have to contact with large number of men that may violate the meaning of their veiled position. Thus reduces their participation. Some of them assert that the

³⁰ Case study 11.

³¹ Case study 12.

³² Case studies 28, 30.

³³ Case study 19

way in which politicians do veil is not a right way. They do not wear veil in an Islamic way.

Family: a woman has to play multiple roles within her family that requires maximum times in a day. After performing these roles, a woman has less time to do jobs outside home. They may engage in job requiring fewer hours. Moreover, in political system, there are a lot of responsibilities that a woman cannot handle.

Distrust in existing political system: veiled women perceive that our existing political system is not Islamic. It is a destructive political system. They think that politicians are much more corrupted. There are lots of risks in this system that a woman is incapable to handle.

Expectation for a new political party: some of the veiled women do not blame political system but blame democratic system that creates all kinds of injustices. They expect abolition of democracy and the emergence of Islamic system. In this Islamic system, women can participate in politics maintaining their veiled position and modesty. Some other veiled women demand the reformulation of the existing political system. A constructive and creative political system can motivate them to participate in this domain.

Actually, most of the cases emphasize on Islamic rules and norms in terms of their desire to participate in politics. As existing political system of Bangladesh is more or less democratic, they perceive it as non- Islamic. Thus, discourage them to participate in this realm. So, the ethos of existing political system and the belief of veiled women regarding this kind of politics are contradictory that limits their participation in this sphere.

Decision making

Decision making is an important indicator of empowerment. The researcher tried to investigate how veiled women take their decision about education and profession. It has been cleared that gender socialization is so powerful at the family level of Bangladesh. The decision to wear veil is debatable whether the young girls adopt this

practice according to the desire of their family or their own. This chapter explores how they take decision about education and profession.

It has been that it is the decision of their families whether they read in general line or in madrassa. Urban women are usually permitted to read in general line while most of the rural women are permitted to study in madrassa. For example-

“My father believes that Madrassa education will give Islamic knowledge by the side of general knowledge. So, he decided to get me admitted to madrassa³⁴.”

“Most of the cases have decided to complete their graduation and to engage in jobs outside home. Teaching profession is preferred by all of them. A few cases want to complete higher education even up to MPhil and PhD. They get inspired by their family members³⁵.”

Some of them decided to complete their graduation but do not want to engage in job outside home. They emphasize that if a woman is economically solvent, she should not engage in jobs outside home. The primary duty of every woman is rearing and caring her children, they think³⁶. What has been observed by these cases studied can be explained by the study of Talcott Parsons. Parsons was concerned with the socialization of children and declared that successful socialization is possible through supportive families. Parsons demonstrates that a clear-cut sexual division is effectively followed by the family where females play expressive roles for providing care and security to children and offering emotional support. Men, on the other hand, accept instrumental role as being the breadwinner of the family, Parsons continues. Women’s expressive and nurturing tendencies are needed to comfort and stabilize men, he added. The solidarity of the family would be guaranteed by this complementary division of labour arising from the biological distinction between the sexes (cited in Giddens, 2006).

Moreover, some of them have decided to wear veil as their families impose it on them where some other cases have taken conscious decision to wear veil by realizing the meaning of Islamic norm.

Veiled women whom I have studied mentioned that they have taken their decision in life by discussing it with their family members. In doing anything, they take their permission from their family members. Some of them have told that sometimes their

³⁴ Case study 18.

³⁵ Case studies 7, 24.

³⁶ Case studies 1, 14.

families create pressure on them in terms of decision making. Then, they have to depend on the decision of their family³⁷.

Some of the cases take their decision in life through a mutual conversation with their family including their decision to wear veil. As veiling is not sanctioned by the government of Bangladesh, the decision to wear veil rests on personal choice which in turn depends on family norms³⁸.

“I take my decision through mutual conversation with my family members but my mother is so influential here (Salma, interview, 9 August, 2013).” My parents help me in term of decision making about our education, and occupational choice. But my mother is very much concerned about my veiling³⁹.

Some of them mentioned that they are given importance on taking decision in their lives⁴⁰. But some of the empowered women (veiled) mentioned that they do not take their decision independently.

“I am a school teacher. Though my family gives me importance in term of decision making, I take advice from my sisters and brother. This helps me taking right decision in every step of my life⁴¹.”

Liza, a professor in Dhaka University, takes her decision independently. It is her own decision to engage in teaching profession. At first, she joined in a multinational corporation but could not give much time to her family. Then she decided to join in teaching as she could and still can adjust her time with professional duties as well as her domestic responsibility. She also takes her decision to wear veil by realizing the meaning of Islamic norms. She wears a headscarf with *Salowar Kamiz*⁴².

Actually, the role of family is crucial in terms of making decision by veiled women.

Property inheritance

Almost all the cases recognize the rule of property inheritance according to the Islamic norm especially their father’s property. Al- Fariqi states that, Muslim countries approve the general rule for women’s inheritance rights according to

³⁷ Case studies 23, 24.

³⁸ Case studies 7,8.

³⁹ Case study 15.

⁴⁰ Case studies 9, 11.

⁴¹ Case study 23.

⁴² Case study 25,

Islamic doctrine. It means that women inherit half of their male counterpart, Fariqi observed. So, men are obliged to support women within and outside marriage as being justified by Islamic norm(al-Faruqi,1988).Most of the cases studied by this investigation emphasize on this Islamic law of property inheritance. Some of them mentioned that their fathers bear the expenses of their graduation. If they can engage in jobs, they will do something better for their families, they will not demand their father's property⁴³. Some other is aware of Islamic law of property inheritance. They feel that it is their right to have property. According to the norm of Islam, they will get half of the property of their brothers that they get from their fathers' property⁴⁴. By the side of inheriting father's property, a woman gets property from other sources – from their husbands and sons, stated by Liza, a professor of the University of Dhaka.

“I will get property from my husband but my husband will not get from me. In this sense, Islam preserves the dignity of women. Muslim women will get property from three sides- from her father, her husband and from her son. A man is given more property than a woman from her their father but the man is given much restriction and obligation than the woman that means he is given the responsibility as the maintainer of the family. If he does not give her sister's property in the absence of parents, there is law in our country securing women's right on property⁴⁵.”

In sum, none of the cases demand or support on equality in property inheritance. But most of the cases praise Islamic law of property inheritance that is supposed to ensure their dignity.

Equal opportunity

This chapter aims to investigate to what extent veiled women demand equal opportunity, whether they wish to get equal opportunity or not.

One of the cases the researcher has studied mentioned that-

“A female cannot be equal with male. Allah has created them with different figure, rights and responsibilities. This is not possible in the context of Bangladesh⁴⁶. Another case rejects the notion of male -female equality in all sectors of society. A

⁴³ Case studies 19, 21, 30.

⁴⁴ Case studies 23, 24.

⁴⁵ Case study 25.

⁴⁶ Case study 1.

Muslim woman should enjoy and have her right in accordance with the Islamic norms⁴⁷.” Another case mentioned that equality between men and women is necessary but not in all sectors of a society otherwise it may create chaos in society. Equality in all sectors of society may cause misunderstanding between men and women, she asserts⁴⁸. Neeela emphasizes on male -female equality in society. A woman should be given same opportunities that a man enjoys⁴⁹. There is a link between her impression and the liberal feminists’ notion of male and female sameness.

“If equality is recognized, then certain other facilities of women in Bangladesh will be withdrawn- quotas for female in primary school teaching and BCS will be withdrawn, biological difference will be questioned and withdrawal of dual role(both domestic and work outside home) of women⁵⁰.” “Islam has given man and women different rights, roles and responsibilities. A woman should bear the responsibility of household and rear her children while the man should play his role as provider of his family. Though their roles and duties are different in Islam, mother has given greater value than the father. So, the role of female is given much dignity than the role of male. In this sense, male female equality is not possible that may create disturbance in society. When women are more empowered conflict arises between the relationship of men and women. One will not accept the authority of another⁵¹.” Besides this another case mentions that equality does not mean that a woman should avoid wearing veil. Equality means that both men and women should have equal opportunity for performing their respective duties, she continues. The tasks of male and female will be different and so their rights and responsibilities will also be different, she further explains. All men and women should have the opportunity to perform their respective roles, she thinks⁵². Their impressions ascertain the argument of some sociologists (Ashar, 1998; Moghadam, 1991) who perceive veil as women’s’ subordination to oppressive tradition.

Liza, a professor of a renowned university, does not support male and female equality. “There is no notion of equality in life, she thinks. Equality is based on one’s view that cannot be imposed on someone from outside. Both husband and wife

⁴⁷ Case study 3.

⁴⁸ Case study 5.

⁴⁹ Case study 7.

⁵⁰ Case study 11.

⁵¹ Case study 14.

⁵² Case study 23.

should understand their situations of their family. Then they have to decide in what way they will maintain their relation and bond- either they have to reduce their demand or to help their family as possible as they can (in case both are empowered). Otherwise they have to shift in joint family for sake of their children. When husband and wife work outside home, they cannot give enough time and care to their children. Consequently, ethical deterioration and personality disintegration of the children may occur. She perceives women empowerment in a positive sense but it is necessary to know how to handle it. There are some strategies and plans of empowerment which should be followed by everyone. Otherwise, its dark side may grasp our total society. Engaging in jobs does not necessarily mean empowerment. There are some other sources of empowerment which should be taken into consideration⁵³.” Equality is not needed in all sectors as mentioned by one of the cases studied. Equality should be given in terms of receiving education and engaging in jobs, she thinks⁵⁴.

In sum, it has been found by analyzing the cases; at the family level most of them are satisfied to their family members that they give those facilities of completing graduation as like as their brothers. Their families encourage them to engage in jobs and to be self-dependent. Even some of the female students from madrasa mentioned the similar view. But they do not want equality in terms of their domestic duty. Male and female equality is not possible in a society. So, the liberal feminists’ notion of male -female sameness is rejected by them. They told that if equality is maintained in all sectors of a society, women will not care about men and vice-versa.

Participation in extra- curricular activities

The researcher explores the level of participation of veiled women in different kinds of extra-curricular activities like singing, dancing, games and sports and in their educational institutions.

Some of the cases wearing veil (burka, headscarf accompanying niqab) have not participated in any extra-curricular activities in their educational institution throughout their lives and also have not developed any skill in those activities (Singing, dancing, games and sports). They know that these are clearly forbidden

⁵³ Case study 25.

⁵⁴ Case studies 19,30.

(Haram) in Islam. Their families also teach them in this way⁵⁵. “Some cases studying in University realize that it is essential to participate in extra-curricular activities because this enhances the creativity of a person. Modern societies and organizations praise and give high demands for those persons with multiple skills. All most all jobs in Bangladesh emphasize on their candidates’ participation in extra- curricular activities. But they cannot participate and develop their skills in those activities as their families do not permit them to do by defining these as non-Islamic activities. They still cannot do that as their veiled position is not consistent with these activities⁵⁶.” Their impression can be compared with the observation of Atasory (2003), since western life- styles, consumption patterns, and political and social values are spreading globally, a homogeneous world is created. Consequently, the veil is assumed as a mark of spiritual backlash and central to a traditional culture’s struggle in contrast to cultural homogenization, Atasory emphasized.

But Neela thinks differently. She participates in all kinds of extra- curricular activities in her educational institution leaving her headscarf. She emphasize on the purity of mind. She likes to leave veil for some hours for participating in extra-curricular activities but not for all the times. She emphasizes on veiling of mind (chastity) that is not necessarily maintained by the veiling of the body⁵⁷. Another case shows how her childhood capriciousness reduces after starting to wear veil- “When I read at primary level, I played lots of games and sports with my friends. But after admitting into high school, my father ordered me to wear veil (burqa and head scarf) and forbade me to stop playing outside home. I then did not realize the meaning of veiling. Sometimes I left my veil and played outside home when my father was absent from home. In those times, I missed playing outside home⁵⁸.”

By studying the students of Madrassa, It has been found that there are different kind of extra- curriculum activities- *Gojol*(Islamic songs), *hadith*, *nath* and reciting Qur’an. These are arranged for male and female students differently. Female students more or less participate in this competition⁵⁹.

⁵⁵ Case studies 1,2,3.

⁵⁶ Case studies 23, 24.

⁵⁷ Case study 7.

⁵⁸ Case study 28.

⁵⁹ Case studies 14 , 12

It is clear that, when any family emphasizes on learning Islamic norms and values which emphasizes on practicing these throughout the life, this will never permit their children to develop skill in those extracurricular activities mentioned above. So, some of the cases become observer or listener what other performs. Some of them feel that how their families limit their boundaries of flourishing and participating in extra-curricular activities. A feeling of deprivation always works inside them. Veiled woman in their student life may wish to participate in games and sports or to learn playing musical instrument, but her dress code restricts her to do so. As a result, they limit their capacity of learning and developing multiple skills.

Educational attainment

In this thesis, 37 cases have been studied. Among them, 30 cases are student at graduation level. They have desire to complete their graduation. Their family also gives them support to do that. The cases from Madrassa also wish to study up to kamil(equivalent to M.A.). All of them more or less want to be self-dependent and to do something better for their families. So, the practice of wearing veil is not a hindrance to their educational attainment.

Control over personal income

The researcher has studied about six cases that are engage in formal paid work and investigated their control over their income.

Sharifa, a high school teacher, mentioned that she has no over her personal income. She has to give a considerable portion of her income to her father as her father has retired from his job⁶⁰.

She is a primary school teacher. She gives her total income to her father as her father bears the total expenses of her study up to Kamil (equivalent to M.A.)She wants to do something better for her family⁶¹.

Liza, a university teacher, wears Salwar *Kamiz* with a headscarf. She has full control over her personal income. She does not experience veil as an obstacle to women empowerment⁶².

⁶⁰ Case study 23.

⁶¹ Case study 16

She is a banker. She has started to wear veil after joining in her profession. She wears burqa with an *orna*. Her veiling does not create problem in her occupational setting as she has started this practice after five years of passing this profession. As a married woman, she spends full of her income for the need of her family as her husband does. But she faces difficulty in maintaining her dual role though there is a permanent domestic worker at her home to take care of her children but she has to monitor the work of her responsibility of the domestic worker by using mobile phone⁶³.

She is a banker. She wears *Salwar Kamiz* with a headscarf. She has been wearing veil just after completing her M.B.A from a renowned university. She has not faced any problem in her job for her veiling. She told that-

“I spend a portion of my income to my father’s family as he is a retired person and the rest of my income is spent for my family and my children. My husband has given his permission in this regard. But I cannot give enough time to my children that pain me much .But I want to continue my profession. My husband is supportive to me to perform my dual role⁶⁴.”

I have found one case who is a primary school teacher and married-

She has to give her total income to her husband. She has to take her everyday expenses from her husband by telling it every day. She has to show her all expenses to her husband that pain her much⁶⁵.

Actually, some of the women in formal paid work start to wear veil after engaging in jobs while other two start to wear veil at their early ages. Some of them wear veil in a liberal manner- wearing headscarf with Bengali dresses (Saree and *Salwar Kamiz*). These women spend their income in a way where they wish. It is clear that these women in formal paid work is given importance by their family members especially their husbands though there is also the reverse situation. Some of them wear veil in a liberal manner- wearing headscarf with Bengali dresses. It is clear that women in formal paid work are given importance by their family members especially by their husbands. In case of unmarried women, they find satisfaction by giving economic support to their father’s family in case their fathers are retired from their jobs.

⁶² Case study 25

⁶³ Case study 33

⁶⁴ Case study 31.

⁶⁵ Case study 26.

6.3 Summary of Chapter Six

Empowerment indicators are more or less has impact on the lives of veiled women. Most of them have given negative impression on political participation of women, decision making in their families is done through mutual conversation, their participation in extracurricular activities is low, their educational attainment is not hindered due to wearing veil and they support Islamic law of property inheritance. Actually, they more or less want to follow Islamic norm in every step of their lives.

Chapter Seven: Veiled women's perception on gendered division of labour

7.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to investigate veiled women's perception on gendered division of labour in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh. According to the gender division of labour, women will perform their domestic duties whereas men will play their roles as breadwinner. It is the concern of this chapter whether they want to engage in jobs or not. If they want to engage in jobs then what kind of jobs they will engage in. It is also the concern of the researcher to what extent veiled women accept or reject gendered division of labour. This chapter will examine the applicability of R. W. Connell's theory of gender relations on the views of veiled women in terms of gendered division of labour.

7.2 Analyzing veiled women's perception on gendered division of labour

Almost all the cases, the researcher have studied, more or less support on gendered division of labour. Their choices of occupation are greatly depended on their concern for performing domestic responsibility. For example- Ela, likes to be a teacher at primary or secondary school because she will perform her dual role including her veiled position. She does not like other professions because she cannot perform her dual role and retain her veiled position. She does not support political participation of women. She also believes that woman should receive higher education (Honors, Masters and others) to face the complexity is society. If society is simple with no economic constraint, they should not receive higher education, she added. Women's participation in working situation should be lessened for the sake of doing household chores, she thinks. More the woman involves in public domain, the more they cannot retain their character, she believes⁶⁶. Her view is more or less similar to the observation of Odeh(an Arab feminist), who mentions the meaning of veil is that women should stay at indoors out of men's way so that they cannot seduce men. They should not engage in work outside home, their suitable and

⁶⁶ Case study 1

rightful place is in the house where they play their respective role as wives and mothers, not as wage workers (Odeh, 1993).

Moreover, sexual division of labour is found in both within the home (for example- household activities and child caring) and in the labour market (issue like occupational segregation and unequal pay) (Giddens, 2006). What has been explained by Giddens can be found in the opinion of some cases. For example: Sufia has given similar impression on gendered division of labour as like as Ela. She wants to be a teacher for many reasons- continuation of learning, maintaining household chores, spreading the light of education and for maintaining veiled position. Some professions related to defense, politics (politicians), jobs as lawyer, media personality, pilot, etc. are disliked by her because she thinks some of these professions are best suited for men but not for women. She emphasizes on the acceptance of dual role by woman⁶⁷ . Some other cases⁶⁸ support the opinion of sufia. Dola also believes that household responsibility is the inborn duty for every woman. She will maintain her household responsibility (when get married) and also the job outside home.

Lia's view is different to those of the cases mentioned above. She adopts a more liberal view in the light of veiling. A woman can avoid wearing veil in case of her necessity which will not be regarded as sin by Islam, she believes. She further asserts that-

“I want to be higher educated. Teaching and banking professions attract me more than any other professions. Some professions especially defense related jobs are not suitable for women. If there is no other ways to get job, a woman can engage in those jobs. If I will face this situation, I will engage in defense related jobs by the reference of my father (who is in police). At the time of my duty, I will not wear veil but I will wear veil in other time in front of non-related men. Though household chores are the responsibility of women, I prefer equal sharing in case I will be employed⁶⁹.”

Neela has given the same impression to some extent like Lia that veil is not a hindrance to women empowerment but conservative style cannot participate in all sectors of a society. She wants to be self-dependent .She supports on receiving higher education by women. She thinks all kinds of professions are suitable for women. She

⁶⁷ Case study 2

⁶⁸ Case studies 3, 4, 5.

⁶⁹ Case study 6.

emphasizes on male and female equality in society. She does not support the acceptance of dual role by women rather choose equal sharing of household activities in case of employed women. She will leave wearing veil for the sake of building a suitable career for her⁷⁰.

Professions requiring long hours in a day and much physical strength are best suited for men as mentioned by one of the cases included in this study. She wants to be a careerist and also to perform household chores (when gets married) carefully. Man and woman should be given equal opportunity in a society, she claims⁷¹.

Jeni emphasizes on gendered division of labour between man and woman to some extent. An employed woman should perform dual role-doing jobs outside home and also doing household chores, she believes. She refers teaching, banking and some informal sector jobs like sewing, tailoring, beauty parlor etc. are best suited for woman whereas jobs requiring high public contact, long hours in a day and more physical strength are applicable for men⁷². In this sense, one of the verses of Qu'ran is influential on determining veiled women's perception on gendered division of labour- In the Qur'a, "men are given the explicit social role as providers of the family. Men are responsible for (in charge of) women with what god has preferred some of them over others and by that they spent of their wealth (4:34, sura An-Nisa)." It means that men are responsible for providing with livelihood for their families. The main theme of the gendered division of labour in the Islamist ideology is found in biological differences between men and women.

By supporting this view, Merin asserts that a woman has to maintain her responsibility as a sister, as a wife and as a mother. She has multiple roles to play. After maintaining these duties properly, a woman has less time to do jobs outside home, she asserts. She can do jobs requiring less working hours but it is totally impossible for her to be active in political system as there are massive responsibilities to perform. These will in turn create disturbance in their domestic responsibility, she thinks. She wants to be self-dependent. A woman should receive higher education wearing veil as she does. Teaching and banking professions attract her much because she will be able to maintain her dual role including her veiled position. Professions as journalists, pilot, Army, police, media personality are disliked by her. Some of these

⁷⁰ Case study 7.

⁷¹ Case study 8.

⁷² Case study 9.

are better for men worst for women. She supports equal sharing of household activities but it remains a question whether her counterpart (when married) will share household chores or not⁷³.

Shompa mentioned that-

“I want to be a magistrate as I dislike other professions. I do not prefer banking profession because it deals with interest rate that is forbidden in Islam. Professions like journalist, defense related jobs are suitable for man not for woman because she is biologically less strong than men. Their main responsibility is to maintain household activities according to Islamic norms. So, a woman can not engage in jobs requiring night duty. If there is no complexity in her family, she can engage in these jobs outside home. The aim of receiving higher education for woman is to rare and care children⁷⁴ .”

Salma has given different impression from Shompa- “ Men are guardians of women, she believes. She demands separate institutions for men and women. If working situations of men and women are separated, participation of women in all sector of Bangladesh will increase. If this separation is initiated, their modesty will be protested. She wants to be higher educated. She thinks that teaching profession is best for her because she can maintain household chores and this job wearing veil. In other professions, there is chance of harassment, non-approval of veil and insecure working environment. She defines some other professions as best suited for men. Underlying reasons are- men are biologically stronger than women and they are not responsible for performing household chores. A woman can be a teacher or doctor or magistrate .But household responsibility is the primary duty of every woman⁷⁵.”

Nipa aims to be a teacher for many reasons-less time is needed in a day, continuation of learning throughout her life and veiled position can be maintained. Banking profession is not liked by her as it deals with interest rate that is defined as *haram* in Islamic norm. She has support on division of labor between men and women in a society. Household duty is the first duty of every woman⁷⁶.

Juthi rejects women’s participation in public domain. “She avers that women are less intelligent than men. A Woman should not receive higher education if she is economically solvent. She wants to be a teacher in madrassa. Other professions in

⁷³ Case study 10.

⁷⁴ Case study 11

⁷⁵ Case study 12

⁷⁶ Case study 13.

Bangladesh are not preferred by her. She has never imagined engaging in those jobs. Educational and working situations of men and women will be separated. It is better for a woman to conduct tailoring and sewing activities inside home for marketing purposes so that she has fewer interactions with non-related men. She thinks household responsibility as the primary responsibility for women. Islam has given men and women different rights and responsibilities. A woman should bear the responsibility of household and rear the children while the men should play his role as provider of the family. Though their roles and duties are different, the mother is given greater value in Islam than the father. So, the role of women is given much dignity than the role of father⁷⁷.”

Nushrat has mentioned a different choice of profession. She wants to engage in corporate job after completing her BBA and MBA.⁷⁸

Sharmin states that women should not engage in professions which do not permit veiled position. She wants to be teacher or banker because of having secured working environment and maintaining her veiled position.. A woman should maintain household responsibility even if she works outside home⁷⁹. Similar observation has been found in another case-

“Where there is no approval of wearing of veil, there will be no participation. She like to be a teacher because she has to contact with less number of men, does not has to do work under boss and has less possibility of being harassed. She dislikes joining in multinational corporations. Any profession making contradiction with veil must be rejected, she believes. Wearing veil and burqa cannot make women empowered in a country like Bangladesh. Top posts of almost all professions impose restriction on veiled women and exclude them in engaging in these jobs. In this sense, this practice creates a hindrance to the path of success. Some profession especially some banks and multinational corporations do not allow veiled woman. But she emphasizes on accepting higher education by women⁸⁰ .” Her argument can be analyzed by the observation made by Saddikei and Ger (2007): whereas benefits of modern female identity transmitted to unveiled women, veiled women with the Islamic garb possessed a traditional, rural and backward identity.

⁷⁷ Case study 14

⁷⁸ Case study 34.

⁷⁹ Case study 16

⁸⁰ Case study 19

She is a student of DMC. At first she did not want to be a doctor. It was the desire of her parents to be a doctor. Then she gradually set her mind to do so. But she realizes that the teaching profession is best for women than the profession as a doctor as she can give much time to her family. A doctor has to study a lot throughout her life that pains her much. She believes that male-female should be given equal opportunity according to the Islamic norm⁸¹.

But Munira dreams to engage in civil administration as it is safer for women, it permits women wearing veil and it has social dignity. Other professions like police, Army, jobs in Multinational Corporation, Journalists and media personality are disliked by her. Some of these jobs do not allow veiled women to engage.

“If these professions do not impose restriction on veiled women, women empowerment will increase in our country (Interview, 17th August, 2013)”.

If her ongoing profession (when she will employed) imposes restriction on wearing veil, she will resign her job. House chores are the main responsibility of every woman even if she is employed. By keeping small family size, a woman can perform her dual role- household chores and child bearing and also the work outside home, she added⁸².

Tuli has not fixed her aim in terms of engaging in profession. “She is thinking to be a banker or a magistrate, or a lecturer in a university. She wants to continue her education by doing Mphil and PhD whether in home or in abroad. The primary responsibility of a woman is to perform her household responsibility. If they do work outside home, it may create problem in their families. By considering this problem, teaching profession is best suited for a woman because less time is needed to give, less labor is needed, and do not have to work at night. Jobs as banker, MNCs’ employee, and jobs in other private companies become hard for women. She thinks media personality, entrepreneurship, journalist, etc. are not suited for women, and these are risky for women. If one’s family gives support to do one of these jobs, she can do that. She does not support nuclear family while preferring joint family joint family is helpful to an employed women as she can get support from many other members for caring and rearing her children. A veiled women’s life-style is different from that of non-veiled women. A non-veiled women can move at anywhere at any

⁸¹ Case study 37

⁸² Case study 21

time but a veiled women cannot as she always consider to protect the dignity of veiling⁸³.”

Sharifa wants to be a BCs cadre or a lecturer of a university. The reasons for choosing these occupations are- for having social respect, moderate salary and ensuring moderate standard of living. It is true that veiled position is not accepted by some professions, she thinks. She has not decided on what will She do if she gets police cadre in BCS. Her dress will be the hindrance to engage in this job. She believes that the primary responsibility of woman is to maintain household activities and to rare children where man has to be helpful in this respect⁸⁴.

Tani likes to be a teacher for getting some facilities- less time is to give than other professions, dual role of a woman can be maintained, veiled position can be retained and less chance of being harassed. Some other professions requiring physical strength, long hours in a day and night duty should be avoided by woman and these are better for man, she describes. The first responsibility of a woman is to maintain household chores and care children, she avers. After performing these tasks, she can engage in work outside home⁸⁵.Liza has given a more practical reason for engaging in teaching profession-

At first, she joined in a multinational company but cannot adjust her time with family. Then she switched to teaching profession that gives her facility to adjust her time properly. By the side of teaching profession, she is performing her role as a mother and as a wife. She has to drop in and out her children from school, monitor all activities at home even staying at her department through mobile phone. It does not seem good that her husband will drop in and out her children from school. She thinks that it is the responsibility of women to do these activities including their other domestic responsibilities (Liza, interview, 25 August, 2013).

It is clear from the impressions of the above cases that veiled women emphasize gender division of labour in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh in the following way-

⁸³ Case study 22.

⁸⁴ Case study 23

⁸⁵ Case study 24

Occupational segregation-

Most of the cases want to engage in teaching profession. A few of them aim to engage in banking and some other in BCS centered jobs except in police. At first, veiled women consider their domestic responsibility as their primary duty and then select those professions (especially teaching and home-centered tailoring and sewing for marketing purposes) that will allow them to perform their primary duty properly. Some professions like-defense, pilot, media personality, journalist, corporate jobs are mostly disliked by them. They believe that any job imposing restriction on wearing veil must be rejected by them. They further mention that if their ongoing professions impose restriction on wearing veil, they will resign their job rather than their practice of wearing veil. Some veiled women perceive that they are not allowed to engage in Multinational jobs including in some organizations that emphasize on modern values. They recruit smart and updated employees excluding veiled women whom they define as unsmarts and traditional. Consequently, the extent of ‘occupational segregation’ is higher among veiled women. Thus limits their activities in the realm of empowerment. Contrary to this situation, a few cases want to leave their veiled position for building a suitable career for them. They gradually feel a weaker association with wearing veil.

Avoidance of public sphere-

Some of the veiled women want to avoid participating in public sphere totally. They believe that if a woman is economically solvent, there is no need to participate in jobs outside home. They prefer to play their domestic role. The greater life satisfaction of women lies in her role of mothering, they emphasize. This leads to total segregation of those veiled women from the public domain.

Acceptance of dual role-

Most of the cases want to accept dual role- domestic work including work outside home. They do not demand equal sharing of domestic responsibility in terms of employed women. They believe that, after performing their roles as daughters, or wives, or mothers, they can engage in jobs outside home. According to their view, a

woman should perform her domestic responsibility even if she is engaged in jobs outside home.

In sum, the researcher described their perception on division of labour in terms of acceptance and rejection of jobs-

Acceptance of jobs	Rejection of jobs
Requiring less hours in a day	Requiring long hours in a day
Without any night duty	Having night duty
Requiring less physical strength	Greater physical strength
Having low public contact(especially with non-related males)	Related to high public contact especially with non-related males
No or less chance of being harassed in working situation and having separate working situation for men and women.	Having insecure working situation – the chance of being harassed and having co-working situation for men and women.
Ensuring moderate salary, moderate standard of living and social dignity	obtaining less social dignity for women
Imposing no restriction on veiling position of women	Imposing restriction on veiling position of a woman
For example- teaching, informal activities like sewing and tailoring for marketing purposes, banking, BCS centered jobs except police, and doctor.	For example- defense related jobs, jobs in some selected NGOs, corporate jobs, as pilot, as journalist and sometimes banking as it deals with interest rate that is clearly forbidden in Islam.

7.3 Summary of Chapter Seven

Actually, veiled women emphasize on gendered division of labour both inside and outside home. They want to perform their domestic responsibilities even if they are engaged in jobs rather than demanding equal sharing of domestic responsibilities.

Some of them totally reject women's' participation in public sphere for the sake of performing mothering duty properly when they will get married.

Chapter Eight: The uniqueness of the sense of aesthetics and expressionism of veiled women

8.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the uniqueness of the sense of aesthetics and expressionism of the veiled women in terms of wearing make up in the context of urban and rural Bangladesh. The researcher has investigated how they perceive wearing makeup and putting of fashionable dresses in public places and their behavioral changes after starting to wear veil.

8.2 Their uniqueness of the sense of aesthetics and expressionism

After studying about 37 cases, the researcher has found three groups of veiled women in term of their uniqueness of the sense of aesthetics and expressionism. The first group likes to wear makeup and becomes occasionally unveiled. The second group rejects wearing makeup and fashionable dresses as it thinks that these increase men's attraction for women that may cause moral degradation (*fitna*) of both men and women. So, they more or less avoid it. The last one wears headscarf with Bengali dresses like *saree* and *Salwar Kamiz* including makeup. They want to represent them as smart and modern while maintaining their veiled position. Sandikei and Ger (2010) have found in this regard that, they want to present them aesthetically and tastefully. Sandikei and Ger (2010:29) avers , “ In some..., aestheticization entails legitimation of beautiful, covering along with discrediting of both indecent , open , styles of dressing and rural/traditional practices of veiling.”

The impressions of the cases falling in the first group are given below-

Niva told that-

“I become occasionally unveiled in different festivals. I like to wear makeup but for the sake of wearing veil usually i cannot wear this. But sometimes, I cannot resist me wearing makeup in public places. Veil is not consistent with makeup. I realize

that these two are not compatible to each other's. Western attire does not attract me because it is not consistent with our social system and also with Islamic viewpoint⁸⁶.” Lia has given more or less same impression like Niva-

“ I wear veil especially burqa and headscarf without neqab. I become occasionally unveiled in attaining festivals. I like to wear simple make-up. Gorgeous make-up increases men's attraction for women that is regarded as sin in the eye of Islam and this should be avoided. It is a sin to wear both western and fashionable dresses by Muslim women because one cannot retain minimum modesty by wearing these dresses. Though I know this Islamic norm, it is really hard to avoid Bengali culture and wearing makeup. In my locality, girls start to wear veil just after passing primary education. I see veil as a behavior control mechanism. It makes me polite, calm modest and creates eagerness in doing religions rituals⁸⁷.”

Neela emphasize on modern values that urges a woman to become modern and smart. She assert that-

I accept veil in a more liberal style. I become occasionally unveiled when it is necessary. I like Bengali culture. I cannot avoid wearing makeup and Bengali dresses when different Bengali festivals come. It is true that head scarf is consistent with makeup in Bengali style but burqa is not. I like to wear western attire accompanying head scarf. I think- A woman should wear fashionable dresses with only a head scarf if she wants to be modern and updated⁸⁸.

Sheela realizes that wearing makeup makes women fairer in front of men that are forbidden in Islam but sometimes she cannot maintain this Islamic norm. She likes to wear Bengali dresses with headscarf. She likes wearing simple makeup but believe that makeup and veiled position are contradictory to each other.

“Wearing make-up makes man seductive to woman. So, it should be avoided by women. Moreover, I perceive veil as behavior control mechanism. I limited my friend (especially boys) circle, reduced my interest in playing outdoor games and increase my interest in religious rituals and activities. I become polite, gentle and calm after starting to wear veil.⁸⁹”

⁸⁶ Case study 4.

⁸⁷ Case study 6.

⁸⁸ Case study 7.

⁸⁹ Case study 8.

Munira has given different impression in terms of wearing makeup and wearing fashionable attire. To maintain sociality, it is not possible to wear veil in all situations, she believes. Our society is not Islamic, it is Bengali society, she mentions. So, veiled positions may not be maintained in all situations, she thinks. She has never celebrated Bengali festivals wearing makeup in any time but if she gets enough time, she will do that.⁹⁰

Sharifa explained her view in this regard in a different way than the cases mentioned above. After getting admitted to the university, she observes how Bengali festivals are celebrated. She becomes occasionally unveiled and wears makeup and traditional dress for attending Bengali festivals- *Pahela Baishakh, Pahela Falgun, Ekusha February and so on*. She usually does not prefer to wear makeup and fashionable dresses outside the hall but when she sees her friends to do that, it raises her desire to put on these as like as them. But as Muslim, We should not celebrate Bengali festivals, she thinks. Bengali culture is not consistent with Muslim culture, she realizes. We have to avoid this, but it is not easy to avoid Bengali culture for us as we are bounded strongly by this culture, she thinks. She has preference for western attire. She wears these dresses at hall but not at home or public places. She does not see veil as a behavior control mechanism. At school, she wanted to avoid veil when she observes her friends wearing colorful dresses. But her family created pressure on her not to leave wearing veil⁹¹.

“ Sometimes I wish to go outside from home wearing fashionable Bengali dresses like my friends but I cannot do that as my family will not permit me to do so(interview, 20 August, 2013).”

In sum, it can be said that, their wish to wear makeup is heavily influenced by Bengali culture. Imitation of their friends wearing makeup and fashionable dress are crucial to motivate them to become unveil for a while. For attending festivals and ceremonies, they become unveiled though they realize that it is a sin in the eye of Islam. Consequently, a feeling of guiltiness always works inside them. To maintain social interaction, they have to wear makeup avoiding veil. In this sense, they become veiled at one time, but unveiled at another time. So, there is a fluctuation in maintaining two cultures- the Bengali culture and the Muslim culture. Besides, they

⁹⁰ Case study 21.

⁹¹ Case study 23.

perceive veil as a behavior control mechanism. Their childhood capriciousness vanishes after starting to wear veil. They become calm, quiet and modest after starting to wear veil. Some of them like to wear western dresses inside home or hall but not in public places as these are not approved by the societal norm of Bangladesh.

The notions of the cases falling in the second group studied by the researcher are as follows-

Ela rejects wearing makeup. In all situations and occasions, she wears veil (burqa and headscarf). She does not like to wear makeup as it increases men's attraction for women. Wearing makeup is allowed in front of husbands not of non-related males according to Islamic norm, she mentions. It is not consistent with veiled position, she thinks. She has preference for western dresses and put on these inside home not outside. She wants to engage in jobs wearing veil. Her childhood capriciousness lost after starting to wear veil and she became calms, modest, and polite⁹².

Sufia prefers to wear simple makeup inside home for her own satisfaction. She does not like to wear western dress⁹³.

Shorna have a desire to go public place with makeup but considering her veiled position, she cannot do that⁹⁴. She mentioned that-

“ I like wearing makeup but cannot wear it for my veiled position. I attain all festivals and occasions wearing veil and Burqa. I have never imagined that I will go outside home with makeup though I have a cherished desire to do so. I have no interest in western dresses. A Muslim woman should not wear this attire. I have lessened my interaction with friends (boys) after starting to wear veil and also realizing such interaction as sin.”

Dola has given same impression like Shorna-

“I do not like to put on makeup as I think it is not consistent with wearing veil. I have never gone outside with makeup after starting to wear veil. Sometimes I want to observe Bangali festivals-Pahela Baishakh, Pahala Falgun and Bijoy dibosh with makeup and traditional dresses but cannot do that for my veiled position.” I believe

⁹² Case study 1.

⁹³ Case study 2.

⁹⁴ Case study 3.

that once the practice of wearing veil is adopted it should be continued throughout the whole life according to the Islamic norm” .Western dresses are not worn by me. I maintain less interaction with non-related men (for necessary purposes) and my family teaches me to be polite throughout my life⁹⁵.

Shompa has never gone outside home wearing makeup and fashionable dresses. In all occasions and festivals, she wears veil in same style (burqa and head scarf). She likes to wear simple makeup inside home. She has never gone outside with makeup. Even she has never wished to do so. She has a negative impression on Bengali culture. Any kind of nationalism is forbidden (haram) in Islam. So, she has never celebrated any Bangali festival in this way. She does not view veil as a behavior changing mechanism. She was and continues to be introvert, calm and quite before and after starting to wear veil. She maintains interaction with non-related men in a way prescribed by Islam⁹⁶.

Salma has never wished to wear makeup and she rejected western attire by defining these as boys' dresses⁹⁷. She stated that-

“In all occasions, I wear veil. Bengali culture is not compatible with veiled position. So, I have never enjoyed Bengali festivals wearing traditional dresses and make-up. I have never imagined doing so as Islam orders Muslim women to do that. A woman is allowed to show her beauty in front of her husband. I do not like western dress because identities of both boys and girls cannot be separated who wear these dresses .According to the rule of Islam, a girl should not wear the dresses of a boy.”

Nipa has told the same thing like Salma-

“ I wear veil (burqa, headscarf accompanying neqab) even in attaining all functions and festivals. My intension to wear makeup reduces after starting to wear veil. From then, I have never wished to wear makeup for going outside. A woman should not go outside wearing makeup as it increases attraction of man for women (Interview, 10th August, 2013).” I do not like to wear western attire. I see wearing veil as a behavior changing tool- avoidance of playing outside home including childhood capriciousness. I become polite, gentle and modest after starting to wear veil⁹⁸.”

Juthi , Lopa and sharmin have supported the view of Nipa⁹⁹.

⁹⁵ Case study 5

⁹⁶ Case study 11

⁹⁷ Case study 12

⁹⁸ Case study 13

⁹⁹ Case studies 14, 15, 16

Alpha does not like to wear makeup as she wears veil. The intention to wear makeup and fashionable dresses reduces for wearing veil and burqa, she explains. Western attire does not attract her as it is opposed to Islamic value¹⁰⁰.

It is clear that, this group of women represents their strong association with Islamic norm. They do not want to become unveiled and to present them in an attractive style because they think that this may be responsible for moral degradation of both men and women. Some of them assert that wearing makeup and veiled position are not consistent with each other. Some other has mentioned that their intension to wear makeup and fashionable dresses reduces after starting to wear veil. They have never gone outside in this manner. This manner is always permitted in front of *Mahram* (with whom marriage is not permitted by Islam).

Besides this, the impression of the cases falling in third group studied by the researcher are given below-

Liza is a professor of a university. She likes to wear fashionable Bengali dresses especially *Salwar kamiz* with head scarf and wears makeup in public domain. She presents her in a smart manner while maintaining her veiled position¹⁰¹.

Another case asserts that-

“I think our society is becoming modern. So, I am taking my veiling practice in a more liberal way. In order to cope with modern system, I have to present me in a smarter way. But I cannot avoid veiling because it is the command of god for every Muslim woman. I wear fashionable dresses with headscarf including makeup. I have never worn Burqa. Moreover, I think that corporate job will never allow engaging a woman wearing veil with neqab. If I want to engage in corporate job, I have to adopt this practice in a way allowed by this job¹⁰²”.

It is clear that this group of veiled women try to adopt their veiling practice in relation to their choices of profession. They make a combination between traditional

¹⁰⁰ Case study 17

¹⁰¹ Case study 25

¹⁰² Case study 32

and modern value. On the one hand, they want to follow Islamic norm and also the ethos of modern value on the other.

8.3 Summary of Chapter Eight

There are three groups of veiled women found by this study. The first group wears makeup and fashionable dresses to attain occasions but they think that it is consistent with veiled women. They cannot resist them when they see their friends wearing makeup and fashionable dresses. The second group shows strong association with Islamic norm. They totally avoid wearing makeup and fashionable dresses. Their wish to wear makeup vanishes after starting to wear veil. The last group wears Bengali dresses with headscarf accompanying niqab. They want to present them as modern and updated while maintaining their veiled position. Some of them want to leave veil for the sake of building a suitable career.

Chapter Nine: Summary and Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

This thesis aims to learn whether there is any relationship between veil and women empowerment in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh. This piece of work explores the reasons of wearing veil by the Muslim women in Bangladesh, their perception on gender division of labour, the reflection of empowerment indicators like participation in politics, decision making, participation in extra-curricular activities, educational attainment, inheritance of property and control over own income (in case of employed women) in the lives of veiled women and their sense of aesthetics in terms of wearing makeup and fashionable dresses. After analyzing these issues, the researcher has shown how veiling practice empowers or disempowers women in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh.

9.2 Explaining the reasons for wearing veil

A woman may start to wear veil by the inspiration of her family without realizing its religious meaning whereas another may start to adopt this practice by inspiring from religious norm. Some other women adopt this practice due to their 'collective social arrangements' in society expect them to do so while other sees it as a means of ensuring social security.

It is a common practice among Muslim women to wear veil. It is a matter of debate whether scriptural norms command Muslim women to wear veil or not. The researcher has found several reasons for wearing veil by studying some cases living in urban and rural Bangladesh which are as follows:

Family: some veiled women start to wear veil at their early age through a process of 'gender socialization' within their families without realizing Islamic norm of wearing veil. It is sometimes a sign of family honour and tradition in Bangladesh that the Muslim women have to adopt this practice. Sometimes it may be forced on women by the male member of their families. *Religion:* veiled women adopt this practice by realizing the meaning of Hadith and Qur'an. They see it as mandatory (*faroz*) for every woman. A woman takes a conscious decision to wear veil by realizing this Islamic norm rather than showing conformity to their families or the influence from their family members. *Political:* some Islamic political parties are active in the political system of Bangladesh. They motivate

women to adopt this practice. *Economic*: some veiled women especially in rural areas assert that wearing veil saves money as frequent buying of new dresses is not needed. They can do with a few numbers of dresses. This is true in terms of lower middle class women. *Social*: sometimes 'collective social arrangements' in a society expect women to wear veil. Social expectation in rural areas including some localities in urban areas in Bangladesh requires women to wear veil. In these localities, veiled position is respected by all while rebuking the non-veiled women. Sometimes veiling is regarded as a means of ensuring social security. Dared boys usually do not tease a woman wearing veil. So, it is adopted as a means of avoiding harassment on the streets. *Educational level*: a significant number of women are studying in Islamic institution like madrassa in Bangladesh where veiling practice is mandatory for women. Most of the girls studying here start to wear veil from their 7-10 years of age when they have no idea or maturity to understand the meaning of wearing veil. *Other*: women adopt this practice or are imposed on them by other as a behavior control mechanism. Most of them become calm, quite, and modest after starting to wear veil. It is often seen as maintaining chastity and modesty by women. Women adopt this practice at their early age by imitating their friends wearing veil.

There are multiple reasons for wearing veil by Bangladeshi women. Most of the women the researcher has studied cannot take conscious decision to wear veil. This practice is usually adopted through their socialization process by their families. Moreover, madrassa education makes it obligatory for women to wear veil. In this sense, some of the women wear veil only for their institutional pressure. They practice it in attaining their classes but in other situations and occasions, they become unveiled. Some of them see veiling as having normative standard to guide one's behavior that teaches women to become calm, quite, and modest. Almost all the cases both in urban and rural Bangladesh perceive veil as a means of ensuring social security especially protecting them from eve-teasing, while other women reject this notion by describing that veiled women in public places and transport are seen as having weaker mind to protest against any kind of harassment that makes them more vulnerable. Unless changing the attitude of men toward women, harassment of women on the streets and workplaces cannot be reduced. Researcher found that veiling in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh is not necessarily adopted as a realization religious obligation; it is practiced as a result of intrusion of gender socialization, patriarchal attitude, collective social arrangements of a society, and involvement in Islamic political parties.

9.3 Reflection of Empowerment indicators the lives of veiled women

Participation in political system

In sum, it can be said that almost all the cases I have studied have no desire to participate in politics of Bangladesh. The factors behind these are investigated by the researcher-

Religion: Islam has played a crucial role in making decision by veiled women whether they will participate in politics or not. According to the rule of Islam, women cannot be a leader of a country; men are the guardian of women, they believe. Considering this rule, veiled women avoid participating in this domain. Furthermore, women in politics have to contact with large number of men that violates the meaning of their veiled position as perceived by some of the veiled women included in this study. Thus more or less reduces their participation in this domain. Some of them assert that the way in which politicians do veil is not a right way that they do not wear veil in an Islamic way. But some of the veiled urban women assert that they have no objection on woman who participates in politics but they have no wish to participate in this realm.

Family: a woman has to play multiple roles within her family as sisters, mothers and as wives. After performing these roles, a woman has less time to do jobs outside home. They may engage in job requiring few hours in a day. In political system, there are a lot of responsibilities that a woman cannot handle.

Distrust in existing political system: veiled women perceive that the existing political system of Bangladesh is not Islamic. It is a destructive political system. All kinds of wrong deeds, a politician can do, they believe. There are lots of risks in this system that a woman is incapable to handle.

Expectation for a new political party: some of the veiled women do not blame political system but democratic system that creates all kinds of injustices. They expect abolition of democracy and the emergence of Islamic system. In this Islamic system, women can participate in politics maintaining their veiled position and

modesty. Some other veiled women demand the reformulation of the existing political system. A constructive and creative political system can motivate them to participate in this domain.

Actually, most of the cases emphasize on Islamic rules and norms in terms of their desire to participate in politics. They perceive political system of Bangladesh as non-Islamic. Thus, discourage them to participate in this realm. Another group avoids participating in this realm by considering their domestic responsibility.

Decision making

The researcher has tried to investigate how veiled women take their decision in life and found following issues-

Mutual conversation- some veiled women take their decision in life through mutual conversation with family members .Taking decision independently-some of the women , especially employed women take their decision in life independently . Their families give them importance in terms of decision making. ***Imposition-*** some students from Madrassa states that their fathers and other family members decide to get them admitted to Madrassa. They have not given any chance to decide whether they study in general line or in Madrassa.

Property inheritance

In terms of property inheritance, most of the cases support Islamic law of property inheritance. Some of them wish to get their fathers' property according to this law that one will get half of the property of her brother which he gets from her father. They believe that men are given more property than women from their father's property but they are given much restriction and obligation than the women. If they do not give their sister's property, there is law in Bangladesh securing women's right on property. Some of them will never demand property from their fathers if they can engage in job with moderate salary. Moreover, Muslim women get property from three sides i.e., from their fathers, from their husbands and from their sons as mentioned by few cases studied. In sum, none of the cases demands and/or support equality in property inheritance.

Perception on equal opportunity

The researcher has investigated the perception of veiled women on equal opportunity between men and women. Religious values play a crucial role on determining their views on equal opportunity. Besides, there are some other factors that are as follows- Religion: most of veiled women believe that a female cannot be equal with male. As Allah has created men and women with different figures, rights and responsibilities, equality between men and women is not possible. Muslim women should be given rights according to Islamic norm. There are several factors that are as follows-

Family: some other veiled women mentioned that equality between men and women is necessary but not in all sectors of a society otherwise it may create chaos in family and society. Equality in all sectors of society may cause misunderstanding between men and women. Thus one will not accept the authority of another. This may create in family life. They think that this may create problem in family life. Some of them believe that there is no notion of equality in life, she thinks. Equality is based on one's view that cannot be imposed on someone from outside. Both husband and wife should understand their situations of their family. Then they have to decide in what way they will maintain their relation and bond- either they have to reduce their demand or to help their family as possible as they can (in case both are empowered). Otherwise they have to shift in joint family for sake of their children. When husband and wife work outside home, they cannot give enough time and care to their children. Consequently, ethical deterioration and personality disintegration of the children may occur. She perceives women empowerment in a positive sense but it is necessary to know how to handle it. There are some strategies and plans of empowerment which should be followed by everyone. Otherwise, its dark side may grasp our total society. Engaging in jobs does not necessarily means empowerment. There are some other sources of empowerment which should be taken into consideration as found by analyzing few cases included in this study.

Demanding equality in receiving education and job: Equality is not needed in all sectors, some of them think. Equality should be given in terms of receiving education and engaging in jobs Equality does not mean that a woman should avoid wearing

veil. Equality means that both men and women should have equal opportunity for performing their respective duties. The tasks of male and female will be different and so will be their rights and responsibilities. All men and women should have the opportunity to perform their respective roles, they believe.

In sum, it has been found by analyzing the cases, at the family level most of them are satisfied to their family members that they give them facilities of completing graduation as like as their brothers. Their families encourage them to engage in jobs and to be self-dependent. Even some of the female students from madrassa mentioned the similar view. But they do not want equality in terms of their domestic duty. Male and female equality is not possible in a society. So, the liberal feminists' notion of male female sameness is rejected by them. They told that if equality is maintained in all sectors of a society, women will not care about men and vice-versa.

Participation in extra-curricular activities

Veiled women studying at University level do not participate in extra-curricular activities like singing, dancing and games and sports in their educational institutions. They have not developed their skills in those activities as their families forbade them to participate in and develop skills in those activities as Islam defines these activities as haram .By studying the students of Madrassa, the researcher found that there are different kind of extra- curricular activities- Gojol(Islamic songs), hadith, nath and reciting Qur'an. These are arranged for male and female students differently. Female students more or less participate in this competition.

It is clear that, when any family emphasizes on learning Islamic norms and values and also on practicing these throughout the life, this will never permit their children to develop skill in those extracurricular activities mentioned above. So, some of the cases become observer or listener what other performs. Some of them feel that how their families limit their boundaries of flourishing and participating in extra-curriculum activities. Veiled woman in their student life may wish to participate in games and sports or in others, but her dress code restricts her to do so. As a result, they limit their capacity of learning and developing multiple skills. There are also few cases who participate in these activities without wearing veil but at other times they re-veil their head and body leaving the face clear.

Educational attainment

It has been found that veil is not a barrier to educational attainment rather in rural areas it helps young girls to attain their classes in Madrassa without accompanying anyone. It helps protect them from dared boys.

Almost all the cases have desire to complete their graduation. Their family also gives them support to do that. The cases from Madrassa also wish to study up to kamil(equivalent to M.A.). All of them more or less want to be self-dependent and to do something better for their families. So, the practice of wearing veil is not a hindrance to their educational attainment.

Control over income

Some of the employed veiled women can spend their income in a way they wish. It is clear that women in formal paid work are given importance by their family members especially by their husbands. Unmarried veiled (employed) women find satisfaction by giving economic support to their father's family in case their fathers are retired from their jobs.

9.4 Veiled Women's Perception on gendered division of labour

It is clear from the impressions of the cases the researcher studied that veiled women emphasize gender division of labour in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh in the following way-

Occupational segregation-most of the cases want to engage in teaching profession. A few of them aim to engage in banking and some other in BCS centered jobs except in police. At first, veiled women consider their domestic responsibility as their primary duty and then select those professions (especially teaching and home-centered tailoring and sewing for marketing purposes) that will allow them to perform their primary duty properly. Some professions like-defense related jobs, pilot, media personality, job as journalist, corporate jobs are mostly disliked by them. They believe that any job imposing restriction on wearing veil must be rejected by

them. They further mention that if their ongoing professions impose restriction on wearing veil, they will resign their job rather than their practice of wearing veil. Some veiled women perceive that they are not allowed to engage in Multinational jobs including in some organizations that emphasize on modern values. They recruit smart and updated employees excluding veiled women whom they define as unsmarts and traditional. Consequently, the extent of occupational segregation is more or less higher among veiled women than the non- veiled women. Thus limits their activities in the realm of empowerment. In this sense, R. W. Connell's theory of gender relations is applicable here. Contrary to this situation, a few cases want to leave their veiled position for the sake of building a suitable career for them. They gradually feel a weaker association with their veiled position.

Avoidance of public sphere- some of the veiled women want to avoid participating in public sphere totally. They believe that if a woman is economically solvent, there is no need to participate in jobs outside home. They prefer to play their domestic role. The greater life satisfaction of a woman lies in her role of mothering, they emphasize. A few of them believe that more the women engage in public domain, the more they cannot keep up their modesty as they have to interact with a large number of non-related males. This leads to total segregation of those veiled women from the public domain.

Acceptance of dual role- most of the cases want to accept dual role that means performing domestic work including the work outside home. They do not demand equal sharing of domestic responsibility even in case of employed women. They believe that, after performing their roles as daughters, or wives, or mothers, they can engage in jobs outside home. According to their view, a woman should perform her domestic responsibility even if she is engaged in jobs outside home.

In sum, the researcher described their perception on division of labour outside home in terms of acceptance and rejection of jobs-

Acceptance of jobs-

Jobs requiring less hours in a day, less physical strength, without any night duty, having low public contact (especially with non-related males), no or less chance of being harassed in working situation and having separate working situation for men and women, ensuring moderate salary, moderate standard of living and social dignity, imposing no restriction on veiling position of women are preferred by them. For example- For example- teaching, informal activities like sewing and tailoring for marketing purposes, banking and BCS centered jobs except police. They will more or less wish to engage in these jobs.

Rejection of jobs-

Jobs requiring long hours in a day, having night duty, greater physical strength, having high public contact(especially with non-related males),having insecure working situation – the chance of being harassed and having co-working situation for men and women, obtaining less social dignity for women, imposing restriction on veiling position of a woman. For example- defense related jobs, jobs in some selected NGOs, corporate jobs, as pilot, as journalist and sometimes banking as it deals with interest rate that is clearly forbidden in Islam. They will more or less avoid engaging in these jobs

Actually, veiled women emphasize on gender division of labour both inside and outside home. They want to perform their domestic responsibilities even if they are engaged in jobs rather than demanding equal sharing of domestic responsibilities. Moreover, if they want to engage in some selected professions considering their domestic responsibility and veiled position, they will be segregated from certain occupations. Consequently, this will more or less limit their realm of activities in empowerment.

9.5 Their uniqueness of the sense of aesthetics and expressionism of veiled women

After studying about 37 cases, the researcher has found three groups of veiled women in term of their uniqueness of the sense of aesthetics that are given below.

The first group of veiled women likes to wear makeup and becomes occasionally unveiled; another group of veiled women rejects wearing makeup and fashionable dresses as it thinks that these increase men's attraction for women that may cause moral degradation (*fitna*) of both men and women. So, they more or less avoid it. The last one wears only headscarf with Bengali dresses like *saree* and *Salwar Kamiz* including makeup. They want to represent them as smart and modern while maintaining their veiled position. In terms of the first group, it can be said that, their wish to wear makeup is heavily influenced by Bengali culture. Imitation of their friends wearing makeup and fashionable dress are crucial to motivate them to become unveiled. For attending festivals and ceremonies, they become unveiled though they realize that it is a sin in the eye of Islam. To maintain social interaction, they have to wear makeup avoiding veil. In this sense, they become veiled at one time, but unveiled at another time. So, there is a fluctuation in maintaining two cultures- the Bengali culture and the Muslim culture. Besides, they perceive veil as a behavior control mechanism. Their childhood capriciousness vanishes after starting to wear veil. They become calm, quiet and modest after starting to wear veil. Some of them like to wear western dresses inside home or hall but not in public places as these are not consistent with the societal norm of Bangladesh.

The second group of veiled women represents their strong association with Islamic norm in terms of wearing veil. They do not want to become unveil and to present them in an attractive style in public places because they think that this may be responsible for moral degradation of both men and women. Some of them assert that wearing makeup and veiled position are not consistent with each other. Some other has mentioned that their wish to wear makeup reduces after starting to wear veil. They have never gone outside wearing makeup and fashionable dresses.

The last group of veiled women tries to adopt their veiling practice in relation to their choices of occupation. They make a combination between traditional and modern value. On the one hand, they want to follow Islamic norm and also the ethos of modern value, on the other. They wear fashionable dresses with a headscarf only. Especially the cases who want to engage in MNCs, private banks and in some other NGOs fall into this category.

9.6 Comparative discussion on the perception of rural and urban veiled women

There are certain differences between the views of urban and rural veiled women:

Rural women in Mahigonj, Rangpur perceive veil as ensuring social security on the streets and public transport. Dared boys usually do not tease them in their locality. In public transport, men left their seats seeing veiled women standing. People in their localities see them with respect.

But veiled women in Dhaka city do not perceive veil as ensuring social security. They experience teasing, pushing, and pinching in public transport and in market places. They view that in those public places, veiled women are seen as having weaker mind to protest against eve teasing. So, they are teased more by men. They further mention that without changing men's attitude toward women, social security of women cannot be ensured.

There are variations in the perceptions of veiled women in both urban and rural areas in terms of engaging in jobs outside home. Some rural veiled women believe that if a woman has no economic constraint, she does not need to receive higher education and to engage in jobs outside home. If women engage in public domain, they have to contact with large number of non-related males. Consequently, it will lessen the dignity of their veiled position. Some of them told that a woman can engage in home centered small tailoring and sewing for marketing purposes so that they can maintain their household activities including their veiled position. Another group of veiled women prefer only teaching profession as less hour in a day is needed, veiled position can be maintained, less contact with non-related males and less chance or no chance of being harassed.

On the contrary, urban veiled women want to engage in job outside home-teaching and banking professions are preferred by them. Some of them want to leave their veiling practice for the sake of building a suitable career.

Some of the urban veiled women have given same argument of those of rural veiled women. In Dhaka city, there is also a group of veiled women with more liberal choice who wears *Salwar Kamiz* with headscarf. They like to wear makeup and to present them as smart and modern and at the same time maintaining their veiled position. They believe that different MNCs and commercial banks are recruiting genius, smart and updated employees. As they want to engage in those jobs, they are

taking their veiling style in a more liberal way that will be accepted by those sectors of jobs.

In terms of their views of domestic responsibilities and division of labour, both urban and rural veiled women show different arguments. Some rural veiled women perceive domestic responsibility as the primary duty of every woman. Success of a woman lies on her mothering duty. They will not engage in job for performing their mothering duty properly even if they are completing their graduation. Consequently, this may lead to occupational segregation that may limit their participation in the activities of empowerment. Some of the veiled women want to engage in selected jobs so that they can maintain their domestic duty. They believe that a woman should perform her domestic duty even if she is engaged in job. They further argue that jobs requiring greater physical strength, long hours in a day, including high risk are not best for women but for men (defense related jobs, media personality, pilot, journalist).

On the contrary, urban veiled women think differently from those of rural veiled women in this regard. Though some of the urban veiled women support the argument of rural veiled women by stating that, if economic constraint exists, a woman can engage in job otherwise it will not be permitted by Islam. They define some professions as best suited for men not for women. Moreover, some of them demand equal sharing in case they are engaged in jobs. Some of them raise the question that if they demand equal sharing of domestic responsibility then it remains uncertain whether their counterpart (when will get married) will help or not in this regard.

In terms of male and female equality both urban and rural veiled women have given the same arguments. They believe that a woman cannot be equal with men, as Allah has created them with biological difference, they should be given different rights, responsibilities and duties. If male and female equality is given in a society, then one will not accept the authority of another. Consequently, conflict will arise in personal relationship and in society.

The senses of aesthetics in terms of wearing makeup and wearing fashionable dresses are different among rural and urban veiled women. Some of the urban veiled women become occasionally unveiled. They wear makeup and traditional dresses to attain Bengali festivals – *Pahela Baishakh*, *Pahela Falgoon* and *Ekusha February*. But at other time they wear veil in public places. So, there is fluctuation in maintaining Bengali culture and at other time Muslim culture. Some of them like to

wear western attire at hall or at home but not in public places. So, they are caught in three cultures. Another group of urban veiled women do not like to wear makeup and Bengali dresses in public places. They strictly maintain their veiled position. They have never imagined going outside wearing makeup and fashionable dresses. Sometimes they wish to do so but cannot do this by considering the dignity of their veiled position. They believe that once the veiling practice is adopted, it should be continued throughout the live according to Islamic norm. They have never gone outside wearing makeup and Bengali dresses. Some of them believe that wearing makeup is permitted in front of husband not of other males according to Islamic norm.

Actually, it can be said that actually, there are similarities and dissimilarities of the perceptions of veiled rural and urban women in terms of engaging in job, performing domestic responsibilities, of the perception on division of labour, and of the sense of aesthetics in term of wearing makeup and wearing fashionable dresses at public places in the context of rural and urban Bangladesh.

9.7 Conclusion

In the context of rural and urban Bangladesh, Muslim women wear veil not only as a religious obligation but there are some other reasons for wearing veil. Almost all the cases, the researcher studied have not taken conscious decision (realizing the meaning of Islamic norm in terms of wearing veil) to wear veil. They adopt this practice as a result of the influence of gender socialization, patriarchal attitude, societal expectation, and also considering it as a means of ensuring social security. Veiled women in the rural areas experience veil as ensuring social security while in urban areas veiled women are teased pinched and pushed in public transport and market places in Dhaka city. In this sense, veiled urban women do not perceive veil as ensuring social security. Empowerment indicators have more or less impact in the lives of veiled women. They more or less consider Islamic norms in selecting their profession and in doing anything. Most of the cases avoid participating in political system by considering their domestic responsibility. They also believe that a woman cannot be leader of a country and it is hard to retain their veiled position in political system. Some other veiled women hate democratic system. They mentioned that if Islamic system is established, then they will participate in political system of

Bangladesh. Moreover, veiled women mentioned that their families are Islamic minded and they are not given any opportunity to participate and develop skills in extra-curricular activities like- singing, dancing , games and sports. They believe that these are clearly forbidden in Islam. They take their decision in life through mutual conversation with their family members. It is true that, in doing anything, they consider Islamic norm. They support Islamic law of property inheritance. They think that domestic duty is the primary duty of every woman. After performing this duty, a woman can engage in jobs outside home. They also believe that a woman can engage in jobs requiring less hour in a day, less physical strength, without any night duty, less or no chance of being harassed in the work place, less public contact especially with non-related males and no imposition of restriction on their veiling practice. Consequently, they prefer teaching profession and home centered work of handicraft for marketing purpose. At the same time, another group does not want to engage in job outside home even if they are completing their graduation as they think that it may hamper their domestic duty. Consequently, occupational segregation occurs that limit their realm activities in empowerment. After analyzing the responses of veiled women, the researcher identified three groups of veiled women in terms of their preference for makeup and wearing fashionable dresses. The first group becomes occasionally unveiled and likes to wear makeup and fashionable dresses in attaining festivals and ceremonies. They have loose association with Islamic norm regarding this issue. The second group has strong association with Islamic norm. They do not like to wear makeup and fashionable dresses in public places. They have never imagined that they will go outside home wearing makeup and fashionable dresses. Their intension to wear makeup and fashionable dresses reduces after starting to wear veil. The last group wants to be modern and updated. They wear fashionable dresses with headscarf. They do not want to unveil. They like to wear makeup maintaining their veiled position. They think that as the society and organization are becoming modern, they try to adopt their veiling practices in a way permitted by those organizations i.e., multinational corporations, private banks and NGOs. It is clear that veiled women with a conservative style (wearing burqa and head scarf accompanying neqab)get less chance to be empowered whereas veiled women with liberal style (wearing Bengali dresses with head scarf, and wearing veil without neqab) faces less constraint to be empowered in almost all sectors of Bangladesh. Most of the top posts of almost all organizations and institutions of Bangladesh

emphasize on the capitalist construction of females' bodies in term of recruiting female employees, while excluding the veiled women as they fall on the second category mentioned above. The researcher has found this explanation by interviewing some of cases from the University of Dhaka. At the family level, young girls are socialized in way where they will wear veil, maintain less interaction with men(except in necessary purposes) and will be polite, calm and modest as a Muslim woman,. At the structural level, all sectors of women empowerment i.e., social ,political and economic in Bangladesh are reflecting capitalist and consumerist ethos discarding veiled women's participation in these sectors while recruiting smart and non-veiled women. Thus veiling practice to some extent leads to occupational segregation that more or less limits their boundary of being empowered.

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Glossary

Akika	A ceremony for fixing name of a new born baby.
Basantoo	The Spring
Bidat	Thing that is not permitted in Islam
Faroz	Thing that is mandatory in Islam.
Fashionable Dresses	Kamiz with tights or jeans, Fotua with jeans, Kurti with tights and so on.
Fitna	Chaos
Gojol	A kind of Islamic song.
Haram	Thing that is forbidden in Islam
Kamil	A degree given by Madrasa that is equivalent to MSS.
Madrasa	Islamic educational institution.
Nath	A kind of Islamic song
Orna	It is like Chador worn by Bengali women folk
Pahela Baishakh	Bengali New Year
Pahela Falgun	The first day of spring
Salwar Kamiz	Female garb usually worn by the women in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
Saree	National dress for women folk in Bangladesh.

Appendix-1

Checklist for Interviewing

1. Time of starting to wear veil.
2. Changing in wearing veil.
3. Reasons of wearing veil.
4. Style of wearing veil in different situation and occasion.
5. Preference for making-up. Frequency of going occasion in making-up manner
6. Impression on the relationship veil and make-up of Bengali women.
7. Preference for wearing western dress.
8. Behavioral changes after starting to wear veil.
9. Opinion about the relationship between social security and veil.
10. Participation into different kinds of extra-curricular activities like dancing, singing, games and sports in educational institution.
11. Perception on women empowerment.
12. Reflection of empowerment indicators in the lives of veiled women.
 - Participation in politics
 - Decision making
 - Property inheritance
 - Equal opportunity
 - Educational attainment
 - Full control over personal income
13. Choices of occupation as women.
14. Responsibility of doing household activities

Appendix-2

Presentation of the Case studies

Case study -1

I am Ela (age-22). I read in Begum Rokeya University at Rangpur. I live in an urban area and I wear veil (burka and headscarf accompanying niqab). I started to wear veil at the age of 15 as it is mandatory (Faroz) for every Muslim women. By realizing the meaning of sura Nissa (Quran), I was inspired to wear veil. In all situations and occasions, I wear veil in this style. Violation of this Islamic norm is regarded as sin in Islam. So, non-veiling status is clearly avoided by me. I do not like to wear makeup as it increases men's attraction for women. Wearing makeup is allowed in front of husband but is not allowed in front of non-related males (Maharam). To wear makeup is not consistent with veiled position. I have preference for western dresses and put on these only inside home. I want to engage in jobs wearing veil. My childhood capriciousness has gone after starting to wear veil. I become calm, modest, and polite. I perceive veil as giving social security. I experience that dared boys do not tease me and almost all see me with respect. I have not participated in any extra-curricular activities in my educational institutions throughout my life and also have not developed any skills in those activities like singing, dancing, games and sports. These are clearly forbidden in Islam, I know. I like to be a teacher at primary or secondary school where I will perform my dual role including my veiled position. I do not like other professions because I cannot perform my dual role and also veiled position. I do not support political participation of women. "I totally hate and reject the political system of Bangladesh let alone participating in this domain (Ela, interview, 3 August, 2013)." I also believe that woman should receive higher education (Honors, Masters and others) to face the complexity in society. If society is simple with no economic constraint, then they should not receive higher education. Women's participation in working sectors should be lessened for the sake of doing household chores. More the woman involves in outside work, more they cannot

retain their character, and I believe male and female equality cannot be possible in the context of Bangladesh. A female cannot be equal with male because Allah has created them with different figures, rights and responsibilities. I agree with Islamic law of property inheritance. I take my decisions in life by discussing it with my sisters and parents. Sometimes my elder sisters impose restriction on my choice and force me to follow their advice (interview, 3 August, 2013).

Case study-2

I (Sufia, age-21) am a student of Begum Rokeya university at Rangpur with rural background. I wear veil (wear burqa and head scarf without niqab). I am inspired by Islamic norm regarding the practice of veil and also by the inspiration from my family especially from my elder sisters. I want to protect myself from the staring of men by wearing veil. In all occasions, I wear veil. I prefer to wear simple makeup for my own satisfaction. I do not like to wear western dress. I have not participated in extra-curricular activities in my educational institution and have no interest in developing skills in those activities. These are not permitted in Islam. Women empowerment in Bangladesh will bring something positive, if all women participate in this realm wearing veil. Women are harassed and oppressed for moving in a non-veiled manner. This practice makes women polite, gentle and calm. I want to be a teacher for many reasons-continuation of learning, maintaining household chores, spreading the light of education and for maintaining veiled position. Some professions related to defense, politics (politicians), jobs as lawyer, media personality, pilot, etc. are disliked by me because I think some of these professions are best suited for men but not for women. I emphasize on the acceptance of dual role by woman. I support the Islamic Law of property inheritance. Sometimes my family creates pressure on taking decision in my life. I appreciate male and female equality in society.

Case study-3

I (Shorna, age-20) am a student of Begum Rokeya University at Rangpur with rural background and started to wear veil(burqa with a headscarf accompanying neqab and leaving the eyes open) at the age of 14 due to the inspiration from my family and

also from my locality. At first, I could not understand why I had worn veil. I began to realize its Islamic meaning after passing three years of this practice. I like wearing makeup but cannot wear it for my veiled position. I attend all festivals and occasions wearing veil and Burqa. I have never imagined that I will go outside home wearing makeup and fashionable dresses though I have a cherished desire to do so. I have no interest in western dresses. A Muslim woman should not wear this attire. I lessen my interaction with friends (boys) after starting to wear veil and also realizing such interaction as sin. I have no interest in extra-curricular activities in my educational institution. My childhood fickleness was totally vanished after starting to wear veil. I think that -“Wearing niqab can ensure best security for woman as my face remains hidden for which man cannot judge my beauty (Interview 3rd August, 2013).” Such a woman is respected by the members of her locality. I can protect me from teasing of dread boys. Veil ensures social security. I want to be a teacher because it helps to perform dual role and to allow maintaining veil. I do not like some professions like-Army, police, magistrate, custom officer, media personality, journalist, etc. Some of these professions do not allow women to wear veil while some other are best suited for men. I do not prefer women’s participation in politics in a country like Bangladesh. I believe that household responsibility is inborn duty for every woman. I will maintain my household responsibility (when get married) and also the job outside home. I emphasize on Islamic law of property inheritance. I reject the notion of male and female equality in all sections of society. Muslim women should enjoy and have her rights according to the norm of Islam.

Case study-4

I (Niva, age-20) am a student of Begum Rokeya University at Rangpur with urban background. I think that our social system is Islamic. Thus encourage me to wear veil. I was also inspired by Jamaat-e –Islami women in my locality to wear veil. I gain insight about the Muslim veiling by these women and motivate to adopt and also to continue this practice. At first, I practiced veil in a conservative style and later adopts it in a liberal manner because wearing niqab hides one’s identity and it becomes hard to wear neqab in hot weather. I become occasionally unveiled in different festivals. I like to wear makeup but cannot do that for the sake of wearing veil. Veil is not consistent with makeup; I realize these two are not compatible to

each other's. Western attire does not attract me because it is not approved by our social system and also by Islamic viewpoint. Social security for women is impossible without wearing veil- it reduces the chance of being teased outside home and staring of man at woman. All kinds of extra-curricular activities have been avoided by me. Veiled position cannot be maintained in all sectors of women empowerment because this increases the range of interaction with men including non-approval of wearing veil by women. Consequently, the dignity of practicing veil may be eroded. I want to be teacher or banker for some reasons- I can perform my dual role and also can maintain my veiled position. Other professions like defense, journalist and pilot, are best suited for men not for women. I have support on Islamic law of property inheritance. A woman can never be equal with man as Allah has created them with different figures, rights and responsibilities (interview, 4 August, 2013).

Case study-5

I (Dola, age-21) came from a rural area and reads in Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur. I started to wear veil (burqa with headscarf leaving the entire face open) at the age of 19 because my family members encourages me to adopt this practice. My father thinks that a veiled woman will not do wrong deeds that violate family honour. So, he wanted to see me wearing veil. I do not like makeup as I think it is not consistent with wearing veil. I have never gone outside with makeup and fashionable dresses after starting to wear veil. Sometimes I want to celebrate Bengali festivals like Pahela Baishakh, Pahala Falgun and Ekusha February wearing makeup and traditional dresses but cannot do that for my veiled position. I believe that- "Once the practice of wearing veil is adopted it should be continued throughout whole life." Western dresses are not worn by me. I maintain less interaction with non-related men (for necessary purposes) and my family teaches me to be polite throughout my life. Veiled position ensures social security to some extent- everybody in my locality respects me and man usually leaves his seat in public transport seeing a veiled woman when she is standing. I have not participated in extra-curricular activities in my educational institutions. I want to engage in banking or teaching profession because these are secured for woman where I can maintain my duty wearing veil. Jobs in NGO's, defense and media personality are not preferred by me. Some of these jobs are better for men. I emphasize on accepting dual role by women. I accept

Muslim law of property inheritance. Equality between men and women is necessary in some sectors but not in all sectors which may create chaos in society. Much equality may create misunderstanding between men and women. A woman should not participate in political system in Bangladesh as she has to keep contact with large member of non-related males which violates the Islamic meaning of veiling (interview, 4 August, 2013).

Case study-6

I (Lia, age-22) am completing my graduation in Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur and started to wear veil when I read in class eight. I live in an urban area where individuals expect women to wear veil. My family chooses to see me wearing veil. I feel easy in moving outside as my body shape cannot be gazed by others (especially non-related males). At the beginning I did not understand why I worn veil. But now I realize that it carries religions meaning. I wear veil in a liberal style and become occasionally unveiled in attaining festivals. I like to wear simple makeup. Gorgeous make-up attracts men more and this should be avoided. It is a sin to wear both western and fashionable dresses because a woman cannot retain minimum modesty by wearing these dresses. In my locality, girls start to wear veil just after passing primary education. I see veil as a behavior control mechanism. It makes me polite, calm modest and creates eagerness in doing religions rituals. Though veiled position cannot ensure social security totally, I am respected by others on streets and market places. Nobody teases me. I have no interest in participating in extra curriculum activities in my educational institution. I want to be self -dependent. I want to have my father's property according to Muslim law of property inheritance .I take my decision in life by discussing with my family members. I want to be higher educated. Teaching and banking professions are preferred by me. I support sexual division of labour describing some professions as best suited for men. If there is no other ways to get job a woman can engage in those jobs. If I will face this situation, I will engage in defense by the reference of my father (who is in police). At the time of my duty, I will not wear veil but I will wear veil in other time in front of non-related men. Though household chores are the responsibility of women, I prefer equal sharing in case I am engaged in a job. My mother helps me in decision making .I think that veil

brings success in my life because it makes my polite and calm instead of being fickle and capricious (interview, 8 August, 2013).

Case study-7

I (Neela, age 22) read in Begum Rokeya University at Rangpur and live in an urban area. I wear head scarf with *Salwar Kamiz* after passing H.S.C examination. My mother inspired me to do so. As veiling is not sanctioned by the government of Bangladesh, the decision to wear veil rests on personal choice which in turn depends on family norms. Then I was inspired by religious theme. I accept veil in a more liberal style. I become occasionally unveiled when it is necessary. I like Bengali culture. It is true that head scarf is consistent with makeup in Bengali style but not burqa. I like to wear western attire accompanying head scarf. I think-“A woman should wear fashionable dresses with only a head scarf if she wants to be modern and updated.”I participate in all kinds of extracurricular activities like acting ,dancing singing games and sports without wearing head scarf .I emphasize on purity of mind when I leave veil for some hours for participating in extracurricular activities but not for all times. I assume that veil ensures social security partially but not totally that it lessens eve teasing to a little extent, people in my locality praises veiled women by assuming them as polite and modest. But it is not accurate in all times, I realize. Veil is not a hindrance to women empowerment but conservative style cannot participate in all sectors of a society. I want to be self-dependent and am aware of Muslim law of property inheritance. I support on receiving higher education by women. I think all kinds of professions are suitable for women. I emphasize on male and female equality in society. I do not support the acceptance of dual role by women rather choose equal sharing of household activities in case of employed women. I will leave wearing veil for the sake of building a suitable career for me. “I have no objection on those women who want to participate or who are participating in politics. But I myself have no interest in politics. If a woman has desire to do so and has the ability to lead, she can participate in this domain (interview, 8 August, 2013)”.

Case study-8

I (Sheela, age-21) am completing my graduation from Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur and lives in an urban area .I started to wear veil (burqa and a headscarf accompanying neqab) at the age of fourteen. My parents encourage me to wear veil. It is easy to motivate one to adopt this practice when one reads in High School. After few months of continuing this practice, I stopped wearing niqab for suffering from sinusitis. Wearing veil is better than wearing Salwar Kamiz because it is a loose dress through which one's body shape cannot be gazed by others. Wearing veil carries religious meaning, I realize. My parents encourage me to wear veil. I like to wear Bengali dresses with headscarf. I like wearing simple makeup but believe that makeup and veiled position are contradictory to each other. "Wearing makeup makes man seductive to woman, (Interview 8th August, 2013)." So, it should be avoided by women. I perceive veil as a behavior control mechanism. I have limited my friend (especially boys) circle, reduced my interest in playing outdoor games and increase my interest in religious rituals and activities. I become polite, gentle and calm after starting to wear veil. Veiling reduces the extent of eve teasing on streets, I experience. I have not participated in extracurricular activities in my educational institution- cultural functions, games and sports. Veiled position is not consistent with these activities. I believe -"A woman should wear veil outside home when she will participate in receiving higher education, political leadership and in jobs by maintaining her veiled position." Professions requiring long hours in a day and much physical strength are best suited for men. I am career oriented and also want to perform household chores (when gets married) carefully. I emphasize on Islamic law of property inheritance. I take my decision in life through mutual conversation with my family members. Man and woman should be given equal opportunity in a society. I believe that political system of Bangladesh is not suitable for women. The chance and extent of harassment in political system is much more than in other sectors. So, a woman should not participate in politics (interview, 8 August, 2013).

Case study-9

I (Jeni, age 20) am studying in Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur and I come from a rural area. I started to wear veil, when I read in class nine. There are several reasons for wearing veil- feeling of easiness to wear, it saves me in public transport, encouragement from my family and imitating my friends who wear veil. At first, I did not realize why I worn veil. After passing H.S.C examination, I understood its religious meaning. I like wearing simple makeup and become occasionally unveiled in attaining festivals. Makeup is not consistent with wearing veil. I prefer to wear western attire inside hall but not in my family and public places because our society does not accept wearing this dress. I do not perceive veil as a behavior control mechanism. I am always calm, quiet and polite before and after starting to wear veil because my family socializes me in this way from my childhood. A veiled woman faces less eve teasing and is respected by others in her locality. According to some veiled women, non-veiled position is associated with moral looseness and degradation. I have seen some non-veiled women interacting with non-related males and falling in love affairs that are clearly forbidden in Islam. Members of my locality treat them as bad girls and have not given any respect to them. Veiled position teaches me to be reserved, modest and to monitor my own behavior according to the teachings of Islam. Among many extracurricular activities, dancing attracts me much. I have not developed my skill in dancing as my family teaches me that dancing is clearly forbidder in Islam. I support on equal participation of man and woman in a society. A woman should engage in jobs outside home wearing veil. I want to be self-dependent. Political participation is not possible by wearing veil. There are some other reasons for which I do not like political participation by women- there are two parties in Bangladesh who seek their own interest rather than the development of our country which I totally dislike and there is no third party to participate. Only new and creative one can motivate me to participate in this domain (interview, 8 August, 2013). I have given importance on taking decision in my family. I emphasize on different roles and duties for man and woman. I refer teaching, banking and some informal sector jobs like sewing, tailoring, beauty parlor etc. as best suited for woman whereas jobs requiring high pubic contact, long hours in a day and more physical strength are applicable for men. An employed woman should perform dual role-doing jobs outside home and also doing household chores, I believe (interview, 8 August, 2013).

Case study-10

I (Merin, age-22) am completing my graduation from Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur and come from a rural area. I started to wear veil (burqa and a headscarf leaving the entire face open) when I read in class nine. Nobody forces me to wear veil. Religions norms encourage me to adopt this practice. I attain festivals and functions wearing Bengali dress with head scarf. Bengali way of wearing makeup and veiled position are not consistent with each other. I have no interest in western dresses. Veil is a behavior control mechanism for me. I became calm, polite and gentle after starting to wear veil .It reduces the extent of eve teasing and makes a safer situation for me in public transport. I am always interested in participating extracurricular activities- dancing, singing, games and sports but cannot participle for my veiled position. I perceive women empowerment in a positive sense but women are always oppressed by men even educated and employed women are not different. A woman can participate in all sectors of a society wearing veil. Though the number of women participating in politics is increasing day by day, it is still relatively low. A woman has to maintain her responsibility as a sister, as a wife and as a mother. So I have multiple roles to play. After maintaining these duties properly, a woman has less time to do jobs outside home. I can do job requiring less working hours but it is totally impossible for me to be active in political system as there are massive responsibilities to perform. These will in turn create disturbance in their domestic responsibility. I am aware of property inheritance according to Islamic law. My father helps me in decision making. I want to be self-dependent. A woman should receive higher education wearing veil as I do. Teaching and banking professions attract me much because I will be able to maintain my dual role including my veiled position. Professions as journalists, pilot, Army, police, media personality are disliked by me. Some of these are better for men but are not suitable for woman. I support equal sharing of household activities but it remains a question whether my counterpart (when married) will share household chores or not (interview, 9 August,2013).

Case study-11

I (Shompa) came from a rural area and a student of Begum Rokya University at Rangpur. I wear veil (burqa and headscarf accompanying niqab)and I myself is inspired to wear veil by realizing the meaning of Hadith and Quran. Veiling is mandatory for Muslim women, I think. In all occasions and festivals, I wear veil in same style. I like to wear simple makeup inside home. I have never gone outside with makeup. Even I have never wished to do so. I have a negative impression on Bengali culture. Any kind of nationalism is forbidden (haram) in Islam. I do not view veil as a behavior changing mechanism. I am always introvert, calm and quite before and after starting to wear veil. I maintain interaction with non-related men (*maharam*) in a way prescribed by Islam. Veiled position cannot ensure social security. It cannot be ensured without changing men's attitude toward women. It is true that veiled position is respected by some people. I participated in extra- curricular activities in an Islamic way as I was a student of madrassa up to H.S.C. I perceive that women empowerment is increasing in all sectors of our society. But it remains a question whether this ensures women's total empowerment and whether this reduces their oppression and harassment. I want to be a magistrate as other professions are disliked by me. Banking is not preferred by me because it is related to interest. Professions as journalist, pilot and defense are best for man but not for woman. Women are not biologically fitted for those professions. Their main responsibility is to maintain household activities. So, a woman can not engage in jobs requiring night duty. If there is no economic complexity in my family, I will not engage in job outside home. The aim of receiving higher education for woman is rearing and caring children. I say that our education system does not give fulfilled knowledge. I am aware of Islamic law of property inheritance. In terms of decisions making, my family gives me importance. I like woman receiving higher education. I do not support equality between men and women. If equality is recognized, then certain other facilities for women in Bangladesh will be withdrawn- quota for female in primary school teaching and BCS will be withdrawn, biological differences will be questioned and withdrawal of dual role of women. A woman should participate in a political system of a country according to the rule of Islam that a woman can be a minister rather than being a prime mister of a country(Interview 9th August, 2013).I demand

separate educational and working situations for men and women in Bangladesh(interview, 9 August, 2013).

Case study-12

I (Salma, age-20) read in Rangpur karamatia kamil madrassa at Mahigonj . I started to wear headscarf accompanying a *frog* when I read in class one. After passing class six, I started to wear veil and burqa and head scarf accompanying niqab. At first my family encourages me to wear veil, then my educational institution and then comes the realization of scriptural understanding. In all occasions, I wear veil. Bengali culture is not compatible with veiled position. So, I have never enjoyed Bengali festivals wearing traditional dresses and makeup. I have never imagined doing so as Islam orders Muslim women. I do not like western dress because identities of both boys and girls cannot be separated who wear these dresses .According to the rule of Islam, a girl should not wear the dresses of a boy. In my village, wearing veil reduces the extent of eve-teasing and I can go outside home alone .As I am a student of madrassa, I participate in extra-curricular activities in an Islamic way. I think that women empowerment in Bangladesh is not taking place according to the norms of Islam. I totally reject women's participation in political system. Men are guardians of women, I believe. I claim separate institutions for men and women. I want to be higher educated. I think that teaching profession is best for me because I can maintain household chores and this job wearing veil. In other professions, there is chance of harassment, non-approval of veil and insecure working environment. I define some other professions as best suited for men. Underlying reasons are- men are biologically stronger than women and they are not responsible for performing household chores .A woman can be a teacher or doctor or magistrate .But household responsibility is the primary duty of every woman. I want to be self-dependent and takes my decision in life through mutual conversation with my family especially my mother is so influential here. I emphasize on Muslim law of property inheritance. . I know that there are different kind of extra- curricular activities- *Gojol*(Islamic songs), hadith, *nath* and reciting Qur'an. These are arranged for male and female students differently. I more or less participate in this competition (interview, 9 August, 2013).

Case study-13

I (Nipa, age-21) am a student of Rangpur kuramatia Kamil Madrassa at Mahigonj and lives in a rural area. I started to wear veil (burqa and a headscarf with neqab) at the age of fourteen. I was inspired by the command of the Almighty. I realize that as a Muslim woman, I have to follow the wives of the Messengers. In all occasions, I wear veil in a same style. I do not like wearing makeup and I have never wished to wear makeup for going outside. A woman should not go outside wearing makeup as it increases attraction of man for women. I do not like to wear western attire. I see wearing veil as a behavior changing tool- avoidance of playing outside home and child hood capriciousness. I become polite, gentle and modest after starting to wear veil .This practice reduces the extent of eve teasing on streets. As a madrassa student, I participate in extracurricular activities in an Islamic way –reciting Qur‘an, singing Islamic songs etc. I aim to be a teacher for many reasons i.e., less time is needed in a day, continuation of learning throughout my life and veiled position can be maintained. Banking profession is not liked by me as it deals with interest. I support that men and women should have different roles and duties in a society. Household duty is the first duty of every woman. Wearing veil and burqa brings success in my life without which I could not attend classes in my educational institution for the disturbance made by dared boys in my locality. My parents and my elder sisters help me in making decision. I accept Islamic law of property inheritance. I do not like women’s participation in political system. I want to be self-dependent and economically independent (interview, 11 August, 2013).

Case study-14

I (Juthi, age-21) started to wear veil when I read in class five at Rangpur Karamatia Kamil Madrassa, Mahigonj. She added neqab when she was a student of class six. I wear veil as it is the command of god and is the inspiration from my family. Besides these, it is mandatory in madrassa education to wear veil (burqa and headscarf accompanying niqab) by women. In all situations, festivals and occasions, I wear veil in this style. I do not like to wear makeup. Veil and makeup are not consistent with each other. Wearing makeup by women is permitted in front of husbands not of

others (non-related males). I do not like western attire because this seems to be boy's dress for me. All kinds of capriciousness and fickleness vanished after starting to wear veil. Wearing veil makes women less attractive for men thus reducing the chance of eve teasing. I perceive women empowerment in Bangladesh is a negative sense. The more the women work outside home, the more the society will face complexity. I think that women are less intelligent than men. A Woman should not receive higher education if she is economically solvent. I want to be a teacher in madrassa. Other professions in Bangladesh are not preferred by me. I have never imagined engaging in those jobs. Educational and working situations of men and women will be separated. It is better for a woman to conduct tailoring and sewing activities inside home for marketing purposes so that I have fewer interactions with non-related men. I think that household responsibility is the primary responsibility for women. I experience some facilities for wearing veil-men cannot gaze body shape, I can attain madrassa alone and can get ready to go out quickly (frequent putting on new dresses to go outside home is not needed). I can take my decision in life by the help of her parents. I accept Islamic law of properly inheritance. She totally rejects equality between male and female which may create chaos in society. When women are more empowered, conflict arises in the relationship between men and women. Islam has given men and women different rights and responsibilities. A woman should bear the responsibility of household and rare the children while the men should play his role as provider of the family their roles and duties are different but the mother is given greater value in Islam than the father. So, the role of women is given much dignity than the role of father. I totally reject the equality between men and women that may create chaos in society. I also reject women's participation in political system. All kinds of public places must be under the control of men. It is not possible for women to participate in political system by wearing veil in the context of Bangladesh. I maintain interaction with men in a way prescribed by Islam. I know that there are different kind of extracurricular activities- *Gojol*(Islamic songs), hadith, *nath* and reciting Qur'an. These are arranged for male and female students differently. I more or less participate in this competition. I want to get my father's property according to Islamic law(interview,11 August, 2013).

Case study-15

I (Lopa, age-25) am a primary school teacher living in a rural area in Rangpur. I completed my graduation from Rangpur karamatia Kamil madrassa at Mahigonj. I started to wear veil (burqa and headscarf with neqab) when I read in class six. The underlying reasons are- my family encourages me to do that and institutional pressure (madrassa education) to wear veil. I stopped wearing neqab after joining in my profession as office committee has forbidden that. Students cannot understand the speech of a teacher wearing niqab. I like wearing simple makeup. Bengali culture and festivals are totally opposed to those of Islam. A Muslim woman should not enjoy these. I do not like to wear western dresses. My childhood capriciousness diminished after starting to wear veil. Veiled positions facilitate me in transport and save me from eve-teasing. I prefer to be a teacher by which I can maintain my dual role. Professions as teacher, banker, employee of NGOs and jobs in informal sectors like sewing and tailoring are best suited for women. My parents help me in making decision about my education and profession but my mother is very much concerned with my veiling practice. I have no control over my personal income. I give my total income to my father as I want to do something good for my family. I do not like women's participation in political system. I will never demand my father's property and has no intention to interfere here (interview, 11 August, 2013).

Case study-16

I (Sharmin, age- 21) am completing my graduation from Rangpur Karamatia Kamil Madrassa, Mahigonj and lives in rural area (KoshaiTuli,Mahigong) in Rangpur. I wear veil (burqa and headscarf with niqab, socks in hands and legs). There are several reasons for wearing veil -institutional rule, veil is mandatory (Faroz in Arabic term) for Muslim women and it protects me from eve teasing. I attain different festivals and occasions wearing veil. I think that wearing veil and wearing makeup are not consistent with each other. I totally reject wearing makeup. I have never wished to go outside with makeup. I have no interest in wearing western dresses referring these as boy's dresses which are clearly forbidden for women to wear by Islam. All kinds of capriciousness reduce after starting to wear veil. I believe that my veiled position will save me from the fire of hell. I participate in extracurricular

activities in an Islamic way in my education institutions. I want to be teacher or banker because of having secured working environment and maintaining my veiled position. Women should engage in professions which do not permit veiled position. A woman should maintain household responsibility even if she works outside home. I do not know anything about the law of property inheritance. My parents and elders sisters help me to take decision. I want to be self-dependent. I believe that there are biological differences between men and women. As a result, their social roles will be different from each other (interview, 12 August, 2013).

Case study-17

I (Alpha, age-20) got admitted to madrassa at class seven and started to wear veil. The reasons behind wearing veil are- it is compulsory to wear veil in Madrassa, it is also mandatory to wear veil for every Muslim woman and to follow the wives of the messengers of Islam. I do not like to wear makeup. Wearing veil and burqa reduces the intention to wear makeup. Western attire does not attract me as it is opposed to Islamic value. I have not developed any skills in extra-curricular activities. My family teaches me to be calm, quiet and polite. Wearing veil and burqa reduces the chance of being teased by dared boys in my locality. Women can engage in professions like doctors, engineer, NGOs and journalist. Other professions especially defense are best suited for men. Household responsibility is the first responsibility for every woman. Participation in politics is opposed to Islamic value. I do not prefer Bengali tradition and culture. I am aware of Islamic law of property inheritance. I take my decision in life through a mutual conversation within family members (interview, 12 August, 2013).

Case study -18

I (Habiba, age-21) read in Rangpur Karamatia Kamil Madrassa, Mahigonj and started to wear veil and burqa as a Madrassa student. "I wear veil as my Madrassa makes it obligatory (interview, 12 August, 2013)." I realize that wearing veil is mandatory in Islam. I do not like to wear makeup and have no interest in wearing western attire. I do not like Bengali Culture as it is contradictory to Muslim culture. Veiled Position saves me from eve teasing in my locality. I demand for separate educational and

working situations for men and women. I want to complete my graduation. I want to involve in service oriented jobs like doctor or teacher or NGOs where I will maintain my veiled position and will be self-dependent. I realize that some professions like defense, pilot, etc. are not suitable for women but for men. There are biological differences between men and women. So, their rights and responsibilities should be different. The equality between male and female is not possible. I am aware of Muslim law of property inheritance. My father helps me in making decision. My father believes that Madrassa education will give Islamic knowledge by the side of general knowledge. So, he decided to get me admitted to madrassa. I do not like women's participation in political system because Islam does not allow women's leadership. I want to be self -dependent by engaging in one of the professions mentioned earlier (interview, 12 August, 2013).

Case study-19

I (Ruba, age -22) am completing my graduation from University of Dhaka and lives in Dhaka city. At first my family encourages me to wear veil (burqa and headscarf with niqab) after passing H.S.C examination. At that time, I was not aware of Islamic inspirations and became occasionally unveiled for attaining festivals. I was extensively influenced by Islamic inspiration after coming university of Dhaka. I realize it as mandatory for ever women (command of god over women). I lessen my interaction with non-related men except in necessary purposes- knowing class schedule from class representative, patterns of presentation etc. I totally reject wearing makeup and western attire. I refuse equal opportunity of men and women. Allah has created men and women differently and has given them different rights. A woman should join in the realm of woman empowerment wearing veil .Where there is no approval of wearing veil, there will be no participation in public domain. My childhood capriciousness reduces after starting to wear veil. I emphasize on Islamic law of property inheritance. In my locality, veiled position is respected but not in D.U. campus where some people tunes them by calling as terrorist(*jangi*), some teachers insult them for wearing veil and some other people think them as having impure mind beneath the veil and burqa. I like to be a teacher because I have to contact with less number of men, do not have to do work under boss and has less possibility of being harassed. I dislike joining in multinational corporations. Any

profession making contradiction with veil must be rejected. Wearing veil and burqa cannot make women empowered in a country like Bangladesh. Top levels of almost all professions impose restriction on veiled women and exclude them in engaging in these jobs. In this sense, this practice creates a hindrance to the path of success. Some professions especially some banks and multinational corporations do not allow veiled woman. But I emphasize on accepting higher education by women. I support Islamic law of properly inheritance. I take my decision by consulting with my senior sisters. I reject male and female equality. Allah has created man and woman with difference and also in their rights and responsibilities. As a Muslim, everybody should participate in politics according to the rule of Islam. It is essential to engage in political system as every step in our lives is determined by politics. I do not blame political system rather democratic system that creates injustice in all sectors of our society. So, the existing political system should be overthrown by establishing Islamic system. Then women can participate in this domain where their modesty and respect will be protected (Interview, 13th August, 2013).

Case study-20

I (Rodela, age-21) am a student of the University of Dhaka living in Dhaka city. I feel that my veiled position is imposed on me by my father when I read in class eight. I wear veil (burqa and headscarf with neqab) to maintain the family status and the expectations of my locality. At first, I wore niqab. After coming D.U., I reject wearing neqab. At the beginning of my practice, I did not realize its religious meaning but now I understand this by reading the meaning of *surat Nissa and Surat Ahjab*. I attain Bengali festivals wearing traditional dresses accompanying headscarf. BCS centered jobs and banking professions are preferred by me. I dislike defense related jobs as my veiled position cannot be maintained. I do not experience veil as ensuring social security while creating problems-“A veiled woman is treated as having weaker mind to protest against eve teasing. Consequently, she faces problem in public transport in Dhaka city (Interview, 15th August, 2013)”. I have faced such problems for several times. I became introvert and diminished my childhood capriciousness after starting to wear veil. I do not like western dresses as body shape can be gazed by other’s (men). Usually, a boy sees a girl as a sexual object. My body shape cannot be gazed by men through wearing veil and burqa. I have not

participated in extracurricular activities in my educational institution. I have not developed any skill in those activities. I take my decision in life by consulting with my mother and friends. My mother encourages me to be an independent woman. I am aware of Islamic law of property inheritance but my father may create problem in giving my portion. A working woman usually has to perform her double standard though support from family members is needed. As a citizen of Bangladesh, it is enough to have voting rights. There is no need to participate in political system of a woman in Bangladesh. A lot of risks are associated with our political system. All kinds of wrong deeds, a politician can do here. It is quite difficult to handle such risks as a woman. So, I totally reject women's participation in politics of Bangladesh (interview, 15 August, 2013).

Case study -21

I (Munira, age-22) started to wear veil (burqa and headscarf except niqab) when I read in intermediate first year. I was inspired by Islamic norms. I become occasionally unveiled for attaining different festivals. To maintain sociality, it is not possible to wear veil in all situations. Our society is not Islamic, it is Bengali society. So, veiled positions may not be maintained in all situations. I have never celebrated Bengali festivals for having no time. Veil is not a barrier to the way of women empowerment. All jobs including civil administration are consistent with veiled position. I have no preference for western dresses. I do not perceive veil as behavior changing mechanism as I am always polite and modest. I maintain less contact with non-related men because my family and also Islam forbid such interactions. I perceive veil as giving social security. Men do not stare at me after starting to wear veil. My relatives see me positively. I see extra-curricular activities as a means of increasing creativity but I have no interest in participating in those activities. I perceive women empowerment in a positive sense. As half of the population is women, development of a country is not possible without the empowerment of this section. Consequently, per capita income and GDP will be increased. But it is true that veiled positions cannot be maintained in all sectors of a society. I dream to engage in civil administration as it is safer for women, it permits women wearing veil and it has social dignity. Other professions like police, defense, jobs in Multinational Corporation, Journalists and media personality are disliked by me. Some of these

jobs do not allow veiled women to engage. “If these professions do not impose restriction on veiled women, women empowerment will increase in our country (Interview, 17th August, 2013)”. If my ongoing profession (when i will be employed) imposes restriction on wearing veil, I will resign my job. By consulting with family member, I take my decision in life. I do support on Islamic law of property inheritance. I will not demand my father’s property if I can engage in job with better salary. Men and women should be given rights according to the norm of Islam. I have completed my graduation from the University of Dhaka and wish to do MPhil and PhD. I have interest in participating in political system if it does not impose restriction on my veiled position. Household chores are the main responsibility of every woman even if she is employed. By keeping small family size, a woman can perform her dual role- household chores and child bearing and also the work outside home (interview, 17 August, 2013).

Case study-22

I (Tuli, age-21) read in University of Dhaka and started to wear veil (burqa and headscarf except niqab) when I read in intermediate first year. The underlying reasons are- religious inspiration and family tradition (almost all female relatives wear veil). By seeing my mother, sister and grandmother, I decided to wear veil. I become occasionally unveiled to attain different functions. I like to wear makeup for my personal satisfaction not for others. For attaining marriage ceremony of my relatives, I usually wear gorgeous makeup without wearing veil but it is seen badly by others when they see a veiled women becoming occasionally unveiled. Considering this issue, I have never observed Bengali festivals- *Pahela Baishakh*, *Pahela Falgun* and *Ekusha February* with makeup and wearing Bengali dresses. I have no interest in wearing western dresses as these are boy’s dress not of girls. I do not see veil as a behavior control mechanism. I am always calm and quite in my life because my family teaches me to do so. I maintain less interaction with men. My family does not permit such interaction. I believe that wearing veil and burqa ensures social security for me. It reduces the chance of eve teasing. “I have not found any record of veiled women of being raped, victim of acid violence and eve-teasing. Everybody has respect toward veiled women and treats politely with them”. I have not participated in extra-curricular activities in my educational institution. I have no

interest in developing skills in those activities- singing, dancing, games and sports. My family discourages me to do these by reminding the norm of Islam. A woman should be given independence to some extent in terms of decision making. I take my decision by consulting with my brothers and sisters. I am aware of property inheritance according to the rule of Islam. I do not support feminist movement and equality between men and women. God has not created men and women in a same way. There are biological differences between them leading to different rights and responsibilities. Equality is not needed in all sectors. I have not fixed my aim in terms of engaging in profession. I am thinking to be a banker or a magistrate, or a lecturer in a university. I want to continue my education by doing MPhil and PhD whether in home or in abroad. The primary responsibility of a woman is to perform her household responsibility. If they do work outside home, it may create problem in their families. By considering this problem, teaching profession is best suited for a woman because less time is needed to give, less labor is needed, and do not have to work at night. Jobs as banker, MNCs' employee, and jobs in other private companies become hard for women. I think media personality, entrepreneurship, journalist, etc. are not suited for women, and these are risky for women. If one's family gives support to do one of these jobs, she can do that. I do not support nuclear family while preferring joint family that is helpful to an employed women as she can get support from many other members for caring and rearing her children. A veiled women's life-style is different from that of non-veiled women. A non-veiled women can move at anywhere at any time but a veiled women cannot as she always consider to protect the dignity of veiling (interview, 17 August, 2013).

Case study-23

I (Sharifa, age-26) have completed my graduation from the University of Dhaka. I started to wear veil when I read in class six. At first, I wore chador with Bengali dress. Now I wear veil and burqa except niqab. The reasons for wearing veil are- imitating my friends wearing veil, protecting me from eve-teasing and moving outside home with modesty. It is not easy to hide body shape wearing other dresses. I become occasionally unveiled for attaining Bengali festivals- *Pahela Baishakh*, *Pahela Falgun* and *Ekusha February*. Though makeup is not preferred so much by me, I wish to go outside with makeup by seeing my friends doing such things.. But as

Muslim, We should not celebrate Bengali festivals. Bengali culture is not consistent with Muslim culture. We have to avoid this, but it is not easy to avoid Bengali culture for us as we are bounded strongly by this culture. I have preference for western attire. I wear these dresses at hall but not in home and public places. I do not see veil as a behavior control mechanism. At school, I wanted to avoid veil seeing my friends wearing colorful dresses. But my family created pressure on me not to leave wearing veil. “ Sometimes I wish to go outside wearing fashionable Bengali dresses like my friends but I cannot do that as my family will not permit me to do so(interview, 20 August, 2013).” I experience veil as ensuring social security. “When one wearing *Salwar Kamiz* and another wearing veil, the first one will be teased severely by dared boys while the last one can relieve of such bad comments”. I have not participated in extra-curricular activities in my educational institution. I have not developed any skill in those activities as these are clearly forbidden in Islam. I observe women empowerment in positive sense. In all sectors of our society, participation of women is increasing. Though my family gives me importance in term of decision making, I take advice from my sisters and brother. This helps me to take right decision in every step of my life. I accept Islamic law of property inheritance. Equality between men and women is not supported by me because I am influenced by Islamic inspiration. Men are the guardian of women and men should behave gently with their wives. But a women’s desire should be emphasized where there will be less domination. It is the duty of every woman to abide by the advice of her father and husband (if she is married). Equality does not mean that a woman should avoid wearing veil. Equality means that both man and woman should have equal opportunity for performing their respective duties. The tasks of male and female are different and so will be their rights and responsibilities. I want to be a BCS cadre or a lecturer of a university. The reasons for choosing these occupations are- for having social respect, moderate salary and ensuring moderate standard of living. I reject women’s leadership in political system let alone wishing to participate here. Islam does not permit woman to be the leader of a country. This is defined as *Haram* by Islam. So, as Muslim, we should abide by this command of Islam that does not permit women to be a leader of a country. It is true that veiled position is not accepted by some professions. I have not decided on what will I do if I get police cadre in BCS. My dress will be the hindrance to engage in this job. Veiled position is insulted by some individual. Some teachers at my department insult me for wearing

veil. The primary responsibility of woman is to maintain household activities and to rare children where man has to be helpful in this respect (interview, 20 August, 2013).

Case study -24

I (Tani, age-22) read in Dhaka University and lives in Dhaka city. I started to wear veil (burqa and head scarf accompanying niqab) when I read in class six. Reasons for wearing veil are- I develop my interest in this sense by seeing my mother to wear veil and also imitating my friends who wear veil. After passing H.S.C examination, I realized the teaching of Islam on the veiling of women. I wear veil in attaining occasions and festivals also. I have preference for wearing makeup but cannot wear makeup for wearing veil. I have never gone to any function wearing makeup. The current status of women empowerment is good for a society like Bangladesh. But veiled position is not allowed in some sectors of women empowerment. All sectors should consider the merit of a person rather than his/her dress code. I have no preference for wearing western dresses as these are best for man not for woman. These cannot hide body shape of a woman while making them most seductive to man. After starting to wear veil, my childhood capriciousness vanished. I lessened my interaction with boys and reduced my interaction with the outside world. I do not experience veil as ensuring social security. In Dhaka city, men teased at both veiled and non-veiled women. They are pinched and pushed at public transport and market places, I noticed. I also faced such situations for several times. It is true that some people treat me with respect. I have not participated in extra-curricular activities because my family does not give any opportunity to develop skills in those activities like singing, dancing, games and sports. My family teaches me that these activities are forbidden in Islam. I take my decision by discussing with my family members. I do not like women's participation in political system as veiled position cannot be maintained. According to Islam, a woman cannot be a leader of a country. So, a woman should avoid participation in politics. I believe that all women should receive higher education and should be self-dependent. I do not accept the notion of male and female equality because god has created them with biological difference. So, there will be difference in their rights, responsibilities and opportunities. I like to be a teacher for getting some facilities i.e., less time is to give than other professions, dual

role of a woman can be maintained, veiled position can be retained and less chance of being harassed. Some other professions requiring physical strength, long hours in a day and night duty should be avoided by woman and these are better for man. The first responsibility of a woman is to maintain household chores and care of her children. After performing these tasks, she can engage in work outside home (interview, 25 August, 2013).

Case study-25

I (Liza, age-35) am a professor of Dhaka University. I have been practicing veil for eight years by inspiring from religious theme. My family is Islamic minded and influences me to wear veil. I wear veil in a more liberal manner – wear head scarf with *Salwar Kamiz* including makeup. Nobody forces me to wear veil. In all occasions, I wear veil. I have preference for making up. Sometimes women empowerment turns toward different extremes. I emphasize on merit based recruitment in all sectors of a society regardless of gender and dress code. One factor of women empowerment makes me worried – a woman has only 24 hours a day which is not a longer time for her. In this situation, women’s household responsibility must be impaired for maintaining work outside home (veiled position does not matter here). From this stage, conflict within family members arises. Women’s role has become a matter of another extreme. Now-a- days men try to understand more about issues of their families. A woman has intelligence and competence to play multiple roles rather than man. By the side of her teaching profession, I am performing my role as a mother and as a wife. I have to drop in and out my children from school, monitor all activities at home even staying at my department through mobile phone. Women empowerment often creates conflict in terms of the perspective of women. Some women think that they are working outside home but question arises- who will do the work inside home? This is still unanswered. I am not totally opposed to women empowerment. But it creates conflict within personal relationship within a family where a child has to grow – up in a chaotic environment. It has in turn a negative impact on society. I have engaged in teaching profession according to my own decision. At first, I was in corporate job. I resigned it after few years because job commitment in corporate sector does not allow me to give much time to my family. I realize the benefit of teaching in which I can adjust my time. I feel that it is not

logical to tell my husband to drop in and out my children from school. I do not support equality between men and women. There is no equality in life, she thinks. Equality is based on one's view which cannot be imposed on someone from outside. Both husband and wife should understand their situations. Then have to decide in what way they can maintain their relations and bonds either they have to reduce their demand or to help their family as possible as they can. Otherwise they have to shift in joint family when husband and wife work outside home; they cannot give enough time and care to their children. Consequently, ethical deterioration and personality disintegration of the children may occur. I perceive empowerment in a positive sense but it is necessary to know how to handle it. There are some strategies and plans of empowerment which should be followed by everyone. Otherwise, its dark side may grasp our total society. Engaging in job does not necessarily mean empowerment. There are some other sources of empowerment. Besides this, I emphasize on Islamic law of property inheritance. I know that I will get property from my father, husband and son. But my husband will not get property from me according to the rule of Islam. So, Islam preserves the dignity of women. I am getting property from three sides. A man is given more property from his father and he is also given much restriction and obligations than woman. If he does not give her sister's property in the absence of their parents, there is law in our country securing women's right on property. I have full control over my personal income. I have never been forced by my family in terms of making decision. I do not see veil as ensuring social security and respect. There is a reason behind this such as a group of women conduct wrong deeds wearing veil that violates the dignity of veil (its religious significance). So, this is no longer respected by others. Politics is necessary in the context of Bangladesh. Any woman wishing to participate in politics can do that. I have completed my higher education up to PhD because my father's family and my family are supportive in this respect. I have no interest in western attire. I do not perceive veil as a behavior changing mechanism. I always try to move in a right way (interview, 25 August, 2013).

Case study-26

I (Sheema, age-26) started to wear veil when I read in Honors first year. I wear veil especially burqa and head scarf without any niqab. I realize veil as mandatory (*Faroz*) for every Muslim woman. I have started to wear veil by understanding the meaning of *Sura Nisa*, *Ahjab*, some Hadith and I want to follow the styles of messengers' wives. I have made a conscious decision to wear veil. Violation of this duty is regarded as sin in Islam. So, non-veiling status is clearly avoided by me. By the side of religious side, I also experience veil as ensuring social security for women in my locality. I like to wear simple make up but I do not want to avoid my veiled position. In attaining functions, I wear *saree* or Salwar Kamiz with headscarf. I have never celebrated Bengali culture wearing makeup. I perceive these as non-Islamic activity. A Muslim should avoid this culture. I have no preference for western attire and I have never worn this attire. I have not participated in extracurricular activities after starting to wear veil. I do not like woman's participation in political system. A woman has to perform a lots of responsibilities for which she cannot do job requiring long hours in a day. As a primary school teacher, I find it hard to perform my domestic duty including my duty in school. I have support on Islamic law of property inheritance. Equal opportunity between men and women is not supported by me. In order to keep peace in a society, one has to abide by the authority of another. I take my decision in life through a mutual conversation with my family members including my decision to wear veil. As veiling is not sanctioned by the government of Bangladesh, the decision to wear veil rests on personal choice which in turn depends on family norms I am a primary school teacher. I have no control over my personal income. I have to give my total income to my husband. I have to take my everyday expenses from my husband by telling it every day. I have to show my all expenses that pains me much. Household duty is the main duty of women. A woman has to perform this duty even if she is engaged in job (interview, 1 September, 2013).

Case study-27

I (sweety, age -27) am a banker and I have completed my B.B.A. and M.B.A from the University of Dhaka. I have started to wear veil at age of eighteen as my mother encourage me to wear veil. Then I have realized its religious meaning. At first I wore

veil especially burqa and head scarf accompanying niqab. After coming D.U. campus, I have started to wear *Salwar Kamiz* with head scarf in public place. I want to be modern and updated and at the same time I want to maintain my veiled position. At the time of presentation in our classes, it was mandatory to make presentation wearing fashionable Bengali dresses. Since then, I have adopted this practice in a liberal way and avoided wearing burqa. I then started to wear makeup that I did not wear in previous time. It is true that all institution expect to have a modern and smart employee. So, I find that it is the right way to present me smartly by wearing *Salwar Kamiz* with a head scarf only. I do not see veil as ensuring social security. It cannot be ensured without changing men's attitude toward women. Moreover, as a resident of Dhaka City, I do not perceive veil as ensuring social security. In public transport in Dhaka city, veiled women are seen as weak to raise their voice against teasing and harassment by men. So, they are teased more than the non-veiled. I have experienced teasing, pushing and pinching for several times. I have possessed negative attitude toward the participation of women in political system in Bangladesh. A woman cannot retain her character and modesty if she becomes active in politics. A woman cannot maintain her veiled position in the political arena of Bangladesh. The veiling practice by existing political leaders is not adopted in a right way. Islam does not approve such kind of veiling. My family gives me importance in terms of decision making. I have full control over my personal income. If I demand equal opportunity between men and women in our country, it will be a question that who will ensure that kind of equal opportunity. Male- female equality is not possible in all sectors. Equal sharing of household activities is needed in case a woman is employed in job outside home (interview, 3 September, 2013).

Case study-28

I (Shirin, age-24) have started to wear veil when I read in class six. I am still practicing it as a student of *Kamil*(equivalent to M.A.) in a madrasa. I have not accepted this practice voluntarily rather my family strictly imposes it on me. Sometimes, I wish to go outside wearing fashionable dresses like my friends but cannot as my family will not permit me to do so. There is also my institutional pressure to wear veil. I know that the practice of veiling carries a religious meaning but I do not know the verses of Quran that make it mandatory. I cannot become

occasionally unveiled. I want to go outside wearing fashionable dresses seeing my friends to do so. But I cannot do that as my father is so Islamic minded. He will not let me to do so. My childhood capriciousness reduces after starting to wear veil-

“When I read at primary level, I played lots of games and sports with my friends. But after admitting into high school, my father ordered me to wear veil (burqa and head scarf) and forbade me to stop playing outside home. I then did not realize the meaning of veiling. Sometimes I left my veil and played outside home when my father was absent from home. In those times, I missed playing outside home.” I think that women are less intelligent than men. So, it is not right for a woman to decide to participate in politics. Democracy is a man-made system. Without Islamic system, justice cannot be established. Formulation of constitutional laws of a country is directed toward preserving political interests of the elected party of Bangladesh. Under this system of ruling, women are treated as commodity. So, woman should not participate in the political system of Bangladesh. A woman cannot be equal with men. A woman is biologically less strong than man. I want to be teacher of madrasa because I will not get chance in other professions. I feel that the chance and scope of madrasa students are limited to be employed. I perceive veil as ensuring social security in my locality. I support on Islamic law of property inheritance. My family member sometimes force their decision on me without considering my choices .House responsibility is the inborn duty of every woman (Shirin, interview, 5 September,2013).

Case study- 29

I (Pia, age-22) am completing my graduation from the University of Dhaka. I started to wear veil especially burqa and head scarf accompanying niqab when I read in class nine. I voluntarily accept wearing veil as I see my sisters, mothers and grandmothers following this practice. I view that it is the tradition of my family to wear veil. My guardians (especially father) expect me wearing veil. I abide by the norms and values of their families and always try to fulfill the instruction of my male guardians within my family. My brothers do not allow me to go outside without wearing veil. When non-related male guests come in our house, they order me to maintain veil in front of them. I like to wear makeup. Sometimes I wear make up inside home but not in outside. I have never gone outside wearing makeup. I have never imagined doing so.

I think that once the practice of veiling is adopted, it should be continued throughout the live. I was always calm, quiet and modest. My behavior is always same before and after starting to wear veil. I have no interest in participating extracurricular activities. I take my decision in life through the mutual conversation with my family members. I want to complete my higher education and want to engage in job to be self-dependent. I do not support political system of Bangladesh. Household duty is the first duty of every woman. I do not perceive veiling as ensuring social security. Unless the attitude of society towards women is changed, social security cannot be ensured. Male and female equality is not possible in all sectors of a society. I personally do not support male and female equality. There should be different responsibilities, rights and duties of men and women (interview, 4 September, 2013).

Case study- 30

I (shammi, age-22) am completing my graduation from the University of Dhaka. I have started to wear veil when I read in class ten. I think that some Islamic political parties' like- *Jamaat-e-Islam and Hijbut Tahrir* are influential in Bangladesh. These Islamic parties encourage Muslim women to wear veil (especially to adopt conservative choices) and practice Islamic norm in every step of their lives. *Jamaat – e- Islami* women are active in my locality. I have gained insight about the Muslim veiling by these women and motivate to adopt and also to continue this practice. I realize that non-veiled position is associated with moral looseness and degradation. I have seen some (not all) non-veiled women interacting with non-related males and falling in love affairs that is clearly forbidden in Islam. Members of my locality treat them as bad girls and have not given any respect to them. For me, veiled position teaches me to be reserved, modest and to monitor my own behavior according to the teachings of Islam. I have lessened my interaction with non-related males. I do not support women's participation in ongoing political system. It is a non-Islamic political system. If Islamic political system is established, then a woman can participate in this system. I have never participated in extracurricular activities in my educational institution. As Islam has given men and women different rights and responsibilities, they will be given their opportunities according to the teaching of Islam. I want to be a BCS cadre and I am taking my preparation to do that. I like this type of profession as I want to be government service holder. Other professions do

not attract me. I think that the first responsibility of every woman is rearing and caring of children. After performing these duties a woman can engage in work outside home (interview, 4 September, 2013).

Case study- 31

I (meghla, age-26) am a baker. I wear a headscarf with *Salwar Kamiz*. I have been wearing veil just after completing my M.B.A from a renowned university. I have taken conscious decision to wear veil by realizing its religious meaning. I have not faced any problem in my job for my veiling. I think that woman wearing veil with niqab may face problem in terms of getting job. I can spend my personal income in a way I want. I spend a portion of my income to my father's family as he is a retired person and the rest of my income is spent for my family and my children. My husband has given his permission in this regard. I do not support women's participation in politics. I am aware of Islamic law of property inheritance. I find it hard to maintain my roles as household chores and work outside home. But I like to be a careerist. I have preference for makeup. In attaining festival and occasion I wear makeup with Bengali dresses without any veil. I do not perceive veil as ensuring social security. Male female equality is not supported by me. A woman should abide by the order of their male guardians otherwise conflict may create in personal relationship (, interview, 5 September, 2013).

Case study-32

I (Tuba, age-23) am completing my M.B.A from the University of Dhaka and I live in Dhaka city. I have started to wear veil at the age of fifteen due to the inspiration from my family. At first I wore burqa and head scarf accompanying niqab. Now I am wearing veil differently. I think our society is becoming modern. So, I am taking my veiling practice in a more liberal way. In order to cope with modern system, I have to present me in a smarter way. But I cannot avoid veiling because it is the command of god for every Muslim woman. I wear fashionable dresses with headscarf including makeup. Moreover, I think that corporate job will never allow engaging a woman wearing veil with niqab. If I want to engage in corporate job, I have to adopt this practice in a way allowed by this job. Though I do not want to participate in political

system, I have no objection to those who participate in this sector. I think that men and women should be given equal opportunity in all sectors of society. A woman should not be dependent on another. I have independence in taking my own decision. I have support on Islamic law of property inheritance. I do not see veiling as ensuring social security for women. It is the bad attitude of men who make the society insecure for women. Among the extracurricular activities, I attend seminars in my department. I have not participated in other extracurricular activities. I keep contact with all the classmates of my department. I think that veiling does not mean that a woman should lessen her interaction with male especially non related males. I experienced that in situation of necessity for academic activities boys are more helpful than girls. I like equal sharing of house hold chores in case of employed women. I think that if a woman wear veil smartly, she will not face any problem in engaging in jobs but conservative style may face problem in this regard(interview, 6 September, 2013).

Case study -33

I (Nira-32) have completed my graduation from D.U. Now I am engaged in bank job. I have been wearing veil for five years. After joining in this profession, I have started to wear burqa with an *orna*. But I do not wear niqab. It is my conscious decision to wear the veil. Nobody forces me to wear it. After completing my graduation, engaging in a job was my aim. So, I have engaged in bank job. I then decided to wear veil as a sign of expressing satisfaction to the almighty. Everybody in my locality treats me with respect. Though at first I wear *Salwar Kamiz*, I have a desire for wearing the veil. I believe that wearing veil is strongly associated with Islamic norm and modesty of women. “But I cannot say that in which verse in Qu’ran, the practice of wearing veil is mentioned.” Though in recent times smart employees are recruited, my veiling does not create problem in my office. As a married woman, I spend full of my income for my family. I face difficulty in maintaining my dual role though there is a permanent domestic worker at my home to take care of my child but I have to monitor the work of this domestic worker by phone. It is really a matter of tension. I believe that domestic duty is the first duty of every woman even if she is engaged in job outside home. As our society is becoming complex, a woman has to engage in work outside home. But now I realize that a woman should engage in job requiring

fewer hours in a day. I take my decision by consulting it with my family members. When I did not wear veil, I would like to wear makeup and fashionable dresses. The intension to wear makeup reduces after starting to wear veil and after getting married. In attending all occasions, I wear veil. I believe that this practice should be continued throughout my life according to the Islamic norm. Men and women should be given equal rights in a society. I support Islamic law of property inheritance though I will not take any property from my father. I think that veiling cannot ensure social security unless the attitude of men and society toward women is changed (interview, 7 September, 2013).

Case study -34

I (Nushrat, age-22) am completing my BBA in D.U. I have started to wear veil – burqa and niqab when I read in class eight. My mother wear veil that encourages me to wear veil. I became aware about this Islamic norm from my mother. Perhaps in *sura Nisa and sura Ahjab*, the practice of wearing veil by Muslim women is mentioned. But I cannot say in which verse of Quran, the practice of wearing veil is stated. My childhood capriciousness vanishes after starting to wear veil. I think that both family and society expect women to be modest, polite, calm and obedient. I came from a rural area where the veiled position is respected by all. The veiled position is seen as a sign of morality where the non-veiled position is regarded as a sign of immorality. I have not become unveiled in public places before coming D.U. After coming D.U., I cannot resist me in wearing makeup and fashionable dresses outside the hall. From my childhood, I have attraction for wearing makeup. But after starting to wear veil, I could not do that outside home but inside home. My strong association with veiling becomes weaker after coming D.U. campus. I sometimes become unveiled in attaining occasions – different important functions of my department, Bengali festivals and so on. I wear Bengali dresses especially *Saree* with makeup in those accessions. But in my locality, I have never done this and also will never do that. I realize that a Muslim woman should not be unveiled and should not present her fairness to non-related males. But it becomes hard for me when I see others doing that especially for attaining festivals. I have not fixed my aim in terms of engaging in job. I like corporate jobs. Household duty is the main duty of every woman. Men and women should be given equal opportunities to flourish in society. I

think that the rights and responsibilities of men and women are different. The process of ensuring those rights and responsibilities means equality. I have no interest in participating in politics. If a woman wants to do that, she can participate. I do not think that wearing veil ensures social security for women. Unless our society grows positive attitude toward them, social security of women cannot be ensured. I have not participated in any extracurricular activities in my educational institution because my family does not encourage me to do so. I take my decision through mutual conversation with my family. I support Islamic law of property inheritance (interview, 7 September, 2013).

Case study -35

I (Rosi, age-21) am a student of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur. I have come here from a rural area of Rangpur. I got married after passing second year final. I have started to wear veil by inspiring from my in-laws relatives. From then I have begun to realize its Islamic meaning. I am practicing this for one and a half year. But I do not know in which verse in Quran, the practice of wearing veil is stated. I like to wear makeup and sometimes become unveil. In different occasions like *Akika*, marriage ceremony, birthday etc., I wear *Saree* with gorgeous makeup. I realize that a woman should not present her fairness in front of non-related male that cannot always follow. I can wear fashionable dresses by wearing headscarf. But wearing makeup remains incomplete with headscarf. I do not perceive veil as ensuring social security. I do not experience veil as changing my behavior. I am always calm and modest as my family teaches me in this way. I have no interest in participating in extracurricular activities. I do not like women's participation in politics. At family level, a woman has to do a lot of tasks for which it is not better for woman to participate in public places. I take decision in my life by consulting with my husband. I accept Islamic law of property inheritance. I think that men are biologically stronger than woman. They have no responsibility of doing household chores. So, they are suitable for public domain. As my husband is in a bank job, he can manage our livelihood properly. He has to spend a long hours in a day outside home. In this case, if I am engaged in job outside home, there will be nobody to take care of our children. So, it is better for a woman to avoid engaging in public sphere when she has secured economic situation. I believe that a woman's success is largely depended on

performing her mothering duty properly. So, I have no intention to engage in job outside home. But I have desire to complete my graduation (interview, 12 August, 2013).

Case study -36

I (Monika, age -21) am completing my BBA from the University of Dhaka. I have started to wear veil after passing my SSC exam due to the inspiration from my mother. At first, I wore burqa with a headscarf accompanying niqab. At first, I did not realize its religious meaning. After two years of this practice, I gained a clear idea of this practice by realizing the meaning of *sura Nisa and sura Ahjab*. My eagerness to abide by religious rituals like fasting and saying prayer has increased. Before coming D.U. campus, I strictly maintain my veiled position. I did not wear makeup and fashionable dresses in public place. My intension to wear makeup totally vanished after starting to wear veil. But after coming D.U., my strong association with wearing veil has weakened. I began to wear short burqa with *tights or jeans* accompanying a headscarf. In our department, we have do presentation. In performing presentation, dress style matters. Sometimes I become unveiled and wear *saree and Salwar Kamiz* without any headscarf. Then, I wear simple makeup to attain presentation. But I experience a guilty feeling inside me for being unveiled. But at other times, I wear veil. It is not right according to the Islamic norm. As Bengali culture is a mixed culture, it becomes hard to maintain the veil at all situations. Sometimes I cannot but wear fashionable dresses like *saree and Salwar Kamiz* with makeup in attaining different festivals when see others doing that. My mother rebukes me for being unveiled. I do not perceive veil as ensuring social security. It depends on the rules and regulation of the society. I think that a woman can participate in politics if she wishes. But I have no interest in participating in politics. I want to engage in corporate jobs. I think that in future I will wear *salwar Kamiz and Saree* with a headscarf only. As most of the private jobs are recruiting smart and updated employees, smartness does not come wearing burqa. Even multinational companies exclude such veiled women to engage in. I take my decision sometimes consulting with my family and sometimes independently. I support Islamic law of property inheritance. I believe that men and women should be given equal opportunity in society. I have desire to take higher education after completing my

BBA and MBA. I think that household duty is not the primary duty of woman. It is a matter of equal sharing when both husband and wife are engaged in work outside home (interview, 8 September, 2013).

Case study -37

I (Naila, age 21) am a student of DMC (MBBS, 2nd year). I have started to wear veil when I read in class six. It is mandatory for every Muslim woman. Besides this, my elder sisters encouraged me to wear veil. When I read in class eight, I realized the meaning of *Surat Al’Ahjab and Surat An-Nur*. Though I like wearing makeup but have not gone outside wearing makeup for protecting the dignity of veil. I do not like western culture. I became calm and quite after starting to wearing veil. I have participated in different extracurricular activities in my school. It was girl’s school where I could do that without wearing veil. But I am not participating in those activities as being so busy with my study. Moreover, I think that- “more the women are empowered, more they will violate the dignity of veiling. In some sectors of our society, restriction is imposed on purdah. In our Medical College, some teacher force female veiled student to avoid wearing niqab. In our viva board, neqab becomes a problem in the eye of some teachers”. I think that the face is the main source of beauty of every woman that should be kept hidden in public places so that any kind of *fitna* can be avoided. If men and women are given separate institutions in all sectors of a society then women will not maintain their veiled position strictly. In terms of politics, I support Islamic system rather than democratic system. According to the rule of Islam, a woman cannot be a leader of a country. At first, I did not want to be a doctor. My parents wished me to become a doctor. Then gradually, my wish to be an engineer ended. I then devoted myself to become a doctor. My mother convinced me that though veiling can be maintained as a doctor but not as an engineer. The underlying reason is there is a lot of field works for an engineer where wearing veil cannot be maintained. But now I get tensed when I think about handling male patient. I may treat him as a patient but problem arises if he treats me as a sex object. I am not clear that whether my dignity of veiling will be violated or not in this sense. I also think that a doctor has to study for a larger part of her life and she can give fewer times to her family and children. As household duty is the main duty of every woman, teaching profession is the best for woman, I realize that even being a

doctor. The notion of equal rights is strongly prohibited in Islam. If women take the economic responsibility of their families, it will limit the influence and scope of men to be dominant. Consequently, it may create problem in the perspective of both husband and wife within the family. The more the women are empowered, the more they will create harm for the family in a society like Bangladesh. Everybody should be equally emphasized within a family. I do not like to celebrate Bengali culture that will be regarded as *Bidat*. So, I always avoid this (interview, 8 September, 2013).

Appendix -3

