Settlement Experiences of Bangladeshi Migrants in Australia

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ABSTRACT

Bangladeshi migrants are one of the fastest-growing communities in Australia. According to the latest census (ABS 2011a) nearly 28,000 Bangladeshi people live in Australia, with an average growth rate of 18.5% per annum since the 1990s. Further, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC 2014a) reveals that Bangladesh was one of the top 10 source countries for the General Skilled Migration (GSM) program from 2006 to 2011. Despite this, there is no dedicated study on the settlement experience of this emerging migrant group in Australia. This study addresses this gap in the migrant settlement literature, and focuses on the settlement and acculturation experiences of this cohort. The study identifies the reasons why Bangladeshi people migrate, and analyses the barriers to and facilitators of successful settlement. In so doing, the study gives particular emphasis to the settlement experience of Bangladeshi women migrants.

The thesis first critically reviews theoretical approaches to migrant settlement with particular attention to Berry's influential framework for understanding migrant acculturation. According to Berry's model, acculturation occurs in two dimensions: one refers to the maintenance of heritage culture, and the other refers to the nature of engagement with a host culture. Based on this model, Berry introduces four potential outcomes of acculturation: assimilation, integration, marginalisation, and separation. The thesis tests this model with respect to Bangladeshi migrants in Australia.

In line with the migration literature, the thesis identifies the factors which affect migrants' settlement or acculturation. These factors include migrants' pre-arrival characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, religion, cultural background, education, and host society language proficiency. Post-migration factors such as social capital, recognition of overseas qualifications, attitudes of the host society toward immigrants, and government settlement support policies also play an important role. In order to map the settlement experience of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia, the thesis then assesses the importance of these factors in relation to key settlement indicators such as employment status, income, job satisfaction, home ownership, and satisfaction with life after migration.

The study focuses on Bangladeshi permanent migrants living in three states of Australia – New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland – where over 89% of these migrants have settled. Using a structured questionnaire, quantitative information was collected from more than 200 Bangladeshi migrants. This survey data was supported by semi-structured follow-up interviews with 52 respondents, in a gender-balanced sample to collect in-depth qualitative information.

The findings reveal that social and political instability in Bangladesh has been the major determinant in decisions to migrate. In spite of maintaining a relatively high living standard in their home country, skilled Bangladeshis are migrating to the West in order to avoid these circumstances and ensure a better future for their children. The research findings also demonstrate that as Bangladeshi migrants are highly educated and skilled, language is not a major barrier to acculturation compared with other cohorts of migrants from a non-English-speaking background.

However, as with many other migrant groups, educational qualifications are not always recognised in Australia. This is particularly true for Bangladeshi women. Non-recognition of qualifications has a number of negative consequences including economic hardship, psychological depression and family disruption. The findings also suggest that younger migrants are in a better position in terms of labour market outcomes and acculturation. Former onshore applicants report that rapid and frequent changes in government policies regarding skill requirements for permanent residency create uncertainty and lead to a significant waste of time and money. This can have long-lasting effects on migrants' employment opportunities, as well as family life. Findings also suggest that government support programs and information for skilled migrants to integrate into the labour market are inadequate. On the other hand, due to advances in information technology, recent immigrants have substantially minimised the social distance between home and host countries.

The findings further indicate that acculturation patterns of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia are diverse. The thesis shows that Bangladeshi migrants maintain strong bonds with their ethnic community and that their bridging capital with the host society is relatively weak. This can, in part, be attributed to misperceptions about Australian culture. There is also some evidence of changing religious practices among Bangladeshi Muslims. Anxious that their children retain connections with Bangladeshi culture, some

of the participants in this study found themselves becoming more religious on moving to Australia; while another, smaller group reported becoming attached to different religious groups (e.g. *Tablighi Jama'at* or Preaching Party). These latter changes, to some extent, have occurred due to interactions with Muslims from other parts of the world.

In terms of the experience of Bangladeshi women migrants in Australia the results are varied. Migration brings freedom and power for many women on the one hand while, on the other, reduced economic opportunities are also common. Aside from non-recognition of qualifications, responsibilities for young children and domestic duties are associated with downward mobility of women migrants.

In general, the findings suggest that Bangladeshi migrants are integrating into Australian society. However, there remain significant barriers. The study concludes with policy recommendations derived from the respondents' interviews. These include the need for additional support to be given to the newly arrived to help accelerate the processes of acculturation, and to minimise unnecessary dislocation. Modification of the two-year waiting period to receive social security benefits is suggested, based on the recommendations of interviewees. Furthermore, proper and effective government support is required for migrants to integrate into the labour market. A less easily fixed, but also important, barrier is cultural misunderstanding among some Bangladeshi migrants and the host society.

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Inspiration from my family has been always the greatest strength in my life. I would like to pay honour to my beloved parents – my father, Professor Shah Muhammad Shafiqullah, and my mother Rabeya Begum. Their passion, care, wisdom, hard work and blessings led me to where I am today. My grandmother has been a great source of inspiration even since she passed away. I still feel her present in my thought, in any special moment. She would have been so proud if she were alive today. I would also like to pay my sincere gratitude to my father-in-law, mother-in-law, Nasrin *Apa*, Bulbul, Ershad and Iqbal for their encouragement and blessings to me. It has been a great pleasure to have Iqbal with us in Melbourne, who volunteered in editing the Bengali manuscripts attached in appendix. I specially recall the contribution of my very precious brothers Sanjar, Adil and Ghalib, and my lovely sister Asma (my very best friend), who never lost their faith in me and inspired me through the ups and down of this journey. I am extremely fortunate and proud to have the most loving siblings who are also academics, on the pursuit of their PhD. Words cannot tell how terribly I missed them all these years. I am also thankful to my brother-in-law Sharif, and sisters-in-law Rafia and Shakila, for their constant inspiration throughout this time. Moreover, I owe appreciation to my uncles, aunts, and cousins for their encouragement.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to my first teacher, Shah Mohammad Abdul Baten, who literally taught me my A, B, C. Although he was my teacher in the first five years of my schooling, his ideas, inspiration and dedication accompanied me all through my academic endeavour. "Did you finish your PhD?" were his last words to me before he died in January last year. I could not say a word to him that day. I wish he were here today.

Love and care from two very special persons, Ruth Simpson and Ishrat Shaheed, who are more like family, added a sense of warmth, hope, and pride in the last years of my PhD which I will treasure the rest of my life. Moreover, inspiration from friends, neighbours, and also the parents' group in my daughter's school, has been tremendous, and I will treasure this as well.

Last, but not least, I would like to show my appreciation to my very own family – my beloved husband, Dr Mohammad Tarequl Hasan Chowdhury, and our adorable daughter Nazeefa. Whenever I was about to give up, my husband helped me to stay focused. He has been my first critic as well as mentor. The comfort and support he gives

me throughout this time has been priceless. Without it I would not have reached this milestone in my life. Our angelic daughter learnt not to make noise inside the home at the age of three, when her *Baba* commenced his PhD. At the age of five she discovered that *Ma* was going through the same process. That eventually turned her into a quiet person. Now, at the age of nine, what she most enjoys are drawing and silent reading.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my

Father, who has been dreaming to see his daughter finish her PhD;

Mother, who has been praying to see her daughter smile; and

Husband, who has been constantly beside me to make my Father's dream

and Mother's prayer come true.

আমারে তুমি অশেষ করেছ, এমনই লীলা তব

ফুরায়ে ফেলে আবার ভরেছ জীবন নব নব।

Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure.

This frail vessel thou empty again and again, and fill it ever with fresh life.

(Quoted from *'Gitanjali'* by Nobel Laureate Poet *Rabindranath Tagore*)

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma except where due reference is made in the text of the examinable outcome. To the best of my knowledge the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Sß Shafiq

(Salma Bint Shafiq)

Signed   Date: March 11, 2016

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABS   Australian Bureau of Statistics

ABAV   Australia-Bangladesh Association Inc. in Victoria

ABIC   Australia-Bangladesh Islamic Council

ASRG   Australian Survey Research Group

BBS   Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

DIAC   Department of Immigration and Citizenship

DIBP   Department of Immigration and Border Protection

DIMIA   Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

GOB   Government of Bangladesh

GSM   General Skilled Migration

IMI   International Migration Institute

LSIA   Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants in Australia

NOM   Net Overseas Migration

NSW   New South Wales

NZFEC   New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils

PR   Permanent Residents

QLD   Queensland

SSRS   Social Science Research Council

TR   Temporary Resident

UN   United Nations

VIC   Victoria

WDI   World Development Indicators

WWII   World War II

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Migration from Bangladesh to Australia started in the mid-1970s. Since the early 1990s the community has grown rapidly with an average rate of 18.5% per annum (ABS 2011a). This makes Bangladeshis one of the fastest-growing ethnic groups in Australia. According to the latest census (ABS 2011a) nearly 28,000 Bangladeshi people are living in Australia. Further, a recent report by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC 2014a) reveals that Bangladesh was one of the top 10 source countries for the General Skilled Migration (GSM) program from 2006 to 2011. Despite this, there is no dedicated study on the settlement experience of this emerging migrant group in Australia. This study addresses this gap in the migrant settlement literature, and focuses on the settlement and acculturation experiences of this cohort. This empirical research is based on primary data collected through 210 surveys and 52 interviews conducted among Bangladeshi migrants living in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, where over 89% of these migrants have settled (ABS 2011a).

Objectives and research questions

Against the backdrop mentioned above, the objective of this thesis is to examine the settlement experiences of a relatively new but rapidly growing migrant group in Australia – Bangladeshi migrants. It does so to observe the way the Bangladeshi migrants live and adjust in a different socio-cultural environment to their country of origin. In particular, this research hopes to examine the gender dimensions often hidden within these experiences. Thus, the purpose of this research is to examine the following issues: First, the thesis identifies the factors motivating Bangladeshi people to migrate to Australia. Second, the study examines the facilitators of and barriers to successful settlement and acculturation of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia. Finally, the thesis analyses the settlement and acculturation experiences of Bangladeshi women migrants in Australia.

Based on the aforementioned objectives three key research questions are addressed in this study: First, *what are the key determining factors motivating Bangladeshi people to migrate overseas in general, and to Australia in particular?*

Ghosh (2007, p. 225) argues that reasons for migration play a significant role in shaping the settlement experience of migrants. Migration literature often stresses the various push and pull factors to explain motives for migration. That is, some people leave their home country willingly (e.g. skilled migrants), while others are bound or forced to migrate (e.g. refugees or humanitarian migrants). Accordingly, this study examines whether Bangladeshi people are willingly migrating or whether there are circumstances in Bangladesh that are forcing them to emigrate. It seeks to identify the factors motivating Bangladeshi people to migrate, particularly to Australia.

Second, *what are the factors that contribute to the successful settlement and acculturation of Bangladeshi immigrants in Australia? Conversely, what are the barriers to the successful settlement of Bangladeshi immigrants in Australia?*

The migration literature suggests a range of factors that may affect the settlement and acculturation of migrants. These factors include, but are not limited to, age, gender, marital status, education, religion, host country language proficiency, ethnicity, and cultural and family backgrounds (Fletcher 1999; Burnett 1998; Hatton & Price 1999; Khoo & McDonald 2001; Richardson et al. 2002; Khoo 2012). The thesis assesses the impact of these factors on the key settlement indicators, such as employment status, income, job satisfaction, home ownership, and satisfaction with life after migration. The existing literature further emphasises the important role of social capital, often conceptually divided into bridging and bonding capital, in the settlement of migrants (Massey et al 2002; Dekker & Uslaner 2001; Cox & Orman 2009; Portes 2000; Ryan et al. 2008a; Hagan 1998; Dixon et al. 2009; Stark & Jakubek 2013). Therefore, this study focuses on the roles of different forms of social capital in settlement and acculturation of Bangladeshi migrants.

Third, *what factors affect the settlement experiences of female Bangladeshi migrants, and how are they different from male migrants' experiences?*

Gender has been identified as an important factor affecting migrants' settlement experiences (Jolly & Reeves 2005; Winter & Pauwels 2005; Boyd 2006; Ho 2009). The

upshot of these studies is that women migrants' settlement experience is likely to be different from men's. A number of reasons explain these differences. These include skill level, legal status, country of origin, and mode of entry into the host country as migrants (Piper 2008). These different attributes of male and female migrants, therefore, may result in different settlement experiences in terms of labour market participation, network generation, sense of belonging, and vulnerability (see, Schrover & Yo 2011). As such, this thesis pays special attention to the experiences of Bangladeshi women migrants to Australia.

Background to the Study

Complete abolition of the White Australia policy[1] in the early 1970s and the subsequent immigrant-friendly policies of the Federal Government have made Australia a truly multicultural nation. This is confirmed by the fact that Australia is home to migrants from over 200 countries around the world: 30% of Australia's total population were born overseas, and around 46% of the population have at least one parent born overseas (ABS 2011a). Meanwhile, migration growth constitutes the major part of total population growth, accounting for 62% of it, and the growth of net overseas migration (NOM) surpasses the natural population increase (DIBP 2013).

Since the abolition of the White Australia policy a trend in Australian immigration is the dominance of immigrants from Asian countries.[2] For example, eight out of the top 10 source countries for General Skilled Migration (GSM) places are from Asia and five of them are South Asian countries (DIAC 2014a). Although migration from South Asia is dominated by Indians, other South Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have emerged as new source countries of immigration to Australia in recent decades.

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[1] The Immigration Restriction Act, 1901, underpinned the White Australia policy.

[2] Like other developed countries in Europe, North America and Oceania, Australia's long term or permanent immigration program has three broad components − family reunion, skilled migration and humanitarian concern (Piper 2008, pp. 7, 104). However, the Australian immigration program in recent decades has been dominated by the skilled stream as opposed to the humanitarian and family streams. Thus, "The 2010–11 skill stream outcome of 113 725 places accounted for 67 per cent of the total Migration Programme. The planning level for the skill stream of the 2011–12 Migration Programme was set at 125 850 or 68 per cent of the total Migration Programme. The planning level for the skill stream of the 2012-13 Migration Programme is 129 250 places, which also represents 68 per cent of the total Migration Programme" (DIBP 2014).

Numerous studies have been conducted on the settlement and related issues of immigrants living in Australia. A large number of those studies are on settlement experiences of refugees or humanitarian migrants (e.g. Khoo 2012; ASRG 2011; Colic-Peisker 2009; Mansouri, Leach & Traies 2006; Tilbury 2007a). A considerable amount of research has been done on the labour market outcomes of migrants, such as labour force participation rates, employment and income (see, DIAC 2011a; Mahuteau & Junankar 2008; Richardson et al. 2002; Richardson et al. 2004; Junankar & Mahuteau 2004).[3]

Studies on different ethnic and religious groups are also available. For example, Haveric (2009) examines the settlement of Bosnian Muslims in Victoria, Khawaja (2007) focuses on the psychological distress of the Muslim migrants in Australia, and Bouma and Brace-Govan (2000) discuss 'religious settlement' of Muslim and Buddhist women migrants. Settlement experiences of many European migrant groups in Australia with different cultural backgrounds have been studied extensively. For instance, Leuner (2007) investigates the settlement patterns of Polish migrants in Melbourne. Sharpe (1996) examines acculturation of Swedish migrants to Australia. Settlement experiences of dominant and older migrants groups from Asia also receive significant attention. Thus, Inglish (1972), Williams (1999) and Millar (2009) provide detail accounts of Chinese settlement history in Australia since the late 18th century. Crissman (1991) focuses on the identity issues of Chinese in Australia while other studies such as Ho (2006), Ho and Alcorso (2004), and Yan (2004) focus on Chinese women's experience for work and family, and settlement stress. Ip, Wu and Inglis (1998) and Ip (2001) investigate the motivation for migration, and the incorporation of Taiwanese business migrants into Australian society. Indian migrants' experiences in Australia have also

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[3] Many of these studies use the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants in Australia (LSIA) data. LSIA collected data from migrants who arrived in Australia between September 1993 and August 1995, between September 1999 and August 2000, and finally from migrants who either arrived in Australia or were granted permanent Australian visas between December 2004 and March 2005. LSIA data collected extensive information about the migrants (see LSIA website http://www.immi.gov.au/media/research/lsia/ and Cobb-Clark 2001 for details). However, LSIA data though extensive have a number of limitations. For example, the data are collected from offshore migrants (except for third wave of data) only, and thus ignore a great majority of onshore migrants. Cobb-Clark (2001, p 469) observes that "the data provide information about the early settlement process rather than about long-run equilibrium behaviour".

been the subject of broad research (for example, Gunasekara, Rajendran & Grant 2014; Vahed 2007; Gopalkrishnan & Babacan 2007; Lakha & Stevenson 2001).

While a large number of studies on different migrant groups including migrants from different Asian countries have been conducted, there is no systematic study which focuses exclusively on the settlement experience of Bangladeshi migrants. There are a few studies which mainly examine health-related issues of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia. For example, Khan and Richardson (2013), examine the quality of life of Bangladeshi migrants in Melbourne. In sharp contrast, Bangladeshis living in other developed countries such as the UK, the US and Canada have interesting settlement experiences and their survival strategies often attract scholarly attention. For example, research has been done on Bangladeshis living in the UK (Ahmed 2005; Salway 2007; Haque 2000; Dyson et al. 2009; Eade 2010; Rozario & Gilliat-Ray 2007; Cameron & Field 2000; Khanum 2001; Mohsin 2011; Kibria 2008), the USA (Ali 1997; Sultana 2005; Ahmad 2011; Siddiqui 2004), Canada (Subhan 2007; Ghosh 2007), Italy (Knights 1995), and Malaysia (Sultana 2008). What these studies demonstrate is that Bangladeshi migrants in terms of education and socio-economic backgrounds are diverse and, consequently, their settlement experiences are likely to differ from country to country.

Significance of the study

While many migrant groups have been examined in academic research, one group missing from the literature is migrants from Bangladesh to Australia, despite the fact that the number of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia has been increasing rapidly in recent decades. Further, a review of the existing studies on migrant settlement in Australia reveals several other important gaps. First, most of the studies are conducted on the settlement of older and larger migrant groups such as the Chinese, Indian and Vietnamese. Very few studies are conducted on the settlement experiences of emerging migrant groups. There are good reasons to believe that settlement experience differs across individuals and groups (see, Kim, Ehrich & Ficorilli 2010; Khoo 1994). Second, emphasis is often given to the settlement of humanitarian migrants. Far less attention is given to the settlement experiences of skilled migrants. Skilled migrants' settlement is often reduced to labour market outcomes. While it is sometimes taken for granted that skilled migrants settle successfully on their own merits, research by Ip (2001) demonstrates that skilled and educated migrants can face significant settlement stress.

Third, permanent immigrants generally arrive in destination countries as family units within which men and women experiences migration differently (Banerjee 2015). Despite broader research pointing to the different settlement experiences of many migrant groups, the role of gender is often absent in these studies. As Cobb-Clark (2001) puts it, as far as Australia is concerned much of the published work focuses on primary applicants only and ignores the experiences of other immigrants, in particular migrating spouses, who are predominantly women.

This thesis addresses these gaps by examining the settlement experiences of Bangladeshi migrants, who are an emerging migrant cohort in Australia and, according to the ABS (2011a), are highly educated and mostly skilled. This study identifies the facilitators of and barriers to successful settlement experienced by Bangladeshi migrants with particular attention to women, whose experiences are largely under-explored in the literature. This quantitative and in-depth qualitative research is the first comprehensive study of the settlement experiences of Bangladeshis in Australia, forging a new understanding of the history of the Bangladeshi community in this country.

Widespread international migration has become a critical issue. This is because settlement in a new country is a difficult and lengthy process. Comprehension of the factors that facilitate or hinder migrants' successful settlement is vital for migrants and policy makers in the host country alike. Understanding those factors is crucial for migrants because this may help them to mitigate the mental stress and the difficulty of living conditions they may encounter in the settlement process. Policy makers from the host country may find it useful because this will help them to formulate policies for the successful settlement of migrants, and thus attempt to ensure those migrants do not become a burden on their host country. This thesis contributes to the breadth of scholarship by investigating the settlement factors affecting Bangladeshi migrants.

As mentioned above, Australia is a high-migration country. It chooses this path for well-articulated economic reasons (Jupp 2002). Therefore, successful settlement of immigrants is an important policy issue for the Australian Government. This study will expand knowledge of the settlement needs of skilled migrants by examining the experience of a newly growing cohort – the Bangladeshi community. The thesis reflects upon the strengths and weaknesses of settlement services provided to migrants and thus can help to improve settlement policies geared towards skilled migrants.

Furthermore, this study will also be relevant to the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) for policy-making purposes. Migrants make significant contributions to the economic development of Bangladesh through remittances, and investment (Siddiqui 2004). Although long-term emigration from Bangladesh is a well-known phenomenon, a recent study commissioned by the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment of the GOB documents that 'there is no information about the nature of emigrant Bangladeshi communities abroad, their professional expertise, and types of problems they face either in the country of immigration or the country of origin' (Siddiqui 2004, p. V). This study will improve our understanding of the barriers faced by Bangladeshi migrants settling abroad.

Bangladesh as a country of emigration

Bangladesh has a long recorded history which is related to the history of other countries such as India and Pakistan on the Indian sub-continent. *Bengal*, the area currently known as Bangladesh, was ruled by different Hindu kings during ancient periods. The region came under Turkish Muslim rule at the beginning of the 13th century. Then, the area became a part of the Mughal Empire in 1576. The Muslim rule in Bengal lasted for more than five hundred and a half centuries. In the aftermath of the *Battle of Plassey* in 1757, Bengal along with other parts of the Indian sub-continent came under British colonial rule. The British left India in 1947 and divided the Indian sub-continent into two parts, namely India and Pakistan. Pakistan itself was divided into two parts – West Pakistan and East Pakistan (Bengal). However, the 24-year association with West Pakistan was fraught with misrule and oppression by the central government of the (West) Pakistan. As a consequence, East Pakistan fought for independence which it achieved after a nine-month-long liberation war and bloodshed. Finally, in 1971 Bangladesh emerged as a new independent country in the world (Banglapedia 2015a).[4]

Bangladesh is small in size (about 148 000 sq km) but has a huge population, which stands at 160 million according to a recent estimate (BBS 2013a). This makes Bangladesh one of the most densely populated countries in the world.[5] Bangladesh is the fourth largest Muslim country in the world. About 89% of the population are

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[4] Banglapedia (2015a), the National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh, provides a detailed account of the history of Bangladesh, ranging from the ancient period to the present.
[5] BBS (2013b) shows that Bangladesh had an average of 964 inhabitants per square kilometre in 2011.

Muslim, and nearly 9% Hindu, while Buddhists and Christians, along with some small tribal communities, are the other minority groups. Although Bangladesh is a predominantly Muslim country Bangladeshi culture is quite distinct from those of other Muslim countries. This is due to an ancient heritage (Ahmad 2011, p. 109), which contains a long historical connection with other religious groups. As Banglapedia (2015c) puts it, the culture of Bangladesh 'is the outcome of the accumulation and synthesis of many different ethnic and religious groups and subgroups and varied classes interacting and influencing each other for centuries'.[6] Yet Bangladeshis are quite homogenous in terms of language as 98% people speak Bengali (BBS 2011). English is also widely spoken and understood among educated (Health Bulletin 2012). Although the cultural life of the Bangladeshis is largely dominated by their religions, Bangladeshi culture is distinctive for its linguistic traditions. However, Bangladeshi Muslims particularly feel a sense of confrontation due to the significant differences between their religious and cultural practices. Ahmad's (2011) clarification is notable in this context. Ahmad writes, "Their [Bangladeshi Muslims'] identity represents a constantly negotiated balance between their commitment to the universal claims of Islam and their engagement in the particular demands of their cultural uniqueness." Thus, Bangladeshi Muslims strive to achieve a balance between their two diverse identities.

Bangladesh has been a low-income country since independence. However, over the years the country has made significant improvements in various socio-economic indicators such as poverty reduction, population control, literacy rate, life expectancy, and the empowerment of women. According to the World Development Indicators (WDI) of the World Bank, the average growth rate of income in the country has been 5.6% per annum during the last two decades (World Bank 2015a). Per capita income currently stands at US$1097 (World Bank 2015a).[7]

Despite positive achievements, social and political instability remain major problems in Bangladesh. Moreover, the threat of natural disasters and climate change adds to this

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[6] Similarly, BBS (2013b, p. XXV) notes that "Bangladesh culture is composed of different forms, including music, dance, and drama; art and craft; folklore and folktale; languages and literature; philosophy and religion; festivals and celebrations etc. Festivals and celebrations are an integral part of the culture of Bangladesh. *Pohela Baishakh* (Bengali New Years), Independence Day, National Mourning Day, *Eid-ul-Fitre*, *Eid-ul-Azha*, *Muharram*, *Durga puja*, *Shahid Dibash* and International Mother Language Day etc are widely celebrated, across the country".
[7] In a recent report the World Bank notes that Bangladesh because of its improved economic performance has joined the lower-middle-income country group (World Bank 2015b).

vulnerability. The unemployment rate is also quite high. Against deteriorating socio-economic conditions, international migration both short-term and long-term appears to be an option for many people.[8]

Major destinations of short-term migrants who are mainly unskilled and semi-skilled are oil-rich Middle Eastern countries and some East Asian countries such as Malaysia and Singapore. Long-term migrants, on the other hand, prefer to settle in the developed countries of the West. The legacy of colonisation made the UK the traditional destination of Bangladeshi migrants (Khondokar 2004). Other major destinations for long-term migrants are Germany, Greece, Italy, Belgium, and France. Bangladeshis also have a preference for settling in North American countries such as the United States and Canada.[9] More recently, due to tight immigration policies in the UK and other European countries, Australia and New Zealand have emerged as new destinations for long-term skilled migrants.

The nature of settlement by Bangladeshi long-term migrants is quite distinct in different countries, partly due to historical reasons, and partly due to host countries' immigration policies. For example, a unique feature of Bangladeshi migrants in the UK is that they originated from a particular region of Bangladesh (Greater Sylhet). Early first-generation migrants were low-skilled with little education. However, in later periods skilled migrants started to settle in the UK as well. On the other hand, both skilled and unskilled people formed Bangladeshi migrant groups in the USA, and Western European countries such as Italy and Germany. Bangladeshi migrants in Italy are mainly single males; skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled (Knights 1995). In sharp contrast, settlers in Canada, Australia and New Zealand are mainly skilled and live with family (Siddiqui 2003). Furthermore, migration of Bangladeshi women in developed countries is largely seen as associational or tied, in which women follow their male partners (Siddiqui 2003).

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[8] It should be mentioned, however, that emigration from the region currently known as Bangladesh is not a new phenomenon. People from this area have been migrating in neighbouring areas for economic, religious and political reasons for many years (see Siddiqui 2003, Siddiqui 2004 for a detailed account). This continued throughout the British and Pakistani periods.

[9] In terms of the number of emigrants, the top three destinations of Bangladeshi long-term migrants are the UK, the USA, and Italy (see Siddiqui 2004).

Bangladeshis in Australia

Figure 1.1 below presents the Bangladeshi population as reported in different Australian censuses. The Bangladesh-born population was first cited in the Australian Census of 1976 which reports that a little more than 400 Bangladeshis were living in Australia at that time, and 58% of them were male. The number more than doubled in the next census, albeit still to fewer than 1000. This scenario started to change drastically from the mid-1980s and particularly from the early 1990s onward. According to the most recent census in 2011, nearly 28,000 Bangladesh-born people live in Australia; 57% of them male and 43% female. The growth rate since the 1990s has been 18.5% per year which makes Bangladeshis one of the fastest-growing communities in Australia.

Figure 1.1: Trends of Bangladesh Born Population in Australia
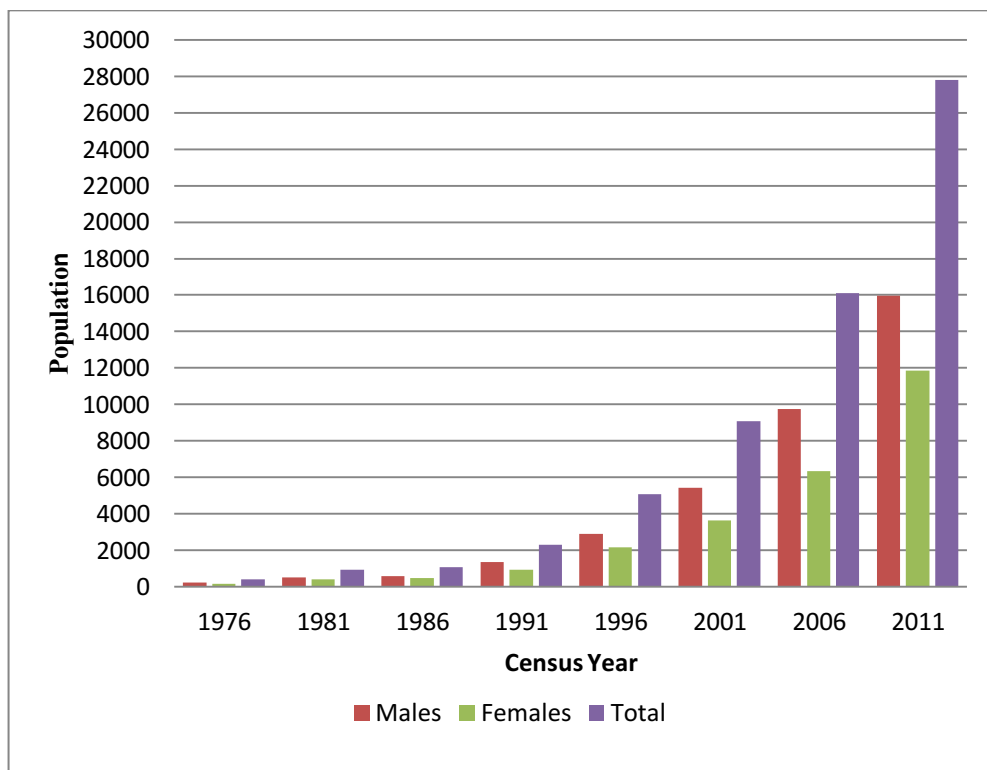
Source: ABS (2014)

The population census of Australia, in general, includes not only permanent residents but also temporary visa holders such as international students, workers or even tourists. Thus, the census data presented above overestimate the total of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia. However, data on Bangladesh-born permanent residents have been available since the early 1990s. Table 1.1 below presents the number of Bangladesh born people

who obtained permanent residency in Australia each year since 1990-91. The table provides data on new arrivals and onshore permanent residents (PR) who have become a distinct feature of Australia's migration mix since the mid-1990s.

Table 1.1: Bangladesh Born Permanent Residents in Australia

Year	New Arrivals	Onshore	Total (new arrivals plus onshore)	Cumulative
1990-91	358	33	391	391
1991-92	605	72	677	1068
1992-93	344	43	387	1455
1993-94	300	20	320	1775
1994-95	709	194	903	2678
1995-96	759	181	940	3618
1996-97	481	37	518	4136
1997-98	282	26	308	4444
1998-99	419	27	446	4890
1999-00	784	15	799	5689
2000-01	950	n.a.	950	6639
2001-02	437	284	721	7360
2002-03	437	366	803	8163
2003-04	581	552	1133	9296
2004-05	770	662	1432	10728
2005-06	848	872	1720	12448
2006-07	908	1395	2303	14751
2007-08	1139	1574	2713	17464
2008-09	1505	721	2226	19690
2009-10	1715	440	2155	21845
2010-11	1375	899	2274	24119

Note: The cumulative numbers are an underestimation of actual total Bangladeshi migrants because new arrival and onshore migrant data before 1990-91 are not available. However, this number when compared with the total census population indicates that students and other temporary visa holders do not constitute more than 10% of the total Bangladeshis living in Australia. n.a. = not available.

Source: DIAC (2011b, 2008), DIMIA (2005, 2002)

Table 1.1 shows that most of the migrants from Bangladesh were coming as offshore applicants during the 1990s. This trend changed since the early 2000s when more than half of the total were onshore migrants. More importantly, onshore migrants exceeded offshore ones from 2005-06 to 2007-08. Although the number of offshore migrants seems to have waned after 2007-08 they were still 40% of the total intake in 2010-11. This mainly reflects the 'two-tier' migration program which allowed people to apply for

permanent residency after obtaining a degree or diploma from an Australian educational institution, and also government policies allowing people with work visas to apply for permanent visas after staying in Australia for a certain period of time (Hawthorne 2010).

According to ABS census data, nearly 27% of the Bangladesh-born population arrived in Australia before 2001, 33.5% between 2001 and 2006, and 37.1% between 2006 and 2011 (ABS 2011a). Bangladeshi-born people are highly educated which is reflected in the fact that close to 80% of those aged 15 years and above have some form of post-school qualifications. This is much higher than the national average of 60% (ABS 2011a). According to these data 92.1% of the Bangladeshi-born speak English language very well or well, and only 6.8% do not speak it well. The labour force participation rate among Bangladeshi-born migrants is 74.5% and, of those who are employed, 43.9% are in skilled managerial, professional or trade occupations. Most of the Bangladesh-born are Muslims (85%), followed by Hindus (6.9%). One notable feature of the Bangladeshis in Australia is that they are heavily concentrated in NSW, particularly in Sydney. Thus, according to the Census of 2011, 61% of the Bangladeshis live in NSW, followed by 18% in Victoria, and 6% in Queensland.[10]

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured in nine chapters. Chapter Two, the literature review, will evaluate the competing approaches to understanding migrant settlement. The chapter first reviews theories, historical backgrounds and debates over migrant settlement, and then it evaluates the theories and existing literature on the settlement experience and acculturation of migrants. Particular attention is paid to Berry's (1997) influential framework for understanding the acculturation of migrants. This chapter identifies the settlement indicators such as labour market participation, job satisfaction and life satisfaction after migration. This is followed by identification of various factors which affect migrants' settlement and acculturation, including the role of social capital and gender in acculturation and settlement experiences in the host country. A review of the existing empirical studies on migrants' settlement and acculturation is incorporated in

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[10] The information provided in this paragraph is based on Australian Census of Population and Housing 2011 data (ABS 2011a), and has been summarised in Community Information Summary of DIAC (2014b).

the final section of the literature review. The review particularly focuses on the settlement studies conducted on Bangladeshi migrants to Australia and those living in different parts of the world.

Chapter Three discusses the research methodology of the thesis. This project employs a multi-method approach to collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Using a structured questionnaire, quantitative data were collected from 210 Bangladeshi migrants, both male and female, living in three states of Australia: New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (VIC) and Queensland (QLD). Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews of 52 respondents. Field notes and observation have also been used to supplement qualitative information.

The findings of the thesis are discussed in chapters four to eight. Chapter Four examines the pre-arrival characteristics and motivations for migration of Bangladeshi immigrants to Australia. Based on surveys and interviews this chapter reveals that Bangladeshi migrants are relatively young, highly educated and generally skilled. The findings suggest that economic factors are not the main reason for their emigration. Instead, existing social and political instability in Bangladesh, concern for a better future for their children, desire for a better lifestyle, and family reasons motivate them to migrate to Australia. This chapter also reveals that women's migration is largely associational.

Chapter Five focuses on the impact of pre-migration and post-migration factors in settlement and acculturation of Bangladeshi migrants. Pre-migration factors include age, education, and skill, English-language proficiency, and the respondents' social and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, post-migration factors include recognition of qualifications, host country attitudes towards migrants (racism and discrimination), and Government migration policies and support services for migrants. This chapter investigates the correlation between factors and indicators of successful settlement, and illuminates the facilitators of, and barriers to, acculturation and settlement of Bangladeshi migrants. Chapter Five shows that labour market participation by the respondents is much higher than the Australian national average. This participation is influenced by both pre-migration and post-migration factors. However, labour market status does not ensure job satisfaction or life satisfaction in Australia. Bangladeshi migrants' job satisfaction is positively influenced by education qualifications, English-language proficiency, occupational status and engagement in an occupation related to

previous skills or training. Perceived discrimination at work has a negative impact on job satisfaction. It is found that non-recognition of pre-migration qualifications is a major barrier to many migrants' successful settlement while relatively high proficiency in English positively affects all aspects of their settlement, including life satisfaction, which is affected by English-language proficiency and economic success. The thesis also reveals that Bangladeshi migrants in general acknowledge the welcoming attitude of people within the host society, whilst a few of them report that racism and discrimination exist in Australia to some extent.

Chapter Six analyses the acculturation experiences of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia, with a special focus on bonding capital, by looking at the migrants' relationship with their ethnic communities. This chapter also focuses on the cultural maintenance of Bangladeshi migrants in the Australian society and the connection with their home country. It is argued that Bangladeshi migrants in Australia maintain a strong ethnic bond that is reflected in their association with the members of the community. This strong bond is particularly helpful for new migrants in finding accommodation and jobs, and meeting people. It is found that Bangladeshi migrants in general place particular emphasis on maintaining their cultural heritage. Findings also suggest that advances in information technology have substantially minimised the social distance between home and host countries. This is particularly helpful for women migrants in reducing their settlement stress.

Chapter Seven examines the acculturation of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia with a focus on bridging capital. In particular, this section highlights issues of importance to cultural and social relationships with the host society. Findings show that the degree of bridging capital is much weaker than that of bonding capital among Bangladeshis in Australia. This is particularly true in relation to local Anglo-Australian people. Misconceptions about Australian culture and people seem to be a significant barrier to engagement with the host society. However, there is some evidence that Bangladeshi migrants maintain bridging relationships with other migrant groups, particularly those who are culturally or religiously closer to them.

Chapter Eight looks at the settlement experiences of Bangladeshi women migrants in Australia. Data show that Bangladeshi male migrants and female migrants are quite distinct in terms of their age, language proficiency, skills and qualifications, which

results in different settlement experiences for women. This chapter shows that women migrants' labour force participation has increased since they arrived here. However, this higher participation occurs at the expense of lower occupational status for many women. Non-recognition of pre-migration qualification which is mainly responsible for occupational degradation is particularly pronounced for women. Findings also suggest that despite the increased workload, migration in general brings Bangladeshi women freedom, empowerment and comfort. However, the experiences of the elderly women who migrated two or three decades ago are different in many instances from those of recent women migrants.

Chapter Nine concludes the thesis by drawing the findings together. In general, the research suggests that Bangladeshi migrants are integrating into Australian society. However, there remain significant barriers. Finally, this chapter puts forward policy recommendations to assist in the better settlement of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia. These include more effective Government support for labour market integration, and revision of the two-year waiting period to receive social security benefits. The research highlights the importance of efficient ethnic organisations in facilitating settlement and points to cultural misunderstandings that can undermine the bridging capital between migrants and the host society.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses debates over migration settlement and reviews the theories and existing literature on settlement experience and acculturation of migrants. Berry's (1997) bi-dimensional framework of acculturation is a key focus in this context. Factors which facilitate or impede settlement processes, and indicators used to gauge successful settlement, are also discussed. In so doing, the chapter emphasises the role of migrants' social capital and gender in the settlement process. Finally, relevant empirical studies on the settlement experiences of migrants are reviewed. In order to reveal the pattern of Bangladeshi migrants' experiences this section particularly highlights the key settlement issues related to Bangladeshis around the world, as well as other studies on settlement in and outside Australia in general.

Past debates over migrants' settlement

Migrant settlement is a highly complex process, and the literature reflects its multi-dimensional nature. This sub-section presents a brief overview of the change in the concept of settlement over time and ensuing debates.

The earliest approach to settlement adopted in major immigrant-receiving countries such as the USA was *assimilation.* That is, successful settlement would be measured by how well migrants were assimilated in the host country (Khoo 2012). An early definition of assimilation was given by Park and Burgess (1921, p. 735) as a "process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and the attitudes of other person or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life". Along this line, classical assimilation theory posits that the process involves the giving up of one's own culture and acceptance of host society culture by the migrants and, through this process, migrants and their successive generations enter into the mainstream (Bohon & Conley 2015; Jung 2009). Therefore, to accomplish successful assimilation ethnic groups must 'unlearn' particular cultural behaviours, especially ones that contradict those of the host society (Alba & Nee 2003, p. 2). One implication of assimilation as pointed out by Jupp (2003, p 22) is that it may mean the invisibility of any feature that differentiates one person from another (Jupp 2003, p. 22). It follows that assimilation is complete when

newcomers (migrants) would not be noticed or received extra attention in the place of destination (Jupp 2002). The classical assimilation theory regarding migrants' incorporation had a deep influence on social scientists for a long time (see Alba & Nee 2003). Assimilation had been put into practice until the post-war period in most of the immigrant-receiving Western countries, such as the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand (Fletcher 1999, p. 16).

However, the changing nature of international immigration during the post-war period led many researchers to question the general applicability of classical assimilation theory to all migrants (see, Greenman & Xie 2008; Alba & Nee 2003). They argue that the theory is more applicable to early-20th-century migrants who were largely homogenous - mainly white European, settling in other countries populated by Europeans. In contrast, migrants of the post-war periods were mainly from Latin America and Asia who originated from a wider variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Therefore, they argue that any single, uniform model of immigrant incorporation such as the assimilation theory originating from the settlement experiences of a homogenous group may not be appropriate for the latter immigration cohort.

On the other hand, some authors wanted to revive the classical theory under the name of 'new assimilation theory' (see, Bohon & Conley 2015). This theory proposes that assimilation does not necessarily mean completely giving up one's culture, rather it would mean that different cultures coming into contact influence and mix with each other to "create a new shared culture" (Bohon & Conley 2015, p. 25). According to this latter theory there are multiple ways to incorporate newcomers in a host society and therefore migrants may assimilate fully, be free to preserve their ethnic customs, or attain a position somewhere in between (Jung 2009, p. 376). However, it can be argued this theory points to ways of migrants' integration which are completely different from those canvassed by classical assimilation theory in that the old theory "imposes ethnocentric and patronizing demands on minority people struggling to retain their cultural and ethnic integrity" (Alba & Nee 1997, p. 817). Against this backdrop the assimilation approach was eventually replaced by a new concept, *multiculturalism.*

Multiculturalism was fundamentally different from assimilation, indicating greater acceptance of cultural diversity. It is seen as a framework or a set of policies which recognises cultural differences (Howarth & Andreouli 2012). Castles (2000) clarifies

the significance of cultural diversity and multiculturalism. According to him immigrants are likely to be different from the people of the host country in many ways; apart from their socio-cultural backgrounds, tradition, language and religion, much visible difference is seen through physical appearance and clothing. If the receiving countries do not welcome this cultural diversity migrants may end up being marginalised in concentrated areas. Castles (2000) further observes that some governments consider cultural pluralism a threat to national unity. Therefore, they do not accept ethnic diversity. On the other hand, if diversity is welcomed, 'there has been a tendency to move from policies of individual assimilation to acceptance of some degree of cultural difference'. This results in recognition of minority culture that could lead to a sense of belonging among the migrants. As a result, people are likely to settle more comfortably and confidently, and at the same time contribute to the host society.

Howarth & Andreouli (2012) argue that "multiculturalism can be seen as a demographic condition, as the result of increased human mobility and inter-cultural contact". The central tenet of multiculturalism as observed by Fletcher (1999, p. 18) is that every migrant deserves to maintain their culture and heritage without being troubled or discriminated against, at the same time adjusting to the dominant and other multi-ethnic cultures. This was also called a policy of 'integration', which was simply an acceptance of manifestations of ethnic and cultural diversity (Burnett 1998, p. 7). True multiculturalism requires changes in society and institutions to eliminate discrimination against immigrants (Burnett 1998, p. 8). Moreover, these changes should facilitate immigrants' settlement and enhance their equitable participation in the host society. In other words, multiculturalism reshapes migrants' identity rather than obliterating it.

Multiculturalism was first adopted by Canada in 1971 (Fletcher 1999, p. 17) and soon other countries followed. The UK, the Netherlands, and Sweden are good examples of multiculturalist nations where immigrants can be successfully integrated and at the same time maintain their cultural heritage (Cherti 2008, p. 27).

Migrant settlement policies in Australia

 As in the other major migrant-receiving countries such as the US, the UK and Canada, assimilation had been the original philosophy of settlement in Australia, especially during the large-scale post-war migration era of the 1950s and 1960s. In Australia,

during the assimilation period, provision of settlement services was based on the assumption that most new migrants would 'readily assimilate' to the Australian way of life (DIMIA 2003, p. 25). Thus, according to Jupp (1992, p. 131), the goals of settlement policy

> "were to ease the assimilation process, to avoid the creation of ethnic enclaves, to minimise public costs, to reduce majority anxieties, to use migrant labour for projects of national importance, and to ensure that immigrants became permanent settlers who would not differ too markedly from the average either culturally or socially".

A 'two-class' immigration program and settlement ideology was employed which openly differentiated between white and non-white migrants. This Immigration Restriction Act was commonly known as the White Australia policy. Under this system, British migrants were treated as equals of the Australian-born, while non-British migrants were relegated to inferior positions in both the labour market and Australian society more generally (DIMIA 2003, p. 25). During the early days of the assimilation period, immigrants were officially advised 'not to behave in a way that would attract attention' (Markus, Jupp & McDonald 2009, p. 93). This study further highlights a biased function of assimilation in Australia.

> Assimilation would be complete when nobody noticed the newcomer, typified by a 'competition' conducted at Good Neighbour Conferences: photos of selected children were displayed and delegates had to choose the 'Australian' (Markus, Jupp & McDonald 2009, p. 94).

Therefore, assimilation was an imposed disposition by the receiving countries on to migrants (Fletcher 1999, p. 17). Its ultimate effect was that children whose parents hailed from a non-English-speaking background were likely to be alienated. Consequently, the demand for cultural assimilation seemed 'not only impossible, but damaging' (Burnett 1998, p. 6).

From the late 1960s it began to be questioned whether assimilation was either appropriate or possible in reality. As a result, the number of immigrant arrivals started to drop, while departures increased (Burnett 1998, p. 6). Thus, government and public

discourse acknowledged that assimilation was no longer a successful settlement policy (Burnett 1998, p. 7), and required reformation.

Jamrozik, Boland and Urquhart (1995) document that in the Australian context the transition from assimilation to multiculturalism was shaped in several steps. First, post-war assimilation lasted until the mid-1960s and was replaced by integration which lasted from 1964 to 1972. Then multiculturalism was first mentioned in government policy documents, though it could not yet be termed official due to much public debate and diverse interpretation. [11]

Another significant markers laid down in this period was the handing down of the Galbally Report 1978. According to Galbally (1978), immigrants were entitled to equal access to social programs and services. This report also emphasised special services and provisions required during the early days of settlement. Galbally further stressed the importance of ethnic community agencies. This transformation in Australian settlement policy made Australia one of the most attractive immigrant destinations.

Before multiculturalism was officially established, 'ethnic pluralism' (1972-1975) came into existence under the Whitlam Government, which emphasised migrants' settlement process. The notion of multiculturalism was first adopted with the introduction of ethnic radio. The next step was cultural pluralism which came into being with the advent of ethnic television. This is classified as first stage of multiculturalism, which lasted until 1983.Cultural pluralism continued through the second stage of multiculturalism in which policies of access and equity were implemented. These changes were expected to facilitate immigrants' settlement and enhance their equitable participation in Australian society (Burnett 1998, p. 9). This stage lasted until 1988 and was followed by post-multiculturalism (1988 onward). In the late 1980s, the federal government formulated a 'National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia' (Jamrozik, Boland & Urquhart 1995, p. 99). The *National Agenda* provided a policy framework that focused on cultural

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[11] Multiculturalism was a term first coined by the Minister of Immigration Hon. A. J. Grassby. In a paper entitled '*A Multi-cultural Society for the Future*' (see Grassby 1973, p. 8). Grassby envisioned a society that would support diversity, social justice, and a dynamic interaction among the ethnic groups by 2000. Chiro (2011, p. 22) observes that Grassby's vision envisiioned a fundamental transformation of Australian society in which the domination of Anglo-Irish had been transformed by the successive wave of other nationalities, such as European, Middle Eastern and Asian.

identity, social justice and economic efficiency irrespective of ethnic backgrounds (Jamrozik, Boland & Urquhart 1995, p. 99).

Multiculturalism remains a source of debate among scholars in various social science disciplines. It has been profoundly criticised: as mentioned earlier, it has been considered as a threat to national unity (Castles 2000). Howarth and Andreouli (2012, p. 8) argue that the perception "multiculturalism has failed" may in part exist "because of perceptions of increased racist hostilities and decreased cultural tolerance as much as perceptions of increased cultural tolerance, particularly towards Islamic values and practices". Debate is also extended through philosophical discussions on whether multiculturalism results in 'greater equality and cohesion' or in 'greater inequality and segregation'. As a philosophical concept, therefore, multiculturalism interestingly is seen as both the solution and the problem (Howarth & Andreouli 2012).

Fletcher (1999, p. 21) further indicates that in a multicultural society migrants are allowed to preserve their culture and heritage, as long as that does not contradict the values of the host society. Therefore, migrants must have a commitment towards the host culture not to violate any of its fundamental values.

A number of European politicians have spoken out against multiculturalism. For example, British Prime Minister David Cameron argued in early 2011 that:

> Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values (Cited in Howarth & Andreouli, 2012, p. 2).

Similarly, German Chancellor Angela Merkel claimed,

> It has not proven possible for people from different cultural backgrounds to simply live side by side in Germany, which is home to some four million Muslims.

In this way the Chancellor pointed to US and British concerns over the threat of terrorist

attacks by militant Islamists living in Germany. Merkel further asserted that multiculturalism had 'utterly failed' in Germany (Merkel 2010).

Based on the above-mentioned arguments it is apparent that multiculturalism was not interpreted properly, either as a theory or as a policy. However, multiculturalism works better in Australia than in Europe (Hartwitch 2011). Hartwitch's comparative study of the immigration policies of Australia, Germany, and Britain reveals that Australia's transition to a multi-ethnic society after WWII was much more successful than in the other countries. The key to success for Australia's multiculturalism lies in its selective immigration policy in which "Australia has been cherry picking the best-qualified migrants" (Hartwitch 2011, p. 3). Consequently, they are meant to be capable of integrating into Australian society because their backgrounds, educational qualifications, and proficiency in English are likely to lead them to adjust to, and incorporate themselves in, their new milieu. Hartwich (2011) further affirms that migrants in Australia are well-integrated by international standards in terms of employment outcomes. Moreover, the academic achievements of some of their children are often better than those of the native population.

The nature of Australian multiculturalism has been illustrated most articulately by the former Prime Minister of Australia Bob Hawke (1983-1991):

> What multiculturalism means in this country should be clear. It is simple. It means an acceptance and appreciation of diversity and a fair go for everyone in Australia; irrespective of their backgrounds … it is not the way a person looks, dresses or talks that makes him an Australian today; nor it is the form of religious practice or social life a person follows; nor it is related to when a person's family arrived in this country; nor it is the colour of a person's skin. What makes a person Australian in this country today is quite simply a clear commitment to the future of our nation. It is that commitment to Australia which overrides every other consideration (Cited in Fletcher 1999, p 21).

Blumberg (2012), however, stresses that, in spite of all efforts to advocate unity and cultural diversity in Australia, immigrants are experiencing constant inequalities. Blumberg (2012, p. 2) asks:

Is Australia a nation truly free from discrimination, violence and racism, providing equal opportunities for everyone, irrespective of cultural background?

Opposition to multiculturalism was also given voice by Pauline Hanson's One Nation party, which gained one million votes in the 1998 Commonwealth election. One Nation, in effect, rejected all forms of ethnic variety, favouring assimilation of immigrants and Indigenous Australians, calling on multiculturalism to be 'abolished', for mass immigration to be abandoned, and for the ending of welfare services allocated on the basis of Aboriginality or ethnicity (Jupp 2011, p. 43).

On the other hand, many authors are quite sceptical about the practice of multiculturalism in Australia in reality. For example, Jamrozik, Boland and Urquhart (1995) observe that Multiculturalism is:

> perceived and acted upon as an acceptance and tolerance of the multitude of non-English-speaking immigrant communities among the Anglo-Australian majority which certainly does not see itself in any way as 'multicultural'. In common perceptions, in public attitudes and in policy interpretation and application, multiculturalism has become a basic division between the 'multiculturals' or 'ethnic' on one side and the 'true Australians' on the other (Jamrozik, Boland and Urquhart 1995, p. 107)

Similarly, Hage (2000, p. 18) points to the racial violence visited upon the Muslim community on several occasions, and concludes that the notion of multiculturalism in Australia is actually a 'white nation fantasy'. The policy of multiculturalism has also been criticised due to the white dominance and 'Anglo-ness' (Lobo 2014; Chiro 2011). Therefore, it is still a question whether Australian multiculturalism is a success or failure.

The concept of migrant settlement

Migrant settlement is a complex issue and there is no agreed definition of this concept. More importantly, the objective of settlement has been changing over time. In order to explain the settlement process of migrants in host countries, scholars have proposed different theories which feature numerous terms. Important among them are assimilation, acculturation, integration, adaptation, and multiculturalism. These terms have been used in different ways over the period of organised immigration.

The Canadian Council for Refugees (1998) considers settlement a process of *acclimatisation,* a short-term process of adaptation to the host society. According to the council, the process involves a range of issues: from finding accommodation and employment, and learning the host society's language, to being familiar with its environment. The council (1998, p. 9) further distinguishes between integration and settlement by considering the former a "longer-term process through which newcomers become full and equal participants in all the various dimensions of society". On the other hand, Bouma (1994, p. 38) defines settlement as an "ongoing process by which immigrants make the transition from life in one country to life in a new country". Burnett (1998, p 18) also considers settlement a process that occurs gradually. She adds that settlement is constructed by the immigrants' interaction with various elements of the political, economic, and social structure of the host society into which the immigrant is incorporated.

DIMIA (2003) explains settlement as "involving the growth of civic confidence, participation, and responsibility" (p. 62). More importantly, settlement occurs in stages. For example, Cox (1987) outlines three main stages of immigrant settlement: pre-arrival, transition, and post-arrival, while Fletcher (1999, p. 33) postulates five stages: pre-arrival, arrival, immediate post-arrival, adaptation and integration. Each plays a significant role in shaping migrants' settlement in their host country. In the context of Australia's settlement policy the following definition, given by Galbally (1978), provides a clear picture:

> Settlement is the complex process of adjusting to a new environment following migration. It is a long-term process affecting all immigrants and particularly those coming from cultures different from that dominant in

Australia or without a well established ethnic group here. Its end point is the acceptance by and the feeling of belonging to the receiving society. It implies change both in the individual migrant and the host society (Galbally, 1978, p 29).

More recently, Vertovec (2007) has introduced the concept of 'super-diversity' among migrants to explain the complexity of migrants' settlement process in the 21st century. In his opinion, migrants differ not only in terms of their ethnicity but also in terms of such factors as language, culture, religion, networks, legal status, human capital, and transnationalism. He concludes that these multiple factors make migrants' settlement a far more complex issue than it was ever before.

Settlement for the purpose of this research is defined as a process of adjustment with a different lifestyle in a different geographical location, and in a different socio-cultural environment. In order to better analyse the term 'settlement', this study employs the combination of theories proposed by Fletcher (1999) and Bouma (1994), because Fletcher's definition summarises the whole process, from entry level to social participation in the host country, while Bouma highlights emotional progression and participation in the country of residence.

The concept of acculturation

A concept closely related to settlement is acculturation, defined as "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits 1936, p. 149). Similarly, Berry et al. (1992) consider acculturation as the process of cultural and psychological adaptation that occurs where there is direct contact between two or more social groups with different cultural backgrounds. Therefore acculturation is an important part of settlement, and immigrants have to go through both processes.

Acculturation has been an important concept in settlement research, particularly in the context of international migration. It is argued that successful settlement depends on the degree of acculturation (Dixon et al. 2009; Feldman & Rosenthal 1992; Grosfoguel & Cordero-Guzman 1998).

Models of acculturation

This section discusses alternative models of acculturation, with particular attention to the model proposed by Berry (1980). The earlier theoretical approach of acculturation was 'uni-dimensional' or 'simple acculturation' which predicts that migrants will relinquish their own culture, beliefs and values to accept those of the society to which they have migrated (see Schwartz et al. 2010). This approach considers acculturation as a linear process, the direction of cultural changes always inclined toward adoption of the host country's culture.

The uni-directional model has been criticised by a number of researchers on the ground that cultural changes do not always occur in a linear fashion. Rather, acculturation is a more complex process whereby individuals learn a new culture and at the same time maintain some aspects of their own (Organista, Marin & Chun 2010; Schwartz et al. 2010). Within this latter strand of opinion, researchers have been proposing alternative models of acculturation since the early 1980s. Most notable among them is one proposed by Berry (1980) and subsequently elaborated (Berry 1997; Berry 2005; Berry 2006).

Berry's theory is based on classical definitions of acculturation proposed by Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936), Social Science Research Council (SSRS 1954) and Graves (1967). Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936) state that acculturation is a cultural change stemming from first-hand contact between the people of two different cultures. The US Social Science Research Council (SSRS 1954) comprehends acculturation as a cultural change that takes place as a result of interaction between two distinct cultures. Finally, Graves (1967) considers acculturation a psychological adaptation of individuals or a group of people in a plural society. Berry blends these classical definitions in his theory. In his opinion, "acculturation is the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members" (Berry 2005, p. 698). That is, Berry emphasises both cultural and psychological changes as a consequence of contact between distinct cultural groups.

Berry (1980) suggests a three-phase course of acculturation – contact, conflict, and adaptation. During this process individuals and groups may encounter two issues. The

first, "cultural maintenance", has been defined as "to what extent are cultural identity and characteristics considered to be important, and their maintenance striven for" and the second as "contact and participation", that is, 'to what extent should they become involved in other cultural groups, or remain primarily among themselves" (Berry 1997, p 9). Considering these two issues, Berry proposes the four acculturation outcomes shown in the table below. These are integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation.

Table 2.1: Acculturation outcomes

	Attitude towards keeping heritage, culture and identity	
	Positive	*Negative*
Attitude towards learning and interacting with new culture		
Positive	Integration	Assimilation
Negative	Separation	Marginalisation

Source: Berry (1997, 2005).

In this framework *assimilation* refers to embracing the values of the receiving or host culture and ignoring those of one's heritage culture. On the other hand, engaging with both cultures simultaneously – that is, maintaining one's original culture as well as interacting with other cultural groups – is denoted as *integration. Marginalisation* occurs when migrants keep their distance from both groups (their ethnic group and the mainstream). Finally, enthusiasm about the values and cultural exclusiveness of one's country of origin, while avoiding direct interaction with the host culture, is signified by the term *separation*.

Based on a number of empirical studies conducted on the acculturation outcomes of different migrant groups, Bourhis et al. (1997, p. 378) conclude that "integration was the most preferred mode of acculturation, followed either by assimilation or separation, while marginalisation is the least preferred" by migrants. Similarly, Berry (1997) argues that the four dimensions of acculturation shown above are associated with positive adaptation in a new society. The relationship is such that integration is the most adaptive outcome while marginalisation is the least adaptive. This is because integration involves the lowest level of stress for migrants while marginalisation is the most stressful (Berry 1997; Ince at al. 2014).

The above framework with four outcomes presented by Berry is based on the idea that people from non-dominant cultures (such as immigrants) are free to choose their mode of acculturation. However, if the dominant group (the host country) constrains the choice of non-dominant groups or imposes certain forms of acculturation, Berry (1997) proposes other terminologies than the four mentioned above. For example, when a dominant society forces migrants to choose separation, Berry (1997) proposes to call it segregation or exclusion. On the other hand, Berry (1997) argues that marginalisation generally results from attempts by the dominant culture to enforce assimilation or segregation: people from a non-dominant culture hardly choose to be marginalised. Thus, Berry (1997, p. 10) advocates 'mutual accommodation' in order to attain smooth integration. That means both groups are required to adjust, especially on fundamental issues. Non-dominant groups need to 'adopt the basic values of larger society', whilst dominant groups should be open-minded in welcoming newcomers. When dominant groups demonstrate their acceptance of minority groups, the society they inhabit together is labelled a multicultural society (Berry 1997, p. 11). In addition, integration is pursued when other members of the same ethnic group share similar aspirations to maintain their cultural heritage (Berry 1997, p. 11).

Berry (1997, p. 10) argues, "Integration can only be freely chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity". The reason is that in multicultural societies immigrants are neither bound to accept and follow the values, attitudes and behaviour of their hosts, nor to sacrifice those of their country of origin. More importantly, host societies are 'enriched by the presence of multiple cultures' (Organista, Marin & Chun 2010, p. 103).

Berry's approach has been criticised by a number of authors. A major criticism is that it is too general and oversimplified (Bourhis et al. 1997; Korzenny 1998). This criticism is justified given that acculturation is a complex and multidimensional process, and a host of factors can affect the process. The complexities of acculturation processes are discussed in Kang (2006, p. 675) who contends that the typological strategies outlined by Berry are not scaled appropriately and therefore may not produce realistic scenarios about the degree of acculturation. Similarly, Birman, Trickett and Vinokurov (2002, p. 598) argue that there is no single best mode of acculturation, which again reflects the

complex nature of acculturation.

Organista, Marin and Chun (2010), on the other hand, point to the inapplicability of Berry's model when an individual belongs to more than two cultures. This particular critique, while valid, is more applicable to people with intercultural marriages and whose children are exposed to multiple cultures. However, for first generation migrants (such as Bangladeshi migrants about whom this thesis is concerned) who come from a society where intra-cultural (or intra-religious) marriage is a norm, Berry's model may be more easily applied to examine the acculturation outcomes. Berry's conception of 'marginalisation' has also been criticised on the ground that it is not practical for an individual to maintain their cultural identity by ignoring both their own and the host society culture (Del Pilar & Udasco 2004; Schwartz & Zamboanga 2008).

Despite its limitations, Berry's model is found to be useful for comprehending the responses of individuals exposed to a new culture (Organista, Marin & Chun 2010). It has also been supported by a number of scholars (Sam 2006; Cabassa 2003). Berry's model therefore remains a useful starting point for the study of migrant acculturation (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2015).

Indicators of successful settlement and acculturation

Settlement indicators are used to map to 'what extent and in what ways settlement is occurring' (Fletcher 1999, p. 30). Studies on migration outline a number of indicators that can be used to measure settlement outcomes. Most common among them are those related to labour market success. However, Lester (2009) argues that labour market success is only a part of successful settlement and not applicable for a large number of migrants who do not (or cannot) participate in the labour market. Consequently, Lester (2009) suggests the following indicators: migrants' life satisfaction in their host country, mental health, whether they think their decision to migrate was right, and whether they would encourage others to do so. Khoo and McDonald (2001) identify indicators of settlement within four dimensions – social participation, economic participation, economic well-being, and physical well-being. Indicators within each dimension are presented in the following table.

Table 2.2: Dimensions and indicators of successful settlement

Dimensions of settlement	Indicators
Social participation	English proficiency, citizenship
Economic participation	Labour force participation rate, employment and unemployment rates, occupational status
Economic well-being	Level of income, whether income is received in the form of government pensions or allowances, job satisfaction, home ownership
Physical well-being	Physical and mental health status, self-assessed general health status.

Source: Khoo and McDonald (2001)

The following definition of individual migrants' well-being, provided by Thornley (2010), captures the full spectrum of settlement indicators. Settlement is the ability to participate fully in economic, social, cultural and political activities; maintaining one's own distinct ethno-cultural identity and culture; becoming part of the social, institutional and cultural fabric of society; being physically and mentally healthy; and being well, contented, and satisfied with life.

Successful settlement of migrants is practically related to economic factors that include employment, occupational status (employed, unemployed, not in the workforce) as well as job satisfaction. Further, economic well-being is indicated by the level of income (Khoo & McDonald 2001). When a migrant's current job is equivalent to one held in the former country, it can be deemed a good job (Mahuteau & Junankar 2008, p. 11). The literature shows that most migrants, especially those from dissimilar socio-cultural and language backgrounds, are likely to experience downward mobility in occupation regardless of their educational qualifications and skills (Burnett 1998; Piracha, Tani & Vadean 2010; Mahuteau & Junankar 2008). Consequently, they work in low-profile jobs, often classified as 'dirty jobs'. This 'education-occupation mismatch' is more severe among immigrants than people from the host society, and the difference is more pronounced for those from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

Home ownership is an important indicator of economic as well as social well-being. New migrants are likely to live in shared accommodation during their early days of settlement. This is especially true for those with insufficient housing capital

(Richardson et al 2002, p. 8). Many close relatives continue to share housing until they earn an adequate income and can provide their own accommodation (Richardson et al 2002). Khoo and McDonald (2001) discovered that home ownership increases with the length of residence. Migrants in all categories are expected to have a home of their own within a certain timeframe.

Citizenship is marked as a way for greater participation in the host society (Khoo & McDonald 2001). Since citizenship offers migrants the ability to participate in the host society as voters, this gives them a new sense of belonging. Migrants' position as a part of their host country is legally secured with citizenship. Other settlement indicators commonly identified in the literature are access to government services, being able to participate in the wider society, and being accepted as belonging (Henderson 2004, p. 9).

Factors affecting successful settlement and acculturation

Many factors influence settlement and acculturation. Some of these factors serve to facilitate, whereas others impede, successful settlement. Studies such as Berry and Sam (1996), and Berry (1997) elaborate these factors. Building on this work, Cabassa (2003, p. 131) provides a framework of contextual factors that may affect settlement or acculturation. In this framework, the factors are related to 'prior to immigration context', 'immigration context' and 'settlement context'. Prior immigration context includes factors related to country of origin and individual attributes. Similarly, settlement context may include factors related to host country and individual characteristics. Minas (1990, p. 262, cited in Burnett 1998) provides a similar framework in which he arranges settlement factors into three groups: 'pre-migration, migration and post-migration variables'. Some of the important factors are discussed below.

Pre-arrival and migration characteristics

Migrants' demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, religion, cultural and family backgrounds influence settlement and acculturation significantly

(Khoo & McDonald 2012; Fletcher 1999; Burnett 1998). Migrants' education and proficiency in the language of their host country have also been identified as important factors in successful settlement.

Age: People who migrate at a younger age are more likely to acculturate successfully in their new society and culture. This is because feelings of national or ethnic identity and cultural exclusiveness among the young are not as entrenched as they are among their elders, which makes their transition in the new setting likely to be a smooth one (Thomas 2003, p. 41). Furthermore, one's age at migration may affect a migrant's ability to obtain further educational qualifications and gain proficiency in the language of the host country, thereby influencing settlement outcomes (Weston 1996). The migration literature also shows that older people are likely to face more complexity than others settling in a new country (Leuner 2007, p. 420). This is because it is difficult for older people to accept changes in their post-migration lives.

Gender: Gender plays an important role in migrant settlement. The literature suggests that men are likely to experience settlement differently to women. Women's experiences as migrants are likely to be much more complicated than men's (Thapan 2005, p. 24). The transitions migrant women experience are multiple and complex.

Domestic responsibility often creates barriers to the acculturation of women. Instead of adapting to the broader host society, women find that migration intensifies their domestic workloads, a phenomenon that has been termed 'migration as feminisation' (Ho 2004, 2006; Salway 2007; Mirdal 1984). Moreover, domestic responsibility coupled with their reproductive role causes a decline in women's employment. Thus, in spite of high educational qualifications and a good command of the host country's language, many women initially give up their career, or switch to a part-time or more flexible occupation, as indicated by Meares (2010), resuming after their children are established in school (Purkayastha 2004, p. 189). This can often result in 'painful shifts in identity' from professional to housewife, from economic contributor to dependant, and consequently 'a sense of grief and loss' may engulf those women (Meares 2010, p. 479). On the other hand, men (particularly from traditional societies) are likely to

engage with their host society much earlier as they usually precede women in gaining work and access to services (Ahmed 2005; Ho 2006).

Due to the absence of family support migrant women find giving birth and child-care more challenging abroad than in their homeland (Yan 2004; Chu 2011). Furthermore, Johnson (1998) observes that men decrease their support in household activities as they find outdoors are more demanding than the domestic duties (cited in Thomas 2003, p. 43). As a whole, migrant women face a 'series of extra barriers in each arena of their lives – work, community, family – in order to rebuild their lives and careers' (Purkayastha 2005, p. 195). Furthermore, most of the studies on Muslim women migrants' experience in Western countries demonstrate that women, especially those who maintain religious and cultural exclusiveness through their traditional clothes, face obstacles to inclusion in the social and economic activities of the host society (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2007a; Tilbury 2007b; Samani 2013; Imtoual 2004).

Martin (2003) shows that adjustment to a different culture is a big challenge for women. Settlement is increasingly difficult the larger the cultural gap between home country and adoptive one. Examples of these difficulties include limited understanding of the new culture, language, and women's roles in their new country. Martin asserts that women may face dual problems, some arising from their status as migrant or foreigner and others due to their being women.

The literature also shows that women have little influence on migration decisions in the household: the decision to migrate is often linked directly with the men's employment prospects (Altamirano 1997; Jolly & Reeves 2005). Most women migrate as dependants or to achieve family reunion, either accompanied by husbands (sometimes other male relatives) or joining them later on. How migration will impact on women is often overlooked in decision-making. Jolly and Reeves (2005, p. 12) further observe that there is no evidence of men moving for associational reasons. Therefore, it is clear from the literature that women's role in migration is somewhat passive in that women's migration decision is mainly associational or women migrate mostly as 'tied movers'. Moreover, women migrants are typically believed to be less qualified than their male counterparts. All these factors may spell different settlement outcomes for migrant women.

On the other hand, it is argued that migration may enhance the autonomy and power of women and can be seen as a potentially liberating experience for them (Martin 2003; Westwood & Phizacklea 2000). However, these positive effects can isolate them from family support networks and cultural norms, which could impose extra pressure on women's capacity to settle in a new environment (Kabeer 2000; Gardner 2002).

Immigrants' social and cultural background: Social and cultural backgrounds are identified as factors influencing settlement, with cultural dissimilarity or distance potentially leading to negative outcomes (Burnett 1998). The role of religion is also significant in migrant settlement (Cahill 2003). Migrants are likely to bring their values, customs and traditions with them wherever they go. For example, Thomas (2003, p. 42) asserts that migrants often bring 'a set of attitudes and cultural orientation' to their country of destination. Thus, some immigrant parents do not permit their children to accustom themselves fully to Western culture. As a result, a clash of cultural values can create conflict between immigrant youth and their parents who are anxious for their offspring to uphold traditional cultural values and concerned when they see them adopting those of their new country and behaving in ways alien to their own tradition (NZFEC 1993 cited in Dixon et al. 2009).

Education and skills: Migrants' economic success in the host country depends largely on their education and skills (Dustmann & Glitz 2011). Higher education increases migrants' employability because employers use education as a sign of jobseekers' ability (Piracha, Tani & Vadean 2012). Therefore, more educated and skilled migrants "fare better in terms of labour market participation, employment and earnings than those with fewer skills" (Fletcher 1999, p. 54). Berry (1997) argues that education contributes to better adaptation by migrants to their host society (Berry 1997, p. 22). Therefore, it can be assumed migrants with high educational qualifications and skills are likely to settle well.

Proficiency in the language of the host country: Such proficiency has significant influence on all areas of settlement (Dixon et al. 2009). Migrants' proficiency in the language of their host country, and their occupational status and income, are positively correlated (Fletcher 1999; Miranda & Zhu 2013; McHugh & Challinor 2011; Esser 2006; Islam & Parasnis 2014; Yao & Ours 2015). Chiswick (2008, p. 19) shows that the proficient group earns about 15 per cent more than the others. Similarly, Fletcher (1999,

p. 50) observes that "migrants with higher levels of dominant language proficiency have higher average labour force participation rates and lower unemployment rates".

Chiswick (2008) and Chiswick and Miller (2014) cite several advantages of proficiency in the host country's language. For example, language proficiency makes it easier for a migrant to find work and, once in the workforce, to be more productive. Further, it enables her or him to interact easily with the host society. This in turn reduces the likelihood of migrants' finding themselves confined to a cultural or linguistic enclave.

Furthermore, immigrants may require further study upon arrival to ensure suitable employment. Proficiency in the language of their host community eases migrants' access to further education and paves the way to higher academic achievement (Esser 2006). This proficiency also broadens their access to the settlement services provided by government or other organisations in the host country (Weston 1996). There is evidence that many people from non-English-speaking backgrounds have unequal access to government services and programs even after 30 to 40 years in Australia (Shergold and Nicolaou 1986, cited in Burnett 1998, p. 14). It is also recognised that the language barrier can increase the sense of distance from, and misunderstanding of, the receiving country's culture (Adsera & Pytlikova 2012). Therefore, proficiency in that country's language is properly regarded as the key to successful integration.

Immigration context

The mode of migration and circumstances under which migration takes place can affect the settlement experience. For example, it matters whether the decision to migrate was forced or voluntary, and whether migrants have adequate knowledge and preparation beforehand (Burnett 1998, p. 25). People migrate for different reasons: some leave their country by choice (skilled migrants, for example) while others are forced to do so (humanitarian migrants). The literature shows that the reasons for migration play a significant role in shaping migrants' settlement experience (Ghosh 2007; Nann 1982). Therefore, it is assumed that people who leave their country of origin to better their education and economic opportunities are likely to acculturate more easily, compared with those who leave their country to avoid poverty, war or political oppression (Organista, Marin & Chun 2010).

The decision to migrate can be influenced by a host of factors which are broadly divided

into push and pull factors. In general, the literature links economic factors with the decision to migrate (Cornelius, Martin & Hollifield 1992; Hunter 2012). Aside from economic factors, social and political contexts induce people to leave their home country (Cabassa 2003, p. 130). Moreover, fear of negative consequences due to environmental alteration in their home country, such as climate change, also induces people to migrate (McAdam & Saul 2010).

Settlement, or post-migration context

Post-migration factors can be attributed to migrants' individual characteristics as well as host country factors. These are discussed below.

Recognition of overseas qualifications: Although migrants' educational qualifications or skills are important determinants of their labour market outcomes, recognition of their educational qualifications is even more important (Chiswick & Miller 2008). The reason is that recognition of qualifications is a key step in re-entering one's profession or occupation, and thus a crucial factor in successful settlement. Many migrants with non-English-speaking, or culturally diverse, backgrounds often cannot find a job related to their qualifications (Castles et al. 1988; Syed 2007). As a result, many new migrants are under-utilised and not working in the professions they were trained for (Piracha, Tani & Vadean 2012; Syed 2008). Quite commonly, highly qualified migrants can be seen working as taxi drivers, private security guards, and other low-profile jobs in the suburbs of Sydney, Chicago and other commercial capitals of the world (Syed 2008; Lagos 2006). Thus, migrants commonly experience 'status loss' due to the non-recognition of educational qualifications by employers in the host country (Chiswick & Miller 2009; Piracha, Tani & Vadean 2012; Junankar & Mahuteau 2004). Consequently, non-recognition of qualifications may lead to dissatisfaction with their job even if they are employed.

Non-recognition of qualifications may also lead migrants, including many highly educated ones, to pursue further studies, which is often regarded as very stressful, especially when earning money is the most urgent survival concern. This stress is likely to extend to all members of the family and damage relationships, a trend associated with a sense of rejection and loss of dignity (Tilbury 2007a, p. 443).

The context in the host country: The general view of immigrants held by people in the host country may affect the extent to which they settle and acculturate there (Hunter 2012, p. 30). According to Castles (2000), if the receiving countries do not welcome diversity, people from an ethnic minority may end up marginalising themselves in concentrated areas. Societies experiencing 'cultural pluralism' for a long period accept cultural diversity and share their communal resources (Berry 2005, p. 703), and this constitutes a positive multicultural ideology (Berry & Kalin 1995).

Discrimination in the labour market is often identified as a barrier to being hired. 'Visible differences' such as physical appearance, clothing, 'ethnic names', and accent can affect employment outcomes significantly. D'Amico and Maxwell (1995, p. 982) reveal that race or ethnicity plays a key role in determining access to jobs. Due to specific visible religious markers such as religious clothing, facial hair and an Islamic name, in addition to skin colour, Muslims are likely to suffer discrimination in the labour market (Hebbani & McNamara 2010; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2007b). Furthermore, prayer requirements, and names identified as ethnic, may stop them from getting job interviews (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2007b, p. 71). Overall, "Discrimination and prejudice have the potential to make the process of settlement more difficult for newly arrived migrants. It may be a factor affecting economic, socio-cultural or personal aspects of settlement, and is more likely to affect those from culturally dissimilar, non-English-speaking backgrounds" Fletcher (1999, p 63). Most immigrant countries have settlement policies and services to handle the issues that impinge on settlement but they exert limited influence when it comes to personal dealings and bias.

Social Capital of Migrants: Social capital in the context of migration settlement is defined as a set of interpersonal ties that connects migrants, former migrants, and people living in the host country through bonds of kinship, friendship, and a shared community of origin (Massey et al. 1998; Boyd 1989; Hagan 1998). Burt (2000, p. 1) argues that social capital is an asset created by a network of strongly interconnected elements.

Sociologists have emphasised the strong role of social capital in facilitating immigrants' incorporation into the host society (Brettel & Hollifield 2014, p. 19). The reason is that social capital is associated with positive social interaction whereby migrants engage with each other and with receiving communities (Orton 2012). Orton (2012, p. 9) elaborates the point,

'Positive interactions' refers to those processes which help these people to effectively build networks of mutually supportive relationships with each other in ways that contribute to a more cohesive society. This type of interaction provides a foundation for improved relationships involving more than just a toleration of each other's co-existence. Instead deeper relationships can emerge from an interactive process of relationship-building that incorporates a developing empathy, mutual respect and dialogue between diverse individuals and groups.

The literature shows that better connected people are likely to do better (Hagan 1998; Burt 2000). Therefore, it is assumed that the role of networks or connections is very significant in the acculturation of migrants. It is argued that networks reduce the short-term costs of settlement and the risks associated with movement, especially during the early settlement period, and increase the expected net returns from migration (Massey et al. 1998, p. 42). Networks also provide food, shelter, job information and contacts, recreation, and emotional support (Boyd 1989, p. 643). Willmott (1987), for example, reminds us that "practical support such as childcare is likely to be provided by someone within one's local neighbourhood" (cited in Ryan et al. 2008b, p. 675). Moreover, Orton (2012, p. 13) observes that positive interaction with members of the host society promotes social and economic inclusion, which might in turn lead to greater integration and empowerment of migrants. Without such positive interaction, migrants may end up living 'parallel lives', and more importantly, may encounter hostility from members of the host society.

Social capital, therefore, engenders trust, cooperation and support, building strong relationships within and between networks and communities (Claridge 2004; Massey et al. 1998; Boyd 1989). Social capital is available from two sources: the home community, in which case it is defined as *bonding capital*, and the host community, which supplies *bridging capital*. Both bonding and bridging capital improve one's personal feelings of well-being and satisfaction. Thus, both forms boost acculturation.

Lancee (2010, p. 206) defines bonding capital as ties that connect people and enlarge networks, making positive outcomes likely. Family is often delineated as the closest unit of bonding capital linked to 'thick trust' (Lancee 2010; Boyd 1989, p. 642). This domestic unit provides emotional as well as instrumental support (Ryan et al. 2008 a, p.

674). The next supporting unit is the ethnic or home community. Once networks develop among a migrant community, they are likely to encourage and support new migrants (Boyd 1989, p. 645). For example, Hagan (1998, p. 58) has shown that in a particular work environment an "ethnic based labour system controls recruitment, work schedules, and promotion. Friends and relatives already employed in the supermarket chain alert perspective workers". Therefore, bonding with family and friends can help migrants emotionally, socially, and economically (Keeley 2007).

Bridging capital, on the other hand, is defined as the collection of ties that establishes a 'wide social network' outside the recipient's ethnic community (Lancee 2010, p. 207). Burt (2001) uses a metaphor to describe this: "A wide social network is a network that contains structural holes… A bridge is a tie that spans a structural hole" (cited in Lancee 2010, p. 207). Holes or gaps are shaped because of class, ethnicity, and age. Therefore, bridge-building is important since it connects people of different origins and helps to overcome the limitations or transcend boundaries through diverse linkages. More importantly, it ensures societal cohesion. The literature shows that, when migrants are connected with the host society, they are likely to play a significant role in social and economic activities, which consequently reduces the risk of intolerance between migrants and locals (Orton 2012, p. 4).

The research suggests that in order to adapt to the host society, migrants need resources from both types of network (Cox & Orman 2009, p. 2). For example, living in an ethnically homogenous neighbourhood may have a positive role in acculturation since people from similar cultural backgrounds could be more co-operative than others (Lancee 2010). Moreover, Hagan (1998, p. 55) notes that kinship-based networks ease the initial stage of migration. In the same way, successfully dealing with problems and interacting positively with members of the host society are likely to enhance acculturation (Neto, Barros & Schmitz 2005, p. 22). Lancee also (2010) hypothesises a positive relationship between the level of bridging social capital and labour market outcomes (the likelihood of gaining employment and a higher income). In the same way a positive relationship between the level of bonding social capital and labour market outcomes can be hypothesised.

However, it is debatable whether bonding or bridging capital is the more effective means of securing successful settlement. Those in favour of bonding capital argue that

it is stronger and more reliable than bridging capital (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2015; Lancee 2010). This is because bonding works within the community, which is formed by a group of people who possess similar feelings, values, and ways of living. In contrast, bridging capital makes a bridge of relationships with the people of other communities, who are diverse in mentalities, beliefs, and lifestyles. This set of connections may make for good understanding and assist in building friendly relationships between the communities: however, this is likely to remain a formal relationship. Similarly, it is argued that bonding social capital is more supportive for new arrivals (Kerrington & Marshall 2008). However, bonding also shuts off networking with the broader society which in turn slows down integration (Beugelsdijk & Smulders 2009; Lancee 2010). Lancee (2010, p. 209) further asserts that bridging capital reduces the risk of discrimination while Bankston (2014, p. 10) observes it may impose a boundary between migrants and the host society.

Putnam (2001, p. 2) explains that some forms of social capital are good for certain people but not others. For example, bonding social capital is especially supportive for new arrivals (Kerrington & Marshall 2008). It is also noteworthy that migrants living in ethnic enclaves may not need to interact with the local population, because whatever they need is available in those highly concentrated areas (Danzer & Yaman 2012, p. 22). Further, the characteristics that make social capital advantageous may also have negative consequences (Putnam 2001, p. 2). Instead of providing trust they could lead to mistrust or misunderstanding (Claridge 2004), and social exclusion (Hunter 2000). According to Hunter, interaction among certain clusters or associations may exclude other groups from their networks. Consequently, mistrust may grow among the excluded groups. Therefore, when analysing social capital, the possibility of negative outcomes should be examined.

Linkage to service access and participation in social activities: In order to partake in community life immigrants require access to information, services and resources available in the host country such as shops, banks, hospitals, schools, and real estate agencies. Furthermore, employment, social security services, taxation, accommodation, insurance, further education, legal aid information, transport and child-care have been identified as significant components in this context (Masri 2002; Gambetta & Burgess 2004). This is very significant, because settlement success depends on how well

migrants avail themselves of these services (Gambetta & Burgess 2004; Richardson et al. 2002; DIMIA 2003).

Furthermore, accessing services results in successful integration, which leads to communication with the wider community, builds support and assists cross-cultural understanding (Gambetta & Burgess 2004, p. 1). Also, migrants can progress their integration by engaging in local communities through playing sport, joining social clubs, attending community events and volunteering, as well as making contacts and friends in the community (Khoo 2012, p. 7-8).

Length of stay: Another significant fact about acculturation is that it is gradual (Organista, Marin & Chun 2010, p. 119). Therefore, the longer migrants stay in a receiving country, the better they learn the language, culture and other social behaviours of the host society (Khoo & McDonald 2001). Unquestionably, length of stay bears a positive relation to settlement outcomes.

Conceptual framework for hypothesising about settlement outcomes

The Australian Survey Research Group (ASRG 2011) has produced a framework combining settlement factors and indicators in such a way as to show how the former affect the latter, in turn determining the final settlement outcome. The table below shows these relationships.

Table 2.3: Conceptual framework for the relationship between settlement factors and outcomes

Settlement factors	Settlement indicators	Settlement dimensions	Settlement outcome
Gender, Age, Settlement length, Marital status, Education etc.	English proficiency Participation in education and training Participation in community life (such as school, volunteer work, religious group, etc) Citizenship intention Amount of community acceptance	Social Participation	Settlement outcome (proxy: level of comfort living in Australia)
	Labour force participation Employed/unemployed	Economic participation	
	Level of income Job satisfaction Satisfaction with accommodation	Economic well-being	
	Physical health Mental health Level of personal confidence	Physical well-being	

Source: Modified version of ASRG (2011)

Reviews of empirical studies on migrants' settlement

Migration has been the subject of broad research by social scientists for at least a century (IMI 2006, p. 2). So a vast number of studies exist which examine different issues related to long-term migrants all over the world. The issues include, but are not limited to, causes of and factors affecting migration (Massey et al. 2002; Boyd 1989); immigrants' settlement patterns (Lo & Wang 1997; Newbold & Spindler 2001; Donato et al. 2007); diasporas, integration, and cultural adjustment in the host society; and transnationalism. This section provides an overview of the studies related to international migrants' settlement. These cover a vast range of issues including education, employment, language proficiency, ethnicity, religion, social capital, host country governments' immigration policy, and how these are all related with migration, and the experience of migrant settlement.

In the review we first discuss selected studies conducted on different migrant groups living in major immigrant nations such as the US, the UK, Italy, Germany, and Canada. This is followed by settlement studies of different migrant groups living in Australia. Then we discuss some studies conducted particularly on South Asian migrants living in Australia. Finally, the settlement experience of Bangladeshi migrants living in different countries, including Australia, is discussed.

Studies on migrant settlement

This section discusses some selected studies which investigate the settlement experiences of migrants living in major migrant-receiving countries such as the US, the UK and Canada. The selection of studies is based on the themes addressed by this thesis: that is, studies that look at the motivations driving migration, factors affecting different aspects of successful settlement and the role of gender in the settlement process.

Studies have affirmed the significance of proficiency in the host country's language for different indicators of successful settlement. For example, Chiswick and Miller (1990, 2005) show the positive effect a grasp of the host country's language (English) has on the earning capacity of migrants living in the USA and Canada. Similarly, Dustmann and Fabbri (2001) find that proficiency in English increases the probability of gaining employment as well as boosting the earnings of non-white migrants in the UK. Aycan and Berry (1996) focus on workforce integration of highly educated Turkish immigrants in Canada. They have found that, alongside deficiency in English, high unemployment and under-employment among Turkish immigrants can be attributed to non-recognition of their Turkish qualifications, and lack of Canadian work experience. The difficulties they face in the labour market hinder their adaptation to Canadian society. Their study thus points to a host of factors affecting successful settlement. Reitz (2007) focuses on employment success as measured by the employment rate and income levels of skilled migrants to Canada. He shows that lack of Canadian work experience, non-recognition of migrants' home country credentials or experience, and lack of proficiency in English are major barriers to employment success. Further, he finds that over time migrants can overcome these difficulties to some extent.

Massey (1986) cites a success story of Mexican immigrants in the United States. By

making new friends, and establishing institutional connections, they obtain more stable and better-paying jobs that bind them more closely to their host country. This study also provides evidence that length of stay has a positive effect on migrants' successful settlement. Waters and Jimenez (2005) posit four dimensions of assimilation ('socioeconomic status', 'spatial concentration', 'language assimilation' and 'intermarriage' with recent migrants to the US) and observe that all four dimensions are largely assimilative.

Vohra and Adair (2000) examined the life satisfaction of Indian immigrants to Canada. They found that Indian immigrants' life satisfaction correlated with perceived discrimination and a perception of social support, but not with education, socio-economic status or the perceived presence of basic amenities. Bloemen (2013), on the other hand, examined migrants' job satisfaction and found that lack of language skill could force migrants to accept lower-level jobs which in turn tended to diminish their job satisfaction. This study, therefore, implies that the kind of job someone works at is an important determinant of job satisfaction and that proficiency in a host country language contributes to positive outcomes in the workplace.

Au et al. (1998) found that education and the English-language proficiency of Chinese immigrants to the UK significantly affected their acculturation. They also concluded that gender plays a role in acculturation, with male migrants more acculturated than females. Phillimore (2011) uses Berry's (1997) acculturation framework to investigate how acculturation and integration of individual refugees living in the UK are affected by different factors. She asserts that a host of factors such as language barriers, racist harassment, culture shock, psychological stress resulting from their home country experience, and their overall 'refugee status' work as obstacles to acculturation.

Mirdal (1984) examines the stress and distress of Turkish women migrants in Denmark. The study reveals that "Turkish women are unable to cope with the new environment due to multiple disadvantages of being poor, uneducated, alien, and female; these factors reduce their control of environment and self-determination" (Mirdal 1984, p. 992). They are confined to the house playing the traditional role of Muslim women. On the other hand, working women find their workload doubled due to the weight of their responsibilities inside and outside the home. Mirdal's study thus points to the disadvantaged position of women migrants. Banerjee and Phan (2015) examine the

occupational status of skilled migrants' spouses who enter Canada as 'dependent migrants' and most of whom are women. The study reveals that these dependent migrants experience degradation in their occupational status which persists over time.

More recently, there has been increasing focus on migrants' social capital during the settlement process (for example, Ryan 2007; Ryan et al. 2008a; Valdez 2008; Soehl & Waldinger 2010; Raza, Beaujot & Woldemicael 2013). Ryan et al. (2008a) examine the processes of network formation, the role of ethnic-specific networks, and the diverse skills and opportunities that migrants utilise in maintaining and accessing social ties, with specific reference to Polish migrants in different parts of London. In so doing, they provide an understanding of bonding and bridging networks used by migrants. Ryan (2010, p. 13) shows that Polish migrants in London find the topic of their ethnic identity confronting. The study found that, although most of the Polish migrants interacted and engaged with very specific groups of friends, family and acquaintances, ethnic engagement did not loom large among them. Moreover, they maintained transnational networks by providing practical support, including various forms of care, a particularly noteworthy one being parents' readiness to come over and help with child-care. As barriers to settlement Ryan (2010, p.371) stresses lack of proficiency in English and the unwelcoming attitude of many English people towards immigrants. Like Polish migrants in London, Russian immigrants in Scotland preserve their ethnic exclusiveness and transnational identity, as Mamattah (2006) discovered. However, Russian immigrants preserve their transnational character through films, books, church and festival attendance, and by observing religious holidays as well as reading newspapers from their homeland on the Internet. They, however, maintain strong community engagement, unlike the London Poles studied by Ryan (2009). Valdez (2008) demonstrates that social capital in the form of kinship ties among migrants to the US opens the way to members of ethnic groups becoming entrepreneurs because such ties distribute information, economic resources and opportunities.

Studies on settlement experience of migrants in Australia

Numerous studies have been conducted on the issues surrounding migrant settlement in Australia. There are studies comparing and contrasting the settlement experiences of different ethnic groups. There are also studies related to specific ethnic groups. Most of the studies examine the settlement experience of humanitarian migrants. Colic-Peisker

(2009) looks at the settlement experiences as measured by the life satisfaction of three refugee groups – ex-Yugoslavs, black Africans and people from the Middle East – who arrived in Western Australia during the 1990s and 2000s. Her study found that life satisfaction corresponded to job satisfaction, financial satisfaction, and social support, and was impaired by discrimination encountered in the labour market. Colic-Peisker and Walker (2003) examined identity and acculturation of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their study revealed that forced migration caused identity loss and complicated the refugees' acculturation experience. Tilbury (2007a) studied the incidence of depression among several East African communities in Western Australia, namely the Ethiopian, Eritrean, Sudanese, and Somali communities. This study documented that non-recognition of qualifications, lack of information and knowledge about labour market, and massive cultural differences between East and West, spawned sadness, frustration and loneliness among these groups. Another finding of the study was that women refugees were more likely to adapt to the new culture because it allowed them more freedom than they enjoyed in their countries of origin. Mansouri, Leach and Traies (2006) examined the effect of humanitarian visa categories on the settlement experience of Iraqi refugees in Australia. The major finding of their study is that Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) holders faced significant barriers in their settlement as compared with Permanent Protection Visa (PPV) holders.

Recently, the Australian Survey Research Group (ASRG 2011) conducted a study to "obtain a better understanding of how Humanitarian Program entrants are faring during their first five years in Australia and to help identify what factors contribute to successful settlement". That study collected information about humanitarian migrants' English-language proficiency, education, use of government services, accommodation arrangements, networking, labour market participation, income, and well-being. One finding of the study is that the more time refugees spent in Australia, the greater their English proficiency along with their employment and income prospects, but the length of stay had no bearing on personal well-being as measured by their happiness and confidence levels. It should be noted here that the characteristics of humanitarian migrants, including their motivation for emigrating, differ from skilled migrants',

suggesting different settlement experiences for each group. Nonetheless, the above studies give some idea of the role played by some common factors in fostering successful settlement.

Studies solely concerning skilled migrants in Australia are scant. The ones that are available mainly look at labour market integration and the factors that may affect it. For example, using data collected through the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants in Australia (LSIA), Richardson et al. (2002) enumerate the characteristics of newly arrived migrants and focus particularly on their labour market experience, satisfaction with life in Australia, housing arrangements, and capacity to use government support services. Similarly, Richardson et al. (2004) study income levels and labour market participation, and explore their relationship with migrants' age, qualifications, English-language proficiency and visa categories. Birrell and Healy (2008) investigate the employment outcomes of skilled migrants who arrived in Australia between 2001 and 2006. This study demonstrates that skilled migrants who come from English speaking backgrounds are quite successful in finding managerial or professional jobs which are commensurate with their professional qualifications. On the other hand, skilled migrants from non-English speaking countries seriously lag behind in finding jobs at managerial or professional levels. The study further shows that former students who earned their qualifications in Australia migrants (overseas students turned to migrants) have been least successful in finding professional jobs in Australian labour market.

More recently, the Australian Government introduced its Continuous Survey of Australia's Migrants, which started in 2009, collecting information and publishing reports on newly arrived skilled and family migrants. Studies based on these data focus on employment outcomes for migrants across different visa categories (see, DIAC 2011a). Some recent studies looked at the factors affecting job and life satisfaction for skilled migrants in Australia. For example, Gunasekara, Rajendran and Grant (2014) have examined the factors affecting the life satisfaction of Sri Lankan and Indian skilled migrants in Australia. They found that both the Sri Lankan and the Indians were satisfied with their life. The significant positive factors responsible for this level of life satisfaction are English-language proficiency and the length of stay in Australia. Some

common factors identified in the settlement literature, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and education, do not have any significant effect on their life satisfaction. Similarly, Gunasekara, Rajendran and Grant (2015) find that these same factors also have nothing to do with their job satisfaction in Australia. Rather, job satisfaction is determined by factors such as the nature of their jobs, promotion, pay, and the behaviour of co-workers.

Several other studies look at the role of one or more factors in settlement outcomes. For example, Thomas (2003) relates migrants' age to acculturation by focusing on older migrants and their families in Australia. The study reveals that compared with the young generation, older migrants are more vulnerable, and have deeper feelings about their culture, heritage, and identity. Burnett (1998) focuses on the role of English-language proficiency in the settlement process, using interviews of 24 immigrants from three different language backgrounds (Chinese, Spanish and Russian) living in Sydney. The study finds inadequate English is the main barrier to settlement regardless of the migrant's educational background and time spent in Australia. Richardson et al. (2004), using the LSIA data to study the workforce participation of overseas migrants, have reached a similar conclusion.

Junankar and Mahuteau (2004) used LSIA data to examine the effect of a change to social security legislation in 1997 that introduced a two-year waiting period for benefits eligibility applying to new migrants. They found that the policy change increased the likelihood of finding a job but reduced the prospect of holding down a 'good' job. More recently, the role of social capital in assisting migrant settlement is gaining academic attention. For example, given the correlation between people's social connections and their health and well-being, Jackson et al. (2013) examine how migrants make acquaintances and friends in a Victorian regional town. The study finds that good connections are conducive to settlement success in regional area. Similarly, Wulff and Dharmalingam (2008) show that migrants' social connectedness is an important factor in retaining skilled migrants in regional Australia over the long haul. Mahuteau and Junankar (2008), on the other hand, examine the role of migrants' ethnic networks in

helping them make a success of jobseeking. Siar (2014) studies Filipino skilled migrants living in Australia (and New Zealand) and establishes that, contrary to common belief, they also maintain strong ties – both emotional and cultural - with their home country.

Studies of different religious groups are also available. Chief among them are surveys of Muslim migrants. Haveric (2009) examines the settlement of Bosnian Muslims in Victoria. Khawaja (2007) focuses on the psychological distress of Muslim migrants in Australia. Bouma and Brace-Govan (2000) discuss 'religious settlement' by Muslim and Buddhist women migrants, and compare their experience with that of their male counterparts. Tilbury (2007b) shows that Muslims in Australia face discrimination in employment based on their names and dress codes. Furthermore, those who are employed are likely to face racism from work colleagues, either directly or indirectly. The experiences of young Muslims in Australia, who hail from different ethnic backgrounds, are examined by Kabir (2007a; 2007b; 2008). These studies reveal that Muslim youth are generally optimistic about being Australian and do not report facing obstacles to the preservation of their religion and culture in this country.

There are studies focusing on different ethnic groups. Leuner (2007) investigates the settlement patterns of Polish migrants in Melbourne during the 1980s with particular attention to the outcome and consequences of their migration. Her study also elaborates the positive and negative experiences faced by them during the settlement process. Leuner (2007) demonstrates that lack of proficiency in English and accordingly non-recognition of qualifications are associated with occupational and financial problems for these migrants. Furthermore, absence of family and friends and cultural differences are significant impediments to their acculturation. Many have neither 'a sense of belonging to Australia' nor 'a greater sense of participation in local and national affairs' in spite of living here for more than two decades (Leuner 2007, p. 418).

Based on data from the Census of 1991, Khoo et al. (1994) use economic as well as social indicators to assess the extent to which migrants born in Asia have settled and adjusted. The study reveals that Asian-born migrants claim a broad range of socio-economic characteristics which results in diverse settlement experience. One finding is that migrants born in parts of Asia where English is widely spoken such as Malaysia, Singapore, India, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong experience favourable economic and social

settlement outcomes. Ip, Wu and Inglis (1998) focus on Taiwanese business people who started migrating to Australia in the mid-1980s. Their motives for migrating are examined, along with the extent of their economic and social incorporation into Australian society. The study identifies the language barrier and hostile behaviour by locals as the main obstacles to social and economic inclusion. Ip (2001) also examines the settlement pattern of Taiwanese business migrants and observes that, although they were well-educated, skilled professionals, managers and entrepreneurs, they had been facing stress and hardship in social and economic relationships. Taiwanese turn out to be one of the migrant groups with a high unemployment rate and low workforce participation. The reason is that they find it difficult to achieve satisfaction in their job or business. For this reason, many are returning to Taiwan for resettlement. Ip (2001) provides an interesting case in point which goes to show that even skilled and educated migrants may encounter significant settlement stress.

Ho (2004, 2006) focuses on Chinese women's experience of work and family life. These studies discover that gender plays an important role in shaping migrants' acculturation experience. Women often cannot forsake their traditional domestic role in spite of having employment qualifications. Men will usually try to find work as soon as they arrive in Australia, while women find that migration intensifies their domestic workload. Therefore, Chinese "migrant women often experience downward occupational mobility and a reorientation away from paid work and towards the domestic sphere" (Ho 2006).

Indian migrants in Australia have also been the subject of extensive research. Vahed (2007) studied the integration and adaptation of Indian migrants in Brisbane. Gopalkrishnan and Babacan (2007) detailed the prevailing methods of marriage and partner choice among the Indian community in Australia. Lakha and Stevenson (2001) focused on the identity of Indian migrants in Melbourne. Afsar's (2004) study of Christians from the Indian sub-continent living in Western Australia showed that their British lifestyle, use of a prestigious English accent, and religious beliefs in accord with those espoused by a majority of Australians all facilitated their settlement. However, many reported suffering racial discrimination because of their physical features in spite of the significant contribution their community makes to different sectors (IT, medicine, engineering, teaching, and social services) in Western Australia.

Studies on settlement experience of Bangladeshi migrants

A considerable literature has been published on Bangladeshi long-term migrants living in the UK. [12] Bangladeshi migrants in the UK are characterised by 'geographical clustering'. Living in the Bangladeshi ethnic enclaves has negative labour market consequences for Bangladeshi migrants in the UK including the skilled migrants (Khattab et al. 2010). The study reveals that living in Bangladeshi enclaves is helpful for cultural and practical reasons, and enables the migrants to get jobs in businesses run by members of their ethnic community. However, those are low-paid, low-skill jobs, seldom matched to the skills of the migrants. In the aftermath of 9/11, Brüß (2008) examined discrimination against Bangladeshi Muslims living in the UK, and compared their experience with that of two other Muslim groups – Turkish Muslims in Berlin and Moroccan Muslims in Madrid. The study found that Bangladeshi Muslims had to endure various acts of racism and discrimination but the incidence for them was lower than for the other two groups. Racism experienced by Bangladeshis is also observed by Khanum (2001) which demonstrates that perception of racism forces Bangladeshi migrants to maintain strong ties with their homeland and even contemplate returning to it.

A number of studies have been conducted on Bangladeshi first-generation women migrants in the UK. This group of migrants are characterised by poor education, and skills, a poor command of English, and weak labour market participation. Phillipson, Ahmed and Latimer (2003) have investigated the 'family and community life' of first-generation Bangladeshi women migrants in the UK. Their study disclosed that, due to their family responsibilities, lack of formal education and weak grasp of English, first-generation women migrants have been facing significant obstacles in the UK. The same factors also worked as barriers for women's low labour force participation and high

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[12] A list of bibliographies on Bangladeshi migrants in the UK can be obtained at http://www.banglastories.org/uploads/Bengali_Diaspora_Bibliography.pdf (accessed on 29 May 2015). Most of the studies look at the experience of younger second-generation Bangladeshis. This list includes studies solely on Bangladeshis or Bangladeshis as part of broader research. Studies on Bangladeshi short-term migrants are also available. For example, Sultana (2008) explores the survival strategies of Bangladeshi temporary migrants in Malaysia. According to the study, social networks play a vital role in the adaptation of migrants to their adoptive society. Migrants are more likely to embed within their own community while striving to maintain strong relationships with the inter-ethnic neighbourhood, co-workers and well-off or powerful sojourners and employers in their host country.

unemployment rate (Salway 2007). Ahmed (2005) examines the identity concern in terms of social, cultural, and religious perspectives of Bangladeshi women migrants in the UK. She identifies social and cultural obstacles such as costumes, the behaviour of local people and non-cooperation from extended family members, loneliness and lack of proficiency in English as impediments to adjustment in a foreign country. Furthermore, Ahmed (2005) and Khanum (2001) reveal the interesting fact that migrant women (and men), especially Muslims, become more attached to their cultural and religious rituals the longer they live abroad. Ahmed (2008) documents the strong desire of Bangladeshi first-generation women migrants to learn English in order to be more active in day-to-day community life, and to integrate into the broader society. However, responsibility towards family, opposition from husbands, living in Bengali enclaves, and age all stand in the way of learning English.

Some studies on Bangladeshi long-term migrants living in the USA, Canada and some Western European countries are also available. Siddiqui (2004) investigates settlement patterns, socio-economic profiles, and ties to home kept up by first- and second-generation Bangladeshi immigrants in the US as well as the UK. Ahmed (2011) documents that the Bangladeshis in America are concentrated in pre-existing ethnic community enclaves which provide support and comfort for them. Similarly, Chowdhury (2005) shows ethnic enclaves help Bangladeshi-Americans maintain their own culture by forming a Bangladeshi sub-culture, resisting assimilation and raising their children in a 'Bangladeshi manner'. Ghosh (2007) finds strong 'transnational ties' among Bangladeshi migrants in Canada which impact positively on their settlement experience. Subhan (2007) examines the maintenance of their language heritage by Bangladeshi migrants in Toronto, Canada, and finds that, while first-generation Bangladeshi migrants speak Bengali at home, they are far less concerned to see that their children will do likewise.

This literature documents that Bangladeshis in the UK, the USA and Canada prefer to live in their own ethnic enclaves, which has both positive and negative consequences. However, there has been relatively little literature on the settlement of skilled migrants.

There is a dearth of studies on Bangladeshi migrants in Australia. A few studies examine the mental health, and related issues, of Bangladeshi migrants. For example, Khan and Richardson (2013) explore the quality of life and lifestyle of Bangladeshi migrants

living in Melbourne as indicated by their physical and mental health. Then there is Munib's (2006) research on the repercussions of immigration and resettlement upon the mental health of South Asian communities in metropolitan Melbourne. Social isolation, feelings of insecurity, professional skills going unrecognised, experiences of racism and discrimination, all contribute to psychological distress among migrants. As a result, they often experience difficulties adjusting to Australian society, which in some cases could result in self-repatriation. Rozario's (2007) research is mainly in the form of a case study that examines the experience of Bangladeshi single female migrants, where special emphasis has been given to *Dipti* (born to a typical Hindu family in Bangladesh and never married), who had lived in Australia since 1985. The study describes the struggle and pain *Dipti* experienced during her settlement period.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined some key theoretical debates over migration settlement. The settlement literature discussed above indicates that migrants face significant obstacles and stress in their host country irrespective of their educational qualifications and ethnic backgrounds. Lack of proficiency in the host country' language, non-recognition of qualifications and ignorance of the labour market often stand in the way of success in employment. Many studies identify feelings of isolation, racism and discrimination as sources of stress and frustration. Another common feature revealed in the above-mentioned literature is that women face particular problems in settling and, acculturating themselves, and their experience is quite different from men's.

Most of the Australian studies focus on the settlement problems of humanitarian migrants – their adaptation, and stress. Others mainly focus on the labour market outcomes for migrants, and thus ignore the settlement experience of the vast majority of migrants who do not participate in the workforce. Further, studies focusing on the settlement experiences of skilled migrants and their spouses are scant. More importantly, there is no study looking exclusively at the settlement and acculturation experiences of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter Three discusses the methodological aspects of this research. This empirical study is based on primary data collected through 210 surveys and 52 semi-structured interviews with Bangladeshi migrants in Australia. Aside from surveys and interviews, observation is also used as a research tool in this study. This chapter first outlines the methodological framework and justification for using particular methods. Approaches to sample recruitment and data collection, research advantages and challenges are also detailed. Finally, how the data are interpreted and analysed is discussed.

Methodological Framework

In order to identify the factors shaping the settlement and acculturation of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia, this project has examined both quantitative and qualitative information collected through survey and interviews, respectively. When combined, these two methods enable a more comprehensive understanding of research topics, which might not be revealed solely with a single approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2008, p. 102). Tashakkori and Teddlie (2008) further observe that mixed methods help to adjust the limitations of one approach by utilising the other, and are likely to offer a balanced outlook about the same phenomenon or relationship. Hussein (2009), Bryman (2008), Tashakkori and Teddlie (2008), and Elliot (2005) advocate combining qualitative and quantitative research as mixed methods approaches allow findings to be cross-tested. It is also argued that surveys followed up with in-depth interviews offer a 'more detailed perspective' about the survey respondents (Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight 2001, p. 84). In other words, more robust data can be elicited by combining qualitative and quantitative methods (Elliot 2005).

As this thesis investigates the settlement experiences of Bangladeshi communities in Australia, it is necessary to understand how the community assists new arrivals and places itself within the broader Australian society. Websites of Bangladeshi associations

in Australia were a valuable source in this regard and provided a useful method of keeping abreast of community news (of help for the newly arrived about shared accommodation, availability of ethnic/*halal* food and groceries) and of their activities concerning cultural maintenance, community engagement, festive celebrations, and transnational activities. In addition to this, field notes and observation have also been used as tools in this research, which is discussed further below.

Survey questionnaire: Quantitative data were collected using a seven-part questionnaire that addressed key variables associated with the migration and settlement experience.[13] The questionnaire includes questions on pre-arrival characteristics such as age at arrival, gender, religion, visa status, education, employment and living standards before coming to Australia. Motivation for migration is also incorporated in this section. Post-arrival circumstances such as current employment and income, issues about children, self-assessment of English-language proficiency, and home ownership are included in the survey. These were followed by questions relating to the preservation of religion and home-country culture, continuing contact with the homeland, remittances, and how respondents related to Australian multiculturalism. Finally, a series of questions attempted to map satisfaction with life after migration: people were asked whether they believed the decision to migrate had been the right one, whether they would encourage friends and/or relatives to migrate to Australia, and whether they wanted to return home to Bangladesh in the future.

The survey questionnaire was designed to be simple, yet comprehensive enough to ensure self-completion. Most of the questions had multiple-choice answers, requiring a respondent to put a tick (√) or cross (X) as the appropriate answer. Several questions asked the respondent to specify, for example, year of entrance in Australia, year of receiving permanent residence or citizenship, field of study, and likes and dislikes about Australia. The questionnaire ended by asking respondents to write down their names

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[13] Questionnaire is attached in the Appendix.

and contact details if they agreed to participate in face-to-face interviews.

Prior to sending the survey out, a trial run was undertaken with family and friends in the Bangladeshi community. This enabled the survey to be altered in areas that were potentially confusing and also led to its simplification so that respondents with more basic English proficiency could complete it. In addition to this I translated the questionnaire into *Bangla*[14] , so that people without a basic knowledge of English could understand and complete it.

Building relationships and gaining trust: Building trust and empathy between a researcher and a subject is a key to enabling stories and experiences to be shared (Partington 2001, p. 35). Before commencing data collection I tried to build up relationships with members of the Bangladeshi community. It took me over six months to nurture these relationships and gain the trust of the community. My family and I attended at least two parties (such as birthday parties, social gatherings) each month. I also invited people to my place on various occasions. All these events helped me get close to members of the community and consequently recruit participants to my project. One remarkable observation about the community gatherings is that Bangladeshi Muslims and Hindus are likely to participate together in most events. By joining those events I had the opportunity to be close to the whole community irrespective of its members' religious backgrounds. As demonstrated by Mack et al. (2005), a researcher's personal attributes, particularly ethnicity, social status and gender play a significant role in generating trust in social research.

As a Bangladeshi woman I was known to the Bangladeshi families in my suburb and neighbouring areas. Through them I gradually expanded my network to the Bangladeshi community living in other parts of the survey areas. Consequently, they welcomed me into their lives and trusted me with their stories.

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[14] *Bangla* version of the questionnaire is attached in the Appendix.

Sample recruitment and data collection: This study focuses on samples from Bangladeshi communities living in three Australian states: New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (VIC), and Queensland (QLD), where, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2011a), more than 89 per cent of Bangladeshi migrants are concentrated. Included in this study sample are individuals above 18 years of age (both male and female) born in Bangladesh, and living in NSW, Victoria or Queensland as Australian permanent residents or citizens. Temporary residents such as students, guest workers and tourists are not included. Moreover, those who left Australia after obtaining Australian permanent residency and/or citizenship are not part of the thesis.

Participants were recruited using a range of networks. Different community organisations such as the Australia-Bangladesh Association Inc. Victoria (ABAV), the Bangladesh *Samity,* the Australia-Bangladesh Islamic Council (ABIC), Bangladesh Association of NSW, the Bangladesh Association Brisbane, and Rockhampton's Bangladeshi Association (*Rockybangla*) were contacted initially. All these associations had information or contact details of many in the Bangladeshi communities. An open invitation to join the project, containing brief aims and objectives of the research, was delivered to potential participants through the leaders of these community organisations, family, friends and community businesses (ethnic grocery shops, restaurants). The invitation was also extended at community gatherings such as birthday parties, *Eid* reunions, literary and cultural programs, and the *Boishakhi Mela* (Bengali New Year's Day fair). The consent request form explained that the survey would take 20 to 25 minutes to fill out. Upon agreement hard-copy questionnaires were distributed to respondents, with prepaid self-addressed envelopes included. About 650 hard copies of the survey questionnaire, together with the self addressed pre-paid envelopes, were circulated. At the same time about 100 soft copies were sent out by e-mail. Respondents were requested to write down their names and contact details, if they agreed to participate in face-to-face interviews with the researcher. Apart from this method, recommendations from the community organisations, personal and social networks

were used to nominate potential participants. Those selected were then approached by telephone or e-mail and the purpose of the study was explained to them. I also used snowball techniques to recruit new participants. Respondents were asked to recommend other community members to be interviewed. This technique was very useful because all the interviewees I initially interviewed provided contact details of others who would go on to participate in the study. The referrals by previous interviewees were also helpful when I approached nominated people. My previous interviewees had talked with the potential interviewees beforehand, so I was already familiar to them and did not have to introduce myself and my project at length. As mentioned above, this process yielded 210 completed surveys and 52 interviews providing primary data for the project.

Confidentiality and anonymity: Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity is a key concern of this project, and this is clearly explained in the consent request form.[15] Studies on research methods and ethical issues often emphasise the importance of respondent confidentiality and anonymity (BERA 2004; BERA 2011; Burgess 1989; Wiles et al. 2008a). Wiles et al. (2008b) further assert that anonymity safeguards confidentiality, and confidentiality guarantees that personal information about the respondents will not be revealed to the readers. Therefore, anonymity encourages people to talk freely and to 'disclose facts, experiences, feelings, or attitudes that they would not disclose to other persons' (Gillham 2000, p. 15).

The consent request form was placed with participants beforehand so they were informed about the project's objectives. Moreover, participants were informed that neither their name nor their identity would be disclosed at any stage, rather pseudonyms would be used in order to secure anonymity. A note about ethics approval appeared at the end of the form along with SUHREC's (the Swinburne University Human Research Ethics Committee's) contact details to inspire trust among the prospective participants.[16]

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[15] The consent request form is attached in the Appendix.

[16] Ethics approval was obtained from my institution, Swinburne University of Technology, to commence

It is also noted that, since the interviews were conducted in *Bangla,* no interpreters, translators, or research assistants were recruited for this study, which served as a further guarantee that respondents' privacy and confidentiality would be respected.

Semi-structured interviews: People who spontaneously gave their consent to share their experience were interviewed individually either at home or any place they chose, at a scheduled time. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire[17] consisting of key research questions that included their motivation for migrating, and the facilitators of, and obstacles to, successful settlement. Open-ended questions triggered in-depth discussions, in which the respondents often ended up telling their life stories. Since the interviews were arranged in an informal way, participants felt free to express their opinions.

The literature shows that interviews offer researchers an opportunity to engage more deeply with topics covered by a survey instrument. For example, Weiss (1994, p. 1) affirms,

> We can learn about the work of occupations, and how people fashion careers, about culture and values they sponsor, and about the challenges people confront as they lead their lives. We can learn also, through interviewing about people's interior experiences. We can learn about what people perceived and how they interpreted their perceptions. We can learn how events affected their thoughts and feelings. We can learn the meaning to them of their relationships, their families, their work, and their selves. We can learn about all the experiences from joy through grief that together constitute the human condition.

This project explores the thoughts and feelings as well as the joys, frustrations, and challenges of life, relationships and goals in the same way as Weiss (1994) addresses.

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data collection. The project was approved by Swinburne University Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) in August 2011. The letter of ethics approval is attached in the Appendix.

[17] Semi-structured interview questions are attached in the Appendix.

Interviews were conducted in *Bangla* (Bengali, the national language of Bangladesh), and audio-recorded, as per the consent granted by the interviewees.

Forty-two people (both male and female, of different ages) were interviewed individually. Additionally, five couples (husbands and wives) were interviewed together. Therefore, I interviewed 52 people altogether. Among my interview participants, 20 people were from Victoria, 15 from Queensland, and 17 from New South Wales. The entire fieldwork was undertaken over a 10-month period, from January to October 2012. I received the last survey at the beginning of 2013.

Field notes and observations: Observation is an important research tool in this study, because careful observation of respondents' answers is attested as a powerful mixed method approach in empirical research (Sandelowski 2000; Creswell 2003). In order to record my observation of respondents' feelings and lifestyles, I have kept a personal diary throughout the research. I tried, as often as possible, to write down personal impressions after each interview was conducted. These were relevant, and sometimes even more important than the recorded interviews. I also wrote diary entries after attending social gatherings and community events, such as birthday parties, *Eid* reunions[18], *Iftar* parties[19], *Boishakhi Mel*[20], *Sahitto Sondha*[21], *Pitha utsob*[22], and *Talim*[23]. I also attended a number of wedding ceremonies for the children of Bangladeshi migrants. I observed people more closely on these occasions. Field notes were particularly valuable in giving me a real insight into the different dynamics that exist within the community. Such data might not have been obtained through questionnaires or interviews.

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[18] Community gathering after the *Eid* celebration.

[19] Muslims fast from dawn to sunset in the month of *Ramadan*. They break their fast after sunset, what is called *Iftar*. They usually invite other Muslims (and even non-Muslims) to celebrate the moment and share food. This arrangement is commonly known as an *Iftar* party.

[20] Community fair to celebrate the Bengali New Year's Day

[21] Literary evening

[22] *Pitha utsob* is a community festival where traditional homemade (beautifully designed) sweets and cakes *(pitha)* are displayed (and sold).

[23] *Talim* is a religious event where Muslims particularly gather. The significance of the lessons of Islam is discussed by Islamic scholars. Men and women assemble separately.

Another significant aspect of the study is that this is not formally a longitudinal study. Nonetheless, I obtained information from many of the interviewees whom I had interviewed six months or even one year earlier. They keep in touch with me via Facebook and telephone, inviting me to special occasions such as children's birthdays, community festivals or other social gatherings. These festive events provide me with a lot more information quite apart from formal fieldwork. Such occasions have enabled me to notice significant changes in many of the participants over time. For example, one of my interview participants (pseudonym *Rani*) was unemployed when I had interviewed her. She had been disappointed and that affected her mentally and physically. Her household chores were not going smoothly. Nine months later, I met her at an *Iftar* party, where she looked much happier and more confident than at our first meeting. She was pleased to let me know of her good news: that she had got a job and, more importantly, her driver licence. Now she felt she was standing on her own feet rather than depending on her husband. Due to her contributing to the family, for the first time in her life she felt herself valued. Soon after that party *Rani* gave me a call to let me know that she had bought a new house and would shortly be moving in. She has invited my family and myself to visit her new home on the very day she moves in.[24]

Another example is Mr Ahmed, whom I interviewed at the beginning of my fieldwork. He was doing his post-doctoral research, far from his wife and children (in another Australian state). He was doing the degree hoping to land a job in his own field. I saw how lonely he was. Recently I met him at a Bengali New Year fair, where he came along with his whole family. He looked happier than before, and informed me he had got the job he was angling for and now his whole family was together again.

All these are stories of success. Conversely, there have been a couple of negative incidents. For example, during my research I interviewed a newly arrived couple who had been in Australia for three months. They were living in a shared house, and none of

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[24] It is a tradition among the Bangladeshis (in Bangladesh) to celebrate the first entrance to a new home alongside friends and family.

them had a job. One year after I interviewed the couple I observed that, in spite of high educational qualifications, the man could not obtain a suitable job in his field, while his wife ended up house-keeping. The woman often calls me, and shares her feelings. She said to me that housekeeping might not require much skill or qualifications but it was at least rewarding enough to meet her family's needs. That is why she preferred to continue being a housekeeper. But she would not let this be known to her relatives back in Bangladesh. She was born, and married, into a rich family, one that used to have servants, while in Australia her job is more like a servant's work. However, she had enough mental strength to accept the reality of life: therefore, she was not depressed but maintained the belief that her husband would soon get a job in his chosen field.

In addition to these particular episodes, I observed changes among many participants over time. I could not ignore any of those, and noted down each event with equal seriousness. All these incidents provided me significant information about the lifestyle of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia. I mentioned earlier that my fieldwork had formally come to an end in October 2012; however, I was still discovering invaluable resources in the experience of Bangladeshi migrants after that time. I came across more and more migrants as time went by, and learnt further information about the community. Some of them willingly wanted to share their stories with me after they heard about my research project. For example, a number of people asked me, "*Vabi, why don't you write my story?*" I heard their stories, committed them to memory, and tried to incorporate them in the larger narrative.

Websites of Bangladeshi associations: I often visit the websites of Bangladeshi associations to learn the latest news and updates about the community. These websites publish useful tips for new-comers, including how to look for work and accommodation, language assistance, where to find ethnic food and groceries, and the contact details of people who are already settled here and holding significant positions within their ethnic community. This information gave me fresh insight into the social

networking of Bangladeshi migrants in this country. *Priyo Australia*, *Shurolok*, *Vorer pakhi* and *Bangladeshi Broadsheet* are leading online platforms visited by Bangladeshi migrants curious about food, fashion, entertainment, and events of interest to business or the general community. Moreover, ethnic businesses run grocery-shop chains, catering and beauty care outlets, travel agencies, driving schools, and family day-care centres. Most of the businesses spread their networks through social media. Furthermore, social, cultural (*Bangla* schools, cultural and literary organisations) and religious associations (mosques and temples) update their news and programs frequently. Therefore, in order to be acquainted with the community events I made the effort to keep an eye on the websites of Bangladeshi associations.

Cultural position of the researcher: For empirical research into migration experiences, insiderness is a key to reach to the subjects, because the 'insider' researcher shares the same language, ethnicity and cultural norms as the subjects (Voloder 2014; Unluer 2012; Cherti 2008). An insider researcher is aware of cultural norms and the way how to approach to the subjects, while an outsider researcher may need a long time to acquire knowledge about them (Smyth & Holian 2008).This relationship also minimises the distance between the researcher and the subjects, and the object of investigation, compared to an 'outsider' researcher (Voloder 2014). Therefore, my position as a researcher; that is my ethnicity and language as well as my 'insiderness' has significantly facilitated my fieldwork. The fact that I am a Bangladeshi was an added advantage, as it helped to enhance trust in relationships, which has been extremely valuable in conducting the fieldwork. Furthermore, no translator, interpreter or research assistant was required for this project (as mentioned earlier). I personally contacted my interviewees, went to their places and conducted the interviews myself. Most of the project participants treated me as one of their own, an insider. They showed me utmost respect as a PhD researcher. They welcomed me warmly and entertained me with traditional food. Elders treated me as their own daughter, while people of my age or younger addressed me as *Apa* (Big Sister) or *Vabi* (Sister-in-law, literally 'Brother's

wife') instead of calling me by name, which underscores the significance of kinship in relations among Bangladeshi people.[25]

Secondly, interviewees relaxed because they could chat with me in *Bangla*. Importantly, some said the interview was a positive experience for them. For example, one respondent, *Neela*, told me, "I feel great after talking to you. I never had a chance to talk about how I feel living in here, about back home. After sharing my feelings and experiences I started to feel much better." *Neela's* comment shows the importance of enabling migrants to share their stories. Besides, since no translators or interpreters were required for us to get under way, interview sessions were enjoyable. It has also ensured confidentiality and trust between interviewer and interviewee. Such understanding was to prove a major advantage.

By visiting interviewees' homes I had a chance to step inside their private lives. During our conversations, I observed the environments they lived in, and their daily domestic routine. Our informal conversations added a lot more detail to the information I had already gained from interviews for the record. The atmosphere was more intimate than the interview sessions, due to the familiar surroundings and partly because my interview partners now knew me. Some of the women I met through this project have become firm friends of mine. Reflecting on my role as a female researcher, I must admit I have enjoyed easy access to their homes. Being a Bangladeshi woman definitely influenced my interviews in a positive manner. I believe a researcher with a different socio-cultural or linguistic background could not have revealed this much information about the Bangladeshi community. Furthermore, being a woman also facilitated my work. I

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[25] Jones (2008) in a study about 'Bangladeshis in America' has noted that once a Bangladeshi comes across a fellow Bangladeshi they become close to each other and treat themselves as relatives in spite of having no blood relations. Elderly people are worthy of respect just because of being older. Therefore they are not called by name: instead they are given a kinship title such as *khala* or *khlamma* or *chachi,* for Aunty. Older men are called *chacha, khalu* (meaning uncle). The truly elderly are called *dada* or *dadi* (grandpa/grandma). Even people of the same age use a kinship name such as *bhai* (brother) or *apa, bhavi, didi* or *boudi* (sister). This kinship makes their relationship strong. Probably Bangladeshi community is the only one that addresses fellow community members with a kinship title.

believe that a Bangladeshi male researcher might not have been welcomed into Bangladeshis' houses as an 'insider' quite as much as I was.[26]

Another significant advantage of carrying out the fieldwork is that visiting an interviewee's house often gave me a chance to meet new people whom I could approach to be included in my project. This is because Bangladeshi people often receive visitors or guests who are friends, relatives or neighbours. This also confirms how close-knit this ethnic community is.

On top of everything, my own experiences have been of great significance in thinking about the issues facing Bangladeshi during settlement. My struggle to adjust to a different socio-cultural environment, living far away from family and friends, has given me an insight into the outlook and experiences of the participants. I let them see how it felt in my shoes and, at the same time, put myself in theirs to discover what they thought of Australia, as well as how they felt about the values and heritage of Bangladesh, the country they had left behind.

Apart from Victoria I travelled to Queensland and New South Wales. NSW is home to the largest proportion of Bangladeshi migrants; while QLD and VIC each have sizable Bangladeshi populations. I received enormous support and cooperation from the communities in all three states. A significant advantage of my research was that I have contacts in both QLD and NSW (my brother in QLD and a friend in NSW). Both of them significantly networked prior to my travel. My brother arranged a social gathering, inviting community members from his local area to lunch[27], which was the greatest way to recruit participants. He also forwarded my e-mail, the survey questionnaire and

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[26] It is likely that a woman can gain access to a Bangladeshi house more easily than a man.

[27] More than 100 people were invited to this event, since it was a reception for my brother's newly wed bride. Traditional Bangladeshi food was served at the lunch, which was prepared by a number of volunteers (*apa, vabi* and *vai*) in the community. The lunch was followed by a traditional cultural program that included music, dance, poetry recitation and speeches. This event has provided me a lot of information about the Bangladeshi community in Rockhampton, especially community assistance, and the maintenance of heritage culture.

consent request form to potential participants.

Similarly, my friend in Sydney introduced me to a number of people in her neighbourhood, at the same time e-mailing the survey questionnaire and project information to her acquaintances. I received a massive response from her networks as well. Their status in, and familiarity with, their respective communities made my work easier and helped me reach participants. In NSW I travelled to Lakemba, Ingleburn, Minto, Campbelltown, and Maryland; in Queensland I visited the capital city, Brisbane, and the regional town of Rockhampton. In Victoria I visited the suburbs of Clayton, Fawkner, Truganina, Noble Park, Dandenong, Laverton, Werribee, Broadmeadows and Footscray where clusters of Bangladeshis live. I also visited Eltham, Hallam, Westall, Blackburn, Burwood (and Box Hill where I live), as well as Geelong, where Bangladeshis are scattered throughout the suburbs of that regional city.

Research challenges: It is observed that researching one's own ethnic group also has its downsides. It can create a sense of mistrust between researcher and subjects; as "greater familiarity can lead to a loss of 'objectivity'" (DeLyser 2001) which I realised on those few occasions when it was apparent that interviewees were obviously reluctant to disclose very personal issues. For example, those who worked in low-profile jobs were not comfortable talking about economic hardship with someone belonging to the same ethnic group but outside their circle of friends.[28]

Further, my traditional outfits (*salwar kemeez* and, occasionally, *saree*), which include a headscarf, led a number of participants to assume I was a conservative woman.[29] Alison

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[28] For example, some women participants say, "Please, *vabi* a, don't ask me what kind of jobs we are doing." However, I was able to reveal some information regarding economic hardship in the end, which was due to the significant personal attachment I had formed with particular respondents. The story of *Moona* presented in Chapter Eight is one of a few examples I have discovered.

[29] I have come up with this supposition due to some incidents in that a number of Bangladeshi women directly asked me whether I was comfortable with traditional costume every day in Australia. Some of them further asked me whether people laughed at me, which was embarrassing and offending for me. For days afterwards I went through the motions of work in a haze of depression. I observe this incident as 'stereotypes of clothing' among people in general.

Lurie's *The Language of Clothes* highlights how people's occupation, origin, personality, opinion, tastes, and current moods are displayed in what they wear (Lurie 1981, p. 205). Lurie quotes a memorable line from Balzac in *A Daughter of Eve* (1839) where he observes that "dress is a continual manifestation of intimate thoughts, a language, and a symbol". Clothes, therefore, can reveal a lot of information about a person. Clothes indicate whether a person is rich or poor, stylish or not, and (something of great importance to this research) traditional or non-traditional. In a couple of incidents during my research I noticed some parents' (especially the mother's) discomfort whenever I met their children who talked and dressed like ordinary Australians. It was apparent in those moments that they tried to conceal their embarrassment by sending the children out of my sight. Naturally, this impeded the flow of the interview.

Apart from the above-mentioned challenges, I encountered a few incidents when interviewees were highly distracted by phone calls from their homeland conveying bad news such as the death of a loved one, or someone being taken to hospital with a serious illness or injuries arising from an accident. These incidents instantly cast a pall over the setting. At this point, my role altered from that of a researcher to that of close kin, striving to console them. Although I could not proceed with the interview as planned, I witnessed their dejection and vulnerability being so far from home and relatives. Therefore, DeLyser's (2001) assertion that insider researchers often need to struggle to balance their dual roles - as an insider and at the same time as a researcher - was certainly reflected in my fieldwork experience.

However, the incidents mentioned above did not pose a big challenge in conducting my research: rather, I discovered a different aspect of interviewees' everyday life, and also their thoughts, that otherwise might have not been revealed. Nothing changed the fact

that I received enormous support and cooperation from members of my ethnic community without which my research would have been impossible to carry.

Response rate: The rate of response is quite satisfactory. The 210 completed questionnaires are about 28% of the total distributed. Gillham (2000, p. 14) describes a '30 per cent return' as a 'fairly satisfactory response', so 28% can be considered satisfactory. It is also noteworthy that interview responses were much more satisfactory than those contained in the surveys. Before we started to talk for the record, participants were informed that the interview would not take more than an hour. But many of those I interviewed at home gave me more of their time than that, treated me as a guest, and offered traditional Bangladeshi hospitality. As well, they questioned me about myself and my family in both Australia and Bangladesh. Conversation continued even after the voice recorder was turned off. Interviewees kept sharing their feelings and experiences, ranging beyond the topics covered by my questionnaire. Significant, indeed invaluable, information came out through these follow-up conversations.

On the other hand, retrieving survey responses proved much more difficult. About half the surveys were sent in voluntarily; for the other half I had to send out reminder. My conclusion from this is that for some respondents completing a questionnaire may be a chore. In this context Gillham (2000, p. 15) asserts that, although interviews are far more time-consuming than surveys, people are less enthusiastic about form-filling. The main reason behind this, as shown in the same study, is that people crave attention, and like to be listened to. Bryman (2008, p. 319) also shows that flexibility makes interviews attractive. Thus, they are always more lively than surveys, and that is what I found to be true in my experience.

Data analysis: Upon receiving the surveys, questionnaire responses were coded and then formatted in Excel. Once the influx of returned surveys had slowed to a trickle and their number had reached 200, data were entered into STATA for analysis. Data have been summarised and sorted by frequency, and contingency tables have been used to

show the relationship between variables. Furthermore, information gathered through interviews has been analysed manually. I listened to the recordings several times and transcribed the interviews inductively. Since the interviews were conducted in *Bangla,* I had to translate each story into English. In addition, I redrafted the fieldwork observations in my diary. A number of in-depth interviews were incorporated as case studies. Interview data were organised and interpreted thematically, and discourse analysis was applied.

Findings are classified in five categories: first, who are migrating and why; second, the impact of pre-arrival and post-arrival factors in acculturation; the third and fourth sections focus on acculturation based on bonding and bridging capital; and the final section describes the settlement experience of Bangladeshi women in Australia.

Conclusion

This section has outlined the methodological approaches employed in my research, and explained why mixed methods were employed. It has explained the data collection procedures as well as the facilitators of, and obstacles to, data collection. In spite of a few challenges and limitations, the data gathered through surveys, interviews and observations are remarkably comprehensive. By combining survey and interview results, and interpreting information through thematic and discourse analyses, this thesis brings a new dimension to the story of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia, and stakes its claim to be a pioneering study of the Bangladeshi community in Australia.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRE-ARRIVAL CHARACTERISTICS AND MOTIVATIONS FOR MIGRATION OF BANGLADESHI MIGRANTS

Introduction

This chapter is structured in two sections. The first section presents quantitative information about pre-arrival characteristics of respondents to the survey. These characteristics include age at migration, gender, and the respondent's religion, which according to the literature are important factors influencing settlement and acculturation (Khoo & McDonald 2012; Fletcher 1999; Burnett 1998). Moreover, respondents' educational levels and employment status before migration are discussed so as to identify their pre-migration status. Together, respondents' pre-arrival characteristics suggest a particular profile of those migrating from Bangladesh to Australia. Section two focuses on the reasons Bangladeshis migrate to Australia, and is based on both quantitative and qualitative information.

Pre-arrival characteristics of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia

This section is based on the information collected from a survey of 210 Bangladeshi migrants living in Australia. Of this cohort 54% are male and 46% female. The vast majority (89%) are married. A great majority (83%) are Muslim; the rest of them are Hindu.

Age of respondents on arrival: Table 4.1 demonstrates the age distribution of the respondents. The table shows that 39% arrived in Australia before they turned 30 years of age, and 45% were aged 30–34 when they migrated. So, altogether, 84% of the respondents migrated when in their mid-30s or younger. This information reflects a trend among younger Bangladeshis to migrate, which fits the skilled migrant profile (ABS 2010). Further, female respondents are migrating at an earlier age than males, with 89% of females migrating before their 34th birthday.

Table 4.1: Age of respondents at migration

Age	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Less than 18	1.0	-	1.0
18 - 24	4.0	3.0	5.0
25 - 29	34.0	31.0	38.0
30 - 34	45.0	47.0	45.0
35 - 39	15.0	18.0	11.0
40 - 44	1.0	1.0	-
N	204	120	84

Category of Migrants' First Australian Visa: In general, Bangladeshi people migrate to the West with skilled or work visas, student visas or family reunification visas. Few Bangladeshis migrate on humanitarian grounds (Siddiqui 2004). This is equally true for Bangladeshis migrating to Australia, as seen in Table 4.2. The table shows the first visa types that enabled participants to enter Australia for permanent settlement. About 47% entered either as a student or spouse of a student,[30] while 36% entered directly with a permanent resident (PR) visa. However, male and female respondents are quite distinct in terms of their first visa type. Thus, while 79% of male respondents entered Australia as primary visa applicants (either student or PR), only 23% of women did so.[31] Further, a majority of female respondents (57%) came to Australia as dependants, while only 6% of males were dependent on their spouse. This reflects the common observation that women's migration is mainly associational, qualifying them as 'tied-movers' (Altamirano 1997; Thapan 2005).

Table 4.2: Visa status of respondents on arrival

Visa type	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Student visa - Primary applicant	34.0	45.0	19.0
Student visa – Spouse	13.0	5.0	23.0
Permanent Resident – Primary applicant	21.0	34.0	4.0
Permanent Resident – Spouse/dependant	15.0	1.0	34.0
Temporary resident (TR)	11.0	11.0	13.0
Family reunion	4.0	-	6.0
Others	2.0	4.0	1.0

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[30] Hawthorne (2010) refers to this as 'two-step migration' in which 'students turn into migrants'. That is, they use student visas as a pathway to migration.

[31] Interesitingly, when women's academic results and professional achievement scored more points than their male counterparts', their names are put as primary applicants, on the application for permanent residency. However, in recent years some single women have come to Australia as students, with a long term plan to migrate.

		199	118	81
N		199	118	81

Time of arrival: Table 4.3 illustrates the date of arrival or date of residency. The table shows that more than half the respondents (62%) entered Australia or obtained permanent residency as onshore applicants after 2000. Just over a quarter (26%) obtained permanent residency during the 1990s and the remaining 12% came to Australia before the 1990s. Taken together, 38% of respondents arrived in or before 2000. This percentage is much smaller than that for the total overseas-born population who arriving in Australia during that period (ABS 2011a). This information further reveals that Bangladeshi migrants in Australia are a recently arrived cohort. The average length of settlement for a respondent is nearly 11 years, with minimum and maximum lengths of three months and 37 years, respectively.

Table 4.3: Arrival time or residency grant date of respondents

Periods	Total (%)
1980 or before	1.5
1981 - 1985	2.4
1986 – 1990	7.8
1991 – 1995	9.8
1996 – 2000	16.7
2001 – 2005	27.5
2006 and after	34.3
N	204

Pre-migration education: Table 4.4 presents the education level of respondents before migration. The table shows that 85% have some form of university degree (Bachelor, Masters or PhD). A higher percentage of male respondents have university degrees than females. The percentages of males and females with university degrees are 91% and 78%, respectively. These statistics corroborate ABS (2011a) data, confirming that Bangladeshis in Australia are among the most highly qualified migrants in terms of their educational levels. It should be noted here that, although most respondents earned their degrees from Bangladesh, a good number earned their highest degrees in Australia (having studied formerly in Australia) or other countries.

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Table 4.4: Education level of respondents before migration

Highest Degree Obtained Before Migration	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
10 years of schooling (SSC) or less	1.0	-	2.2
12 years of schooling (HSC) or equivalent	9.7	5.8	13.3
Graduate/Postgraduate diploma	4.1	2.5	5.6
Bachelor degree	40.1	39.2	42.2
Postgraduate degree	45.1	52.5	36.7
N	196	116	80

The respondents are quite diverse in terms of their subject area, as can be seen from Table 4.5. The table shows that 30% of the respondents have expertise in professional or technical areas such as information technology, engineering or medicine. About 20% have a commerce background (finance, accounting or management) and another 33% possess degrees in the arts or social sciences. It is notable that males are mainly technical students or commerce-oriented as 68% have skills in these areas, compared to only 40% of females. In sharp contrast, half the women (50%) have arts and commerce backgrounds, compared with 22% of men.

Table 4.5: Study area of respondents before migration

Subject Area	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Arts/Social science	33.0	22.0	50.0
Commerce	27.0	35.0	17.0
Professional/Technical	30.0	33.0	24.0
Science	8.0	10.0	5.0
Law	1.0	-	1.0
Others	1.0	-	3.0
N	193	115	78

Pre-migration labour market participation: Table 4.6 shows that 66% of the respondents were working either full time or part time before migrating to Australia. Most of the male respondents (81%) were working, while 44% of female respondents were engaged in the workforce.

Table 4.6: Employment status of respondents before migration

	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Working	66.0	81.0	44.0
Not working	34.0	19.0	56.0
N	202	119	83

Table 4.7 shows respondents' occupations before migration. According to the table about 12% of the total were working in managerial jobs. About 67% were working in professional jobs, such as teachers, information technology (IT) professionals, doctors or engineers. Others were working as clerks, businessmen or in other occupations. This table, therefore, shows that most respondents were working at the upper end of the occupational ladder before migration. However, there are significant differences between male and female respondents in terms of their pre-migration occupation in that males tended to be more skilled than females. The table reports that 74% of men were working as either managers or professionals. For women the corresponding percentage was only 50%. More were employed in the professional than in any other sector of the workforce. Women were twice as likely to be engaged in personal services, clerical or other occupations (34%) compared with men (16%).

Table 4.7: Occupation of respondents before migration

	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Managers/administrators	14.5	18.8	5.1
Professional	58.9	56.5	45.1
Technical/trade	10.5	8.2	15.4
Community/personal services	13.7	16.5	18.7
Clerk/others	2.4	-	15.7
N	126	91	35

Note: This table reports occupations of only those employed before migration.
Therefore, N is smaller than the ones reported in the previous tables.

Table 4.8 shows respondents' level of satisfaction with the jobs they had before migrating. As seen in the table, the majority of people were either satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs (68%), and the level of satisfaction was greater among women (84%) than men (62%). Very few respondents were not satisfied with their jobs. The high level of job satisfaction may be related to the high educational level that enabled them to get decent jobs. Further, for women higher job satisfaction may mean greater

economic freedom that their jobs allow them to enjoy. It could also mean that their jobs made them feel valued in a society largely dominated by men.

Table 4.8: Pre-migration job satisfaction of respondents

	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Very satisfied	25.4	25.8	24.3
Satisfied	42.9	35.9	59.5
Fairly satisfied	26.2	32.7	10.8
Not satisfied	5.5	5.6	5.4
Not satisfied at all	-	-	-
N	126	89	37

Pre-migration proficiency in English: Some 23% of respondents report that they spoke English fluently before migration, with 54% reporting that their oral skill was moderate or good. Only 21% report that they could not speak English well before migration. Respondents' assessment of their reading and writing capability before migration is somewhat higher than it is of their oral skill, with reading and writing fluency reported by 44% and 35% respectively. Although most respondents had good English-language skills, significant differences existed between male and female proficiency levels in three aspects. For example, the table shows that while 92% of men could speak well, only 57% women reported doing so. Such differences are mirrored in regard to reading and writing skills. Therefore, as the table shows, the pre-migration English-language skills of women respondents' were significantly lower than male respondents'.

Table 4.9: Pre-migration English Proficiency of Respondents

		Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
	Fluent	23.2	28.1	16.2
Spoken	Moderate	54.6	64.0	41.2
	Basic	20.6	7.9	38.8
	None	1.6	-	3.8
	Fluent	44.3	50.9	35.0
Reading	Moderate	41.8	47.4	33.7
	Basic	13.9	1.7	31.3
	None	-	-	-
	Fluent	34.5	39.5	27.5
	Moderate	44.8	55.3	30.0
Writing	Basic	20.1	5.2	41.2
	None	0.6	-	1.3
N		196	116	80

Motivations for migration of Bangladeshi migrants

It is generally accepted that either push factors (disruptive conditions in the home country) or pull factors (opportunities for betterment) motivate people to migrate. Some people such as skilled migrants emigrate voluntarily while others are forced to leave their home country (e.g. humanitarian migrants or refugees). For voluntary migrants economic factors are often considered to provide their main motivation. For example, Cornelius and Tsuda (2004) note that the search for a better economic position in the host country inspires people to migrate. Hunter (2012, p. 8) observes that, in spite of doing the same kind of work, people's earning may differ in various parts of the world: that is, there are wage differentials between countries. Awareness of this draws people to migrate to a country where jobs in their field pay better. This is why people from poor or developing countries migrate to developed countries. Furthermore, Cabassa (2003, p. 130) maintains that political, economic, and social contexts in the country of origin are indicators of why people emigrate.

Evidence from quantitative data

The pre-arrival characteristics of respondents confirm that most Bangladeshi migrants are highly educated and hail from relatively well-off socio-economic backgrounds. Despite the fact that most of them had decent jobs and social status in their homeland, they migrated. Using quantitative data this section now investigates their reasons for doing so. Table 4.10 shows what the survey respondents themselves have revealed.

Table 4.10: Reasons for migration to Australia

Reasons for migration	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
To avoid social/political unrest in Bangladesh	55.0	62.0	45.0
Better education/future for children	40.0	45.0	33.0
For better economic position	25.0	24.0	25.0
For a secure life in Australia	42.0	48.0	34.0
To better utilise my skills in Australia	14.0	20.0	5.0
Spouse took the decision/influenced me	19.0	2.0	44.0
Others	18.0	11.0	28.0
N	195	115	80

Note: Respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers.

It can be seen from the table that the highest proportion of respondents (55% of total participants) migrated to Australia because they were not happy with the existing socio-

political situation in Bangladesh (a push factor). Some 62% of males and 45% of females report that they emigrated to avoid the social and political unrest in their homeland. The second major reason for migrating to this country was to 'ensure a secure life in Australia' which is apparently a pull factor. About 42% of all respondents point to this as a factor in the decision to migrate. This is followed by another pull factor: 'better education and better future for children', highlighted by nearly 40% of respondents. On the other hand, only 25% assert that they moved to Australia for a 'better economic position'. Furthermore, 19% note that their spouses took the decision to migrate and they had no alternative but to follow. Interestingly, this reason is mainly given by women. The table shows that 44% of female respondents choose this option but only 2% of males. This information again reinforces the observation that Bangladeshi women's migration decisions are largely associational. About 18% of respondents identified other migration motives: these include cultural factors, family reunion, and the influence of friends or relatives.

Therefore, it is apparent from the table that economic factors do not form the primary reason why Bangladeshis migrate to Australia. This finding replicates Ip, Wu and Inglis (1998) who examined the motivations of Taiwanese skilled migrants to Australia. However, in sharp contrast to the findings of Ip, Wu and Inglis (1998), Bangladeshi migrants are largely influenced by dissatisfaction with the poor socio-political situation in their home country. This finding also differs from Richardson et al. (2002, p. 13) who by using LSIA data found that push factors such as 'negative aspects of life in the former home country in respect to the social, political and economic conditions, as well as employment' were not among the main reasons for migrating to Australia.

Qualitative information

Based on the responses of interview participants, this section further uncovers the reasons why Bangladeshis migrate to Australia. Most interviewees maintain that they left Bangladesh to avoid political and social unrest. This reasoning extends to a lack of security in social life, concerns about poor law and order, and corruption. Furthermore, 'to ensure a secure life in Australia' is identified as a reason for migration by a significant number of respondents. Both issues are interconnected. For example, according to most of the interview participants, a lack of security is currently the most

common concern about Bangladesh, and they wanted to change that situation for themselves and their loved ones.[32] In contrast, Australia is seen as one of the most secure places in the world. Australia is viewed as 'a lucky country' and 'land of opportunity' for immigrants (Hinsliff 2004) because of its excellent law-and-order situation, as well as its economic and environmental standards. Moreover, the Australian Government offers social welfare benefits (Centrelink and Medicare, for example) to migrants, who are very appreciative. Interviewees referred to the availability of these supports from government as one reason why they wanted to migrate to Australia.

To avoid socio-political unrest in Bangladesh: This section now highlights the most common concerns about Bangladesh's socio-political situation as expressed to this researcher; concerns strong enough to have induced participants to emigrate. Remarks by interviewees portray socio-political instability, including bias and hostility, encountered in Bangladesh. According to the interviewees, they were often haunted by insecurity and uncertainty. *Mahmood* explains:

> Lack of security has been the main issue in Bangladesh. Law-and-order situation is deteriorating day by day. I was so much worried about the safety of family. That is why we emigrated.

Another respondent, who used to be a university teacher, mentioned that dissenting political views voiced by him had placed his life in danger. In his opinion,

> My life was in risk; each night I got telephone call threatening me to withdraw my opinion, or I would be killed. My wife and children were so scared. I had no alternative but to leave my home country.

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[32] 'People's concern about security' includes a wide range of issues. It shifts the focus on to the protection of individuals, including 'safety from hunger, disease and repression as well as crime, violence and sudden or harmful disruptions in people's daily lives' (The Human Security Framework and National Human Development Report, NHDR Occasional Paper 5, UNDP, 2006 in Walsham 2010). This study reveals that Bangladeshi migrants in Australia refer to the latter part of the above definition as a reason to migrate: that is, they moved to Australia to ensure 'safety from crime, violence and sudden or harmful disruptions in people's daily lives'. In Bangladesh, especially in urban areas, people constantly feel insecure since an unpredictable incident (or sudden harmful disruption) might happen to anyone's lives at any time. Interviewees mostly condemn the weak rule of law and blame highly corrupt administration and law enforcing bodies for such disorder.

Political unrest forced many people to move overseas even though they were enjoying a decent socio-economic status in Bangladesh. *Shovon*'s remark sums up the whole situation:

> I had a good job, big house and social status back in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, I left my country because of social and political unrest. The worst thing is *hartal*.[33] Opposition political parties, whoever they are, often call on *hartal* and make people's life practically miserable. I wish my country would have got rid of this political culture. But, I saved my family in the first instance.

Aside from political unrest, the fear of road accidents, muggings, kidnapping, and even sudden death, haunted people whenever they went abroad. One of the female interviewees, *Reshma* explains,

> After my husband left to work and the children to school, I couldn't concentrate on my chores properly. I was just praying, 'O Allah, bring them home safe'. You know what … newspapers and TV always cover the news about road accidents, crime, violence, kidnap and death. So, can you imagine how I could stay calm when my husband and children were not at home?

This comment illuminates the existing scenario of urban Bangladesh. People of any class, irrespective of social rank, are likely have such an outlook. As mentioned by most of the interviewees, once someone leaves their house in Bangladesh, no one can guarantee that he or she will return safely.

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[33] *Hartal* is a Gujarati word, synonymous with 'strike'. It originally meant political protest or non-cooperation with the government by closure of offices or shops. Indian nationalist leader Mahatma Gandhi used this as a form of non-violent protest against British rulers in India. People's involvement in hartal was voluntary. Over time hartal has become a widely used weapon by opposition political parties on the Indian sub-continent to protest against the policies of ruling parties. In Bangladesh hartal is extensively used by political parties. However, quite often hartal turns into violent actions in which offices, banks, transport and schools or colleges are forced to close. Hartal often results in massive loss of public and private property, and loss of human life (see Islam 2005). A European researcher who had been to Bangladesh for four months to do research described hartal in the following way: "...traffic on roads and highways was stopped and violent confrontations erupted, accompanied by explosions and destruction of private property, and involving injury to at least 130 individuals and one death" (Buchman 2013, p. 19). She also observes that the Government takes no responsibility to protect citizens from hartal violence.

Moreover, corruption and 'standover' tactics are increasing at an alarming rate, as indicated by a significant number of interviewees. *Shovon's* observation captures their dismay:

> The irony is that one can't buy a property without giving a 'percentage' or 'share' to *chandabaj.*[34] If anyone fails to compromise with them, for example, don't fill up their requirement regarding the amount of money, he won't be able to buy or build the property. Moreover, his life would be in risk, or he may even get killed.

Shovon's explanation highlights how participants felt, they were practically trapped by the illegal activities of *chandabaj*. The tyranny of *chandabaj* extends almost everywhere in the country, especially in the urban areas (see, Khan & Afroze 1999 for a detailed account).

Over-population, power failures and traffic congestion: Apart from the above-mentioned issues a number of respondents also voiced concern about the rapid increase of population, and the frequency of power (electricity, water and gas) shortages or *load shedding*[35]. In addition to these factors, traffic congestion, pollution, corruption, and fear of the long-term effects of climate change[36] have been observed as important reasons behind migration.

Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, is one of the world's fastest-growing mega-cities, and one of its most densely populated (Corner & Dewan 2014). Other cities are also growing faster than previously due to urbanisation. The pressure of a huge population results in numerous problems, such as traffic congestion, road accidents, air pollution, and poor law and order (World Bank 2007), which causes immense misery in people's

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[34] *Chandabaj*: the local *mastan* (muscle men) who are engaged in extortion, illegal toll collection and rent-seeking.

[35] *Load shedding*, which stems from shortages of power generation, is an everyday occurrence in Bangladesh. It occurs when power production cannot satisfy growing demand. The power authority disconnects supply in a certain area (or areas) to guarantee it to other areas. Load shedding is a serious blight on the everyday life of Bangladesh's people and economy alike.

[36] The most likely long-term effect of climate change is the inundation of coastal areas due to sea level rise. Although climate change in Bangladesh is more likely to result in internal migration than cross-border or international migration (Walsham 2010; and McAdam & Saul 2010), people are concerned about the possible impact of climate change.

lives directly or indirectly. *Shamim* stresses the intensity of the first-mentioned of these challenges:

> Traffic congestion has been increasing day by day. For example, some 10 to 15 years ago you might need half an hour to get to your workplace, while now you need two hours or even more. The long traffic [queues] could make you delay to work, children to schools or exams and, worst of all, patients to hospitals. Furthermore, people who travel across the country are to face immense misery. Vehicles remain stopped for hours on the highways, and people have no alternative but to be stranded on the road.

Shamim's statement was echoed by many other respondents. They mentioned that motor vehicles, paradoxically, paralysed movement around the mega-city of Dhaka. As *Rani* noted,

> Dhaka is no longer a place to live in because of traffic congestion, road accidents, and mugging and load shedding. It's like you won't be able to do any work as you plan. We had been worried about our child's future and found out that emigration was the only way to escape from those disorders.

In this context Rani went on to say her husband, initially applied to emigrate to the USA and Canada. After their applications were unsuccessful, they applied for permanent residency in Australia. In her opinion, Australia's immigration policy is more flexible than other countries'. *Rani*'s conversation clearly revealed a positive outlook about the country's immigration policy.

Food safety: Another notable concern for interviewees was unsafe or contaminated food and polluted water. To keep food looking fresh and long-lasting, dishonest business people in Bangladesh blend toxic chemicals and use artificial colours as additives, causing chronic and acute illnesses that threaten people's lives (see Ali 2013; Afsana 2015). This has been reported on extensively in the national and international press (see, Tran 2013). Further to this, the *Prothom Alo (*10 July 2015)*,* a leading national daily in Bangladesh, reports a recent survey conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS 2011) which reveals that more than 65% of Bangladeshis drink water contaminated with arsenic and harmful *E. coli* bacteria. A number of interviewees referred to the risk. *Reshma* exclaimed,

How do you raise your children when you cannot give them safe food and water? Fruits in the market are poisoned. Worst of all, baby food and even medicine are contaminated. Business people are mostly dishonest and corrupted. Profit is their main concern, not people's health and well-being.

Another interviewee, *Bithi*, recalled:

My child was often sick that I had to see doctor almost every week. Soon after arrival in Australia, I noticed that she had been fine; there were no stomach-aches, while she got better gradually. Now I believe that food didn't suit her in Bangladesh.

Reshma's and *Bithi*'s statements underline the prevalence of food contamination. Ironically, this is one risk that threatens everyone, everyone irrespective of whether they are rich or poor, because food consumption is an indispensable part of everyday life. A significant number of interview participants deemed migration the only way to escape this problem.

Widespread corruption: Many respondents also displayed dissatisfaction with unfair recruitment practices in both public and private sectors. It has been observed that quite often recruitment in Bangladesh is fraught with bribery, nepotism and political pressure (see, Wickberg 2012, p. 5). As a result many qualified people are unable to obtain suitable jobs, which makes them depressed and induces them to emigrate. For example, *Abedin*, a highly qualified engineer, expressed his utmost dissatisfaction with the condition of job recruitment in Bangladesh:

Despite my overseas degrees and work experiences, I couldn't get my desired job since I didn't have powerful relatives or strong networks. I had been so much disappointed that I decided to migrate.

Another interviewee, *Asad,* maintains

Most employers are biased. Instead of qualifications and experiences they prefer connection and bribe. Less qualified candidates could be recruited for their strong networking.

The above remarks exemplify that qualifications are not always recognised in the Bangladeshi employment sector. Rather, employers are often keen to recruit relatives,

friends, or someone who has references from powerful people, including political leaders. As a result, qualified applicants are likely to be victimised. Interviewees also point to the widespread corruption in all sectors of the economy.[37]

Attitude of colleagues, friends and relatives: A number of interviewees also pointed to professional jealousy among co-workers. This is especially true for those who returned to Bangladesh after acquiring overseas degrees. Co-workers who used to be friendly and co-operative stopped being so; instead they showed extreme unfriendliness to the returnees, which led them to leave the country again. As well, they point to the significant gap between them and relatives or friends. Just as they had in respect of their workmates, a number of respondents spoke of relatives and friends who were openly hostile to those who returned home after studying overseas. For example, recounted Ali,

> After finishing my two-year Master's program I went back to Bangladesh and joined my work. I had been so much stunned to see how my dearest people reacted. They were like, "Don't do this and this: this is not Australia." The more I was trying to be attached with them the bigger the distance they formed. Some of them upset me in every single word, as if I shouldn't have returned. They just wouldn't accept me as one of their own, and that was devastating for me as well as for my whole family. So we decided to migrate.

They also refer to adjustment problems faced by their children in Bangladesh after having lived for years outside the country. Children found schools much more stressful, as those in the West are more informal than the ones in Bangladesh. For example, *Fahmida* asserted,

> We lived in Australia for four years to pursue higher education. My children loved schools and other amenities. So after we went back to Bangladesh they were shocked to see lots of pressure in schools. They had to carry bags full of books and loads of homework, notebooks which were way too heavy for them. Moreover school activities were tight, with only academic goals: there was no fun at schools, which is why they became too depressed that we could not bear.

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[37] Wickberg (2012) observes that corruption in different forms such as Intimidation, bribery and extortion is widespread in Bangladesh; the Government, public administration, the judiciary and police are highly corrupt instrumentalities, Over and above this, corruption extends to the education and health sectors as well as every other social service. There barely exists a sector that is free of corruption.

Therefore, we applied for permanent residency, and eventually migrated to Australia.

Those who had first come to Australia as students, or as the spouse of a student, found adjusting to life back in Bangladesh particularly stressful. And for many respondents this became a key motivator for wanting to migrate to Australia permanently.

Nearly half those surveyed had come to Australia due to the acquisition of a student visa: 34% as students themselves, and 13% as a student's spouse (Table 4.2). A significant number returned to Bangladesh after completing their degrees. While it is unclear how many of these chose permanent migrate because of the hostility they faced upon returning to Bangladesh, the interviewees confirmed that it was a common enough factor.

Those who did not return to Bangladesh but decided to live in Australia commonly applied for permanent residency (PR) or for other documents such as a temporary resident (TR) visa. However, many of them found the quest for a permanent visa an extremely lengthy and exhausting process. In answering questions about why they decided to stay in Australia, a majority of interviewees affirmed that they had become accustomed to the comforts and amenities of life in Australia, which were largely absent back in their homeland. In *Aman's* words:

> When I was coming to Australia, I didn't think I would end up in here permanently. But after two years of living, my family (wife and children) and I realised we couldn't actually go back to Bangladesh. We became used to with all the facilities Australia offered to us. Take the case of utilities like electricity and water supply. Electricity and running water don't stop for a while in Australia; we can't imagine this in Bangladesh, can we?

So *Aman* opted to live in Australia permanently. He started to look for work, and then sponsorship for his immigration application, and eventually managed to obtain Australian permanent residency. This cohort raised another interesting dimension to study of the settlement process. While the effect on women was largely ignored in many people's decision-making, a number of men indicated that their wives had not agreed to go back to Bangladesh. For example, *Imran*, a university lecturer in Bangladesh, first came to Australia as a PhD student, and was later joined by his wife and children. He

was supposed to go back to Bangladesh to continue his work, but his wife strongly protested against his plans. According to *Imran,*

> My wife said no matter what happened she wouldn't go back. She would rather starve here in Australia than return to the *Khancha*[38] again… Children also liked it here in Australia. So I had to agree with them.

Imran elaborated on the opinion of his wife, who relished the freedom and openness of life in Australia, which she lacked in Bangladesh. She was overwhelmed by the opportunities their children enjoyed here. During their argument over migration his wife constantly contrasted conditions in Bangladesh with better prospects in Australia. In the end, Imran yielded to his wife and worked out a migration plan. His family eventually gained permanent residency and applied for Australian citizenship.[39]

One interesting finding that emerges from the qualitative information is that women play a significant role in decision making. Although the quantitative data has previously shown that women's migration is largely associational, and they are bound to follow their husbands, suggesting their choices are restricted, qualitative data revealed a different picture. Once in the diaspora, women expressed their sense of power in decision making and achieve a degree of liberty. This highlights the complexities of gendered decision making that does not fit in with the observation of Ho (2006) and Mirdal (1984).

Almost all the above-mentioned reasons for migration are related to each other. For example, the imbalance between land area and a huge population is liable to cause power shortages, traffic congestion, pollution, and road accidents. Furthermore, political instability, lack of security, widespread corruption and bribery have been endemic for many years and there is no sign this plight will improve. Interviewees identified a dysfunctional law-and-order system as the underlying reason for most of the troubles.

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[38] *Khancha* means cage. Imran's wife was alluding to the limited freedom of her life in Bangladesh.
[39] *Aman and Imran*'s statements demonstrate that they had become accustomed to the amenities in Australia. Therefore, instead of going back to home country after achieving degrees they made Australia home. That is a clear sign of acculturation (please see chapter six and seven for detail about the acculturation of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia).

It is also remarkable that a significant number of interviewees were personally affected by the problems discussed above, compelling them to leave Bangladesh, while others were concerned about their spin-off effects in the future. All were affected either directly or indirectly, which motivated them to leave for a better place. These particular migrants left no doubt that they had chosen Australia as that better place because it compared favourably against Bangladesh on all the benchmarks previously discussed. Their thinking coincided with that inspired by the following pull factors, as participants made clear in their interviews.

Better education and future for children: Bangladeshis consider migration a good means of ensuring a better education and future for their children. This opinion is correlated with their perception of insecurity on home soil, because political instability often has ramifications for educational institutions. *Mahmood*'s explanation below encapsulates this point:

> When *hartal* is called by the opposition party, people are basically stranded inside the house. It's not safe to go to work or take children to school. In these days, it's very usual that children would miss at least one fourth of the classes because of hartal. I didn't see this problem would ever be solved. So I decided to take my children to a better place where I could ensure them safety as well as better education and better future.

Many interviewees echoed *Mahmood*'s concerns. A number of parents were frightened to send their children to school during strikes, political processions or any other public demonstrations. They were afraid of the danger since no one's life is safe in such circumstances.

'Student politics' as well as 'campus violence' is another concern harboured by parents, as the interviews reveal.[40] This utterance by *Tomal* reflects how graphic the threat is seen as being:

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[40] In Bangladesh, every major political party has a student wing. Ideally, student politics should be geared to the interest of students. However, national political parties use the students for their own interest. The current practice of student politics in Bangladesh amounts to a serious menace to the nation. Students affiliated to various political parties often engage in violent confrontations that result in injury and death of not only political activists but students watching on, with education grinding to a halt. It is alleged that political parties are reluctant to ban student politics from the nation's campuses because doing so would

It's terrible to see a 20-year-old university student leader who has a gun. His education and future are totally ruined and, more importantly, innocent students are often victimised. I did not intend to send my children to university to put them in such hostile environment.

Most of the country's leading political parties are active on campus, involving students directly in national politics. Student politics often creates significant casualties. To avoid this, many parents consider migration a good option. Apart from 'student politics,' 'session jam' is another concern identified by most parents, one they identify as chronic at the tertiary education level. *Shovon* observed,

In the aftermath of political chaos, campus violence and casualties, universities remain closed for months. As a result, students cannot finish their courses in due time. That's the most horrible thing in most of the public universities. I couldn't compromise with my children's future, so brought them out of that.

These remarks are also echoed by most interviewees. Children's education and future are powerfully impacted by the political culture of Bangladesh. That is one reason why people move to the West, where children's better education and future can be ensured.

Dream to settle in the West: A 'dream to settle in the West' motivated many Bangladeshi people to migrate. In South Asian culture, people living in Western countries are often seen as wealthy, happy and praiseworthy (Vahed 2007; Siddiqui 2004). Accordingly, friends and relatives living are likely to be motivated to settle overseas. This fact significantly inspires Bangladeshi people, as revealed in these interviews. A significant number of participants said they had a dream to settle in the West that kept them motivated. For example, *Tomal* asserts:

I had been dreaming to settle overseas since I was a child. I saw some of my relatives who were living in the Western countries. Some of them used to visit home every three of four years. They used to bring expensive presents for us. They looked so beautiful, happy and proud as if they came from heavenly places or different planets. Their standard of living and behaviour seemed so gorgeous to me that I started to dream to have similar lifestyle. I realised that I wouldn't

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run counter to their own interests.. Although only a fraction of all students are engaged in student politics, every student suffers the consequences of such activism (The Daily Star, 27 November 2014).

maintain this standard if I stayed in Bangladesh. I never saw people living in Bangladesh were so happy. Thus, soon after my graduation I applied for immigration to USA, Canada and Australia. However, I got positive response from Australia in the first instance, and decided to come to Australia.

Tomal's statement illustrates his eagerness to 'go West'. He was ready to migrate to *any* developed country in the West. However, he found Australia's immigration policies more welcoming, which induced him to migrate to these shores. Similarly *Saira* maintained that her husband longed to settle in any Western country, because he always wished his children to be brought up in a much better environment than that prevailing in Bangladesh. In spite of enjoying a solid socio-economic status in Bangladesh, they migrated to Australia due to her husband's desire for a better future. In the same way, *Sumon* affirmed that he had been impressed by the Western way of life, its openness and freedom, opportunity, and social equality. So the evidence proves beyond doubt that this 'dream of the West' is an influential factor in Bangladeshis' desire to emigrate.

Influence of friends and relatives: Findings also indicate that friends and relatives significantly influence the decisions of Bangladeshis to live abroad, a phenomenon often classified in the literature as 'chain migration' (Chiswick & Miller 2002; Northcote, Hancock & Casimiro 2006; Johnston et al. 2006). Interviewees attest that friends and/or relatives already residing in Australia encouraged them to migrate. For example, *Rana* said,

> A number of my relatives like uncles, aunties, cousins and also friends have been to Australia for many years. They often encouraged me to migrate. I got a good job in Bangladesh, yet I applied, because I had been convinced. That was like a craze to settling overseas, especially in a peaceful country like Australia was like a dream of most young person in our time.

Similarly, *Shamim*:

> I was born in an educated family. My family was solvent socially and economically. Yet, we the 11 friends all together decided to migrate overseas

hoping to have a better prospect of life – we had been named *ora egaro jon*[41]. Currently all are settled in different countries. Some are in the USA, some in the UK, some in Canada, and some are in Australia.

So, we see, friends and relatives have played a very influential role in the migration of Bangladeshis to Australia.

Economic motivation: Respondents' pre-migration employment and economic status indicates that economic motivation was not a major spur to Australia-bound migration. Yet, some interviewees mentioned economic aspirations as a factor. The following statements highlight the importance of economic considerations. *Rafiq* had this to say:

> I had my own business back in Bangladesh. I was working hard, but not satisfied with the work environment and the outcome. So I wanted to try my luck, to see if I can earn higher income and maintain higher standard of living by migrating to a developed country. I wanted suggestion from some of my friends already settled in Australia. They encouraged me to come here, and I so did.

Rafiq's comment shows he was longing to improve his economic standing by living abroad, and was significantly influenced by friends living in Australia. Similarly, *Saidul* maintains:

> My wife and I were schoolteachers. Teaching is not well paid job back in Bangladesh, you know. So we decided to migrate to Australia to have a better economic position.

These comments by *Rafiq* and *Saidul* hint that the search for greater affluence motivates some Bangladeshi people when weighing up whether to migrate to Australia.

Family reunion: A number of people interviewed or surveyed for this study came to Australia under family reunion provisions. The present section examines this group whose migration decisions differ from other cohorts in that their migration is mainly associational. It is also notable that family reunion applies more to women in this context. This study's findings indicate that some male interviewees came to Australia

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[41] *Ora egaro jon* is a famous Bangla movie of the 1970s in which 11 friends join forces as freedom fighters. *Egaro* stands for '11'. In the movie, *ora egaro jon* collaborated and risked their lives to save their country. Today, paradoxically, Bangladeshi families are quitting the country for their own sake.

while they were still single. After settling in Australia they went back to Bangladesh for a wedding and made arrangements to bring their spouses to Australia on family reunion visas. For example, *Neela* relates that her husband migrated to Australia before they were married. A few months after their wedding ceremony, she moved to Australia to be with him. This thesis observes that the number of women who migrated to Australia on family reunion visas is significant.

These findings also suggest that the parents of migrants also come to live in Australia on family reunion visas. However, it is observed that parents are more likely to visit Australia for a certain period of time than to become permanent migrants themselves. A few elderly parents are known to have migrated to live with their children, but they were not interviewed for the purposes of this research.

Spouse took the decision: A number of respondents assert that they migrated to Australia because they had to do it 'for the family's sake'. As with family reunion, this is particularly true of women migrants. According to them their husbands took the decision based on their own dream and career prospects. In such cases, women had little or no say, and had to sacrifice their own desires and career dreams. It is notable that highly educated and professional women particularly belong to this cohort. Interviews confirmed that to keep the whole family together women gave up their own interests. *Sadia* fell into this category:

> My husband was not happy with his work in Bangladesh. He used to believe and dream that going overseas would bring him something better. Although I was doing my dream job, I couldn't stop him; I had to migrate to accompany my husband and children.

Consider the case of *Suborna,* who had been a bright student about to finish her Master's at a leading university in Bangladesh:

> I was just few months away to appear the final exam, but neither my husband nor my parents supported me to make the degree. Everyone was saying my husband's work was more important, so I should go with him, and I could get the degree once I would be in Australia. But the reality is that I couldn't do that.

Although *Suborna* later pronounced herself quite satisfied with her lifestyle in Australia, especially with the better prospects for her children, she sometimes feels a sense of failure. For the sake of her husband's career she had to give up her academic endeavour. All this suggests that the migration of Bangladeshi women to Australia is largely associational, a conclusion in close accord with Thapan (2005), Altamirano (1997) and Mirdal (1984).

Role of socio-cultural factors: Other motivating factors which have led Bangladeshis to emigrate are related to socio-cultural conditions in their homeland. For example, a desire to avoid the complications of extended family life appears to be one such factor. The extended family is a persistent presence in Bangladesh (Chowdhury 1995; Rozario 2007), though not as common in recent times. Living in an extended family prompts mutual support in time of need but can also be, troublesome, since family members, especially daughters-in-law, often find themselves required to adjust and compromise (Rahim 1988). It is likely that they will have to subordinate their own will and desire to the common interest. To rid themselves of stress and complexities, this thesis has discovered, many people decide to move far away where they can live on their own. Interestingly, family complications are more often singled out as a reason women use as an argument for migrating. In this context, *Maloti*'s viewpoint is typical:

> I used to live in extended family, where I had so many responsibilities. I had to do household chores all the time, yet no one was happy. In-laws were looking for my fault, and accusing me. It was humiliating and disappointing. I made my husband realise that going overseas was the only option to get rid of these complications. Although initially he did not agree, complicated situation made him understand and finally we applied for immigration.

It is worth noting that *Maloti* was not very well educated and did not have a paid job back in Bangladesh. It can be argued that she was undertaking the duties of a traditional Bangladeshi housewife. But the experience of some educated and working women is not unlike hers. In this regard a highly educated woman, *Bithi* recounted:

> I couldn't do anything on my own back in Bangladesh. Whenever I wanted to go out for shopping or any other work, I had to seek permission from my in-laws. I had to answer to lot of questions, what I was going for, who would I go with,

when I was coming back … and so on. Being an educated and working woman it had been embarrassing, at the same time humiliating. The only solution I found out to get rid of this was to go far away from that setting.

Bithi's statement shows that the stress and complications of living with two families under one roof compelled her to emigrate. Education and employment alone do not always alter women's status within an extended family. Migration is thus perceived as a way to escape the pressures of extended-family life. This finding is consistent with the research undertaken by Zannoni (2010) in her 'My Mother's Memories – the success and tragedies of an Italian migrant family'.

Although Zannoni's mother migrated from Italy to Australia in the 1950s due to the vexations of extended-family living, among other reasons, the typical position of women living in such families has not changed remarkably since those days. The Guardian (30 November 2008) published a report on the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, which showed that tensions within this relationship can cause long-term unhappiness and stress for both women. Intriguingly, about half the women who participated in this research hold similar opinions about the vexed situation of living in an extended family. It is, therefore, notable that while most of the men surveyed and interviewed referred to hopes of a better environment, a better economic disposition, a better life overall, and a better future for their children, women emphasised freedom, happiness, and their own family's well-being as the most significant drivers of their family's decision to migrate.

Apart from this, the research findings suggest that the consequences of mixed-faith marriage forced some Bangladeshi couples to migrate. It should be noted that such unions are not widely accepted in the socio-cultural context of Bangladesh, though they are not illegal (Uddin 2008). Parents are often ashamed when children of theirs choose a life partner from another religion. What is more, relatives and neighbours often treat these couples with disdain. To avoid this predicament, those with partners from other faiths regard emigration as a solution. For example, *Dipti*, a Hindu woman, told me,

I was in love with a Muslim man whom I married without my parents' consent. Naturally, my parents were not happy with my marriage. They said they

wouldn't see me ever again, because I married a Muslim man. I couldn't find a way to make them happy, so better [to get] far away.

The experience of *Hasan* (a Muslim man) is slightly different, in that his parents were not as strict as *Dipti*'s. They accepted his Hindu wife. However, members of the extended family and other relatives did not conceal their discomfort when talking with a daughter-in-law from a Hindu family. *Hasan* disclosed that his wife and he had been worried about their child's identity and future, and this persuaded them to migrate. As Uddin (2008, p. 121) asserts, partners in mixed marriages that take place in Bangladesh are likely to face negative consequences due to society's disapproval, and this expectation has been fulfilled as we learn from *Dipti*'s and *Hasan*'s recollections.

Furthermore, 'parents' opposition to marriage' is another significant issue that influences the decision to migrate. People in this cohort mention that they decided to migrate because their parents disapproved of their marrying. *Laila* maintained,

> My parents were not happy with my marriage as I chose my husband and, more importantly, he is not as worthy and qualified as my parents expected. Even though they gave their consent for marriage, I felt they were very disappointed, as if they couldn't introduce him proudly among the relatives. I couldn't bear my father's gloomy face. My husband was also depressed since he realised how unwelcome he was in my family. He and I thought if we would go somewhere very far, where we could live on our own, my parents might feel relieved. Some of my husband's friends were already living in Australia, who advised us to come to Australia.

Laila's conversation demonstrates the significance of arranged marriage at the social and family levels in Bangladesh. Such marriages are quite common. Children are expected to obey their parents' decisions regarding whom they should marry. Although the practice is changing, and is not as rigid as it was 10 or 15 years ago, many traditional families still prefer arranged marriage. When parents are aware that children have chosen their own partners they become disheartened, and this often results in turmoil within the family. Children also feel guilty for having disobeyed parental wishes, and this can lead to a period of estrangement within families. Hence the finding of this that migration is sometimes chosen as a way to avoid the consequences of 'love

marriage'. The study also suggests women are more persuasive in this context than men, since the research showed that women often reached this decision and made their husbands take the necessary steps to leave their home country.

Before concluding this chapter I propose to present a case study, the story of *Shihab*. The case study represents the situation of many alienated and frustrated young people who consider migration a way to escape the existing socio-political instability bedevilling Bangladesh.

Case study 1: Story of Shihab

Shihab was born into a wealthy family in rural Bangladesh. He lost both his parents at a young age. He was their youngest child, and so deeply affected by his parents' death. His older siblings were busy with their own lives so he had no one to look after him. Eventually he fell into bad company, which interrupted his studies, and at the same time worsened the relationship with his siblings. He was also involved in student politics, which took a toll on his academic performance. Soon he was branded as a hopeless boy with no future in Bangladesh. His brothers were worried for him.[42] So they sent him to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where at least could find work as a labourer. Their main intention, though, was to remove him from politics and other negative influences.

For three years Shihab worked hard in the UAE and earned plenty of money. However, he was not satisfied with his life. He felt acutely that his social status was much lower than his educated and well-established sibling's. He saw education as the key to increasing his status, and started to think about a better life, not just one that would be judged solely on income. Shihab knew going back to Bangladesh would not solve his problem. If he went somewhere else, it occurred to him, especially to a Western country, he could start a new life. This dream motivated him and eventually led him to Australia.

After struggling four years as a student, Shihab became eligible to apply for permanent residency. In the meantime he returned to Bangladesh to wed, and brought his bride to Australia. The family received PR, and eventually became Australian citizens. Shihab states that his brothers and sisters are no longer ashamed of him, they are proud. More

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[42] This concern is due to the violent nature of student politics in Bangladesh as mentioned earlier.

importantly, he credits his new status as a person, living, studying, and working in Australia with raising his profile as suitor in his home town back in Bangladesh. In his opinion, "If I were the same man engaged in local politics in Bangladesh, or still working in the UAE, no parents of a decent family would allow me to marry their daughter."

The story shows how *Shihab* turned himself from an escapee into a steady person who has created a happy family. It is no exaggeration to say that migrating to Australia changed his life. As observed by Ali (2007, p. 40), migration increases one's social status and is often positively linked with 'marriage marketability', clearly visible in *Shihab*'s case. The story also shows that what drove *Shihab* to migrate was the determination to try his luck and prove himself as a dignified member of his family. *Shihab*'s story also presents an insight into Bangladeshi society where political involvement is considered an unworthy and unbecoming deed, and at the same time, can be life-threatening. But, apart from escaping the sticky web of politics and the clutches of bad company, *Shihab*'s 'fairytale ending' is also significant because the dream that brought him here continues to inspire him. From this it is obvious that a wide range of issues were tied up with *Shihab's* life-changing decision to relocate to Australia.

Conclusion

This chapter has canvassed the pre-arrival characteristics, and investigated the motives, of Bangladeshi migrants who agreed to be respondents for this study. It has revealed that the typical Bangladeshi migrant to Australia is relatively young, highly educated and generally skilled. Majority of them were employed before migration, and many were satisfied with their jobs. Both quantitative and qualitative data reveal that economics is not the main consideration for those thinking of emigrating. Rather, the social and political circumstances of Bangladesh largely influence the decision to move abroad. To some extent, cultural factors also play a part. Generally, those contemplating migration are willing to consider any developed country that can offer better security, better education for their children, better health care, and overall a better standard of living. Australia's immigration policies notably proactive compared with those of many other Western countries (Spinks 2009), were mentioned by a number of respondents for having motivated to prefer this country as a destination. There is also evidence that women's migration is mostly associational. Overall, Bangladeshi migrants are more

influenced by push factors: they are particularly sceptical about their future prospects if they had chosen to remain in their homeland. This scepticism arises mainly from political unrest and social insecurity which overshadowed other negative aspects discussed in this section. At the same time, pull factors such as the better life on offer in Australia were influential in confirming for many Bangladeshi immigrants the wisdom of their choice.

CHAPTER FIVE: EFFECTS OF PRE-MIGRATION AND POST- MIGRATION FACTORS ON SETTLEMENT

Chapter Four examined the pre-migration demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Bangladeshi migrants. This chapter focuses on post-migration factors related to migrants' settlement and acculturation. This chapter will present respondents' status according to different settlement indicators such as current employment, income, job satisfaction, improvement of economic status after migration, and satisfaction with life after migration. This is followed by an examination of relationships between pre-migration and post-migration settlement and indicators. Finally, in order to present a clear picture of the impact of particular factors, this chapter draws on qualitative information. Based on quantitative and qualitative information the chapter illuminates the facilitators of, and barriers to, the acculturation and settlement of Bangladeshi migrants to Australia.

Post-migration factors in settlement

Current age distribution of respondents: Table 5.1 presents the respondents' current age distribution. The table shows that the majority of respondents (51%) are in their 30s, with 46% being 40 or older. Only 3% are under 30. The respondents' median age falls within the 35–39 age bracket. Therefore, compared with the median age of 45 years for all overseas-born people living in Australia (ABS 2011a), Bangladeshi-born migrants are relatively young.[43]

There are differences in age distribution across males and females. For example, fewer than 1% of men are under 30, compared with almost 7% of women. Further, 56% of males are aged 40 or over. In contrast, only 32% of females are in this age group. The median ages of males and females are in the 35–39 and 40–44 age groups, respectively. So, on the whole, female respondents are younger than their male counterparts.

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[43] The median age of all Bangladeshi-born people living in Australia is 31 years (ABS 2011a) which is younger than the median age of the respondents. This is because only respondents 18 years and over were included in the survey, while ABS (2011a) information is based on Bangladeshi-born people of all ages.

Table 5.1: Current age of respondents

Age (Years)	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
18 - 24	0.5	-	1.1
25 - 29	2.9	0.8	5.6
30 - 34	23.3	19.2	28.9
35 - 39	27.6	24.2	32.2
40 - 44	22.4	30.0	12.2
45 - 49	8.1	8.3	7.8
50 - 54	8.6	9.2	7.8
55 and above	6.6	8.3	4.4
N	210	120	90

Further education after migration: It is observed that many respondents pursued further education or training after arriving in Australia. For example, Table 5.2 (below) shows that a significant percentage of the respondents (56%) have pursued further education – a certificate course, diploma, or university degree – since migrating. The table further shows that further education is more prevalent among women. Thus, a majority of the female respondents (70%) have earned an Australian qualification. For men the proportion is about 41%.

Table 5.2: Post-migration further education of respondents

Further education	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Yes	56.4	40.9	70.1
No	43.6	59.1	29.9
N	209	122	87

Highest educational qualification: The post-migration education level of respondents is likely to be higher than their pre-migration education level, at least for some (pre-migration education levels were shown at Table 4.2 in the previous chapter). Table 5.3 presents the highest educational qualifications attained by respondents. The table shows that currently nearly 91% have university degrees (almost 5% higher than the pre-migration figure). This again confirms that Bangladeshi migrants in Australia are highly educated. Another 3% of respondents have attained a Level 5 (diploma) qualification. Nearly all (96%) of the men and 83% of the women hold degrees. So, more male respondents have university degrees than females. In addition, the proportion of male respondents holding postgraduate qualifications (64%) far exceeds the corresponding

ratio of women (45%). Whereas 2% of males reported having 12 years or less of schooling, the proportion is about 13% for females. Therefore, it is clear that even after further education women's highest qualifications tend to be significantly lower than men's. It should be noted here that many respondents, particularly women, have completed further education such as a certificate course or short diploma since migrating. However, as they are non-degree qualifications, most respondents' highest qualification has not been upgraded.

Table 5.3: Highest qualifications of respondents

	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
10 years of schooling (SSC) or less	1.4	0.8	2.3
12 years of schooling (HSC) or equivalent	5.3	0.8	11.2
Graduate/Postgraduate diploma	2.4	1.7	3.4
Bachelor degree	34.9	32.5	38.2
Postgraduate degree	56.0	64.2	44.9
N	209	120	89

Current English-language proficiency: Table 5.4 presents respondents' self-assessment of their current English-language proficiency in three aspects of the language – speaking, reading and writing. Two-thirds (67%) of respondents now claim either fluency or very good to be fluent in English. It is worth recalling that only 23% would claim this prior to migration.[44] So nearly half of all respondents (44%) have improved their pre-migration English-language skill and are now fluent in the language. Apart from them, more than 31% report that they now speak English fairly well. However, 54% of respondents stated that they could speak English well while they were living in Bangladesh. This does not necessarily mean that the number of respondents with moderate speaking capability has decreased, but rather that respondents have upgraded their speaking skill to the next level, i.e. from moderate to fluent.

Merely 2% of respondents now consider they speak only elementary English. This compares with 22% of respondents claiming basic-level oral skill in the pre-migration period. Overall, respondents have made significant progress over time in their capacity to speak English.

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[44] See Table 4.9 in Chapter Four, which summarised respondents' pre-migration proficiency in English.

Table 5.4 (below) proceeds to indicate respondents' current reading and writing capability. In general, respondents have significantly improved their reading and writing ability since migrating. This table also indicates current English-language proficiency for both male and female cohorts. Most respondents in each category of language usage have good command in all three aspects. Further, both groups have improved their English skills since migration. However, the improvement is more marked for men than women. More importantly, women lag behind men in terms of their skill in English. While 80% of male respondents report speaking English very well, only 49% of females report doing so. Similarly, higher percentages of males reportedly read and write with fluency.

Table 5.4 Current English-language proficiency of respondents

		Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Spoken	Fluent	67.0	79.8	48.7
	Moderate	31.4	19.3	48.8
	Basic	1.6	0.9	2.5
	None	-	-	-
Reading	Fluent	62.9	73.7	47.5
	Moderate	33.5	26.3	43.8
	Basic	3.6	-	8.7
	None	-	-	-
Writing	Fluent	51.5	59.6	40.0
	Moderate	39.2	39.5	38.8
	Basic	8.8	0.9	20.0
	None	0.5	-	1.2
	N	196	116	80

Table 5.5 (below) further elaborates the change in respondents' oral proficiency by giving the percentages of those who moved up from one level to the next. It thus shows whether respondents' skill in oral English has improved or deteriorated over time.

Table 5.5: Change in English speaking proficiency after migration

Pre-migration Ability	Post-migration Ability			
	Fluent	Moderate	Basic	None
Fluent	100.0	-	-	-
Moderate	73.6	25.5	0.9	-
Basic	17.1	80.5	2.4	-
None	-	66.7	33.3	-
N	195			

The percentages in Table 5.5 are row percentages. The first row shows that all the respondents with oral fluency in English when they migrated (100%) have retained it; no one has become less proficient. On the other hand, the second row shows that 74% of those who spoke English moderately well at migration have now become fluent, and only 25% remain at the same level as before. The improvement has been more significant for those who had basic speaking skill or none whatever before migration because 97% of them improved to either the moderate or fluent level (see third row). Finally, every respondent who was unable to speak any English before migration has improved to one of the next levels (basic or moderate), as can be seen from the fourth row. So, all of these migrants now speak some English. A similar, but somewhat smaller, improvement is observed in the reading and writing dimensions.

The evidence provided above thus suggests that, as far as the host country language (English) is concerned, Bangladeshi migrants have integrated successfully in Australia. This can be stated because proficiency in the host country language is an important settlement criterion, and considered in the literature as both a factor in, and indicator of, successful settlement (see Fletcher 1999). Moreover, the rate of improvement in proficiency with the host country language is also considered indicative of successful settlement (Fletcher 1999).

Respondents' current occupation: The current occupations of respondents who are in work appear in Table 5.6. The table shows that only 6% of the respondents work at managerial level, which is less than half the Australian national average of 13% , work at managerial level.[45] The single largest group is the professionals, who make up 45% of total respondents. This is much higher than the national figure of 21% . One in six (17%) work in technical and trade occupations, almost the same as the national figure. Community and personal service providers constitute 20% of respondents. This is twice the national average (10%). Regarding gender, it is observed that more than 57% of male respondents work in management or as professionals, compared with only 41% of women. The national percentages for these two occupations are 34% for men and 35% for women, in each case less than the percentages for Bangladeshi migrants.[46] A significant proportion of female respondents (39%) work in community and personal

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[45] The Australian national average statistics mentioned in this section are obtained from the ABS (2011a).
[46] These percentages have been calculated based on the data obtained from ABS (2011b).

services, while only 11% of men do so. Accordingly, Bangladeshi women migrants can be seen as lagging behind men in the occupational as well as the educational realm. Nonetheless, as shown above, Bangladeshi women's occupational position is somewhat better than the Australian women's average.

Table 5.6: Current occupation of respondents

Occupation	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Managers/administrators	6.3	8.5	2.1
Professional	45.4	48.9	38.8
Technical and Trade	16.8	17.0	16.3
Community and personal service	20.3	10.6	38.7
Clerical and administrative workers	2.8	4.3	-
Others	8.4	10.7	4.1
N	143	94	49

Host country factors: The attitude of host country people towards immigrants plays a significant role in how well they settle in. This section discusses the issue by splitting it into two categories – racism (such as racial comments or behaviour) and racial discrimination experienced by the respondents. Findings indicate that respondents in general regarded themselves as much less often discriminated against than other ethnic groups; whilst a significant minority perceived themselves as subject to both racism and discrimination. Respondents' answers to the questions about racism are presented in Table 5.7 (below). Asked whether they ever faced racism in Australia, nearly 60% of survey respondents affirmed that they had experienced it in one form or another. Most of the perpetrators were strangers (82%), followed by neighbours (51%). Furthermore, a minority of respondents (14%) reported being the target of racism from co-workers.

Table 5.7: Racism (Have you ever faced racism in Australia?)

	Total (%)
Faced racism	
Yes	58.0
No	42.0
Sources of racism	
From Work colleagues	14.0
From Neighbours	51.0
From Strangers	82.0
From Others	-
N	182

Note: The percentage total is greater than 100 because multiple responses were allowed.

Table 5.8 (below) looks at the survey findings on the issue of racial discrimination as perceived by respondents. The table shows that only 35% of respondents reveal that they have faced discrimination in their daily lives. Discrimination is mainly work-related, with more than half the respondents (51%) reporting that they have experienced discrimination in the workplace.

To some extent this supports the findings in the literature that Asian migrants and/or Muslims face discrimination in the labour market (Junankar, Paul & Yasmeen 2010; Tilbury 2007b). This evidence of work-related discrimination is also supported by Hawthorne (1997) who finds that even highly skilled migrants such as doctors or engineers experience significant discrimination in the Australian labour market, and by Trenerry, Franklin and Paradies (2012, p. 4) who observe that the incidence of "race-based discrimination in the workplace is unacceptably high" in Australia.

It should be mentioned here that, given the available information, it is difficult to establish whether the perceived workplace discrimination reported by respondents is due to ethnicity or religion. 'Perceived discrimination' in connection with recruitment, promotion or training can be the outcome of other factors such as lack of qualifications, inadequate language proficiency, or both. Qualitative information provides more detail about interviewees' perceptions of racism and discrimination (discussed below).

Table 5.8: Discrimination (Have you ever faced racial discrimination in Australia?)

	Total (%)
Faced racial discrimination	
Yes	35.0
No	65.0
Sources of discrimination	
At work	51.0
Buying/renting property	17.0
Government offices	6.0
Other services	16.0
Others	16.0
N	178

Note: The percentage total is greater than 100 because multiple responses were allowed.

Indicators of successful settlement

This section now turns to an examination of various settlement indicators that emerge from the survey responses. Since labour market outcomes are often considered key indicators of successful settlement (Khoo & McDonald 2001), various aspects of labour market experience, such as workforce participation, profession, job satisfaction and income, are discussed first. This will be followed by discussion of other non-labour-market settlement indicators such as satisfaction with life in Australia.

Labour market participation, employment and occupation: Table 5.9 shows that the workforce participation rate of respondents, including those employed as well as those looking for jobs, is about 86%. Non-participation stands at about 14%. Thus, Bangladeshi migrants can boast a much higher workforce participation rate than the national figure of 72% for those aged 20- 74. [47] More than 60% of respondents are either self-employed or working full-time. This is almost the same as the national rate of 59% (ABS 2011b). One-sixth (16%) of respondents work part-time. Overall unemployment is 9.7%, which is higher than the Australian rate (5.6%) (ABS 2011b).

Table 5.9: Labour market participation

Employment status	Total (%)
Self-employed	15.8
Employed (full-time)	45.8
Employed (part-time)	16.3
Looking for job	8.4
Not looking for jobs	13.7
N	203

Among those who are employed, a significant number of respondents reported that they did not work in the field for which they were trained. [48] This signals that non-recognition of qualifications earned before migration may be a problem for them. To elaborate this issue, the current section compares the occupations undertaken by

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[47] Notably, the national participation rate for all age groups (15 years and above) is 65% (ABS 2013). However, the 20–74 age range is more relevant here because the respondents for this research are all aged 18 and above. The national workforce participation rate for people aged 20-74 age is calculated as the simple average of male and female participation rates for the 20-74 age group during 2013-2014 based on ABS (2015) data.

[48] Nearly 38% of respondents reported not working in the field for which they were trained.

respondents before and after migration. That is, the table shows whether those who were working as managers before migrating are still in management, and so on. These results are presented in Table 5.10 (below), which displays considerable differences between the pre- and post-migration occupations filled by respondents.

Table 5.10: Comparison of respondents' occupational status before and after migration

Previous occupation	Current occupation				
	Managers	Professional	Tech & Trade	Community & personal	Clerical & others
Managers	14.3	50.0	-	14.3	21.4
Professional	1.8	80.0	5.4	7.4	5.4
Tech & Trade	-	25.0	50.0	16.7	8.3
Community & personal	23.1	-	30.8	38.5	7.6
Clerical & others	-	-	-	66.7	33.3
N	110				

In the above table the percentages are row percentages. The first row shows that only 14% of those respondents who used to work in managerial positions before migrating currently occupy such positions. Fully half (50%) of the previous managers now work as professionals. More importantly, more than 35% of previous managers now work in personal services, clerical or unskilled positions. Unmistakably, the position of those working at managerial level before migration has degraded noticeably. In contrast, most respondents formerly in professional jobs (80%) have retained such positions (row 2). Nonetheless, 18% of all the professionals have come down in the world, so to speak, with only 2% climbing the occupation ladder. There is also significant downward mobility among technical and trade workers, of whom 25% have moved to occupations with less prestige.

Despite this trend, more than 70% of respondents report that they are either very satisfied or satisfied with their job, as can be seen from Table 5.11. On the other hand, about 19% say they are only fairly satisfied and 11% report differing degrees of dissatisfaction with their job.

Table 5.11: Current job satisfaction of respondents

	Total (%)
Very satisfied	27.7
Satisfied	43.4
Fairly satisfied	18.2
Not very satisfied	7.6
Not satisfied at all	3.1
N	159

Income and economic status: Now we report the income distribution of the respondents. Table 5.12 shows both individual income and household incomes accruing from different sources, including government allowances where relevant. It can be seen from the table that a large bloc of respondents (36%) earns $40,000 or less a year. More than 13% of households also have income in this range. Most individuals (54%) and nearly half of all households (46%) earn between $40,000 and $120,000. Only 9% of individuals and 20% of households have an income above $120,000 a year. Median personal income is in the $40,001-80,000 bracket, higher than the Australian median personal income of $30,000 (ABS 2011a). Median household income is in the $80,001-$120,000 range; also above the median Australian household income of $77,000.[49]

Table 5.12: Annual income (personal and household) of respondents

	Personal income	Household income
	Total (%)	Total (%)
40,000 or less	35.6	13.4
40,001-80,000	21.8	22.7
80,001-120,000	32.8	23.2
120,001-140,000	5.8	17.4
140,001-180,000	2.6	13.4
180,001 and above	1.4	9.9
N	152	172

Most respondents (84%) report that their household income is enough to support their family (see, Table 5.13). The remaining 16% report that their household income suffices

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[49] The higher personal and family income of Bangladeshi migrants may be due to the fact that they are highly educated and skilled. Income reported includes government help, including child benefits.

only to meet their basic needs. Similarly, 78% of respondents report that their economic status has improved since migrating (Table 5.14).

Table 5.13: Sufficiency of respondents' income for family maintenance

	Total (%)
Very well	38.8
Well	45.4
Only meets basic needs	15.3
Difficult to meet basic needs	0.5
N	196

Table 5.14: Respondents' economic status compared with pre-migration status

Living standard	Total (%)
Much better	35.4
Better	42.3
The same	13.6
Worse	8.7
Much worse	-
N	206

Respondents' income and economic status, presented above, reveal that most respondents are satisfied with their current income and enjoy a better economic status in Australia than they used to have in their home country. Only 15–21% of respondents think otherwise. The latter group is small but, given the high educational qualifications and English-language proficiency of Bangladeshi-born immigrants already noted, it is fair to assume that significant barriers exist even for this skilled migrant cohort to assimilate in the Australian labour market.

Non-labour market indicators of successful settlement: This section now focuses on the non-labour market indicators of successful settlement. First, we present the respondents' views on their satisfaction with life in Australia. The responses, presented in Table 5.15, show that only 12% are highly satisfied with their life in Australia. This figure is much smaller than what we found in terms of economic status. Nearly 47% are just satisfied. On the other hand, 33% report that they are only fairly satisfied with their life and 7% are dissatisfied. This finding suggests that economic status is not the only factor affecting people's satisfaction with life.

Table 5.15: Respondents' satisfaction with life in Australia

Life satisfaction	Total (%)
Very satisfied	11.9
Satisfied	47.5
Fairly satisfied	33.2
Not satisfied	6.9
Not satisfied at all	0.5
N	202

This is also evident from Table 5.16 where we present the response of survey participants reflecting on their decision to migrate here. The table shows that while 64% consider the decision was right, a significant proportion (36%) now believe it was not right or are not sure.

Table 5.16: Whether migration decision was right

Migration decision right	Total (%)
Yes	64.2
No	17.9
Not sure	17.9
N	190

Respondents were also asked to evaluate how 'they fit in Australia' now compared with when they arrived here. Their responses are highlighted in Table 5.17. More than 84% of respondents report that they fit in "better" or "much better". Despite all the difficulties, most think they fit in better with this society now than they used to do in their early days after migration. This positive attitude provides some support for the contention that they have settled successfully in their adoptive land.

Table 5.17: How the respondents 'fit in Australia'

	Total (%)
Much better	38.5
Better	46.2
The same	11.2
Worse	4.1
Much worse	-
N	195

The information presented above shows that Bangladeshi migrants are highly educated and are proficient in their host country's language, factors that obviously favour their

settlement prospects. However, there are indications that non-recognition of their qualifications can pose a problem for them. This, coupled with other factors, may bring about labour market failure for some and, for many, mediocre levels of satisfaction with life in Australia. The qualitative information below offers more detail on each of these factors.

Association between factors and indicators of successful settlement

The previous section studied respondents' post-migration characteristics and their status in connection to such settlement indicators as labour market status, job satisfaction, income, economic status and satisfaction with life in Australia. This section explores which traits possessed by migrants are associated with different various settlement indicators. [50]

Factors affecting labour market status: The relationship between different settlement factors and respondents' labour market status is presented in Table 5.18. For ease of presentation, the dependent variable (labour market participation) is presented as a set of row percentages. Several types of participation – self-employed, employed full-time, employed part-time, looking for a job, not looking for a job or non-participation in the labour force – are shown across the top row.

The table's left-hand column displays different factors that may affect respondents' participation in the labour market. All percentages in the table are row percentages. The main objective here is to show whether there are statistically significant relationships between the settlement factors and labour market participation.[51]

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[50] The associations between respondents' pre-migration characteristics (discussed in Chapter Four) and settlement indicators are also discussed in this section.

[51] The statistically significant association between two qualitative variables (or a qualitative and an ordinal variable) is examined by a chi-square test. If the probability value (p-value) of the test statistics is equal to or less than 0.05, there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables involved. Otherwise (if p-value is greater than 0.05) the relationship is not statistically significant. However, the chi2 test shows only the statistical significance but says nothing about the strength of the relationship between the two variables. Therefore, Cramer's V is reported to show the strength of the relationship. Cramer's V spans values between 0 and 1; Cramer's V at less than 0.10 shows a weak relationship, whereas values in the range of 0.11-0.30 signify a moderate relationship and values above 0.30 indicate a strong relationship (see, Healey 2015, p, 303).

Table 5.18: Pre-migration and post-migration factors in labour market participation

	Labour market participation				
	Self-employed (%)	Employed full-time (%)	Employed part-time (%)	Looking for job (%)	Not looking for job (%)
Age at migration (N = 200)					
18-24	-	33.3	44.4	11.1	11.2
25-29	14.7	45.6	16.2	7.4	16.1
30-34	17.2	49.6	12.9	8.6	11.7
35 and above	16.7	40.0	16.7	10.0	16.6
Pearson chi2 = 8.54 (-p-value 0.74), Cramer's V = 0.12					
Settlement periods (N = 200)					
1980 or before	66.7	-	-	-	33.3
1981-1989	12.5	50.0	12.5	-	25.0
1990-1999	28.6	53.6	7.1	-	10.7
2000 and after	12.4	45.3	18.0	10.6	13.7
Pearson chi2 = 19.12 (p-value = 0.08), Cramer's V = 0.18					
First Visa type (N= 199)					
Student (primary applicant)	17.4	47.8	18.8	8.7	7.3
Student (spouse)	11.5	34.6	23.1	7.7	23.1
Skilled permanent (Primary applicant)	16.7	59.5	9.5	11.9	2.4
Skilled permanent (spouse)	10.3	27.6	20.7	10.3	31.1
Temporary resident	13.6	54.5	13.6	-	18.3
Family reunion	-	20.0	20.0	20.0	40.0
Others	50.0	33.3	-	-	16.7
Pearson chi2 = 36.21 (p-value = 0.05), Cramer's V = 0.21					
Education qualifications (N=203)					
12 years schooling or less	14.2	14.3	14.3	14.3	42.9
Diploma	-	20.0	20.0	20.0	40.0
Bachelor degree	12.7	52.1	19.7	4.2	11.3
Postgraduate degree	18.7	46.9	14.2	9.7	10.5
Pearson chi2 = 22.44 (p-value = 0.03), Cramer's V= 0.19					
Area of study (N = 200)					
Arts/Social Science	20.6	35.3	13.2	4.4	26.5
Commerce	23.6	41.8	16.4	12.7	5.5
Professional/Technical	5.3	61.2	16.5	10.2	6.8
Others (Science, law etc)	11.1	50.0	22.2	5.6	11.1
Pearson chi2 = 29.25 (p-value = 0.00), Cramer's V = 0.23					
Pre-migration employment (N=202)					
No	12.8	38.6	12.9	5.7	30.0
Yes	17.4	50.0	17.4	9.8	5.4
Pearson chi2 = 23.56 (p-value = 0.00), Cramer's V = 0.34					
Previous occupation (N=123)					
Managers/Administrators	27.8	33.3	22.2	16.7	-
Professional	6.9	56.9	15.3	11.2	9.7
Technical/Trade	23.1	46.2	23.1	7.6	-
Community/Personal	41.2	41.2	11.8	5.8	-
Clerical/others	-	33.3	66.7	-	-
Pearson chi2 = 26.23 (p-value = 0.05), Cramer's V = 0.24					
Pre-migration language proficiency Spoken (N=196)					
Fluent	8.9	80.0	8.9	2.2	-
Moderate	17.9	47.2	19.8	7.5	7.6
Basic	12.5	15.0	17.5	12.5	42.5
None	33.3	33.3	-	-	33.4
Pearson chi2 (12) = 62.46 (p-value = 0.00), Cramer's V = 0.33					
Post-migration Language proficiency Spoken (N= 196)					
Fluent	15.4	64.6	11.5	4.6	3.9

Moderate	14.7	13.1	27.9	11.5	32.8
Basic	-	33.3	-	33.3	33.4
Pearson chi2 (8) = 63.22 (p-value = 0.00), Cramer's V = 0.40					

First, consider the correlation between respondents' age at migration and labour market status as shown in the first part of Table 5.18. [52] The table shows no visible difference across respondents' age groups in terms of their labour market participation. There is only a weak indication that the smallest age cohort (i.e. 24 years and under) and the largest (35 and over) may be different from the other groups. For example, more than half the respondents in the youngest age group (56%) are either working part-time or unemployed, presumably because they are students and still looking for suitable jobs. Non--participation in the workforce is greatest among the oldest age group (17%). But the correlation between age at migration and labour market participation is not statistically significant. [53] Similarly, migrants' current age bears no significant correlation with their labour market participation.[54] However, settlement periods, which are also synonymous with settlement length, are only weakly related to labour market outcomes. [55] Migrants who arrived before the 1990s have higher labour force non-participation than later arrivals.[56]

On the other hand, the type of first visa with which respondents entered Australia is significantly correlated with their involvement in the workforce. [57] Involvement is highest for primary applicants and lowest among those who came as spouses and as part of a family reunion migrant group. Altogether, 98% of primary applicants who entered

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[52] As the percentages are row percentages, the first row shows what proportions of respondents in the 18-24 age group are self-employed, employed full-time, employed part-time, seeking jobs, not seeking jobs, and so on. The rest of the correlations in the table are interpreted in a similar fashion.

[53] In order to assess statistical significance of the correlation between age at migration and labour market participation, the relevant chi2 value along with its probability value of significance (p-value) has been reported. It can be seen that the p-value of chi2 statistics is 0.74 which is much higher than the threshold value of 0.05, suggesting that the relationship is not statistically significant. Cramer's V value is very small (0.11), indicative of a relationship verging on weak.

[54] The p-value of chi2 statistics signalling the association between the respondents' current age and labour market participation is greater than the conventional significance level of 0.05 (the association is not reported in this table).

[55] The chi2 p-value is 0.08, slightly higher than 0.05. Cramer's V is also not very large (0.18), suggesting a moderate relationship.

[56] Many Bangladeshi migrants who came to Australia before the 1990s might be retired by now. Moreover, women's participation in labour market, especially for those who came in 1990s, is typically low (see chapter 8).

[57] This is evidenced from significant chi2 data (p-value <.0.05) and a moderately large Cramer's V (0.21).

Australia as skilled migrants participate in the workforce. The percentage is slightly lower for primary applicants who first entered Australia as students (93%). By contrast, 60% of respondents on family reunion visas, and 69% of those who came to Australia as the spouses of skilled migrants, are members of the workforce. It will be recalled that these two groups consist mostly of women. Thus, this finding reflects higher non-participation rates among women. Apart the from family reunion group, the percentage of respondents looking for a job is highest among skilled primary applicants. This can be linked to the inability of some members of this group to find a suitable job commensurate with their skills.

The role of educational qualifications is widely acknowledged in the literature as a predictor of migrants' labour market participation (see Burnett 1998). This is confirmed in the case of Bangladeshi migrants as well. The educational qualifications of respondents are significantly linked to labour force participation.[58] That is, the more educated people are, the more likely they are to participate in the labour market. The table shows that higher percentages of university degree-holders (i.e. Bachelor or post-graduate degrees) work full-time or part-time than those who have only a diploma or secondary-school higher certificate. Conversely, degree-holders are less likely to be unemployed or uninvolved in the labour market. Therefore, a higher education qualification strongly correlates with labour market status. In fact, it turns out that not only is educational qualification predictive of workforce participation, but so are particular areas of study. For instance, 26% of those respondents with a Social Science or Arts degree are non-participants in the workforce. This rate is far higher than the corresponding rate for those with a commerce degree (5%) or a professional degree (7%). This fact is probably related to labour market characteristics in Australia, where it is very difficult to put to use an Arts or Social Science degree earned in Bangladesh.

Previous labour market involvement also exhibits an important relationship with migrants' current labour market outcomes, forming a statistically significant correlation. Those with previous labour market experience and those working in skilled occupations prior to migration are more likely to join the labour market after migration. So it is that nearly 95% of respondents with pre-migration work experience take part in the labour market (see, Table 5.18). The percentage is much smaller (70%) for those without such

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[58] The chi2 p-value reported for this correlation is 0.03, less than the threshold value of 0.05.

experience. As far as previous occupations are concerned, former managers or administrators have the highest incidence of unemployment (17%), followed by professionals (11%). The percentage unemployed is lower among those who used to do less skilled jobs. This may be because it is easier to find a less skilled job than one in management or the professions.

In line with the literature, proficiency in one's host country language (in this case English) is a strong facilitator of labour market integration. All three aspects of English language – speaking, reading and writing are significantly associated with labour market participation. The last part of Table 5.18 shows the correlation between respondents' oral English proficiency before and after migrating, and their labour market participation. Command of English in both periods is significantly tied in with employment status (chi2 p-values<0.05). The table shows that a higher percentage of respondents who speak English fluently obtain full-time jobs and, conversely, fewer of them are unemployed or not involved in the workforce. A similar relationship is observed regarding pre- and post-migration reading and writing skills. Again, in line with the literature on migrant settlement, it can be safely assumed that respondents with a better grasp of their host country's language can better integrate into its labour market.

Finally, as a significant number of respondents reported experiencing racism or discrimination (see, Table 5.7), this section also examines whether these factors are (negatively) correlated with respondents' integration into the labour market. However, no statistically significant evidence of such a correlation has been found, leading to the conclusion that perceived racism has no influence on labour market participation

Factors affecting job satisfaction: This section now examines whether respondents' pre- and post-migration traits are linked to another dimension of labour market integration – their current job satisfaction.

The survey found that respondents' age at migration and current age are not significantly associated with job satisfaction. Nor, it may be noted, are many other pre-arrival characteristics such as first Australian visa type, previous areas of study, previous labour market experiences, and length of stay.[59] These findings bear out Gunasekara, Rajendran and Grant (2015) who examined the job satisfaction of Indian

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[59] This non-significance is evidenced from the p-values of chi2 test statistics for these correlations which are much higher than the threshold value of 0.05.

and Sri Lankan skilled migrants in Australia and found that age, gender, education levels, and length of stay were not significant predictors of job satisfaction. An explanation may be that it is one thing to join the workforce but another thing completely to achieve job satisfaction. This is justified by the findings that many respondents are not working in their preferred occupation but in lower-status jobs. This observation is further confirmed in Table 5.19 (below) which shows the correlation between current occupation and job satisfaction (data in this table are represented as row percentages). The table reveals that respondents working at higher-skilled jobs (managerial or professional) report greater occupational satisfaction. Nearly 90% of respondents working in management or a profession are highly satisfied or satisfied with their jobs. The percentage is much lower for those lower down the job scale, with 70% satisfaction or high satisfaction reported by migrants occupying technical and trade positions, and 62% for community and personal service providers. A strong correspondence is therefore evidenced between current occupation and job satisfaction, as indicated by the chi2 p-value (< 0.05).

Table 5.19: Association between current occupation and job satisfaction

Current occupation	Job satisfaction				
	Very Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Fairly Satisfied (%)	Not Satisfied (%)	Not satisfied at all %
Managers/administrators	44.4	44.4	11.2	-	-
Professional	45.3	42.2	9.4	3.1	-
Technical and Trade	29.2	41.7	25.0	4.1	-
Community and personal service	10.4	51.7	31.0	6.9	-
Clerical and administrative workers	-	25.0	75.0	-	-
Others	8.3	33.4	8.3	25.0	25.0
N		152			

Table 5.20 reports the correlation between other settlement factors and respondents' job satisfaction, a correlation found to be statistically significant. One factor strongly linked to respondents' job satisfaction is whether they are working in the field for which they were trained. Table 5.20 shows greater job satisfaction among those who work in their preferred occupation. So, 39% of respondents working in their preferred occupation declare themselves highly satisfied with their jobs, and another 48% in this group report that they are satisfied in their current work. For those respondents who are not working in their preferred occupations, the corresponding proportions are only 8% and 36. This finding parallels the observation of Chiswick and Miller (2008) that working in a

preferred occupation, and particularly in the field people were trained for, largely accounts for job satisfaction.

Table 5.20: Pre- and post-migration factors in respondents' job satisfaction

	Job satisfaction				
	Highly satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Fairly satisfied (%)	Not satisfied (%)	Not satisfied at all (%)
Education qualifications (N=203)					
12 years schooling or less	16.7	16.7	66.6	-	-
Diploma	-	50.0	50.0	-	-
Bachelor degree	32.2	33.9	22.0	11.9	-
Postgraduate degree	26.1	51.2	11.9	5.4	5.4
Pearson chi2 = 22.35 (p-value = 0.03) Cramer's V = 0.22					
Work in the same field as trained (N=157)					
Yes	38.8	47.7	11.6	1.9	-
No	7.5	35.9	32.1	15.1	9.4
Pearson chi2 = 40.26 (p-value = 0.00) Cramer's V = 0.51					
Faced Racial Discrimination					
Yes	20.7	37.7	28.3	11.4	1.9
No	35.2	46.7	10.2	6.8	1.1
Pearson chi2 = 10.19 (p-value = 0.03) Cramer's V = 0.27					
Pre-migration language proficiency: Spoken (N=196)					
Fluent (very well)	56.8	29.5	11.4	-	2.3
Moderate (well)	18.9	52.2	18.9	7.8	2.2
Basic	11.1	38.9	22.2	27.8	-
None	-	50.0	50.0	-	-
Pearson chi2 = 37.05 (p-value = 0.00), Cramer's V =0.28					
Post-migration language proficiency: Spoken (N=196)					
Fluent (very well)	34.7	45.9	12.7	4.2	2.5
Moderate (well)	8.7	40.0	34.2	17.1	-
Basic	-	-	-	100.0	-
Pearson chi2 = 32.42 (p-value = 0.00), Cramer's V = 0.32					

Apart from current occupation, two other important factors related to job satisfaction are educational qualification and language proficiency (see, Table 5.20). Both correspond positively with job satisfaction. That is, respondents with higher educational qualifications and proficiency in English were significantly more likely to be more satisfied with their jobs. This finding contradicts Gunasekara, Rajendran and Grant (2015) who do not find such evidence for Indian and Sri Lankan migrants in Australia. On the minus side, host country factors such as discrimination experienced by respondents is significantly associated with job (dis)satisfaction. That is, those who perceive themselves to have been the object of discrimination are likely to be less happy in their jobs. This is understandable given that most episodes of racial discrimination reported by respondents are work-related, as Table 5.8 shows.

Factors affecting respondents' income: As far as respondents' income is concerned, significant correlations emerge solely for several criteria: first Australian visa type, settlement period, higher educational qualifications and greater language proficiency (before and after migration) are significantly correlated with income. Characteristics such as age at migration, area of previous study, and previous labour market experience are either weakly or not at all significantly correlated.

Factors affecting satisfaction with life in Australia: We have also examined correlation between pre- and post-migration factors and respondents' satisfaction with their life in Australia. It turns out that very few of the pre- and post-migration factors such as age, length of stay, first Australian visa type and educational qualifications are significantly linked to life satisfaction. Even factors like racial discrimination and racism show no significant correlation. The reason may be that satisfaction with life is a very broad and complex issue, little of which can be explained by one individual factor. These findings partially support Gunasekara, Rajendran and Grant (2014) who found that life satisfaction levels for Indian and Sri Lankan skilled migrants in Australia did not depend on age or their education level but correlated with the length of stay in Australia.

Table 5.21: Spoken English proficiency and life satisfaction

	Very Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Fairly Satisfied (%)	Not satisfied (%)	Not satisfied at all (%)
Pre-migration speaking					
Fluent	16.7	52.4	19.1	11.8	-
Moderate	11.9	48.5	32.7	6.9	-
Basic	7.3	41.5	46.3	4.9	-
None	66.7	-	33.3	-	-
Post-migration speaking					
Fluent	13.8	54.5	23.6	8.1	-
Moderate	11.5	32.8	50.8	4.9	-
Basic	-	33.3	33.3	33.4	-

One factor correlating significantly with life satisfaction is respondents' English-language skills. Those towards the upper end of the scale are more satisfied with their lives. Table 5.21 (above) presents the correlations between respondents' pre- and post-migration spoken English and satisfaction with life. The table shows that respondents with fluent and moderate levels of English speaking skill are generally more satisfied with their life in Australia. A similar relationship is observed between English reading and writing ability and life satisfaction. This is understandable given that higher

proficiency in a host country language may benefit all spheres of a migrant's life, overall satisfaction included. This finding is also in agreement with Gunasekara, Rajendran and Grant (2014).

Table 5.22: Labour market outcomes and life satisfaction

	Life satisfaction				
	Very satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Fairly satisfied (%)	Not satisfied (%)	Not satisfied at all (%)
Employment status (N=195)					
Self-employed	12.9	45.2	32.2	9.8	-
Employed full-time	18.6	56.9	19.8	4.6	-
Employed part-time	6.1	45.5	33.3	15.2	-
Looking for a job	-	41.2	47.1	5.9	5.9
Not looking for a job	7.1	25.0	64.3	3.6	-
Pearson chi2 = 40.31 (p-value = 0.00), Cramer's V = 0.23					
Occupation (N=156)					
Managers	55.6	22.2	22.2	-	-
Professional	15.9	60.3	19.1	4.9	-
Technical and trade	9.5	57.1	23.8	9.5	-
Community and personal service	14.3	46.4	32.1	7.1	-
Clerical and administrative workers	-	33.3	33.3	33.3	-
Others	8.3	50.0	16.7	16.7	8.3
Pearson chi2 = 30.69 (p-value = 0.05), Cramer's V = 0.24					
Job satisfaction (N=158)					
Very satisfied	31.7	48.8	17.1	2.4	-
Satisfied	9.1	65.3	21.2	4.5	-
Fairly satisfied	3.7	35.7	46.4	14.3	-
Not satisfied	18.2	36.5	27.3	18.2	-
Not satisfied at all	-	40.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Pearson chi2 = 59.68 (p-value = 0.00), Cramer's V = 0.31					
Work in same field as trained					
Yes	17.4	56.1	21.4	5.1	-
No	7.8	45.1	33.3	11.8	1.9
Pearson chi2 (4) = 8.73 (p-value = 0.05), Cramer's V = 0.25					
Income level (N=150)					
Less than 40,000	7.8	46.2	36.5	9.6	-
40,001- 80,000	9.1	39.4	36.4	15.2	-
80,001- 120,000	22.2	66.7	8.9	2.2	-
120,001-140,000	16.7	33.3	50.0	-	-
140,001 and above	50.0	50.0	-	-	-
Pearson chi2 = 26.24 (p-value = 0.01), Cramer's V = 0.25					
Living standard (N=198)					
Much better than pre-migration	20.0	50.0	28.6	1.4	-
Better than pre-migration	8.3	47.6	35.7	8.3	-
Same as pre-migration	10.7	39.3	35.7	14.3	-
Worse than pre-migration	-	43.7	37.5	12.5	6.3
Pearson chi2(12) = 25.29 (p-value = 0.01), Cramer's V = 0.21					

Interestingly, variables related to respondents' work and economic status correspond strongly with how satisfied they feel with their lives in Australia. The results are reported in Table 5.22) which identifies these linked variables as employment status, current occupation, job satisfaction, income level and standard of living.[60]

The greater their job satisfaction, the more they earned, and the higher their standard of living, the better pleased with their lives in Australia respondents said they were. And the same work and economic factors mirror respondents' views on whether they fit better in Australian society now than they did in their early years of settlement. That is, the respondents who fare well according to different dimensions of labour market outcomes also see themselves as fitting in better now than they did during their early days in Australia.

Overall, a host of pre-migration and post-migration factors are associated with the integration of Bangladeshi migrants into Australia's labour market. However, not all these factors are associated with migrants' job satisfaction or economic status. The important factors are pre- and post-migration English-language proficiency, educational qualifications, racial discrimination and current occupation type.

Non-recognition of pre-migration qualifications acts as a barrier to labour market integration. Yet very few of either pre- or post-migration factors are related to the satisfaction levels expressed by Bangladeshi migrants with life in Australia. Even host country factors such as perceived racial discrimination or racism directed at migrants do not seem to impair Bangladeshi migrants' satisfaction with life in this country. In contrast, economic factors such as workforce and economic status are powerful predictors of how satisfied they are likely to be with their lives here.

Qualitative information

This section is based on the responses of interview participants and provides qualitative information about the effects of different factors on migrant settlement and acculturation.

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[60] Probability values of the chi2 statistics for these correlations as reported in Table 5.22 are less than or equal to the threshold value of 0.05.

Effect of age: Quantitative information provided above did not establish a statistically significant connection between age and labour market participation, job satisfaction or satisfaction with life in Australia. However, qualitative findings indicate that respondents' age may be related to their labour market integration. More importantly, these findings point to a considerable impact of age on the likelihood of successful acculturation for Bangladeshi migrants. Thus, those who migrate at a young age, such as before they turn 30, are more likely than older migrants to acculturate successfully. A number of interviewees asserted that they should have migrated much earlier as they find adapting to the host society, as well as jobseeking, much harder compared with the experienced of young people. This supports the theoretical idea that one's age at migration has a significant bearing on how well one acculturates to the host country (see, Taras, Rowney & Steel 2012).

To elaborate the impact of age on labour market outcomes, two parallel case studies are presented below. The first is about *Rahman*, who migrated to Australia in his late 30s. The second introduces *Sumon*, who was in his early 20s when he came to Australia. It should be noted that both men had been living in Australia for more than seven years when interviewed.

Case study 5.1: Age and labour market integration

Rahman migrated at the age of 38. He was highly educated and used to have a very good job in Bangladesh. Being a high official in government, he, along with his family, had enjoyed ample comfort and luxury. Nevertheless they migrated. The reason they did so resembles that cited by most Bangladeshi migrants in this study; to get away from socio-political unrest and ensure a better future for their children.

Rahman spent the first year after migration doing absolutely nothing. He could have done odd jobs. However, he was not fit for manual work. At his age, he was unable to compete with younger people doing such work. Rahman and his family lived off the capital they had brought with them from Bangladesh, savings accumulated from his previous career.

Rahman was keen to do further study in his own field. He was trying to gain admission to various universities. Being a permanent resident, he was eligible to enrol in a Master's program. But he was not offered a scholarship so he had to take a job as a kitchen hand, something he had never before imagined taking up. The money he earned was enough to meet his basic needs, though he found the work frustrating, His wife had been extremely disappointed as she could not bear to think of her highly educated husband washing dishes and mopping floors in a restaurant kitchen. In her opinion, "My father liked this man for me because of his educational qualification, strong family background and his high- profiled job. If he knew what his precious son-in-law is doing now, I can't imagine what would have happened."

Rahman eventually won a scholarship, which allowed him to quit his low-profile job. But he could not find a suitable job even after completing his degree. After seven years as migrants, Rahman and his wife realised they would have to leave their glory days behind them. Both of them are now doing jobs that they are keeping secret from their parents back in Bangladesh.

Case study 5.2: Age and labour market integration

Sumon's story gives a completely different picture compared to Rahman's. Sumon came to Australia as a 22-year-old. He was then a student, struggling with economic hardship and to learn English. Within two or three years he was able to overcome these obstacles and come to terms with the changes in his life. Once he finished his studies (certificate and graduate diploma) he got a job. In the meantime he travelled back to Bangladesh for his wedding. Eventually Sumon and his wife received permanent residency and Australian citizenship. They bought a house. Seven years after migrating, Sumon can be considered success story, even though he is yet to celebrate his 30th birthday.

So, Sumon's labour market integration took a much shorter time than Rahman's, True, Sumon did not face as many obstacles as Rahman did. Based on the two case studies mentioned above, it is apparent that Rahman's pre-migration background and achievements were of no use, while Sumon has made a fresh start and thus attained his goal. Moreover, the length of time each has lived in Australia is affecting their settlement in opposite directions. As time goes on, Rahman and his wife are losing all

hope of finding proper employment, while Sumon is gradually becoming more optimistic. Sumon's experience illustrates the relevance of one's age at migration to the prospects for successful settlement.[61]

Apart from occupational success and economic affluence, age also plays a significant role in acculturating migrants. Interviews conducted during this research reveal that learning a new language, acclimatising to new behaviours, and exposure to new cultures has been extremely troublesome for older people. For example, *Abedin* notes,

> I don't think I have learnt anything; I just tried to go on. Now I am learning so much new things about Australia from my children. I remembered how hard it was to talk and behave with strange people, or maybe I am the one who was strange … I don't see Bangladeshi young boys and girls who have come recently are as panicked as I was, and even I am now. They are much smarter than me.

Abedin's statements clearly convey the impact of age on acculturation. His comments also show that children accept the changes life brings, and differences between societies, much more readily than parents. Similarly, Shovon says,

> I used to believe I was a progressive modern person, but after moving to Australia I have found out how conservative I am. Initially I couldn't take the way young people behaved and dressed – you know what I mean. Nothing matches with my values. I feel like I should say them something, advise them … but no, I am not supposed to do that. It's not my country.

This sentiment was echoed by a number of interviewees, indicating that older people are likely to be authoritarian in matters concerning social values and their cultural heritage. Due to the large dissimilarity between their home and host cultures, aspects of the latter that are new to them may pass them by. Respondents to this study also voiced concern about the influence local youth's lifestyle could have on their own children, which basically stressed them out. In contrast, as interviews revealed young migrants are not narrow-minded about the culture and values inherited from their homeland.

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[61] *Rahman*'s story further demonstrates the impact non-recognition of qualifications can have, a point that is discussed later on.

They are more accepting of differences and likely to integrate well with the host culture compared with their elders. Doidge (2007) has confirmed through clinical research that as we age the brain loses its capacity to absorb new information. Findings in the present study regarding the impact of age on settlement success are also consistent with those of Thomas (2003) and Leuner (2007), as both studies indicate that older people are less likely to accept circumstantial changes to their lives.

Effect of educational qualifications: Quantitative information clearly shows a positive correlation between educational qualifications and employment among Bangladeshi migrants in Australia. These findings are backed up by the qualitative data. Non-recognition of qualifications is a noteworthy aspect. Findings indicate that, for half the respondents, there is no relation between pre-migration qualifications and current occupation. Many of them had to switch to unfamiliar fields of study and find work related to their post-migration qualifications. A significant number reported being employed at jobs beneath their expectations, and some remain unemployed. For this cohort, therefore, prior qualifications are irrelevant to their present occupations.

Table 5.2 has shown that more than half the respondents embarked on further study or training after migrating to Australia. This was due to the non-recognition of their existing qualifications in the Australian labour market. But further study does not always lead to a suitable job, as the interviewees made clear. Despite acquiring an Australian degree, some respondents insisted they had been unable to put their degrees to good use. For example, *Shahid* maintains,

> Ironically, postgraduate degrees, especially PhD, are likely to minimise the possibility of getting jobs in your field. Now I don't show my PhD in job application ... Finishing a PhD is such a rewarding achievement, you will feel that soon. But if you can't utilise, everything would seem meaningless … Now I realise that I should have done a diploma instead of a PhD.

It can be inferred from these statements that respondents risk being perceived as over-qualified, a state of affairs classified in the literature as 'education-occupation mismatch' (Chiswick & Miller 2009; Piracha, Tani & Vadean 2012; Junankar & Mahuteau 2004). As a result, there is often little to show for five or six years of expense and hard work. A number of the respondents admitted to concealing their

highest degree attainment when applying for a job. Although Leuner (2007) asserts that educational qualifications earned in developed countries are likely to be recognised in the Australian labour market, this study has come across a number of people with qualifications gained in countries other than Bangladesh who found their skill and their degree to be useless. A lack of information may be to blame for this, as Torun's story shows. His case study highlights the lack of government help and how newly arrived skilled migrants suffer the consequences of government misdirection.

Case study 5.3: Non-recognition of qualifications and inadequate government help for jobseeking migrants

Torun worked as an IT professional in the UK for several years. Since he had no intention of settling abroad, he returned to Bangladesh, where he was appointed general manager in an IT firm. But his plan to settle in his home country changed soon after his return due to socio-political disorder in Bangladesh, which led him to apply for permanent residency in Australia. Soon after the visa was granted, Torun, along with his wife and seven-year-old son, flew to Australia hoping he would quickly be able to obtain a job, given his qualifications and experience. He also thought that as a skilled migrant he would receive help from the government to find a job. But the path ahead was not a smooth one.

Upon arriving in Australia he started to apply for jobs in the IT sector, but after months of sending in applications he had not heard back from a single employer. It occurred to him that the way he was preparing applications might not be the right approach. Torun recalls his thinking then, "The reason could be that the process of applying and getting an interview was quite different from what used to be the case in the UK. Some agencies work as intermediary between the employers and the employees. And it looked like these middlemen were not quite trained in the area which the recruitment is for."

Seeing the need to rearrange his CV, and feeling in dire need of help on how to write an acceptable cover letter and CV, he contacted Centrelink, which referred him to a job-search website from which he could not retrieve any information that was particularly helpful for him. They also suggested he enrol in an IT training course. A clearly exasperated Torun complains, "But I have had enough training in my area, my degrees

were assessed by the Australian Immigration, and therefore the visa was granted. So why do I have to go through that assessment process again to work in my area?"

He wanted face-to-face discussion or one-on-one mentoring to prepare his CV, which is what he went to a Centrelink office for. There he was told that they could provide internet support and a printer for his CV but no "face time". The office advised him that after two years or so he could apply for unemployment benefits: "But I did not ask for any unemployment benefits. All I wanted was some solid help that would facilitate my job search." Torun also visited TAFE to inquire if it ran any courses as to how to write a CV, and a cover letter etc, but again left the establishment without a positive answer. Two years of job searching left him quite frustrated. Some of his junior colleagues from Bangladesh, who are now well settled in Australia, advised him to work as a cab driver – an option that devastated him.

His wife's support and hard work have been instrumental in their family's survival. She affirms that she will not give up work until her husband reaches his goal. Torun explains that skilled migrants are not seeking financial assistance from government, only proper advice and help to find jobs appropriate to their skills, and thus enable them to contribute to the Australian economy.

Torun's experience demonstrates that skilled migrants require specialised advice to get the right training that will lead to the right job, though unfortunately the scope for such help seems to be very limited.

When qualifications are not utilised or recognised in the host country's labour market, this creates significant strain on migrants, as indicated by the interviews for this research. On the one hand, they cannot give up their degrees, but on the other hand they find it hard to get accustomed to lowly jobs, despite their having an adequate income. Non-recognition of qualifications significantly affects whether they settle into the new society. For example, Rahman, as mentioned earlier, used to be a senior official (head of office) in Bangladesh, while in Australia he had to work as a subordinate in various places. This made him feel ashamed. Rahman's age and the disregard of his qualifications were both likely explanations for his reduced employment status and lifestyle. Similarly, Torun's experience shows the impact non-recognition of

qualifications had on his settlement progress, notwithstanding, the fact that he had qualifications from a number of developed countries. Torun stresses,

> It's so disappointing that I couldn't utilise my degrees in Australia. It's just beyond my imagination. Spending years without employment is frustrating and devastating for the family.

Torun explains he was not aware that his educational qualifications, which had been approved by the Australian Immigration when granting him permanent residency, would not be accepted in the Australian labour market. He looks on this as a kind of deception. His story is reminiscent of Akram's (2012, p. 123) findings, where she demonstrates that a failure to build on academic success led to severe psychological disorder among South Asian Muslim migrants in Toronto.

Based on the above discussion, education can be regarded as a resource only when an educational qualification is recognised in the host society's labour market. So, as indicated in Gans' (2009) study, it may not always be appropriate to view education as an instrument of acculturation. This section now concentrates on another significant factor, 'frequent changes in migration policy and its consequence in the settlement of migrants', a topic we can only address by having regard to qualitative information.

Government migration policy and support services for immigrants: Interviews with participants revealed a belief that support services for immigrants to Australia are inadequate. This was especially the case in relation to support for jobseekers, and what is widely seen as misleading information spread by recruitment officers.

Torun's case study elaborates on the problem in great deal. As well as these points, a significant number of participants pointed to frequent changes in government policy as a source of distress and uncertainty. Onshore migrants made particular reference to this problem, since their plans and activities have been subjected to drastic alteration due to the frequent changes in migration policy. The force of this complaint may best be understood by listening to Rafiq's story.

Case study 5.4: The effect of frequent changes in skilled migration policy

Rafiq had a Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA) from Bangladesh. Yet he came to Australia to do his Master's in Accounting knowing that a degree in accounting would help get him permanent residency in Australia. Better still, the degree was related to his previous qualification. So he was confident that after graduating he would get a job commensurate with his qualifications. But, just as he was about to finish his course he came to know about a change of government policy that meant Accounting was no longer on the priority list for Permanent Residency (PR) applicants. This devastated him. To improve the chance of securing his PR, Rafiq switched from three courses to four. He did a Diploma in Business and then a course in hospitality management, but nothing worked out. Finally he enrolled in another course, and obtained a motor mechanic's certificate. With that he landed a job as a motor mechanic but had to move to a regional town on condition that his employer would sponsor him for PR. Being a university graduate, he was not happy working as a mechanic. Apart from that, he didn't take to life in the countryside. Nonetheless, he had to live there for the sake of obtaining his PR. Eventually, after five years of waiting, Rafiq and his family received their long-awaited PR. Quite apart from the waste of time and money, Rafiq looks back on those years a time full of uncertainty.

After obtaining their PR, Rafiq and his family moved back to the 'big smoke'. Rafiq reports that, even though he has more than one field of study, he hasn't yet found a job in any of them. In his words, "so many degrees, certificates, while all are useless". To feed the family he had to work hard, taking all manner of odd jobs, day and night. Rafiq lamented his plight in the following words: "I am, like, stranded in the middle of the sea; neither go forward, nor go back. I can't make happy anyone in the family, parents back home, wife – no one, no matter how hardly I have been trying." To bring in more money, his wife works part-time as a cleaner. But she is embarrassed to discuss her and her husband's work with friends, and especially with their parents in Bangladesh. Her lowly status has humiliated her and caused her to fear for her children's future, giving rise to depression and family conflict. Rafiq thinks that if the policy on PR had not changed, he could have become a permanent resident much earlier and have found a decent job. He tells himself his life would have been very different.

Rafiq's story shows that frequent changes in immigration policy are likely to leave migrants feeling they've been misguided and this can result in unexpected misery. Rafiq's story is not an isolated event. This study has discovered a number of Bangladeshi migrants who went through more or less similar experiences to Rafiq's.

Some interviewees who applied for permanent residency visas as onshore applicants also highlighted the slow and lengthy visa processing system of the Australian immigration department. When they applied for permanent visas they fulfilled the requirements for the skilled bridging visa. However, some of the interviewees had to wait for two to four years to obtain the bridging visas. During that period they did not have access to Medicare and had to pay tuition in public schools for their children. That period was full of uncertainty and stress for them. The decision on permanent visas came back even later. Kabir (2015, p. 4) concludes that these practices of bridging and/or permanent visa processing may impede migrants' acculturation process.

Asad's statement is noteworthy in this regard. *Asad* says,

> For two years I didn't hear anything from the immigration department. I was granted a bridging visa after that but it took more than three years to obtain the much expected residency.

Asad further mentions that he could not find a job related to his educational qualification and previous work experience. He had to do different types of unscheduled manual jobs (e.g. cleaning in mall and hospitals) for the survival of his family. *Asad*'s comment explains the uncertainty and degree of frustration among the applicants who waited for long periods to get responses from the immigration department.

Asad considers himself fortunate in that he at least obtained permanent visa after waiting for three years. However, the interviewees mentioned a number of cases where applicants waited for three years (or more), but their applications for permanent residency were rejected; so they had to leave Australia instantly. Though the cohort of people who left Australia are not part of this thesis, this example is given here to highlight the consequences of slow and lengthy visa process.

Proficiency in English: As mentioned earlier, most Bangladeshi migrants and their spouses are highly educated. As a consequence of the legacy of British rule, the English

language is widely used in the educational institutions of the Indian sub-continent. [62] Bangladesh, which was also a part of British India, is no exception. English is on the curriculum in all Bangladeshi places of learning. More importantly, parents in urban areas stress to their children the value of learning English. Many parents enrol their children in English-medium schools, where all teaching and instruction is done solely in English. Many schools in the metropolitan areas (such as Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Sylhet) follow the British core curriculum. As our research respondents are largely well educated and hail from urban areas, most of them were familiar with English before they migrated.

As a result, the interviewees report that they did not find English language a significant barrier in integration in Australian society. Most of them can cope with everyday tasks, such as shopping, banking, and visiting the doctor. Even so, adapting to a different dominant language was not easy for some respondents. Some of the interviewees recounted that speaking English was quite a challenge in her early days. As *Sumona* recalled,

> I couldn't find out what the exact word would be when I was talking with a person outside of my own community. It was really frustrating, embarrassing as well.

Many interviewees echoed *Sumona*'s sentiments when she said, "Speaking English immediately after arrival is somewhat awkward and frustrating." A number of respondents point to the difficulty of understanding local accents and colloquialisms, with the ever-present potential of misunderstandings and misconceptions about members of the host society, and vice versa, arising. Still, the respondents gradually improved their skill in English, especially when it came to speaking.

Previous findings have shown that most Australians are aware of immigrants' limitations in regard to their facility with English; and are accustomed to showing their appreciation of those who try to speak the language. *Saidul* affirmed this, saying:

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[62] "Immigrants from former colonies of the UK and the US (e.g., Nigeria or India) are found to be more proficient in English than are immigrants from other (non-English-speaking) countries that were not UK or US colonies (e.g., Thailand or Algeria), other variables being the same" (Chiswick 2008, p. 10).

People are in general, polite and friendly, so it's not a big problem to carry on a conversation, even if I speak wrong English.

Saidul's statement shows that the supportive attitude of people from the host society plays a positive role in surmounting the challenge of speaking the language well. *Sumona*'s advice for improving English proficiency is to interact often, and make friends, with local people (discussed in Chapter Eight). Although most respondents observe that they did not face many obstacles in learning to speak the language adequately, they hastened to add that they could never acquire an Australian accent.

Host country attitudes: This study examines issues relating to the attitude of Australians towards Bangladeshi immigrants, as indicated by the interviewees. Although most participants admitted they had not encountered any kind of discrimination or racism at the hands of local people, a significant minority argued that racism was present in Australian society to a certain extent. Some respondents mentioned that they couldn't be definite on this score because sometimes they feel white people looked down on them because they didn't blend into the crowd. First of all, this section discusses the view of the majority, whose experience of attitudes in the host society has been nothing but favourable. For example, *Maloti* notes,

I don't see any discrimination in schools or workplace. Teachers are very friendly and cooperative. Further, the employers behave friendly with the junior workers, which is quite pleasant. Colleagues are cooperative in workplace, neighbours are also well behaved.

Likewise, *Mahmood* asserts

Australian people are generally friendly. You can even ask for help from unknown people; they are happy to help you with a smile. Australian customer service is very good as well.

Furthermore, *Shihab* maintains

All are equal by law and they actually mean it. There is no restriction to perform your own religion. Some of my friends told me that they got leave from the employers to say their prayer while they were working. So I don't see any problem to maintain own religious or cultural rituals here in Australia.

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Shihab also points out that institutions across Australia made similar allowance for religious observances, such as the performing of prayers, and in this respect he acknowledged the situation in this country as much better than in Bangladesh. In his opinion,

> Not all the universities in Bangladesh have separate prayer rooms for men and women, while most Australian universities ensure this opportunity for the Muslim staffs and students. Isn't this unbelievable?

All the above-mentioned observations go to show that respondents do not feel discriminated against. They are free to do their work as well as maintain their culture and religion. In their view, the host society shows immigrants a friendly face. More importantly, *Shihab*'s statement shows that the amenity and opportunity offered to the migrants coming from different faiths and ethnicities far exceed their expectations. Like *Shihab*, many Bangladeshi people have expressed their appreciation for the plentiful provision of prayer spaces in educational institutions and other venues across Australia, a matter of common knowledge to the community through its various gatherings.

This said, a significant minority holds the opposite opinion, that discrimination is a reality in Australian society. In their point of view, discrimination is often hidden and can show up unexpectedly. *Farhan* is emphatic:

> White people, especially the old people do not like migrants. Some old people look down at you as if you robbed their privileges.

Similarly, *Asif* observes

> Many local people show their displeasure when they are far behind in a long queue: in shops, banks, or Centrelink. I noticed several times – some older people whisper with anger as if migrants are snatching their rights.

Other participants in this study echoed *Farhan*'s and *Asif*'s feelings. So these utterances cannot be considered as isolated from the migrant experience. The observations just quoted reflect a perception that there are Australians who are convinced immigrants have usurped their rights and privileges. Significantly for our research inquiry, whether or not migrants are personally affected by such incidents, isolated events like these may

have a long-term impact on their ability to settle successfully Down Under. For example, *Nilufar* notes,

> A group of high-school students walked past laughing at me. One came close and reluctantly said – "You stink." I was just speechless: how a girl who is of my daughter's age could say these words to me! I was speechless, about to faint.

That incident haunts her, and has convinced her she does not belong in this society. *Nilufar* continues,

> Oh well … Yes, I am a citizen of Australia, but I cannot be an Australian in my lifetime.

Similarly, *Rana*'s experiences have persuaded him he will always be an outsider in this society. He explains that he has faced a number of incidents in shops, restaurants, and banks. According to him,

> I had been waiting in a long queue. When it was my turn to be served, the person at the counter did not seem to be happy anymore. I don't know why.

In the end, *Rana* concluded, he had faced many more positive experiences than unsettling ones. Yet the negative incidents stay with him, so much so that he says despite living here for two decades he does not feel a sense of belonging in Australia,.

The above observations are evidence that in different forms racism, discrimination and the like do exist in Australia. Indeed, the observations cited above resonate with common migrant experiences. Therefore, these statements do not necessarily establish that anyone has been subjected to racial hatred for being Bangladeshi. Findings further indicate that the existence of some racism and discrimination may be being assumed on the basis of a misconception. For example, *Chowdhury* discerns that

> We might feel we are discriminated while that may not be true. Because of cultural dissimilarity we misunderstand the people of host society.

Since values often differ across cultures, misunderstandings will occur. *Chowdhury* also referred to discrimination occurring in Bangladesh, based on a person's wealth, and concluded,

> Social discrimination is much [more] complex in Bangladesh compared with Australia. I prefer to say social equality is much more remarkable in Australian society. A vice-chancellor of university and a cleaner can have chat, buy groceries from the same shop or supermarket, or go to the same restaurant or coffee shop. You can't imagine this picture in Bangladesh.

However, this comparison may be somewhat irrelevant because it explains social discrimination without touching on discrimination towards immigrants. Yet these remarks have been taken into account since they, too, represent the voice of immigrants. The totality of these remarks shows that many Bangladeshi migrants consider Australia to be a fair country, one less discriminatory than their own country of origin. *Asad* points out,

> This is a country where all professions are valued. In Australia people can change their luck simply by cooking. A plumber can maintain a high standard of living. His children can attend good school. Bus driving, carpentering, farming, cleaning – no job is low in socio-economic context of Australia. Unfortunately in Bangladesh we treat those professions as lower-class jobs. We make a line or wall between higher-class and lower-class and they never come close. Paradoxically, their children may not [be] likely to receive proper schooling.

Asad's statement also highlights the social inequality based on socio-economic conditions existing in Bangladesh and he acknowledges the egalitarianism of Australian society. Research findings also suggest that migrants' faith and principles are often valued in Australian society. Since Australia welcomes diversity, migrants can easily maintain their own culture. To become a part of the Australian society no one has to disregard or abandon the heritage of his or her former homeland. This aspect was raised in a number of interviews. *Amina*'s story provides a case in point. *Amina* travelled to, and lived in, almost every continent before migrating to Australia where she now works as a general practitioner. She is pleased to declare:

> Australia is the best place to live in, not just because of its calm weather, but the welcoming attitude of local people. Host society people usually show generosity to the immigrants.

Amina emphasised that her colleagues were consistently friendly and cooperative, irrespective of whether they were Anglo-Celtic or of some other ethnicity. She does not feel shunned by them, even though she wears (moderate) Islamic outfits. And, she declares, she has never experienced racism or discrimination at any time in the 20 years she has lived in Australia. During her interview, *Amina* uttered '*Al-hamdulillah*'[63] several times, a token of her profound satisfaction with life in Australia. Furthermore, she often urges her friends and the other members of her extended family to follow her example and migrate to Australia. In *Amina*'s experience and view, this host society plays an affirmative role in the settlement of newcomers.

In the same way, another interview participant, *Torun*, who lived in a number of countries in Europe and in North America before settling in Australia, asserted that the Australian state was better than any other he had lived in. He singled out for praise Australia's social harmony, which he identified as a pillar of the welfare state. Similarly, *Neela* spoke of her aunt's experience in the UK. As she related it:

> My aunty lives in the UK for more than two decades. She says she faced racism, and discrimination in many ways: like turning out garbage bin on the front door, screaming out when passing through … Her children also complained about local people's attitude. While in Australia I haven't seen anything like that in the last 10 years.

Based on the quantitative and qualitative information collected, this thesis has found that for Bangladeshi migrants in Australia racism and discrimination, while extant, are not widespread.

Satisfaction with the life in Australia: Quantitative information provided above suggests that economic factors such as job satisfaction, income, economic status after migration, and type of occupation are all linked in to the satisfaction with life experienced by Bangladeshi migrants to Australia. As this research has shown, a sound economy sits alongside non-economic factors in determining whether respondents find life in Australia satisfying. The interviews have revealed much more clearly than the quantitative data that the comfort and convenience of living in Australia, lacking to a degree in Bangladesh, accounts to a large degree for participants' general satisfaction

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[63] Al-hamdulillah means 'All praise is due to Allah'. By uttering this word Muslims show their high appreciation for the mercy of Allah the Almighty.

with their lives. For example, Chapter Four reported that a majority of respondents pointed to socio-political unrest in Bangladesh as a primary reason for their decision to migrate. Coming to Australia literally enabled them to escape such problems. According to the respondents, Australia offers better opportunities, better health care, and above all a better life than does Bangladesh. According to *Mahmood*,

> Life in Australia is much more comfortable and convenient compared with the life back in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, when you go out of home to do certain things, you can't guarantee that you would be able to do them properly, and come back home safely in time. A number of uncertain events or incidents could destruct you and your plan. You might experience traffic congestions and/or road accident which might delay your move. Unexpected incidents like political demonstration and chaos could also make you stop or harm you. You even get killed, nobody knows. Apart from these, frequent power failure might not let you to have the proper service in due time. On the other hand, here in Australia there is not much hassle in everyday life.

Mahmood's statement encapsulates the whole issue and has been echoed by the majority of respondents. To sum up, then, the findings of this research project indicate that, even though the qualifications of half the survey respondents were not recognised, and a significant number of participants are not working in their preferred occupation, they are satisfied with their life in Australia. Another important finding is that women are, in general, more satisfied than men with their lives after migration. [64]

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the effect of pre- and post-migration factors on the settlement of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia. This chapter has found that labour market participation for those migrants is higher than the Australian national average for a similar age group (20-74 years). Yet a career in decline, as compared with a migrant's former employment status, is not uncommon. This can be attributed to a large extent to the non-recognition of pre-migration educational qualifications. Also, the respondent's age may be responsible to some extent in that those who migrate at an older age find it

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[64] This issue is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Eight.

hard to integrate into the labour market. Evidence also exists that older migrants may experience problems in acculturating to Australian society.

Nonetheless, the majority of the respondents are satisfied with their jobs, and believe migration has lifted their economic status. Similarly, most respondents think they did the right thing by migrating and that they fit in much better with Australian society now than they did in the immediate aftermath of coming to this country. The majority also expressed their overall satisfaction with life in Australia.

This chapter has identified significant links between labour market status and a number of pre- and post migration characteristics belonging to migrants from Bangladesh, namely: educational qualifications, the category of their first Australian visa, their field of study, pre-migration labour market experience and occupation, and pre- and post-migration proficiency in the English language. But not all these factors offer a guarantee of job satisfaction. The facilitators of job satisfaction for Bangladeshi migrants that have been identified in the course of this research include higher education qualifications, proficiency in English, occupational status, and engagement in an occupation related to their skill or training. It is also evident that racial discrimination in the workplace impinges on job satisfaction.

As regards Bangladeshi migrants' satisfaction with how their life in Australia has turned out, economic factors and a good grasp of English seem to be important. Perceived racial discrimination and racist conduct or speech do not seem to pose significant obstacles to overall satisfaction with life. Among other barriers to successful settlement, respondents have pointed to the inadequacy of government help in finding suitable employment, and frequent changes to skilled migration policies. Overall, quantitative and qualitative information provided in this chapter offers important insights into the factors that facilitate, and the barriers that prevent the successful settlement of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia.

CHAPTER SIX: ACCULTURATION OF BANGLADESHI MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA - THE ROLE OF BONDING CAPITAL

Introduction

Migrants' bond with their ethnic community and home country is a form of social capital, and has an important bearing on their settlement and acculturation in a host country. Keeley (2007) notes that bonding capital provides emotional, social, and economic support to migrants. It is also argued that without bonding capital or a shared sense of identity with the ethnic community, migrants are likely to be socially isolated (Berry 1997). This chapter discusses the acculturation of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia with a special focus on their bonding capital. In particular, the nature of relationships within the Bangladeshi community in Australia will be examined. To reveal the degree of connection with friends and families left behind in Bangladesh or other countries, the nature of home country contacts and the sending of remittances are also incorporated. These topics are followed by discussion of how energetically Bangladeshi migrants set about maintaining their cultural heritage. Finally, the chapter concludes by gauging Bangladeshi migrants' success in acculturating to Australian society from the viewpoint of bonding capital.

Bonding of respondents with the ethnic community

Engagement with the ethnic community is an important way of measuring the extent to which bonding has taken place. Therefore, respondents were asked to report how frequently they participated in community events such as family gatherings, birthday parties, and cultural or religious program. Their responses are featured in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Engagement of respondents with the Bangladeshi community

	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
More than once a week	12.0	10.0	16.0
Once a week	22.0	21.0	24.0
2 or 3 times a month	33.0	30.0	36.0
Once a month	21.0	25.0	15.0
Once every few months	12.0	14.0	9.0
Never	-	-	-
N	195	114	81

The table demonstrates that Bangladeshi people maintain a harmonious relationship with the ethnic community. For example, 34% of respondents report that they take part in community events once a week or more. Another 54% attend community events two to three times or once a month. Taking these percentages together, it is manifest that 88% of respondents participate in Bangladeshi community events at least once a month. No one reported being completely detached from the community. The table shows that women's participation in ethnic community events is somewhat greater than men's. For example, while 31% of men report taking part in Bangladeshi community events at least once a week, corresponding proportion for women is 41%. About 60% of males and 76% of females participate in community programs at least twice or three times a month. The table thus indicates that for Bangladeshi migrants – both men and women – community engagement is quite significant.

The respondents were also invited to reveal how comfortable they were when it came to asking for assistance from their ethnic community. This further demonstrates how close or 'emotionally attached' they are with the community. Table 6.2 shows respondents' attitude on this measure.

Table 6.2: Ease of respondents in seeking assistance from own community

	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Always feel comfortable	50.1	46.9	54.4
Sometimes feel uncomfortable	26.9	30.1	22.8
Often feel uncomfortable	7.5	5.3	8.9
Frequently feel uncomfortable	3.0	3.5	2.5
Never ask for assistance	12.5	14.2	11.4
N	192	113	79

As seen above, half the respondents maintain that they always feel comfortable in asking for assistance from their ethnic community whenever they need it, while 27% state that they sometimes feel uncomfortable about doing so. Only 23% claim they feel; very uncomfortable about asking or never request help. So the table indicates that few respondents are emotionally unattached to the ethnic community. Furthermore, the ease they claim in seeking assistance does not differ significantly by gender, as can also be seen from the table. The quantitative information provided above conclusively shows that Bangladeshi migrants maintain a strong bond with their ethnic community.

The study now resorts to qualitative information obtained through interviews to provide detailed accounts of the exactly how respondents engage with the ethnic community. The respondents in this study asserted that they were closely attached to the community. They often get together. Most of the interviewees meet their compatriots several times a week, and attend community gatherings fortnightly or more often. Birthday parties are the most common such occasions. Children's birthdays, especially, are celebrated with great enjoyment, often with 50 or more people attending. Indeed, gatherings take place all the year round. These gatherings are happy occasions, offering those who attend them a sense of strength and pride. A number of interviewees indicated that without such events their life in this new land would have been dull. *Sumon* put it this way:

> We always look forward to party, community gatherings. If there is no phone call for invitation for two alternate weeks, my wife and I think something must be wrong. Why no *dawat* [65] for two weeks? It's unusual!

The above statement shows how eagerly Bangladeshi immigrants long to socialise. Since everyone is busy with life and work, these events are their only chance to see each other and share their feelings. Apart from birthday parties, Eid reunions and Bengali New Year are widely observed, our interviews revealed. These festivities are usually arranged communally. The responsibility for food preparation is distributed among the community members, and these events are often held in neighbourhood parks instead of someone's house.

Although the bonds linking members of the Bangladeshi immigrant community are very strong, they are also likely to be constrained by certain factors, a finding of this thesis that supports a view expressed by Claridge (2004) Sub-groups based on kinship, occupational status and social class, our findings suggest, evoke a stronger attachment among their members than does the broader community. Members of these groupings often get together, share feelings, trust and support each other. People from dissimilar groups (such as high-status people attending lower-status gatherings or vice versa) are unlikely to mix outside their own "set". *Sumona* illustrates the point:

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[65] *Dawat* is the invitation to a party

Once I had been to a party, where I was different from others. I noticed rest of them were from higher class, like they had white-collar jobs unlike me. I was feeling a bit excluded, since they didn't seem much comfortable with me. After that I decided I wouldn't attend any party like that.

Sumona's statement supports *Rahim*'s (1988, p. 66) assertion that class distinctions exist in Bangladeshi society based on wealth and political influence. Interestingly, some of the interviewees reported that they occasionally concealed their link to sub-groups from people in the broader community for fear other people might be ostracised. Beyond that, they feared, knowledge of such links might breed distrust and misunderstanding among community members. These findings support those of Claridge (2004) and Lancee (2010). Lancee observes that, although people sharing a similar social identity could be expected to support each other, such support was likely to be limited to those recognised as insiders. This is considered a weakness of social capital (Hagan 1998).

Interviews elicited the suggestion that residents of regional Australia had greater community involvement than those living in the big cities. One of the interviewees, *Shamim*, who used to live in a big city but later moved to a country town, lent his support to the notion:

Back in Sydney, I didn't see that much attachment among the Bangladeshi people, because there are hundreds of them. When you hear someone passes you speaks Bengali, you won't be interested to talk with them. However, here (in Rockhampton) we know all the Bangladeshi families. If I see someone speaks Bangla but I don't know them, I must go and talk to the new person.

Shamim also mentioned that whenever he or any member of the community learnt that a new Bangladeshi had arrived in the locality they introduce that person to other community members and stepped forward to offer any help that might be needed. Similarly, *Rafiq*, who used to live in country town of Horsham in western Victoria but later moved to the city of Melbourne, observed that all the Bangladeshis in Horsham lived like a family. It was very painful to leave the town, yet he had to because of his work, *Rafiq* recalled:

My wife and I were sad to leave Horsham, but we had to. Still we try to visit the friends in there, who were more like family to us. I consider that place as my home town in Australia.

Rafiq's comment shows the intense attachment that characterises ethnic communities in regional towns, a social fact not seen in the big cities. Also, rural-dwelling Bangladeshi migrants are likely to take part in mainstream activities, contrary to the ways of their city cousins. This could be due to the lack of fellow Bangladeshis in certain country towns such as Koo Wee Rup, Bendigo, and Shepparton, all in Victoria.

Respondents' ties to their homeland

Migrants' bonding capital can also be measured through the prism of attachment to their home country (Ryan 2004; Amlani 2010). Our research suggests that almost all the respondents retain an emotional connection with their homeland. They frequently stay in touch with those back home, and undertake regular return trips there.

Staying in touch with home: Table 6.3 delineates the manners and frequency of home country contact by Bangladeshi migrants in Australia.

Table 6.3: Staying in touch with home

	Frequency	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Facebook	Daily	51.6	45.8	55.8
	Every few days	22.1	19.3	25.9
	Weekly	7.9	14.7	2.2
	Monthly	-	-	-
	Occasionally	-	-	-
	Never	18.4	20.2	16.1
Video Chat	Daily	9.1	4.7	15.0
	Every few days	24.1	20.6	28.8
	Weekly	24.1	28.9	17.5
	Monthly	12.3	15.9	7.5
	Occasionally	15.5	14.0	17.5
	Never	14.9	15.9	13.7
Telephone	Daily	18.5	11.4	28.4
	Every few days	40.0	35.1	46.9
	Weekly	32.3	39.5	22.2
	Monthly	8.7	13.2	2.5
	Occasionally	0.5	0.9	-
	Never	-	-	-
E-mail	Daily	-	-	-
	Every few days	12.8	14.9	9.9
	Weekly	18.5	21.1	14.8
	Monthly	9.7	14.0	3.7
	Occasionally	27.2	31.6	20.9
	Never	31.8	18.4	50.6
	N	196	114	82

Respondents were asked to report how often they communicated with relatives of friends via Facebook, Skype (categorised as video chat in Table 6.3), telephone or e-mail. The table shows that Facebook is quite popular among respondents, with more than half (52%) using the social media outlet daily to contact family and friends. Another 22% use Facebook for the same purpose every few days and 8% access it weekly. Taken together, 82% of respondents stayed in touch with people back home using Facebook at least once a week. Among this cohort, 65% of men and 82% of women reported using Facebook daily or every few days. From this we observe that female respondents lead men in their use of Facebook to stay in touch with people back in Bangladesh. Approximately 18% of all respondents, presumably older folks who are not at ease with modern technology, report not using Facebook. More men (20%) than women (16%) fell into this group. Skype, and similar video-chat technology, is considerably less popular than Facebook as a medium for communicating with friends and relatives in the People's Republic. Nonetheless, 58% of respondents did report that they spoke with family and friends back in Bangladesh via video chat. Again, use of this technology is higher among women respondents.

Phoning appears to be respondents' favourite way of touching base with home. According to the table, 91% of respondents phone family or friends at least once a week. In fact, every respondent reported using the phone to stay in touch. Almost all the women (98%) use the phone for this reason at least once a week whereas 86% of men do so. E-mail is not widely used, and no one writes letters to family members anymore, since they are in such frequent contact by phone and in other ways.

Overall, respondents have taken great advantage of information technology to maintain contact with people back in Bangladesh. The frequency with which they do so is also very significant. It is equally clear that women are more diligent in this regard than men. These findings resemble those reported by Siar (2014) who found that Filipino skilled migrants living in Australia and New Zealand kept up strong ties with their home country.

Our interviewees similarly indicated that they were in frequent contact with family and friends in Bangladesh and could do so because the massive development in information technology which has made global communication easy and inexpensive these days. As

a consequence, migrants have now substantially 'shrunk' the geographical distance between their home and host countries. For this reason, they no longer feel far from home. *Aporna* speaks for many in saying,

> I never go offline from Skype. Whenever I come home from work I start talking with my mum, talk about everything I have done all day long, while cooking dinner. Sometimes my brothers from the UK and sister from Canada join. Then we do Skype conference. Friends from the USA or Malaysia often give call whenever they see me online. So I don't feel detached from family and friends.

Similar opinions were voiced by *Tomal*, who first came to Australia on his own. He points out that he never cooked while he lived in Bangladesh. Now, after he logs into Skype, his mother teaches him how to cook. He talks with his mother at least once a day. In his opinion, if he could not contact his mother so often he would have spent all his money in restaurants. Furthermore, another interviewee recalled watching her sister's wedding through Skype. In her opinion, that counts as 'visual attendance!' On a sadder note, another interviewee witnessed his father's funeral on Skype. According to him, after watching the funeral rites his children started to feel a sense of their identity and ancestry.

However, the above findings may not be true for those who migrated before the 1990s. The internet was not available then. The telephone was their only handy way to maintain contact with home. But the call rate was much higher than it is today. They used to write letters but, needless to say, exchanging news and information through letters was time-consuming. Migrants were not kept up to date about family matters and, as a result, felt isolated during their early days in Australia. One of the elderly interviewees, *Mrs Islam,* who has been living in Australia for about 25 years, notes,

> Months passed, we didn't hear from home in the early days. We could have telephoned, but my parents did not have a phone in the home at that time. In case of emergency we called on to neighbour's house, though that was not convenient at all. We used to write letters that took months to get there. Some letters were even lost. We didn't get them ever. You can't imagine how awful those days were.

Mrs Islam's statement sums up the situation prior to the 1990s, showing how helpless migrants were in those times. Unable to hear from their dearest ones for months, they often grew lonely and depressed. Women were generally more likely than men to be vulnerable since fewer women were engaged in the workforce than is the case now. A similar observation was made in Ahmed's (2005) study, conducted on Bangladeshi women living in England in the 1970s.

This thesis also observes that, even though the internet is available now, elderly people, especially older women, are less likely to make use of it. They mostly depend on phone conversations to keep in touch with loved ones. Another significant finding from this research is that migrants who have been living in Australia for more than two decades may not feel the need for frequent contact with their old homeland. For example, a number of interview participants reported that their immediate and extended families were not living in Bangladesh. Some have settled in Australia, others in Europe or North America. They catch up with them every now and then, thanks to the revolutionary advances in information technology. These respondents say that, without relatives still living in Bangladesh, they have no one there to contact. In addition, elderly migrants often mention that their close relatives are no longer alive. So bonds with Bangladesh weaken as time passes. *Mrs Khan:*

> My parents passed away long time ago. They were followed by most of the siblings. Currently I have only sister alive who is also sick, about to leave. We can't often talk since she spends most of the time at hospital or under medical care. Her children keep me updated about her health. But I know it [the last communication with home] would stop as soon as my sister closes her eyes.

Evidently, after her sister passes away, Mrs Khan may join the ranks of those who no longer have a point of contact back in Bangladesh. *Mrs Khan*'s remarks serve as a reminder that, while living links fade with age, contact with home is very significant for relatively new and younger migrants. After two decades of living abroad, people's zeal for contacting or visiting their home country tends to fade, especially if immediate family members now live close by or those who are dearest to the expatriate have passed away back in the home country.

The trip home: Most of the interviewees visit Bangladesh at least every two years. In spite of the long tiring flights that this entails, and the high cost of travel, they try to keep these visits home routine. It is very significant for them to see members of their immediate family who have been left behind. Besides this, home trips have another purpose: homecoming adults hope to foster a sense of kinship and family bonds between their children and members of the extended family living in Bangladesh. Immigrant parents also want their children to be familiar with their traditional culture and values.

Tarana explains why going home is so important to her. Her husband works in a well-paid job. The couple have bought a big brand new modern house which is well appointed and beautifully furnished. Her parents and family members visit Australia in alternate years. Yet she always looks forward to her next trip to Bangladesh:

> Australia is like my *shashur bari* (in-laws' house). You know what a Bangladeshi woman usually does after marriage. They travel back and forth from in-law's home to parent's home. Even though your in-laws' house is much bigger and more precious, and your parents' house is small and dark, you cannot stop going your *baper bari* (father's house).

Like *Tarana*, the majority of respondents said how keen they were to visit their homeland. Although living in Australia they can still enjoy their traditional food, festivals, music and movies (as discussed further below), and generally live a contented life, deep inside, they admit, they yearn (the literal term they often use is that their 'hearts bleed') to meet those who are among the dearest in all the world, and to visit the places where they were born and brought up. They cannot stop thinking about laying eyes on their homeland once more, despite ongoing political and social unrest in Bangladesh, identified by most of them as the reason they migrated in the first place (see, Chapter Four). This finding echoes Cherti (2008) who observes that Moroccan immigrants living in London visit their home country every year and that doing so sustains and revives their sense of connection with home.

Yet not all trips home end well. A number of interviewees vented their displeasure about changing relationships within their extended family in Bangladesh. According to them the long-awaited home journey often reveals that a gulf has opened up between

parents, siblings, relatives and friends, and they only discover this while on Bangladeshi soil. Relatives living in Bangladesh are likely to display a negative attitude towards expatriates, as if they were opportunists, traitors, or escapees. These behavioural changes in family and friends are painful for the pilgrim to the family hearth, as a number of participants made clear. *Aman* was one of them:

> Whenever I visit home I discover a huge difference. Infrastructural changes are quite normal and expected. But it's so much painful to see the way people are changing, so is their behaviour. The most hurting thing is that you are not missed anymore. Yes, they are happy to have gifts, and that's all. Even your own siblings, very best friends could behave like this. They believe you do not belong there anymore. You will be surprised to see yourself as a 'guest' in your very own family.

The above conversations clearly demonstrate that relatives living in Bangladesh may treat emigrants as opportunists, who have left home and those who were dearest to them in pursuit of a better life. *Aman*'s lament was echoed by a number of participants and brought to mind a very common proverb: 'Out of sight, out of mind'. So, it is fair to conclude, that much anticipated trip home may not always turn out to be a pleasure trip: for many emigrants, it turns into heartbreak.

Sending of Remittances: Sending remittances to the home country is closely linked with migrants' bonding capital since it affirms the depth of one's economic, as well as, emotional attachment to the country of origin (Stark & Dorn 2013, p. 2). However, as far as long-term skilled migrants are concerned, ties in the form of sending remittances appear to be weak, which is attributable to the fact that long-term skilled migrants are accompanied by their family and generally come from better socio-economic backgrounds (see Siar 2014 and references therein). This argument is also supported by Faini (2007) who finds that skilled migrants have a smaller propensity to remit. This seems to be the case with Bangladeshi migrants in Australia as well.

Table 6.4 shows how frequently respondents send remittances back to Bangladesh. The table shows that only 8% of the respondents send money 'home' every month and another 15% remit money every few months. More than half (58%) remit sums once a year or even more occasionally. About 19% of the respondents do not send money at

all. This low frequency of remitting is the same as observed by Faini (2007) but contradicts the behaviour of skilled Filipino migrants in Australia (and New Zealand) who demonstrate strong ties with their home country by the sending of remittances (Siar 2014).

Table 6.4: Frequency of remitting money to Bangladesh

How often do you send money?	Total (%)
Monthly	7.5
Every few months	15.4
Yearly	22.6
Occasionally	35.7
Never	18.8
N	196

The infrequency of remittances can be explained by the theoretical arguments mentioned above. That is, most Bangladeshi migrants to Australia come from a relatively wealthy segment of society. This, coupled with the fact that migrants are living in Australia along with their family, may explain why they have no obligation, as such, to send money back home. Similar remittance-sending patterns of behaviour have been noted among skilled Bangladeshi migrants living in Canada (Mohsin 2011; Farid et al. 2009; Buchenau 2008). Yet this sharply contradicts the remittance-sending conduct of temporary and unskilled migrants in the Middle East and East Asia, and even in the UK and the USA, who have a very high propensity to remit (Siddiqui 2003).

Interviewees' responses reveal the types and occasions of remittance sent by the Bangladeshis. Those who remit money regularly are likely to be doing so in order to pay instalments on a housing, land or property investment in Bangladesh. Only a small number of interviewees reveal that they regularly remit money to support their parents or other family members.

But a majority of the interviewees assert that they do not send remittance regularly, even though they send their *Zakat*[66] as succour for impoverished relatives. They also occasionally send gifts to their friends and family.

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[66] *Zakat* is an obligatory annual payment incumbent on Muslims who have accumulated wealth above a threshold level. Those who are liable to pay *zakat* must pay a certain portion of their accumulated wealth to the poor, who must be the beneficiary of the *zakat* payment. Ideally, *zakat* may be paid to any poor Muslim but one is encouraged to pay it to poor relatives or friends. This may be why the Bangladeshi-

A number of interviewees also mentioned that they tried to contribute to the upkeep of family living in Bangladesh in the event of an emergency or some exceptionally heavy expense. For example, many do their best to bear a good part of the costs associated with a wedding in the family. *Asif* elaborates:

> I don't send money to my parents regularly, because my father is still working, he can bear the cost of living on his own. But I provided more than half the expenditure of my sister's wedding.

The money he gave his family was extremely supportive for them. *Asif* went on to explain that he could not have afforded to make this gesture if he had lived and worked in Bangladesh.

Research findings also include the fact that, when someone in the family is sick or faces some other problem arising from an accident or any other tragic event, an expatriate family member is likely to come to the victim's aid. Their offer is likely to be directed to remedying the urgent situation in question, a few of the respondents asserted. These findings accord with those commonly reported in reference to Bangladeshi skilled migrants in the West (Ahmad 2011; Mohsin 2011; Siddiqui 2004). For example, in her study on Bangladeshi migrants living in the UK and the USA, Siddiqui (2004) asserts that it is standard practice for most Bangladeshi immigrants in the West to send contributions to Bangladesh earmarked for religious purposes (*zakat*).

Apart from these acts of generosity, a few respondents in this research have informed that they donate to various social organisations in Bangladesh. Their donation is specially designated for the education of poor children, and for medical care to be given to elders.

In this regard the contribution made by Dr *Amina* and her husband is remarkable. They set up a number of temporary hospitals in their home town and now offer free health checks to people during their trips home, at least once a year. They also operate a number of surgeries free of charge. Like *Amina* and her husband, some interviewees also told us they have emergency funds which are sent to Bangladesh whenever a natural disaster strikes. A similar pattern was revealed in Smith's (2006) study, where

born living in Australia send their *zakat* back to Bangladesh. Whatever the truth, the persistence of *zakat* payment confirms the strong bonds between these Muslim migrants and their former compatriots.

Smith describes a trip undertaken by Mexican immigrants living in Brooklyn to help out with a project for installing new water pipes in the municipal water system of their home town. By and large, the way Bangladeshi migrants in Australia give back to their home country is remarkable, and it stands as evidence of the strong bond they have with their homeland.

Assistance from the ethnic community

Assistance from the ethnic community is a significant factor in facilitating the settlement and acculturation of migrants in a host country (Hagan 1998). This is particularly true of help received during the early period of settlement. The reason is that when migrants arrive in a new country they encounter an unfamiliar environment. To cope in this new environment they require help in various forms, that is, to find accommodation, open a bank account, find a job or simply meet people. The help thus received on arrival can significantly affect their settlement and acculturation in the host society (Fletcher 1999; Henderson 2004).

Information provided in the previous sections showed that Bangladeshi migrants maintain strong ties with their ethnic community and home country. This section investigates how that strong bond fosters Bangladeshi migrants' settlement by focusing on the help received from the ethnic community.

The initial focus will be on the help received by respondents during the early days of their settlement in Australia. The respondents were asked whether they received any assistance on arrival and, if so, what type(s) and who rendered the assistance. They were also asked whether they were satisfied with the help they had received. Their responses are presented in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5: Help received by respondents on arrival

	Total (%)
Received help on arrival	
Yes	87.1
No	12.9
Types of Help	
Housing-related	66.3
To interact with the Government	14.6
To find work	47.4
To meet people	64.3
To learn English	9.1
Other	8.1
Sources of help	
Friends and relatives	77.0
Own community	37.4
Government (State/Federal)	19.2
Others	-
N	181

Note: Respondents received help in a variety of ways and from multiple sources.

The table shows that about 87% of respondents received at least one form of assistance. Two-thirds (66%) report having received housing-related assistance early in the settlement period. This involved sharing accommodation with another family, staying briefly with a relative or friend, or obtaining help to rent temporary accommodation. This help was particularly important for those who obtained their permanent residency offshore or arrived in Australia for the first time. Almost the same proportion of respondents (64%) received help in meeting people from their own or other communities. Nearly half (47%) report that they received help to find work.

As to the source of help, 77% of respondents noted that they received the assistance from either friends or relatives, or both, and 37% from the Bangladeshi community. Together, these reflect the important role of bonding capital during Bangladeshi migrants' initial settlement period. By way of comparison, only 19% reported that they had received help from either the Federal or their State Government.

Participants in the study were also asked about the degree of satisfaction with what help they had received. Table 6.6 shows that nearly 51% of respondents were highly satisfied or satisfied with the level of support, while another 41% were fairly satisfied and the remaining 8% not satisfied. The vast majority of respondents (90%) who received help from friends and relatives were either satisfied or very satisfied with it. A much smaller cohort of respondents (48%) expressed satisfaction with help received from the broader

Bangladeshi community. On the other hand, only 32% of respondents expressed their satisfaction with the help they received from either the Federal Government or their State Government. These findings point to the importance of bonding with family and friends, and relative weakness any tie to government assistance early in the settlement process.

Table 6.6: Satisfaction with help received

	Total (%)
Very satisfied	20.2
Satisfied	30.5
Fairly satisfied	40.8
Not satisfied	8.5
Not satisfied at all	-
N	152

The qualitative interviews provide additional insights into the nature of assistance during the early days of settlement. According to those interviews most of the respondents received help on arrival from relatives or friends who had arrived in Australia earlier and been living here ever since. Some respondents received help from both these sources. About half of the interview participants mentioned that they had friends or family waiting for them as soon as they came out of the airport. They all described this as a 'great feeling' after their long and tiring flight. *Laila* recalled how

> I was relieved to see my husband's friend waiting for us at the airport. He drove us to his place, his wife made us dinner, and bed for the night. They showed us utmost hospitality until we found a place to move in. I have been so pleased and grateful for their generosity. I can never pay them back.

Similarly, *Rafiq* told of how

> My brother-in-law helped me a lot when I first arrived in Australia. His family and my family shared a house for about a year, which was very convenient initially. He showed me how to get a phone, buy a car, buy cheap furniture, look for work, this sort of things. Without his help my early days would have been awful.

Farida also thrived on the kindness of friends and strangers:

When we first arrived in Australia, we knew a few friends, though they were not living close by. Soon we became familiar with a Bangladeshi family living in the neighbourhood. Through their network we got to know more ethnic people. After that I realised how significant that help was.

Laila's, *Rafiq*'s and *Farida*'s comments demonstrate that help on arrival plays a very significant part in migrant acculturation. Further, it is presumed that migrants who have friends and relatives in their host country will likely acculturate more successfully than those without friends or relatives. *Aman* was among the latter:

I didn't have any friends or relatives when I first came to Australia. I first arrived as a student. My institute arranged a taxi for me, and the taxi driver was the one who received me at the airport. That taxi dropped me at my destination, student accommodation arranged by the institute. I was feeling like I was blind and helpless. I didn't know where to buy food, and I slept first night with an empty stomach. Next morning I had to find out everything by myself ... food, admission, calling card … You can't imagine how terrible those days were when I couldn't even speak English properly.

It stands to reason that, if *Aman* had someone he knew to meet him on arrival, his initial days would have been better than what he went through. On the other hand, a few respondents had bitter experiences to relate of 'the help' they received from friends or family members when they arrived in Australia. For example, *Sumon* explained that his brother's friends, who were all single and sharing an apartment, picked him up from the airport. They allowed him to stay with them but did not seem to be very supportive. They did not offer him any food for dinner. On the contrary, he had to cook his own food on his very first day in the country and, worse still, he had to cook for his brother's friends as well. He was offered a small couch to sleep on. His 'helpers' did not explain anything to him about his new country – what to do or how to do it. They treated him as if he were their servant. *Sumon* remembers them as the worst days of his life:

I couldn't say anything about them to my brother, because he said his friends were very good. More importantly, I took the decision to come to Australia on my own, even though my family disagreed. So I had to face all these

humiliation. Soon I made some friends, found another accommodation and managed to get rid of those people.

Sumon's remarks remind us that 'help' for new arrivals are not always as helpful as it's assumed to be; instead it can be worse for them than no help at all. *Rani*'s experience was not unlike *Sumon*'s. Not long after her arrivals, she was living in a shared house with another Bangladeshi migrant family. In her opinion, living in a shared house is a discomforting experience but, since she was living with a family who shared the same culture and religion, she expected the family would be understanding and supportive. But in reality it was nothing like that. After a confrontation with them, she had to move. Her bitter experience was mirrored by those of other friends of hers who had also been living in shared accommodation. Most of them complained about the mean-spiritedness of their 'sharers'. Interestingly, they found sharing house with people other than their own ethnic group often worked out better. This could be due to the difference between expectations and realities in any relationship, a kind of complexity inherent in many social relationships, but such conjecture is beyond the range of issues considered in this thesis.

By way of contrast, *Shamim* and his family's experiences were much better than *Sumon*'s and *Rani*'s even though they were not greeted on arrival by anyone familiar to them. *Shamim* notes that,

No friends or relatives were there for us when we arrived. We hired a taxi and got to the pre-arranged place. Yes, we felt lonely, but we managed everything on our own.

Shamim's background and pre-arrival characteristics attain a certain significance in this regard. More importantly, he moved to Australia from New Zealand, which allowed him to prepare himself for his permanent move. Further, he was in an advantageous position because of his previous affluence. It is also noteworthy that *Shamim* was accompanied by his family: so he was not as lonely as *Sumon*.

It turns out that help received by the respondents is not confined to early settlement periods only. Rather, it often extends to later settlement phases. In this connection, help with child-care from the ethnic community is particularly valuable. This is especially true for working couples. *Rana* explains,

Since my wife and I both are working we get anxious before school holiday, when children remain at home for two weeks. Occasional cares are expensive for us to bear. Luckily, we have got a number of *vabi*[67] close by to whom we could leave our children alternatively.

Rana's comment shows that the assistance he receives from the Bangladeshi *vabis* in the neighbourhood is instrumental. A number of respondents praised this particular form of assistance as a 'life saver'.

Shovon was also keen to acknowledge the assistance he received in looking for work. After joining in social gatherings, he made new Bangladeshi friends, who had been very helpful for him in his job search. This thesis also notes that many Bangladeshi migrants got jobs through ethnic networks; once someone has been working previously with a particular employer his fellow Bangladeshis often recommend that person, and the employer, is likely to recruit them. For example, *Sumon* affirms,

Upon *Rafiq vai*'s [68] reference I had been employed in my current job. I am very grateful to him, because I was unemployed for a couple of months after I lost the previous work.

Sumon's comment shows how significant a reference is in gaining employment. In order to convince employers, ethnic employees often introduce a new applicant as their brother or sister, despite the fact that they are not blood relations. This finding resembles those reported by Cherti (2008). One of the respondents in Cherti's research shares her experience, saying she often brought new girls to her employer and introduced them as her sisters. One day the employer asked how many sisters she had. So it can be seen that people from a foreign ethnicity are likely to assist each other in their host country, and so it goes with Bangladeshi migrants in Australia.

Another important finding about assistance from the community is the differing nature of that assistance as between city and country areas. Since, as we have seen, involvement of ethnic community members much stronger in rural areas than in the big

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[67] *Vabi* means brother's wife. Bangladeshi people address their fellow nationals with a kinship name; *vabi* is the most common kinship title for married women.

[68] *Vai* stands for brother. Even if they are not blood relations, Bangladeshi people call each other *Vai* as a sign of the strong bonds that can exist within their community.

cities, the quality and quantity of ethnic community assistance are likely to be superior in the 'bush'.

Despite all the valuable help mentioned above, a smaller cohort, reporting both in the surveys and in the interviews, voiced dissatisfaction with assistance levels from the ethnic community. For example, *Bonna* says she and her family received no help of any kind from their fellows. They had to go through a long and stressful period. Worst of all, in her opinion, was that certain people they knew from her husband's previous workplace back in Bangladesh acted as if they never met before. Instead of helping her husband find a job, some of them advised him to seek work as a cleaner or taxi driver. *Bonna* recounted why this was so difficult to cope with:

> Back in Bangladesh those men worked as my husband's subordinate, he was the boss of them. While now they are behaving as if they are superior to him, just because they came earlier, and got good jobs. It's so painful!

She continued,

> I would say, local people are much friendlier and cooperative than our ethnic people. Local people talk to you, smile to you, even though they don't know you. But many of us try to pretend as if we don't know the ethnic people.

Bonna's remarks do not disguise her disappointment with some of her fellow Bangladeshis. Other respondents also pointed out their unease when it came to asking for help from their ethnic community.

Based on the above discussion, it can be inferred that assistance among the Bangladeshi ethnic community in Australia is largely based on personal relationships. This finding overlaps with those of Iosifides et al. (2007, p. 1347), where the nature of family and kinship networks is revealed as the most important factor in the incorporation of Albanian immigrants into Greek society compared with other forms of social capital.

It should also be mentioned that Bangladeshis in Australia have set up a number of online forums. One of them, Bangladeshi expatriates in Melbourne, can be found on the Expat Blog platform; another is *Porobasi Mon* (Migrant Soul); and a third is *Priyo Australia*. These forums claim that they exist to put Bangladeshis in Australia in touch with one another and to inform them of cultural events and settlement-related services

such as accommodation, child-care and Bangladeshi foodstuffs. But the interviewees for this study reported that they were either not aware of these forums or criticised them as inadequate. Many of the respondents emphasised that these online forums' focus was mostly on cultural events, rather than settlement issues.

Besides the forums, there are a number of Bangladeshi professional organisations in existence, such as the Bangladesh Medical Society of NSW, Bangladeshi Architects in Australia (BAA), and Bangladeshi Doctors Forum Victoria. These organisations are membership-based and assist members in their professional development and with settlement support. However, all these outfits are small, and with limited membership confine their services to members only.

Cultural maintenance

The literature shows that the success of immigrant acculturation depends on a combination of forging the elements of a new culture along with preserving basic elements from the culture of origin (Phinney et al. 2001; Organista, Marín & Chun 2010; Berry 2010). Cultural maintenance is likely to ease the process of transition to the host country, while rejecting one's heritage culture may have negative social and emotional consequences (Nelson & Infante 2014, p. 41). This section focuses on modes of cultural maintenance enacted by Bangladeshi migrants in Australia.

In the survey, respondents were asked how important it was to maintain their home country culture in the host society. Their responses are presented in Table 6.7 (below). Some 65% of respondents consider cultural maintenance very important. Another 25% report that their own culture is important to them. Together, these statistics mean that 90% of respondents place importance on preserving the culture of their home country.

Table 6.7: Importance of maintaining home country culture

	Total (%)
Very Important	65.5
Important	24.6
Fairly Important	8.4
Not Very Important	1.5
Not Important at All	-
N	203

The respondents were also asked to rank the top three aspects of their home country culture, in descending order of perceived importance. Their responses appear in Table 6.8. The table reports which elements of culture the respondents regard as "most important". The first column shows the respondents' first preference while columns 2 and 3 report the second and third most important aspects of their culture, respectively. Column 4 shows the combined figure, i.e. the totality of aspects considered to be the first, second or third most important.

Table 6.8: Importance of Different Aspects of Culture

	Most Important (%)	2nd most important (%)	3rd most important (%)	Combined (%)
Language	23.8	12.1	21.5	57.4
Religion	38.1	23.7	12.8	74.6
Social values	13.9	28.9	27.3	70.1
Traditional food	5.4	13.7	12.1	31.2
Music, Movies etc.	5.9	6.3	7.1	19.4
Traditional costume	1.5	2.1	6.0	9.6
Festival	11.4	13.2	12.0	46.2
Others	-	-	1.1	1.1
N	202	190	182	

The table shows that maintaining one's religion, social values, and *Bangla* language ability are the three most important aspects of their culture prized by Bangladeshi migrant. Three-quarters (75%) of respondents consider religion to be among the three foremost aspects of their culture. This is closely followed by social values, been chosen by 70% of respondents.[69] Next, 57% chose their ethnic language as one of their three most cherished cultural aspects. Bangladeshi festivals were nominated by 46% of respondents as well. These results are not surprising given the vital role religion plays in the life of Bangladeshi immigrants, and that most of the big national festivals, such as *Eid* and *Durga Puja,* are related to religion.[70] Other cultural aspects that rated a mention were traditional costumes, Bangladeshi music and movies, and traditional Bangladeshi food but all of these were considered of less importance.

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[69] Some of these social values include, without being limited to, the showing of respect to elders, reservations about pre-marital relationships, reservations about inter-faith marriage, and upholding of modest dress code, particularly for women.

[70] *Eid* (both *Eid al-Fitr* and *Eid al-Adha*) is the most prominent festival for Muslima around the world. Bangladesh being a Muslim-dominant country, Eid turns out to be the biggest festival held in the country. *Durga Puja,* on the other hand, is the most prominent festival among the Hindu community and is celebrated with great enthusiasm.

On whether they face any obstacles to the preservation of their home country culture, 76% of survey respondents replied in the negative. Those who disagreed identified the challenge of maintaining religious practices, wearing traditional costumes, and adhering to the Muslim *Halal* food code. [71] Another common concern among Bangladeshi migrants in Australia is that they cannot celebrate their festivals properly. This concern was highlighted by 30% of survey respondents in response to the last question of the survey which had asked them to write down what they disliked most about Australia. Those expressing this concern favoured the granting of a religious holiday for Bangladeshi migrants wishing to observe their traditional festivals.

The interview findings produced similar results to those from the survey. A majority of respondents took the view that preserving culture was 'very important' to their life in Australia. However, there was a range of views on the nature of cultural maintenance. About half the interviewees said that maintaining religious and cultural exclusiveness was difficult since Australia was a Westernised country. They are especially worried whether their children will lose their real identity and be assimilated into the mainstream. But, regarding this possibility, people expressed different opinions. In the opinion of many, whether the society is Westernised counts for less than the individual's will and determination to uphold their own culture. The additional observation was made that this should be easy to do given that Australia is a multicultural society.

It also needs to be noted that Bangladeshi culture is not uniform but highly diverse, as it has been formed and influenced by different religious faiths over the centuries (as seen in Chapter One). Aside from religion, education and family background are also markers of how heritage culture is or isn't being maintained (Bulut & Bars 2013; Alzayed 2015). Thus, immigrants are likely to possess diverse opinions about maintaining heritage culture. The most significant components of Bangladeshi culture such as language, religion, social values, traditional food, traditional costumes, music, movies and traditional festivals form the subject of the following discussion. This

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[71] *Halal* means 'allowed'. If food is not *halal*, Muslims are not allowed to eat it. For example, animals such as the cow, goat, and sheep must be slaughtered according to Islamic law before their meat is *halal* for the Muslims to eat. In addition, Muslims are not allowed to consume certain foods such as pork, or to drink alcohol. Any food mixed with the prohibited food, such as gelatine made from animal fat, is not *halal* either but *haram* (taboo).

section evaluates whether Bangladeshi migrants are upholding these aspects of Bangladeshi culture in Australia and, more importantly, whether or not they face obstacles in their efforts to succeed in this objective.

Language: The role of language has been very significant in Bangladeshi culture, especially in the formation and identity of Bangladesh as a country.[72] Therefore, Bangladeshi people in general take pride in maintaining their mother tongue. Table 6.9 explores the extent to which Bangladeshi migrants in Australia speak English at home. As seen in the table below, nearly 40% of respondents never speak English at home, which indicates that they are conversing with their spouse and children exclusively in *Bangla*. The table also shows that half the respondents (50%) speak English when they communicate with their children at home.

Table 6.9: Use of English Language in the home

Speak English in the home?	Total (%)
Always with children	7.8
Sometimes with children	42.2
Always with spouse	-
Sometimes with spouse	10.5
Never speak English in the home	39.5
N	190

The interview responses reveal the degree of heritage language preservation among Bangladeshi migrants in Australia. Most of the interviewees admit that maintaining *Bangla* in the English-speaking country of Australia is not easy. Although most of them speak *Bangla* at home, in most cases their children speak English. Some parents are clearly pained by this, as they feel their children forgetting their linguistic roots, while others are less concerned about this. Subhan (2007) also found among Bangladeshi migrants in Canada that they were more concerned about their children's survival and adaptation than whether they would cling to their heritage culture and language. Subhan further notes that there is a general assumption among parents that a good command of English is what people require to be successful in the West.

Nonetheless, some parents assert that they are very strict about using *Bangla*. They do not allow their children to speak English at home. To retain their offspring's familiarity

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[72] The history of the Language Movement of Bangladesh provides details about this (see, Banglapedia 2015b, the National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh).

with *Bangla* reading and writing they take them along to *Bangla* School once a week.[73] It ought to be noted at this point that there are a number of *Bangla* schools in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane where data for this research has been collected.

Apart from *Bangla* schools a number of Bengali associations have been established around Australia. *Bangla Sahitto Songsod* and the *Bangla Prosar Committee* are just two of these important organisations, established respectively in Melbourne and Sydney. These associations aim to promote Bengali language, literature and culture among Bangladeshi migrants living in Australia. They often organise *Bangla* refresher programs which prominent authors and poets of *Bangla* literature from abroad are invited to attend. Literature-lovers eagerly await these events.

Journals are published specially for the occasion. Many new authors and poets make their debut with writings in these journals. As well as this, a number of monthly newspapers are published in *Bangla*. *Bangla* radio is also working to promote the language in the migrant community. But only the parents or first-generation Bangladeshi migrants participate in these occasions.

Ironically, the younger generation appear to have no enthusiasm for such cultural events. Regular participants in Bangla literary programs are genuinely anguished by the lack of interest in these occasions exhibited by their children.

Religion: The extent to which the religious aspect of Bangladeshi life is being sustained in Australia is explored in depth through the qualitative information collected. The key finding about Bangladeshi migrants is that in general they are very concerned about religion.[74] To ascertain whether participants had kept up religious observance since leaving Bangladesh, interviewees were asked to report on the facilitators and impediments involved in the practice of their religion. Just like the preservation of language, how well religion fares come back to the attitude migrants adopt. For example, *Rafiq* stressed,

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[73] It is noted that Bangla schools are occasional learning centres, most Bangla schools operate weekly, and for a few hours. Children do not have much time to practise Bangla. Few of them can read and write, while they hardly have any passion for the heritage language. Therefore it seems that in spite of all the inspiration and enthusiasm the main aim of these institutions may not be achieved.

[74] It may be recalled that almost all the respondents claim a religious identity: 83% are Muslim and the rest are Hindus (see, Chapter Four).

Maintaining religion depends on person's own devotion. If I am aware of my own religion and cultural exclusiveness, I can do that in my own way. Different society cannot stop me doing that.

Rafiq also noted that he was allowed to say his prayers in his workplace and also allowed to attend mosque for Friday prayers. Like *Rafiq,* a number of the interview participants said they were permitted to perform their prayers at work. Most of the employers are very cooperative about this. Some even arrange a quiet place for prayer. They allow time off for Muslim workers to break their fast during *Ramadan*[75]. Rafiq's remarks were echoed by several other participants.

Interviewees also noted that parents' religious activities provided their children with a good example because parents are usually role models for the children. *Reba* explained how this works in her family:

My husband takes my oldest son (eight years of age) to the mosque whenever he goes to pray. At home they also pray together. This makes an example for the little one, and I believe he will join them soon.

She added that she was not worried about her children being lost to Western culture, since they are brought up in a household where religion was given first place. Her children are also taught about the traditions, values and culture of Bangladesh. They learn about the differences between Bangladeshi and Australian values. They are aware of what is prohibited (in regard to both food and behaviour).

Another interviewee, *Saidul,* lives in a Muslim neighbourhood. Apart from Bangladeshi Muslims, co-religionists from other Asian, Middle Eastern and European countries (Arabs, Turks, Macedonians, and Bosnians) live in the same suburb. He says,

We have a mosque in the neighbourhood, where we often go to pray. We hear the sound of *Azan* (the invitation to prayer) five times a day. When I first came to this place I couldn't believe that I came to a non-Muslim country.

Saidul mentioned that his children were attending Islamic schools where they learnt about their religion, and Islamic values and lifestyle. These schools follow the

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[75] *Ramadan* is a month in the Arabic calendar. During this month adult Muslims are required to fast all day, from sunrise to sunset.

Australian core curriculum, while also focusing on Islamic studies. *Saidul*, therefore, was optimistic that his children would maintain their religious observance and the values of their heritage culture.

Hindu interviewees affirmed that they continued to practise their religion in their own way. One of them, *Shormila*, stated

> I have a prayer room in the home, which I have decorated with my god's statues and images. I light candles in the prayer room and say my prayer whenever I get home.

Shormila stressed that she did not feel practising her religion in Australia was tough. Apart from performing daily prayer, she and her family visit temples on special occasions. They also celebrate their religious festivals enthusiastically along with members of the community, and their Bangladeshi Muslim friends are invited to join them. So the findings concur that, in a multicultural country like Australia, people of any ethnicity can maintain their own religion and cultural exclusiveness. But it needs to be recorded that a number of interviewees did not seem comfortable about answering the question about religion directly. A noticeably hesitant *Aman* explained that he was not very keen on practising religion. He said,

> I never asked my employers for any time off for saying prayer since I do not feel much about it in myself, but I believe if I were enthusiastic I would have been granted an opportunity to perform prayer.

Based on these remarks it appears that religious activity among Bangladeshi immigrations is not a function of Australian society being a different social environment but of the personal religious convictions, of individual migrants.

A significant minority among the respondents claimed to have been discriminated for practising their religion. For example, *Tomal* recalled that his request for a short afternoon prayer break had not been granted, even though each worker is allowed to take a break for afternoon tea. And one of the female interviewees complained that she had been given a warning after she began wearing a headscarf in her workplace. She was asked to take off her scarf if she wanted to continue her work. As a result, she could not carry on in that job and since then she has been unemployed. Another woman

interviewee reported feeling embarrassed when people in her neighbourhood or local shopping mall looked down on her because she was wearing a veil and a long Islamic outfit.

Based on the observations of Bangladeshi community members in Australia and also the interviewees' religious standpoint, Bangladeshi Muslims can be categorised into several groups and sub-groups. Most Bangladeshi Muslims can be labelled 'neo-modernists', adopting Saeed's (2003) terminology. They are 'practising Muslims', though the degree of religious observance and adoption of a religious lifestyle is not the same for all. Saeed's observation about many Muslims in Australia is equally applicable to the sub-set of Bangladeshi Muslims: "They are often quite happy to reinterpret certain Islamic ideas to fit in with modern developments without compromising on fundamental core values and practices of Islam" (Saeed 2003, p. 205). Then there is a 'liberal' group which includes both practising and non-practising Muslims. This liberal group can be distinguished from the 'neo-modernists' by its 'rather secular outlook' and belief that "Islam is essentially a religion that focuses on the relationship between an individual and God" (Saeed 2003, p. 205).

This study also reveals a small but significant number of Bangladeshi Muslims who are attached with a religious group, *Tablighi Jama'at* or Preaching Party. *Tablighi Jama'at* is an internationally networked Islamic organisation that focuses on Islamic lifestyle, according to a literal doctrine of Islam (J. Ali 2010).[76] The members of this organisation invite their fellow Muslims to practice Islam and also provide support to the one who are vulnerable (J. Ali 2010).[77] According to their own literature, peaceful religious activities are the main purpose of this organisation (J. Ali 2010). This is a purely 'pietist

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[76] Islam recommends believers maintain a way of life that includes obligatory prayers (five times a day), strong morals (be honest, cheerful and generous: harm no one), dietary requirements (*halal* food and drink), dress code (modest outfit for men and women, while women are advised to cover their body and head to guard their dignity and honour) (Retrieved from http://www.newmuslims.com/lessons/135/).

[77] Women belonging to this cohort are not likely to go outside unless they are covered from head to toe. The men are also likely to wear Islamic outfits and have facial hair. Ali (2010, p. 194) asserts that this dress code is not mandatory, and this amounts to 'more a manifestation of Arab culture than a religious (manifestation)', yet Muslims belonging to this group follow the dress code out of devotion to the Prophet's dress and lifestyle.

and apolitical movement whose primary aim is to strengthen Muslim orthodoxy' (Kabir 2012, p. 321).

Saeed (2003) classifies the members of the Preaching party as 'neo-revivalists'. According to Saeed (2003), although this group criticises the West, its special focus is on 'reforming' Muslim societies, rather than manifesting "a high degree of hostility to the West and Western values". Therefore, members of *Tablighi Jama'at* are unlikely to face significant difficulty in living in the West (see, Ali 2010). However, it does not seem that there were any 'traditionalists' among the respondents who took part in this study.[78]

Although integration is considered the ideal option for migrants aiming at successful settlement (Berry 1997; Ali 2010), the neo-revivalists face a dilemma due to the contrast between Islamic and Australian values (Ali 2010, p. 186). Their convictions compel them to keep their distance from the host society. And on many occasions they prefer to remain equally detached from the Bangladeshi ethnic community. They avoid traditional community events such as the Bengali New Year festival, birthday parties or other social gatherings where men and women attend together. Neo-revivalist Bangladeshi Muslims consider such events 'un-Islamic'.

Yet despite shunning their host society, adherents to this group consider themselves well settled in Australia. According to them, all they want is a peaceful and stable life, which they have found in this country. They do not need to worry much about economic well-being, since their income is high enough for them to look after their families. Besides, people on low incomes in Australia receive various concessions (with health care cards used to valid entitlement) to help pay their bills as well as allowances for children. Interestingly most of the respondents in this group claim that they did not maintain such a strict Islamic lifestyle in Bangladesh as they do here. They ascribe this behavioural change, partly to their interactions with Muslims from other parts of the world.[79]

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[78] 'Traditionalists in this context are defined as those Muslims "committed to a pre-modern conception of Islamic laws (*Shari'a*) and believe that, in Australia, Muslims are functioning in a non-Islamic political and legal environment' (Saeed 2003, p. 203).

[79] See Chapter Seven for detail.

Research for this project has further uncovered an upsurge in religious practice among some Bangladeshi Muslims. This contradicts the common assumption that migrants, motivated by Western culture, abandon their own culture and religion on coming to live in a Western country. On the contrary, some of the participants have become more religious since moving to Australia, it appears because they want their children to retain their connection with Bangladeshi culture. A number of parents who have adult children assert that they have been unable to keep them on the 'right track' as they found Australian culture more appealing. In their words, it is not possible to lock their children inside the house to shut them away from Western influence. What they can do is to set an example so the children look up to their parents as role models, and recognise the differences between their host and ethnic cultures. Some others mentioned that, due to certain incidents in their neighbours' and friends' lives concerning their children's behaviour they themselves had grown very concerned for their own sons and daughters. *Bonna* explained,

> My cousin has been living in Australia more than 15 years. She had been happy with her life until she came to know that her son and daughter go for dating with their girlfriend or boyfriend, attend parties and drink alcohol. She is so upset on them. She also says her children come home late, (and) don't care about what she wants. She can't believe her children could behave this way.

According to *Bonna,* her cousin realises she should have been more conscientious about passing on her values to them when they were younger. *Bonna* says she has taken a leaf out of her cousin's book. Now *Bonna* is trying to take her religion and culture more seriously so her children, who are still in primary school, will be familiar with the tradition and cultural boundaries of the Bangladeshi people. It is a fact that parents of daughters are more likely to adopt this stance than those who have sons.[80] It is a matter *Bithi* has given much thought to:

> My daughter is in high school now. If I fail to make her understand the difference between my values and local culture now, she would soon go out of my control. So I am encouraging her to use *hijab*. Although I didn't use hijab

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[80] In traditional patriarchal societies, especially in South Asia, parents monitor and control their daughters' behaviour more than their sons'. Many parents believe the family honour largely depends on their daughters' lifestyle, and whether they obey socio-cultural and family values.

earlier, I am using now. If I don't use she would ask "Why do you ask me to use hijab, since you don't?" The thing is that it's not just the hijab, I want her to use modest clothing. Once she is used to [appearing in public] with hijab, I believe, she won't chose the common Western outfits which are inappropriate in our culture.

Bithi's utterance shows she is particularly focused on her daughter's streetwear because, in her opinion, modest outfits will eventually make her realise the difference between the values of these two cultures and also avoid behaviour unbecoming to her values. As *Bithi* has done, the thesis notes that a goodly number of Bangladeshi women who used to wear Western outfits started wearing Islamic dress when their children reached adolescence. It is worth noting that they are not motivated by any spiritual concern, but rather the objective of keeping their children 'under control'. They may be classified as 'neo-modernists', since they are likely to adapt to the host culture, as long as they find no contradiction between its ways and their fundamental values.

Social values: These are a set of customs people adopt, and boundaries they set, in interactions with society (Jacobson 1998; Zaman & Muhammad 2012). In other words, values reflect the culture of a society and are widely shared by the members of that society. Values appear to be unwritten laws, animated by community members' social behaviour. These values are usually based on ethnicity and religion. But, also, education, family background and economic affluence are reflected in socially approved behaviours. Social values are different for each society. In Bangladesh social values refer to particular social behaviours such as showing respect to elders, having reservations about pre-marital relationships and inter-faith marriages, and following a dress code, particularly in the case of women. Table 6.2 shows 70% of respondents admitting that social values are one of the most significant aspects of their heritage culture. During the research, when asked whether in this country they found any obstacles to the retention of their homeland's social values,, the majority said they did not. Yet a significant minority did have trouble in maintaining their values. *Aman* explained why this was so:

Bangladeshi social values are mainly religion-based, especially Islamic. These values are practically making barrier to adjust with the mainstream society.

Aman asserts that religion, especially the Islamic way of life, may hinder the acculturation of migrants when values in the host and home countries conflict, as previously discussed (also see, Ali 2010) Over and above this, gender plays an important role in shaping social norms. For example, Bangladeshi women in general hesitate to shake hands with men (be they co-workers or employers), because Bangladeshi social values do not permit them to do so. A number of working women pointed to this as a major problem that often results in embarrassment and misunderstanding. This finding is similar to Kabir's (2005), where she perceives this as a particular cultural limitation for Muslim women, Bangladeshi women (irrespective of their faith) face this problem, especially in the workplace. But young, highly educated women will probably overcome this constraint.

As with other aspects of culture, conserving social values largely depends on people's personal attributes, family background, and, more importantly, how old they were when they migrated. As people age they develop more concern about their heritage and values, whereas young people are much more eager to explore and embrace new ideas.

Traditional food: Food plays an important role in migrants' acculturation in a foreign country. Most of the interviewees in this study mentioned that they always ate home-cooked traditional Bangladeshi food. They spoke of the availability of spices and other food products. Currently, staple foods and spices are available in almost every Australian city. Bangladeshi grocery stores have been established in most big cities in Australia over the past few decades. Goods sold in these stores, apart from groceries and spices, include seasonal Bangladeshi fruits and vegetables, sweets, soft drink and, Bangladeshi fish, always a crowd favourite.[81]

Well-known Bangladeshi grocery stores include *Bangla Bazar, Hut Bazar, Sonar Bangla Enterprise, Bengal Traders, Deshi Bazar,* and *Bongo Bazar.* For those who prefer to eat out, a number of restaurants offer traditional Bangladeshi cuisine. Combined Bangladeshi-Indian-Pakistani restaurants have also been spotted in various locales. Apart from offering traditional Bangladeshi foodstuffs these shops and restaurants deliver the very aroma and flavour of Bangladesh to Bangladeshi

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[81] Rice and fish are staple food for ordinary Bangladeshis. Fish is very important in Bangladeshi cuisine. "*Mache vate banglaee*" is a common proverb, meaning one can be a real *Bangalee* (Bangladeshi) only if he or she eats rice and fish.

immigrants when they are far from home. Unsurprisingly, the shop names written in *Bangla* script serve as a potent lure drawing Bangladeshi-Australians through the door (see, Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1: Bangladeshi shops in Lakemba, Sydney

Note: Signs are displayed in both English and *Bangla*

The respondents for this study appear to have a favourite traditional food for each particular occasion. For example, *Iftar*[82] is a significant mealtime for Muslims during the month of *Ramadan.* Bangladeshi people in general make certain types of food at *Iftar,* which sets them apart from other Muslim communities. Interviewees affirm that almost all the *Iftar* ingredients used in Bangladesh are available in Australian mainstream supermarkets as well as in Bangladeshi and Indian grocery stores. The real taste of *Iftar* is there to be relished. This can come as a surprise to relatives abroad, as *Fatema* mentioned:

> My mum was surprised to hear that I prepare *Iftar* items for my family exactly the same way she does. Most of the women do the same in Bangladesh. Traditional *Iftar* gives me a sense like home. It also takes me back to my childhood.

Fatema's reminiscence shows the potent allure of traditional food for migrants, and its ability to make them nostalgic. But migrants living in rural Australia may not get similar opportunities to consume traditional food. This is due to the absence of ethnic stores.

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[82] In the month of *Ramadan* every Muslim adult must fast from sunrise to sunset; at sundown they break their fast with the meal named *Iftar.*

Respondents from regional areas also pointed to the scarcity of *halal* products, which forced them to travel long distances or drop meat from their menu.

In the early days of Bangladeshi settlement in Australia – i.e. the 1970s and '80s – traditional Bangladeshi food was unavailable. Mr and Mrs *Zaman* migrated to Australia in 1978, when there was no *halal* butcher's shop in their neighbourhood or even in a remote suburb. They had to travel five or six hours to buy *halal* meat. So they used to do that only on a very special occasion. Mrs *Zaman* recollects that she was so sad to feed her children with Aussie fish and vegetables when meat was their undisputed favourite food. To go on a long journey to buy meat from a *halal* butcher was like living with an excruciating pain, she recalled. And there were no Bangladeshi shops in those days.

> We used to buy groceries and spices from Indian shops, but it's not the same as ours. Taste was way too different, and we couldn't enjoy food that much. Now we have plenty of Bangladeshi stores where Bangladeshi groceries and various food products are available. It really feels different than our early days.

That statement alone demonstrates the importance in migrants' everyday life of being able to access food from their own culture. Since most of the traditional food items are available in ethnic stores, Bangladeshi migrants no longer miss traditional food, as their forebearers in the 1980s had to. More importantly, in return for the effort required in visiting an ethnic grocery store they can close their eyes and, from the pungent smells and flavours that waft their way, imagine themselves in the open market back in their Bangladeshi home town. In these stores, what's more, they often make new Bangladeshi acquaintances, as interviewees pointed out. These research findings bear a striking similarity to those in a study conducted by Ryan (2010). In her research, 'Becoming Polish in London: negotiating ethnicity through migration', Ryan observes that food offers people a way to express their ethnicity. So, as the respondents confirmed, sourcing traditional food is not a problem in Australia. For all that, a number of respondents reported missing particular dainties, such as *malai cha*[83] from roadside stalls, and both *chatpati* and *fuchka*[84] (sold by vendors), which had been part of their

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[83] A special tea made out of tea leaves (grown in Bangladeshi tea gardens), milk, and sugar. When it is fully steeped, a distinctive aroma comes out, and wafts through the air.
[84] Traditional hot and spicy, as well as mouth-watering, snacks

everyday life in Bangladesh. These are greatly missed in Australia. Quite a number of respondents insisted that, despite all the spices being available in Australia, they still could not emulate the authentic flavour of Bangladeshi food. *Mahmood*, for instance, said, 'Nothing tastes as good as what my mum cooks in Bangladesh.'' This feeling obviously reflects the strong emotional tug exerted by his home country. Yes indeed: for Bangladeshi migrants food is not just something to eat: it represents their ethnic heritage and summons up memories of home.[85]

Figure 6.2: Shelves in a Bangladeshi store packed with traditional spices, pickles and kitchen appliances.

Figure 6.3: An advertisement for Bangladeshi fish available from a Bangladeshi store in Melbourne.

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[85] Figure 6.2 displays Bangladeshi traditional spices, pickles and kitchen appliances, and Figure 6.3 shows an advertisement for Bangladeshi fish available from a Bangladeshi store in Melbourne.

Music and movies: Music and movies are directly linked with Bangladeshi culture. Although the survey did not uncover a substantial fascination with music and movies among the respondents, the interviews certainly did.

Interviewees for this study affirmed that, as with traditional food, the enjoyment of music and movies was no longer a big problem. Due to the internet and satellite television, most migrants are able to enjoy traditional music and movies. A set-top box enables them to watch Bangladeshi TV programs, giving them a sense of being back in Bangladesh without leaving the armchair. *Zaman* describes a typical relaxed evening:

> After work when come back home I turn on Bangladeshi TV and watch *Bangla* news, drama or listen to the music. I feel like I am home.

The academic literature has a name for this phenomenon of feeling connected with home through the enjoyment of productions or products that emanate from there: it is defined as trans-nationalism (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt 1999).

Ethnic television becomes a veritable substitute for travelling to Bangladesh, and a remedy for homesickness. Similar findings have also been revealed by Cherti (2008), in her study of Moroccan migrants in London. Nowadays, migrants are even more pampered, free to enjoy the latest music and movies from home as they are uploaded to Google or YouTube. *Reshma* reviewed how much change there had been in these two types of entertainment:

> I didn't have easy access to the internet when I came here. I desperately wanted to hear *Bangla* music when I was feeling lonely. Now that I have 24 hours' unlimited internet at home, I am able to enjoy music and movies whenever I have some time to relax. I feel the difference. Especially after watching a *Natok* [86] I feel I just visited home.

Reshma also spoke of wanting her children to watch *Bangla* movies and listen to *Bangla* music so they would be aware of their cultural heritage. Our findings support the conclusion that the media play an instrumental role in reinforcing the cultural identity of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia. In other words, they minimise the distance between homeland and host country. Cherti (2008) argued that watching TV

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[86] *Natok* is the Bengali name for TV drama, roughly equivalent to the English term 'soap opera'.

from their country of origin assisted immigrants' acculturation to their host country. It is a sentiment expressed by respondents in this research. Figure 6.4 below, displayed at the entrance of a Bangladeshi grocery store, sums it up ever so neatly: 'Watch ethnic TV and live happily abroad.'

Figure 6.4: An advertisement for a device that enables viewers to watch program from Bangladeshi satellite TV channels.

Print media: Apart from music and movies, Bangladeshi migrants are also attached to their home country though Bengali newspapers imported from Bangladesh. Most Bengali newspapers now have an online presence, so migrants have access to information and news on current events in Bangladesh, as well as the whole world, no matter where they live.[87] *Imran* describes how this has changed his daily routine:,

> Now we start the day with *Bangla* newspapers. We can read newspapers before people in Bangladesh read, since we start the day earlier. We can also watch Bangladeshi TV that offers news, music, play, movie, talk show … everything.

Rana is another immigrant whose habits have been similarly changed:

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[87] Interestingly, Bangladeshi migrants in Australia get to read Bengali newspapers before the people of Bangladesh. This is due to Australia's geographical location and favourable time zone.

When I read *Bangla* newspapers, I feel like the whole Bangladesh is in front [of] me. Even though newspapers are mostly filled with bad news, it makes me feel that I am not far away.

The findings that follow our interview replies firmly indicate that Bangladeshi migrants are no longer detached from their home country, despite the fact that they live thousands of kilometres away from their former home. This finding is consistent with other research, such as Mamattah's (2006), and Bilgili's (2014). These studies demonstrate that by accessing home country newspapers migrants feel a sense of travelling home without physically being there. As well as TV and the papers, Bangladeshi migrants in Australia enjoy ethnic *(Bangla)* radio, which has been broadcast in Australia for more than 15 years in Adelaide, Brisbane, and Canberra. Recently, a new radio station was launched in Melbourne.[88]

Circumstances are far removed from what they were 20 years ago. A number of respondents who arrived in the earlier decades of settlement brought with them *Bangla* books, records of traditional music and movies on videocassette, but they could not enjoy latest-release movies or new music. More importantly, they had no access to the daily newspapers. *Islam* remembers how it was 'back in the day':

Most civilised people start their day with a newspaper. Back in 1980s I didn't have option to read *Bangla* newspapers. After visiting Bangladesh we used to bring something wrapped in newspapers. I never threw them in the garbage, rather saved for my leisure time. I went through every single page, even though that was an old newspaper. People now cannot even imagine how that felt like.

Islam's nostalgic remarks reveal an enthusiasm about newspaper-reading, as well as how much he missed reading *Bangla* newspapers until the 1990s. Anderson's (1991) 'imagined community' is also notable in this context. Anderson asserts that print media gives 'a form to the sense of homogeneousness of empty time' and also provides platform for a shared simultaneity among a community of readers.

So it can be deduced that movies, music and other sources of information and entertainment depicting their home country to immigrants will enhance their

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[88] Please see http://www.prapty.com/?p=572 and http://www.priyoaustralia.com.au/

acculturation. As Schiller, Basch and Blanc (1995) observe, migrants these days are less likely to identify as 'uprooted', since they can enjoy the amenities of home and culture despite living far away from their home country

Traditional Dress: Although clothing is considered a significant aspect of culture (Zimmermann 2012; Lurie 1981), respondents in this study do not seem to be very concerned to retain traditional costume in their everyday life in Australia. Based on interviews and observations of this ethnic community, our research reveals that Bangladeshi migrants, in general, are lukewarm towards the idea of wearing traditional Bangladeshi clothing, except on special occasions such as festivals, and other ethnic gatherings. It has also been noted that dressing in a traditional manner is mostly an issue for women, since they are more likely than men to become the champions of this particular cause. With that in mind, this section will focus on the retention of traditional costume from women's point of view.

The findings of this thesis suggest that most respondents are reluctant to wear traditional Bangladeshi outfits, which are often long and colourful, in order to avoid the prospect of being looked at like an 'alien'. There is a widespread perception that many local people look down on people clad in traditional costumes. Many of the women interviewed for this study have stopped wearing traditional clothing public spaces such as shops, schools and workplaces, as well as on public transport. *Rani* is typical in this regard:

> I used to wear *salwar-kemeez* [89] when I first came to Australia. Soon I realised that people looked at me as if I came from a different world. I felt embarrassed and stop wearing that in public places. But I use traditional costume in any Bangladeshi community programs.

This was a common response from many female interviewees each of whom confirmed that she had ceased wearing traditional outfits in order to avoid looking different. But other explanations were offered as well. A number of interviewees pointed to the comparatively cold climate in Australia as a reason to avoid traditional costume.

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[89] *salwar-kemeez* is the most common outfit worn by women in Bangladesh. It consists of three separate parts of clothing and is made in various colour, from various fabrics and in a range of various designs.

According to them, the *salwar-kemeez* is mostly made out of cotton, silk or another fine thin fabric, unsuited to, and uncomfortable in, the Australian environment.

Another important feature noted by a number of interviewees is that women wearing traditional outfits risk becoming objects of attention. Local people would likely treat a woman wearing *salwar* in a variety of ways just because she was wearing the dress of a minority. *Bithi* had a very telling anecdote to relate:

> Centrelink officer asked me whether I needed an interpreter, though earlier she didn't ask for that. It really seemed weird to me, and soon I discovered what the reason could be. Difference is that now I got there wearing *salwar-kemeez*, while last time I was there wearing jeans and jacket.

Bithi's story implies that women wearing traditional costume risked being taken as less qualified or less worthy than those in Western attire. *Bithi*'s observation was echoed by a number of other Bangladeshi women. Although diversity is officially welcomed in Australia, traditional apparel worn by women from different ethnic backgrounds is still likely to be treated as a little strange or unusual, and at the same time less respectable. El Masri (2011) had an experience that can be likened to *Bithi*'s when started wearing Islamic outfits. As she described it, "When they spoke to me, it was delayed, simple English, as though they assumed I couldn't understand and had just arrived from overseas."

It can safely be assumed that women in traditional or Islamic clothing are likely to be marked out as less educated and less proficient in English. Interestingly, a number of female respondents pointed out that it was not only local Australian people but immigrants from the same or similar backgrounds to the migrants themselves who looked down on them when they chose traditional apparel. *Reshma,* who wears a traditional Bangladeshi outfit every single day, explained that other Bangladeshi immigrants considered her old-fashioned. At least she had been forced to make this assumption on account of the way they treated her. Based on *Reshma*'s experience, it can be said that tradition, far from being valued, is considered both unfashionable and not quite respectable.

On the contrary, some women respondents announced they were every bit as comfortable wearing traditional costume in Australia as they were doing so in

Bangladesh. In their view Australia, being a multicultural society, includes many people familiar with immigrants dressed in a diverse array of national and ethnic costumes from all over the world. *Sheela* spoke eloquently for this group:

> I have always been appreciated for my dress-up wherever I go. In shop, bank, on the public transport people often smile at me, some of them comment, "Looking good! Nice outfit! Gorgeous!" … So I never feel embarrassed of my clothing.

Clearly, *Sheela* is not only unembarrassed but rather proud of her traditional outfit. Based on the above discussion, the thesis notes that women's approaches to retaining traditional costume reflect sharply divergent views.

Another striking inference from the research for this thesis is that many of the women who used to wear Islamic garments in Bangladesh have stopped wearing them since coming to live in Australia. These women have concluded that a particular Islamic dress code is ill-suited to Australian social mores. Many had made up their minds before leaving their homeland that they would not be wearing a *burqa* in Australia, and decided not to pack their *burqas* in their luggage. But another group of women, who had never worn a *burqa* or any Islamic clothing while living in Bangladesh, started to dress Islamically after coming to Australia.

|Having noticed this behavioural variability, this study has inquired into the underlying reasons. Since Australia is a Westernised country, many Bangladeshis decided early to adapt to their host society as quickly as possible. As *Bonna* explained,

> Well, this is Australia. I cannot change my colour of skin, while I can change my outlook with the clothing. And this is how I can be a part of Australia.

This statement clearly reflects her belief that the best way to blend in with the local culture is to dress as most Australian women do. So, people who wish to integrate with the host society are likely to wear Western clothes. Yet, as mentioned earlier, some women respondents begin donning Islamic outfits while their children are growing up. In doing this, some are influenced by Muslims from other ethnic backgrounds (see, detail in Chapter Seven). That change is most visible in women's wear. But any spiritual change these costumes are supposed to reflect has the potential to disrupt personal progress towards social and economic incorporation in the host society.

Traditional festivals: About one-third of the respondents surveyed mentioned that they encountered no problems in celebrating their traditional festivals. Similarly, most interviewees said they celebrated festivals held in Australia with as much joy and enthusiasm as they used to do in Bangladesh. They especially pointed to the most important religious festivals, such as for Muslims *Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha,* and for Hindus *Durga Puja.* Since the Bangladeshi community here is very strong and cohesive, migrants no longer feel isolated during festivals. For example, Sydney housewife Mrs *Zama*n who, along with her family, has been living in the same neighbourhood for about two decades, notes that she celebrates *Eid*s and other festivals just the same as she used to in Bangladesh. The way she looks at it,

> I have many Bangladeshi friends in my neighbourhood, nearer suburbs and far suburbs, who are like my family. I often visit them, and so do they [visit me]. We celebrate festivals and other occasions enthusiastically. On Eid day, I cook all the day, have guests all the day, just the way my mother observes Eid in Bangladesh.

Other respondents confirmed that, like Mrs *Zaman*, they invited their Bangladeshi Hindu friends to such celebrations occasions, itself a marker of how deep are the ties binding Bangladeshis from different religious backgrounds in Australia.

Mrs *Zaman,* surrounded by so many other Bangladeshi immigrants, clearly felt encouraged to celebrate just as she would have done back home, by holding an 'open house'. As a result, she no longer feels she is in a foreign country. This evidently endows her with a sense of strength and ethnic pride, and yet it gives her the self-confidence to become well acculturated in this foreign land.

Hindu migrants involved in this research have pointed out that they celebrate religious festivals and rituals in their own way. The most prominent of these is *Durga Puja* which is celebrated with much enthusiasm in collaboration with Hindus originating from the Indian state of West Bengal. Since the Hindus of Bangladesh and those of West Bengal share the same language [90] and a similar culture they prefer to celebrate their religious festivals together. *Shormila* spoke for many Bangladeshi Hindus when she said,

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[90] People in West Bengal also speak *Bangla.*

We are very attached with the Hindu community of West Bengal, since our language, religion, culture and food habit are quite similar. Most of the time we celebrate festivals, especially the religious festivals, together. That gives us a sense of strength.

Shormila also reported hardly any obstruction to the proper celebration of these festivals. Another respondent, *Sottyojit*, said that at festival time he routinely invited all Hindus from Bangladesh, as well as West Bengal, along with any Bangladeshi Muslims living in the neighbourhood. In his words,

My wife cooks all day for the guests. My close neighbours, both Muslims and Hindus, come over to give her hands. My Muslim neighbours and friends are part of the festivals except for the religious rituals. I am overwhelmed to see this harmony.

In a similar vein to Mrs *Zaman*'s sentiments, *Sottyojit*'s statement clearly underscores the degree of ethnic inter-connectedness among Bangladeshi migrants in Australia, a bond reflected in, and strengthened by, the joint celebration of festivals. The findings of this research are consistent with Ryan's finding that religious festivals have become a 'key signifier of ethnic tradition' (Ryan 2010, p. 363).

Perhaps surprisingly, most interviewees insisted that they did not enjoy festivals during their early post-migration days. A number went further and said that, instead of bringing happiness, Eid caused them much grief. Saidul recalled,

My wife used to cry all day on *Eid* day, and the children became so quiet as if we heard any sad news. Even though we had Bangladeshi neighbours and friends, we terribly missed family. Now we are used to … the separation from the dearest people. We celebrate festivals with the friends. My wife is also busy cooking and entertaining guests. So things are much better now.

Saidul's account shows that, with the passage of time, migrants become more accustomed to their new life and environment. Again, this finding echoes Ryan (2010), where she observes that Polish people in London now may not miss Poland as much as they used to do. It would seem the length of migrants' stay abroad makes their life much

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easier, allowing them to create a replica of home in their host country, and to celebrate familiar festivals joyfully as of old.

And yet a significant minority of respondents say they cannot celebrate their festivals due to work commitments. Since there are no designated holidays in Australia for any other ethnic group's festivals, Bangladeshi immigrants are required to go to work on the very day of their important celebrations (unless a leave application has been granted). Most of the interviewees raised this as an issue of concern. For example, *Shovon*:

> I couldn't join a single *Eid* prayer in the last four years because of work. Every time I have been given some extra work to do, so I couldn't even ask for a leave to my employer. My wife and children spend all day feeling sad. Back in Bangladesh our parents are also sad since we cannot celebrate *Eid*.

Shovon has articulated his point that, living outside their homeland, apart from family and friends during their principal festivals, is emotionally painful. What could be worse than to miss the *Eid* prayer and not spend the day with members of their birth family? A number of interview respondents recommended that since Australia is a multicultural country and pays respect to the culture and values of ethnic communities, immigrants should be granted leave on the day of a treasured festival.

Apart from religious festivals, Bangladeshi migrants in Australia join in a number of cultural celebrations. These are jointly celebrated by all Bangladeshis irrespective of their faith. Prominent among these special occasions (national holidays back in Bangladesh) are Bengali New Year's Day, Language Day (21 February), Independence Day (26 March), and Victory Day (16 December).[91] As well as these days, the birth anniversaries of the two most eminent poets in Bengali literature – Rabindranath Tagore (the Nobel Laureate) and national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam – are celebrated every May with great enthusiasm throughout Bangladesh. Migrants do their best to observe all these significant events in the Bengali calendar.

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[91] See, Figure 6.5 and Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.5: Photos of celebration of *Pohela Boishakh*, Bengali New Year's Day in Melbourne

Figure 6.6: Photo of community fair in Campbelltown, Sydney, organised by the Australia-Bangladesh Association

Bengali New Year, *Pohela Boishakh,* is celebrated with much enthusiasm by Bangladeshi migrants throughout Australia.[92] New Year is a joyful occasion for all Bangladeshis. Cultural programs and fairs are held in big open spaces in nearly every state of Australia. Traditional food, costume and jewellery are sold from marquees

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[92] In Bangladesh, the *Pohela Boishakh* is celebrated on 14th of April every year. This is a public holiday in Bangladesh. However, Bangladeshis in Australia celebrate it on the preceding or following weekend of 14th April.

erected especially for the fair. Rides are also offered for the amusement of children. This is exactly how the Bengali New Year is celebrated back home. So, Bangladeshi people living in Australia enjoy their New Year celebrations to the full.

Participation in other events may not be as widespread as they are for *Eid*, *Puja* or *Pohela Boishakh*. Yet different literary and cultural associations organise special programs of their own, events renowned for their high spirits. It was not always like this: 15 years ago these festivals were not marked by as much excitement as they are today. But then the Bangladeshi immigrant community was not as strong as it is now.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the bonding capital of Bangladeshi migrants and its impact on their settlement and acculturation. Based on both quantitative and qualitative data, this chapter has revealed that Bangladeshi migrants in general maintain strong bonds with their ethnic community. Furthermore, they retain strong ties with family and friends left behind. Links to the home country are bolstered by inexpensive phone calls and widespread internet access.

The strong bonds attaching respondents to their ethnic community have been proved instrumental in fulfilling a number of initial settlement needs such as finding accommodation, finding traditional foodstuffs, and sustaining contacts with the ethnic community now resident in Australia. This assistance is particularly significant for newly arrived migrants. There is also evidence that to some extent preparation before migration can serve new migrants as a substitute for bonding capital. The strong mutual attachment of Bangladeshi migrants, coupled with the ease of communication they enjoy with the home country, helps keep to a minimum the stresses that await all newcomers to these shores, and in large measure to withstand the equally inevitable culture shocks. By bonding with people from their ethnic community, Bangladeshi migrants open the door to particular assistance with child-care, mental health support and even tracking down a job.

These findings also reflect our respondents' strong emphasis on the value of maintaining their cultural and religious heritage. They hold fears that their children will

not pass on their cultural inheritance. It has been found that preserving their culture was more difficult for Bangladeshi immigrants during and prior to the 1980s. Recent migrants face significant barriers to maintaining their culture. Whether they do is more likely to depend on personal will and determination than any external hurdle. Australian multiculturalism is highly valued by the respondents as it facilitates the continuation of their religious faith and practice as well as social values. More importantly, the availability of traditional food, clothing, music and movies makes the process of cultural maintenance much easier these days than it was for an earlier generation of Bangladeshi settlers.

Regarding religious observance among the respondents, the findings reveal that Bangladeshi Hindus are mostly homogenous. In contrast, the Muslims form quite a diverse community of religious practice. Most of the Muslim respondents can be described as 'neo-modernist' or 'liberal'. Some of them have become more devout since migrating. To a certain extent, they have become so to safeguard their children from unwelcome Western cultural influences. There are also some 'neo revivalists' (*Tablighi Jama'at* or Preaching Party followers) who are largely influenced by 'neo- revivalists' in the broader Australian Muslim community. There are few respondents who could be classified as 'traditionalist' Muslims.

On the evidence before us of Bangladeshi migrants' strong attachment to their ethnic community and their home country, and of their decided preference to preserve their rich culture, the conclusion can be drawn that they are not 'assimilating' into Australian society. Whether they are integrating with it (or separated from it) and, if integrating, how they are doing so, are questions that will be examined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ACCULTURATION OF BANGLADESHI MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA - THE ROLE OF BRIDGING CAPITAL

Introduction

This chapter discusses the acculturation of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia with a particular focus on bridging capital. That is, it will focus on the degree of social, cultural, and economic engagement of Bangladeshi migrants with their 'host' Australian society. Studies of migrant settlement suggest that the degree of interaction with the host society significantly affects migrant settlement and acculturation. For example, migrants who have stronger ties to the host culture are likely to have a better settlement experience than those without such attachments (Lancee 2010; Cox & Orman 2009; Ryan et al. 2008a; Hunter 2012). In order to map the extent of bridging capital possessed by Bangladeshi migrants in Australia, therefore, this chapter first pays attention to their cultural and social engagement with the host society. Personal interactions with the 'hosts', and participation in community activities (e.g. functions run by local clubs, and voluntary services) will be our main focus. This chapter also inquires into economic engagement with the host society through participation in economic activities. In this context, 'host society' refers to the local Australian people (i.e. people from the dominant culture), as well as members of other immigrant communities who come from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Engagement with the host society

Interaction with the host society can occur in a number of ways (see, Ager & Strang 2004). For example, participation in local community events is one important such mode of engagement. This participation can take place through attending working bees or school fetes, doing voluntary work, or taking up membership in local clubs. Active participation in these activities reflects a migrant's degree of attachment to the host culture (Richardson et al. 2004). It has been argued that migrants' engagement with social activities organised by mainstream society has great potential to facilitate the settlement of migrants (Khoo & McDonald 2001).

This section uses quantitative data to gauge the involvement of respondents with the host society in various ways. Table 7.1 (below) shows how frequently Bangladeshi migrants participate in local community events such as voluntary work, club or sports programs, working bees, and fund-raising events. A striking feature that emerges from the table is that about 60% of respondents have never participated in any local community event. Another 19% report that they participate in community events once every few months, while the remaining 21% have informed us they get involved once a month or more. The table also shows that the women's participation rate in local community events is much lower than men's. This is evident from the datum that 54% of males and more than 68% of females never take part in community events.

Table 7.1: Respondents' participation in local community events

	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
More than once a week	-	-	-
Once a week	5.1	8.3	-
2 or 3 times a month	9.2	9.2	9.2
Once a month	7.1	6.7	7.9
Once every few months	18.9	21.7	14.5
Never	59.7	54.2	68.4
N	196	120	76

Respondents were also asked whether they had joined a local organisation such as a sports club, school committee, a charity or a religious organisation. Their responses appear in Table 7.2 (below) which shows that a little more than a quarter of respondents are either currently active members of a club or used to be. A large majority (73%) had not become involved with a club or any other body during their settlement period. Women's membership was particularly low (14%) as compared with men's (35%). Thus it is clear that Bangladeshi migrants as a bloc are not 'joiners', being disinclined to engage with the local community either in public events or at club level. While the whole ethnic community remains largely uninvolved, this propensity is most pronounced among women respondents.

Table 7.2: Respondents' membership in local organisations

	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
No	73.3	64.9	85.2
Yes	23.6	30.7	13.6
Previous member	3.1	4.4	1.2
N	195	114	81

Tables 7.1 and 7.2 have illustrated the degree and nature of respondents' interaction with their host society through the vector of organisational activities. But such interaction can also occur at a personal level, every time a migrant communicates with neighbours or colleagues, or visits friends or meets people from other communities.

Table 7.3 (below) reports how often respondents spend time with people from other communities. It can be seen from the table that 39% of respondents share the company of people from another community at least once a week, and 26% report that they never spend time with people from other communities. Interestingly, women seem to spend more time mixing with people from other communities than men do. More than half the women responding to this question (53%) reported making such contact at least once a week, but only 30% of men said they did so. This may be due to mothers' greater involvement in children's school activities which affords them more opportunity to interact with people from other communities (see, Ryan 2007, p. 308).

Table 7.3: Respondents' level of engagement with people from other community

	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
More than once a week	14.3	12.7	18.8
Once a week	24.2	17.8	33.7
2 or 3 times a month	10.1	10.2	10.0
Once a month	9.9	8.5	10.0
Once every few months	15.7	21.2	7.5
Never	25.8	29.6	20.0
N	198	118	80

Apart from local community participation, migrants' economic engagement with the host society can also create social bridging capital and be conducive to their integration. For example, Garcia-Ramirez et al. (2005) stress that employed people have a greater scope for generating social networks. This is because employment gives a person the opportunity to interact with colleagues or business associates who are likely to be from other ethnic communities. Economic participation, measured by respondents' labour market participation was discussed in Chapter Five. It may be recalled that the vast majority of respondents (86%) are in the workforce.[93] As indicated in that chapter, this figure is in excess of the national average for workforce participation (72%).

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[93] See, Table 5.8 in Chapter Five.

Overall, the extent of economic engagement among Bangladeshi migrants in Australia is remarkable. To a marked degree this can be attributed to their advanced human capital (education and English-language proficiency).

Qualitative responses

The survey data suggest that most Bangladeshi migrants in Australia have not forged close relations with their Australian host society. This section now turns to qualitative information obtained from interview participants, which aims to provide a clearer, and more nuanced, picture of Bangladeshi migrants' level of incorporation in this society.

Participation in community events: Information obtained through interviews reveals that few Bangladeshi migrants can be found working as (unpaid) volunteers in this country. Of the 52 interview respondents, only nine said they took part in working bees at their children's school. Four of them also helped out at the school fete. Most interviewees maintain that, before coming to Australia, they were not familiar with these kinds of activities. Working bees were totally unfamiliar to them since parents are not called upon to do manual work as part of any extracurricular activities at Bangladeshi schools. *Torun* was one of those parents who found this a strange custom:

> When I received the first letter from my child's school [stating] that on the weekend I was to go to school in the morning and do some manual jobs I was very surprised. I couldn't believe I was asked to do jobs what needed to be done by the builders, carpenters, painters, or cleaners.

Even though he was puzzled at receiving such a letter, *Torun* went along to see what it was all about, and was pleased by what he witnessed:

> I saw lots of parents came to help out, and they were enjoying the work. People were divided into different groups and started working, such as cleaning windows, painting, raking leaves from the playground, cleaning the play equipments and so on. It was – like a community work. Yes, it was. I started to feel good after joining in.

Female interviewee *Shaila* reported a similar experience:

> On the very first day of kinder, my daughter's teacher requested me very politely if I would like to broom the foyer, rake over leaves from the playground. I was a little embarrassed. How dare she asks me to do such things! Is it because I look different, my skin is brown? But soon I realised it went for each parent. I continued to help out and still I do, as long as I have some free time.

Torun's and *Shaila*'s reactions clearly demonstrate that, because Bangladeshi parents are unused to being asked to help out in their children's schools, their first response to being approached for assistance was bewilderment. Gradually they have come round to the view that this is a good way to serve the community. Still, most of the migrants in our cohort remain opposed to doing such tasks. What stops them joining in on working-bee duties? Their busy lives and unwillingness to do this type of labour, certainly, but a more important factor is a personal prejudice that derives from assumptions about how people in their social class should be expected to behave. In Bangladesh, it needs to be noted, well-off people rarely do manual work. Most of them employ domestic helpers to take care of everyday chores. So they are unlikely candidates to become working-bee volunteers, at least in the first instance. *Rana* voiced the objection of people in his social stratum thus:

> I do not participate in working bee because I don't really feel to do manual work.

This remark clearly shows that *Rana*'s preconceptions about manual work prevent him from offering to lend a hand. *Mahmood* had a more rational explanation for his non-involvement

> Working bees are usually scheduled in the early morning Saturday. It's the only morning I can sleep late. I am not so enthusiastic to leave bed so early for community work.

Shovon, who is not solidly built, had his own reasons for dropping off the working-bee roster:

> I joined one day in working bee in my child's school and found it really hard. I am afraid I am not that much fit. So I stopped and never attended.

The above remarks demonstrate that one conventional attitude alone is not responsible for Bangladeshi migrants' reluctance to work as volunteers. From the prejudices of a social class to a lack of physical fitness, a range of reasons is cited. It should be noted that "lack of physical fitness" does not necessarily mean that person is sick or physically frail. Rather, it shows he was unaccustomed to manual work back in Bangladesh.[94] So he finds it quite hard to exert himself at the tasks he is called upon to perform at a working bee.

As mentioned earlier, a few participants report that they volunteer to help out at the school fete, while apart from fetes and working bees no one reported that they'd involved themselves in other events at their children's school (such as Father's Day breakfast, a footy-day lunch and a family dinner). [95] Interviewees said nothing like this was done in Bangladesh. For Shovon, asking him to attend such functions was too much to ask:

> In my child's school, Father's Day breakfast starts at 7 o'clock in morning, and also on weekday. I can't make it since I have work. Moreover, fathers are asked to bring (BYO) cutleries, chair, or mat … etc. I know local people enjoy it, but I really don't feel like joining in.

Shovon's statement leaves no room for doubt that he does not feel so bound up with his host community that he will entertain the idea of joining in communal activities associated with his child's school. His attitude, as conveyed in the words quoted above, is typical of the reasons given by most of his ethnic community for non-participation on neighbourhood events.

In the same way, when the interviewees were asked whether they work in opportunity shops they declared they had no time spare for voluntary work. Op shops are mostly organised by volunteers, especially elderly retirees. They are also free of family responsibilities. By doing community jobs they can be engaged in work again and feel valued. But not a single Bangladeshi migrant in this study became involved in

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[94] Most of the middle class families employ paid domestic workers due to the availability of cheap labours in Bangladesh. This is quite uncommon even for wealthy people in Australia. Therefore Bangladeshis are not likely to do hard work that requires physical movement, such as cleaning, painting, and gardening, while in Australia people do these works voluntarily in working bee.

[95] Father's day breakfast, footy day lunch, and family dinner are family events in most of the Australian schools.

community work after retiring. All four elderly women and two men who are retired have firm commitments to their extended family and ethnic community so they do not devote their free time to local community work. In fact, it appears they do not have any 'free time'. Mrs *Khan* explains:

> My children are grown up and live in other city. But they visit us every weekend. I am so busy at home that I don't feel like going outside. We also attend Bangladeshi community programs. When our children are away, my husband and I are at home. We are busy making phone call to our relatives and friends in Bangladesh, and other countries. This is how elderly people spend time in Bangladesh, you know. They don't really retire until they leave the last breath.

Mrs *Khan*'s words indicate that Bangladeshi migrants are very family-oriented, and so unlikely to engage in community work within the host society. A few interviewees did mention that, to gain experience, they had worked in op shops, because experience of that kind was often helpful when it came to land a job in customer care.

Interviewees were also asked whether they were members of any local clubs. Only two elderly men replied in the affirmative, and four interviewees said they had belonged to local clubs in the past. It is worth noting in this connection in a typical Bangladeshi household elderly men are not likely to be found busying themselves with household chores. So, the need to keep themselves occupied may account for why these four contributed with local events. In stark contrast, none of the women took part in even a single local event. The research established that Bangladeshi women, irrespective of age, were most likely to be carrying out domestic duties. Language difficulties probably constitute an extra barrier to women's participation in local events within the host society. But the women themselves largely confined their explanations to the fact they were so busy with their household responsibilities and activities being organised within their ethnic community.

Engagement with host society at an individual or personal level: Most respondents confirmed that they had few dealings with members of the host society – that is, with people belonging to other communities or cultural groups. *Reema* offered this explanation:

I know a few people from other communities. But I don't have their contact numbers. When we meet we exchange smile and say 'Hi', 'Hello', or talk about something like weather – and that's all. They are very good and friendly, but I don't feel like to involve with them emotionally.

From this we can see that *Reema* has a very formal relationship with the people in her host society. Her attitude epitomises that of most respondents possess similar attitudes. Beyond formal greetings, nothing in the way of an emotional bond is likely to develop between 'guests' and 'hosts' in this society. According to the interviewees, it is unusual; for members of the host society to forge an emotional tie with a migrant: rather, say our respondents, they were very reserved towards migrants and preferred to keep their distance. They prefer to maintain a significant distance or a reservation. What *Rafiq* had to say on this was very illuminating:

I have some friends from outside of my own community. They are nice to me, yet I find a wall between us. They are not as attached with me as they are with a local friend. It can be easily disclosed from their behaviour.

Although it was stated earlier that people from the host society are normally welcoming towards migrants in spite of their different appearance and clothing (see Chapter Five), they may not be interested developing an emotional bond with strangers. The research on this point, therefore, found that the reticence marking their relations was mutual. Respondents also pointed out that their busy lifestyle did not leave them time to develop close ties with the host society. *Aman* explained:

My wife and I work full-time. In office we maintain a friendly relation with the colleagues, no matter what ethnic backgrounds they are from. However, after work we head back home straightaway; we do not have time to hang around with other people.

Aman's view reverberated with several of the interviewees who have also not become close to any members of the host society. But some interviewees went further, identifying particular factors that created distance between 'guest' and 'host' cultures.

Reservations about religious and cultural values adopted by Australians amounted to a barrier making close relations with settled Australians impossible, interviewees argued.

The lifestyle and dietary habits of host society people are completely different from those of Bangladeshis, as *Fatema*, a mother of two school-age children, asserted:

> I know a few mums who I meet with in my child's school. We have little chat in drop off and pick up time. Mums' group get together for morning tea in each term, but I don't join them since they have alcohol.

Fatema's testimony reflects the misgivings many Bangladeshi migrants have about their host society's religious and cultural values, the most significant of these being the acceptance of alcohol consumption in public. This fact alone can create a cultural no-go zone for Bangladeshis who might otherwise have attended social get-togethers with members of the host society. Yet *Fatema*'s opposition to the presence of "alcohol at morning tea" may be misconceived because alcohol is not generally served at morning tea in Australia.[96] So it seems that on this occasion *Fatema* made an uninformed judgement based on the ethnic stereotype that 'Anglos are always drinking'.

Here it should be noted that the migration literature, broadly speaking, focuses on host country people's misconceptions about the culture of newcomers, especially Muslims (Pedersen et al. 2009; Yasmeen 2010; Haghighat 2013). But one of this study's findings suggests that migrants may just as easily have misconceptions about their host country. Cultural misunderstanding is only likely to foster a sense of exclusion among migrants which may well threaten their chances of integration with the host society. A lack of confidence about migrants' grasp of English has been identified as another potential barrier to engaging with people from the host society. Elderly women are most likely to find themselves in this group. For example, Mrs *Islam* admitted that she did not make friends with people from other communities and blamed her lack of confidence in the ability to speak their language without embarrassing herself. She said:

> I speak English when I need to, but I am not comfortable to carry on a long conversation in English with other people.

In spite of living in Australia for more than two decades, she does not consider herself fluent in English. So the prospect of having long conversations with local people is one

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[96] Morning and afternoon tea includes light refreshments such as tea, coffee, fruit drinks, cakes and biscuits, etc., but not alcohol (ATO): Australian Taxation Office database http://law.ato.gov.au/atolaw/view.htm?docid=ITR/IT2675/NAT/ATO/00001

she finds daunting. She dreads embarrassment, fearing the people she is speaking with might laugh at her because of her poor English. According to Mrs *Islam* she is not out to make friends from other communities as she already has so many Bangladeshi friends. It is a picture of one person living in a closed society: with many friends from a single ethnic community, who are clustered together in an ethnic enclave, with her and them immersing themselves in ethnic-cultural events. This scenario does not leave much room for dealings with 'outsiders'. Mrs *Islam* appears to be acutely aware of this:

> More than 500 Bangladeshi people live in our area, two adjoining suburbs. We often get together: there is so much to do among ourselves. We feel like we are in Bangladesh and never feel like making friends from other cultures.

Another elderly woman, Mrs *Khan*, has been living in Australia for about 30 years. She said she had learned a few words of English, which she used on meeting her next-door neighbour, or going to the shop. Her vocabulary is limited to 'Hello', 'Good morning', 'Very good' and 'Thank you'. No wonder she has not made friends with non-Bangladeshis. Surprisingly, this isolation from the mainstream has not left her feeling excluded from the host society. Mrs *Khan* says her husband takes care of everything. She has not been anywhere on her own except for the nearest shopping mall. As a housewife and mother, she has been tied up all these years with taking care of her children and household management. Although she used to feel isolated in the aftermath of her arrival because she could seldom keep in touch with anyone back in the home, she claims it did not take long for her to get over that:

> I am lucky I always have Bangladeshi neighbours. You know how it feels like – a Bangladeshi neighbour is more like a family. So I never feel lonely and I don't think I need to be attached with the local people.

These strikingly convergent views voiced by two elderly women indicate that forging ties with members of the host society may actually not have such a significant bearing on the acculturation of Bangladeshi women migrants in Australia. But this assumption is principally true for elderly women who live in a culturally familiar neighbourhood and do not go out to work. On some criteria they would appear to be marginalised. Yet it is clear from the above observations that how busy one is with work commitments is only one explanation of why women like Mrs *Islam* and Mrs *Khan* cannot develop close

relations with people from other cultural backgrounds. Cultural, religious and language barriers all play their part. Finally, living among a culturally self-contained migrant community removes one more incentive for women to develop an affinity with Australians in general.

It is also remarkable that a strong attachment to the host society does not always make a big difference, especially when measuring settlement success. According to *Shaila*,

> I never feel I have to have Aussie friends. It's not like that I can't speak English or behave with them. Friendship is not something like – you make, because you have to, rather it's a feeling and it comes from your heart. I don't feel for them this way. Their way of life, values, their dream – the way they behave, eat, dress, everything is different from mine. Therefore, I never feel attached with them.

Similarly, *Shovon*:

> I have a few friends from other communities, but the difference is that they cannot touch my heart as much as a Bangladeshi friend can do.

The above statements clearly show that Bangladeshi migrants have not tightly embraced their host society as much as they have their fellow Bangladeshis. As discussed in Chapter Six, migrants nowadays are in daily contact with their home country, thanks to the rapid spread and prevalence of information technology. This has reduced the need for them to pursue 'real-world' dealings with the host society except (apart from the question of workforce participation).

There is a distinct difference of attitude separating Bangladeshis who migrated to Australia between the 1970s and 1990s from their compatriots who landed here later. Back then the Bangladeshi community in Australia was not as strong and widespread as it is today. Contact with home was neither as easy nor as frequent, which left many migrants feeling lonely. To combat such feelings would reach out to their neighbours. For instance, Mr *Zaman* says he had no friends or relatives when he first came to Australia. To make his wife and children happy he used to invite some of his neighbours over for tea. That would keep his family busy entertaining guests, which lies at the core of traditional Bangladeshi hospitality. But even Mr *Zaman* admits he did not want his children to grow too close to the host culture, due to the differences dividing the two cultures. So, even though they liked to spend leisure time with local people, it

was very rare for any deep affinity to grow between Bangladeshi migrants and people in the host society.

The findings also suggest that, like those migrants who arrived from the '70s to the '90s, those living in rural regions, where an ethnic community is not as well established, are likely to interact frequently with those from the host society. Yet, when ethnic communities in regional areas grow, they often bond more tightly than their 'city cousins' (see Chapter Six). This may well be because rural and country-town dwellers are often more community-minded in general. One interviewee who used to live in 'the bush' but later transitioned to suburban life in a major city, remembered attending various local events such as village fetes, school fetes, and being on friendly terms with the community collectively. Many respondents view country people as more welcoming than city folk, for example *Asif*:

> Most of the local people in my neighbourhood were old and lonely. They had no work. Gardening, walking around home and watching TV were their everyday activities. In a few days after moving to the regional town, I realised how they longed for company. When we offered them food, they became so excited. I used to ask them if they needed any grocery when I was going to the supermarket, which made them very pleased.

Based on *Asif*'s testimony, one may observe that loneliness can strike migrants or local people, but that people living in the regions tend to be more open to new friendships than those caught up in the hustle and bustle of city life. With so many activities and entertainments taking up their time, it might not even occur to city dwellers to make friends from outside their own circle. In such an environment migrants and host country people living in urban areas are less likely to find the time to get to know each other.

Despite this, a number of interviewees denied they were disregarding the host culture. Many do, however, prefer to keep mainstream society at arm's length so as to teach their children the differences in values between Bangladeshi and Australian cultures. This objective was outlined by *Shabnam* thus:

> We try to attend local community events, because we want our children to adjust with the society so they do not stay behind. But we don't want them marrying from other cultures and religions.

Shabnam has spoken to her children about her concerns, which are widely shared. We found that the majority of interviewees, irrespective of religious affiliation (as stated earlier, they were either Muslim or Hindu), are anxious to preserve their religious and cultural boundaries. They expect their children to marry within their own culture and faith.

It should be noted that intercultural or inter-faith marriage[97] is not likely to acceptable in Bangladeshi society. Although intercultural marriage has been acknowledged by social scientists as a reliable indicator when measuring assimilation to the host society (Khoo 2012; Grzymała-Kazłowska 2015), the research finding of this study is that Bangladeshi migrants are unlikely to accept this fact willingly.[98]

Shabnam's forthright views and similar misgivings voiced by others strongly suggest Bangladeshi migrants in Australia are unlikely to compromise the fundamental social values of their cultural inheritance. Anxious that their children may not retain connections with Bangladeshi culture, some of the participants in this study preferred to maintain significant distance from the host culture. That is, a sense of *cultural insecurity* precludes Bangladeshi migrants from socialising extensively in the mainstream Australian culture.

Nonetheless, the study has found there are some people engaging with the host society in various ways, even as they remain concerned to see their cultural values are preserved. These people, in other words, are pursuing links with both cultures simultaneously, a fact revealed through interviews and field-work observations. As *Neela* has explained,

> I like spending time with people from other community, because I am interested in different ethnicity and cultures – more importantly, their way of life, relationship, and food. But I would never miss any event of my own community in order to attend others.

In similar vein, *Mahmood* noted,

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[97] Inter-faith marriage is not generally accepted in Bangladesh. The consequences of such marriages have been identified as one of the reasons driving Bangladeshi people to migrate (see, Chapter Four).

[98] The study observes that intermarriages are taking place among the children of Bangladeshi immigrants albeit not very significant.

> I have many Australian friends, who I often contact with. But when comes the priority I would always prefer my own community.

What these observations reinforce is that members of the Bangladeshi immigrant community can be simultaneously involved with the host society and events in their own ethnic and cultural domain, although they are likely to give preference to the latter. That said, some members of the migrant cohort said they maintained links with both cultures while giving priority to neither. *Sumon* was of this view:

> I have some Australian friends as well as friends form other ethnic communities. I spend time with them. They invite me in their places and so do I. We share our experiences – yes; I enjoy their company, because they are very open-minded and welcoming, I also attend community programs arranged by the Bangladeshi community. It feels like two separate worlds, and I feel attached with both groups.

Sadia clearly also felt comfortable living in multiple worlds:

> I have friends from other ethnic groups from work. They are very helpful. We often keep in touch. I invite them in any special occasions. They like my food, praise … my traditional outfit.

These statements by *Sumon* and *Sadia* confirm it is possible, at least for some people, to forge links with two dissimilar cultures at the same time. But it must be conceded that people belonging to this group may not be representative of the whole community. Based on our interviews and fieldwork observations, indeed, this group appears to be a significant minority in the Australian section of the Bangladeshi diaspora.

Even some of the study participants with strong ties to members of the host society recognise that many Bangladeshis feel uncomfortable in the presence of people from different origins whom they meet at social or family gatherings. *Aman* spoke about this:

> We used to invite our Australian neighbours and colleagues from different nationalities in any special occasion. But many people of my own community showed their discomfort since they had to speak English. Some of them objected in that they did not like having other people in the ethnic community gatherings.

Another interviewee, *Rikta*, put the point even more directly:

Some of my Bangladeshi guests directly asked me not to invite other people in common occasion[s], like Eid, or birthday. Since we eat with hand while they use spoon, many of us do not feel comfortable with others. They think, maybe other people consider us uncultured.

The cited observations of *Aman* and *Rikta* clearly demonstrate that some Bangladeshis, find the presence of host society members at an ethnic gathering either undesirable or unacceptable, Bangladeshi migrants who adopt such a view are likely to feel nervous when people speaking two different languages are in the same room, or to take offence at certain Western behaviours and culinary preferences

Some respondents in this study have also reported that Bangladeshi people in general tend to criticise fellow community members who have more interaction with people from the host society. This is reflected in a remark from *Shihab*'s:

I have a number of friends from local as well as other ethnic communities. They often come to my place. We discuss on our work plan. Sometimes we go holiday together. They are very open-minded, informal and simple people. I am much comfortable with these friends. But when I go to any Bangladeshi party, I often hear some people saying to me, "Oh, you are Aussie. What are you doing here?" They are, like, teasing me. [But] I find this quite embarrassing and painful as well.

Shihab indicates that he feels excluded among his own ethnic community because of his interaction with host society people. So, he prefers to keep a little distance between him and his own community. This accords to some extent with Gordon's statement (Gordon 1964) that within the uni-dimensional process of acculturation "retention of the heritage culture and acquisition of the receiving culture were cast as opposing ends of a single continuum" (Gordon 1964, cited in Schwartz et al. 2010, p. 3). Gordon (1964) also observed that when migrants acquire the values, practices and beliefs of a host culture, the hold they have on the values of their original culture is likely to wane. But this assumption does not apply in *Shihab*'s case. In spite of his growing links with the host society, the intensity of his attachment to the culture he has inherited does not fade away. He proclaims himself to be passionate about maintaining his religion and inherited cultural values He also clarifies that his local friends are aware of his religious

and cultural beliefs and practices, such as his saying prayers five times a day, his refusal to touch alcohol, and his refusal to eat meat that is not *halal*. He reports that his friends display admiration for his commitment to inherited culture and values. They even try to ensure he does not ignore his religious and cultural obligations. Therefore, he in no way feels excluded by his local friends.

Shihab's experience offers reassuring evidence that migrant involvement with a host need not be pursued at the expense of one's heritage culture. In other words, to build a cultural bridge to mainstream society need not necessitate 'burning bridges' with the culture one grew up with.

Relationship with neighbours: To a question about their relationship with neighbours many interviewees noted that they hardly know the people living in the same neighbourhood. More than half the interviewees said they had no interaction at all with the people next door. *Reba*'s observation was echoed by many others:

> We have been living in the same apartment for four years. There are three more apartments on the same floor, and more on the top floors, but we don't know each other. When we meet in the stairs or car park we nod, smile or at best say 'Hi', and that's all.

She continued,

> I don't even know where they are from. Some of them look like Indian, for especially I often smell spices, while some look like Chinese. I also see white people, don't know whether they are Australian or not.

She emphasised that her busy work schedule, household chores, time spent touching base with people back home, and community events, all kept her preoccupied. So she did not feel the need, or have enough time, to develop relationships with her neighbours who are almost strangers to her. *Reba*'s account is quite similar to *Aman*'s, who spoke of having a busy work schedule that kept him them occupied, and in any case he did not feel an urge to make friends from among the host community.

Another interviewee, *Imra*n the university lecturer, reported a tad more social interaction. For example, he would stop for a "little chat" on the road, in garden or in

the neighbourhood, if he came across people from the host society. But no one from either side of the cultural divide visited each other's home.

> This is a limited relationship. We hardly get over [out of] the 'comfort zone'. In spite of having conversation for long time we may not feel comfortable to invite them inside our house. They also don't say us to do the same. So no attachment grows except for a very formal relationship.

But, if the person next door, or even way down the street, is from the Bangladeshi community, a totally different picture emerges. For instance, *Sheela* mentioned that she hadn't spoken to her next-door neighbour for months. They were almost strangers to each other in spite of living on the same floor. Asked whether insufficient command of English accounted for their lack of social interaction, *Sheela* replied,

> It's not language that creates a barrier, I just didn't feel to make any connection. They also didn't show welcoming approach. So it never happened.

When that neighbour moved out, a Bangladeshi family occupied their apartment and, according to *Sheela,* they became family in no time. *Imran* said, and other interviewees confirmed, that when one Bangladeshi meets another they make a point during their very first meeting of inviting them to drop by their home.

On the topic of interaction with the immediate community, however, our research tells a different story. A number of interviewees assured us they were on friendly terms with their neighbours. Instead of only hi, they reported having meaningful conversations. They also visit each other for tea, and sometimes share a meal. *Bonna* provided a heart-warming example of such friendship flourishing:

> The lady who lives next door is very old. She lives on her own and likes to talk with me. I often meet her and give her food. She appreciates that, and she also gives presents to my son on his birthday and Christmas.

Sara spoke of a similar experience. Her next-door neighbour is an old Australian man who lives by himself. His children come to see him occasionally. *Sara* says she has a lot of time for him. She gives him food, and the man treats her like his daughter. But both *Bonna* and *Sara* cautioned that they were not particularly close to other neighbours. Their observations demonstrate that they are happy to help elderly neighbour, offering

them company or sharing a meal, and while doing so feeling that they are in some manner honouring their parents. *Sara* passed on a very touching remark by her elderly neighbour. Apparently he is so grateful to her that he often says, "I wish I lived in Bangladesh now." It should be noted that elderly people back in Bangladesh are not normally neglected. If children cannot look after parents, other relatives or paid carers do. They do not live by themselves. So a cautious note must be struck, with the recognition that sharing time with an elderly neighbour, motivated mainly by sympathy should not be mistaken for a desire to be socially active in the host society.

Still, a number of interviewees confirmed that they had friendly relations with their neighbours. *Shabnam*, for one, explained that she had a very warm relationship with her Australian neighbours. They would not drop into each other's home as often as Bangladeshi people do but they sometimes ate together. They often strike up a conversation while working in the gardens. She says,

> If we go for a holiday we request our next neighbours to water in our garden, have [eat] the veggies and keep an eye on the house. In the same way when they are away we look after their garden and home.

Shabnam's comment shows that harmony between neighbours, based on pleasant cooperation, is possible. *Rikta*'s relationship with her neighbours is even more supportive:

> My next-door neighbour is so good, she cooks vegetarian meal for my whole family the day we are back from long holiday. So I don't need to worry about cooking after long and tiring travel.

*Rikt*a's story, delivered with obvious gratitude, also shows that her neighbour is aware of her dietary requirements (she eats *halal*), which is why she delivers a vegetarian, not a meat, meal. This anecdote proves that a close and treasured friendship featuring supportive communication is possible between neighbours, even ones from different faith and cultural traditions.

Although it has previously been pointed out that a misperception about the host culture will probably hinder the process of integration with that host society, the participants often noted that they were not hostile to local people. One of the interviewees, *Shahid,*

whose religious conviction are visible in his growing facial hair as well as his Islamic clothing, had this to say:

> My next-door neighbour is an Australian man who often says I have a nice smile. We often chat and exchange our opinion about so many things happening in the world. He doesn't seem to be furious about Muslims.

Shahid went on:

> Islam is no longer a prehistoric concept among the Australians. Most of the local people have minimum knowledge about us, the Muslims: such as we eat halal, we wear modest costumes, and we do fast in the month of *Ramadan*. In general, people show respect to the Muslims. I have never experienced any encounter because of my long beard and knee-length outfits.

Despite the fact that many Muslims, especially neo-revivalists, remain aloof from the host culture (as seen in Chapter Six), *Shahid* has shown that he possesses a positive attitude towards local people in general. In his opinion, Western media is often biased and hostile to Muslims. Kabir (2006) discovers similar attitude of Australian Muslims to media.

Relationship with co-workers: To a question about their relationship with co-workers, a majority of respondents described their relations with office colleagues as friendly but formal. In spite of being relaxed enough in each other's company, an emotional bond rarely forms between Bangladeshi and Australian co-workers. Apart from official meetings they hardly interact with each other. Respondents in this study thought cultural boundaries might be responsible for colleagues from differing cultural backgrounds not having more to do with each other. Typically, a few respondents mentioned, a Bangladeshi worker would rush off home at the end of their shift instead of socialising with workmates. Cultural boundaries, and different habits, are responsible for *Tanvee*r keeping his work and private lives compartmentalised:

> I got home as soon the job is done for the day. I don't feel like spending time with the colleagues after work. Some of my colleagues go to pub, especially on Friday: almost everyone goes there and have fun. But, you know – I can't do that.

Tanveer's comment portrays these two different cultures in sharp relief, with a reminder that Bangladeshis may not feel right about becoming too emotionally close to their workmates. Although they collaborate during work hours, after work they retreat into two separate worlds. Their lifestyles, family matters, cultures, and values make could all be perceived as incompatible. Aside from personal and cultural boundaries, the attitude of local colleagues is often perceived as an impediment to closer relations, as *Shaila* explains:

> My six white colleagues and I share the same office. Yes, they look friendly, but the way they behave with me is totally different. For example, when I enter into the room I realise – their voice goes down. Apparently, they try to avoid me. I notice sometimes they go for coffee without even informing me. It feels little insulting and I feel excluded.

Shaila's co-workers may be keeping her at a distance because she looks different, A few interviewees said that although local people generally went out of their way to show they were welcoming of migrants, there were still many who preferred to 'put the shutters up'. This thesis is cautious about making assumptions about the attitude of people from the host society simply based on the random experiences of a few interviewees. As seen earlier, Bangladeshi migrants are likely to be occupied with their own familial and ethnic events and, more importantly, are constantly aware of the limits their religion and culture impose upon informality, so that the opportunity to form a conscious bridge with the host culture never seems to arise

It was earlier observed that owing to their lack of proficiency in English, some respondents did not feel comfortable conversing with anyone outside their own community. On top of that, cultural dissimilarity (especially in matters to do with food preparation and preferences) acts as another force driving the host culture and ethnic community further apart. From the outside it is not easy to conclude whether it is people from the host society who are building this 'wall', or the migrants themselves, with their cultural boundaries and liability to misunderstand the host culture's attitude towards them. Yet, one thing is apparent from the survey findings: each side perceives there are limits to what it will find acceptable in the other. It may well be that this mutual awareness that their relations are dominated by walls and boundaries rather than bridges that is responsible for the persistent detachment between Bangladeshi migrants and their

Australian co-workers. Put another way, cultural misunderstanding from both sides could explain the gap.

Engagement with non-Bangladeshi immigrants: Curiously, a number of interviewees reported having closer ties to other immigrant groups than they did to Australians. The reason the respondents themselves give for this is that they all share a common identity, that of immigrants to Australia, even though their ethnic backgrounds are not the same. Many have similar migration stories to tell, having left the country of their birth to settle in a new environment. Moreover, they are likely to undergo similar settlement challenges, such as overcoming homesickness, learning a new language, finding work, and coming to terms with the host society. With all this in common, they often sense a special connection or bond among themselves, one that is lacking between them and members of the host society.

Apart from the reasons given above, cultural, religious and historical factors may be at work in promoting interaction between particular ethnicities, such as Bangladeshis' interaction with Indians and Pakistanis. Historically Bangladeshis were linked to the people of both these nations. Culturally, Bangladeshis have much in common with others in their geographical neighbourhood. For example, members of Bangladesh's Hindu community, being as they are a minority, find it more convenient to observe religious festivals such as *Durga Puja* with their co-religionists from across the border in West Bengal of India. More importantly, they (Bangladeshis and Hindus from West Bengal) speak the same language, *Bangla*, which is an extra asset and a spur to interaction between them.

Looking further afield than South Asia, Bangladeshi Muslims have strong links to immigrants from Middle Eastern countries where there shared 'Muslim identity' plays a role. These connections foster the maintenance of their jointly observed cultural and religious festivals, such as *Eid*, in a harmonious way. Our findings indicate that the majority of our interview cohort feels at one with the global Muslim community, and that such unity provides them with a sense of belonging to a community strong in its faith and motivated by a keen yearning for transcendent spirituality. At the same time our respondents acknowledge Australia as a land that prizes freedom. The story of *Laila*, told below, shows that, instead of embracing Western culture, she has been

inspired by Islamic spirituality, and her faith has been strengthened by interaction with the broader Muslim community.

Case study 7.1: Change in religious practice

Laila was born into a Muslim family in Bangladesh. She was brought up in a progressive environment, where religion was not a significant concern for her and most of her friends, the higher things they set their minds on were glamour, fashion, and entertainment. Copying the Bollywood actress dress-up had been all the rage when she was a teenager. She also loved the Western lifestyle, its clothing its music, and its movies. She hardly ever performed her prayers or other religious rituals as long as she was in Bangladesh. While living there, she looked down on those wearing the burqa or traditional Islamic outfits. She recollects, "I used to laugh at the people who looked funny because of their Islamic outfit. I also believed those people could never be as smart as I was then."

When she came to Australia she discovered that as the perfect place to pursue the Western way of life she had arrived in paradise. She found Australia to be a better place than Bangladesh in every way. This, Laila told herself, was where she was meant to be. But this feeling did not last long. About one and half years after moving to Australia she transformed into a new person Ask her, and she will tell you she has discovered a divine faith inside her. Now she performs prayers and tries to maintain every single ritual taught in Islam. Her Islamic outfit is beyond the imagination of her friends and family because of its length and depth. She is passionate about passing on her new spiritual state to her children so that they continue the legacy. In her opinion, she would not have learnt the true lesson of Islam if she were in Bangladesh now, even though Bangladesh is a predominantly Muslim country.

Laila's story demonstrates that affiliation with the broader Muslim community, especially with the neo-revivalists, has transformed her as a pious Muslim Asked what had changed her life and attitude so dramatically, *Laila* praises the Muslim family – with its sense of brotherhood and sisterhood – composed of the faithful from all over the

world. Attending mosque and Islamic discussion groups also influenced her, she is happy to tell you, and planted the seed of spirituality deep in her soul.[99]

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed social, cultural, and economic engagement by Bangladeshi migrants in Australian society. Based on both quantitative and qualitative information, the study has found that Bangladeshi migrants' bridging capital is much weaker than their bonding capital. That is, Bangladeshi migrants have a very low level of involvement with their host society. Very few of the respondents participate in community endeavours such as working bees, school fetes and other voluntary activities. Unfamiliarity on the part of respondents with the social system and cultural norms in the host society tended to inhibit participation in social activities with the host community.

Similarly, engagement with the host society at a personal level is also seen as very weak. In spite of living here for more than 20 years, many migrants lack any emotional tie with the people of their host society. Some respondents ascribe their aloofness from the mainstream to factors such as cultural boundaries, the strength of ethnic networks and robust family ties. Others point to the unwillingness of the host society members to extend the hand of friendship to migrants. Cultural boundaries aside, migrants' own misperception of host society culture is found to be an important obstacle to migrants' social and cultural integration.

The degree to which participants relate well – or at all – to their neighbours is strongly variable. Some prefer not to invest any emotional energy in getting to know their neighbours since they have so much to do within their own ranks. Cultural conflict creates another barrier, and for that reason many Bangladeshis feel little obligation to form make friends of their neighbours (other than those of Bangladeshi origin). Exceptionally, a few live in harmony with their Australian or, non-Bangladeshi immigrant neighbours, even if they visit them less often they do fellow Bangladeshis.

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[99] Women rarely attend mosque in Bangladesh. In Australia all mosques have separate arrangements for women. Attending mosque is credited with developing a new sense of spirituality among (some) Bangladeshi Muslim women.

The participants in this study consistently report that relations with their co-workers are very formal. Most of the respondents do not socialise with their colleagues after work. Once again, cultural rules as to what is acceptable or unacceptable conduct prevent bridges being established between respondents and their co-workers. Those co-workers' social reticence is revealed as yet another factor in the failure of Bangladeshi migrants to integrate better with their colleagues.

However, this chapter has also revealed that Bangladeshi migrants enjoy strong ties with migrants from other ethnic origins, particularly with South Asians and Muslims from other countries. Accounting for this are the cultural and religious affinities between people of other ethnicities and Bangladeshi migrants.

Bridging the gaps with similar cultural and religious groups makes it easier to perform religious observances such as at *Eid* or *Durga Puja*. As far as bridging with the host society is concerned, Bangladeshi migrants' cultural adaptation and engagement with the host culture is not very substantial.

CHAPTER EIGHT: SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCES OF BANGLADESHI WOMEN MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA

Introduction

Migration literature stresses that women migrants' pre-arrival characteristics are significantly different to men's. These differences, coupled with women's reproductive role, put them at a disadvantage which, in turn, may result in different settlement and acculturation outcomes for them (see, Ho 2006; Ahmed 2005; Mirdal 1984). It has been demonstrated by our respondents that this holds true for Bangladeshi women who have migrated to Australia (see, Chapter Five). For example, it has been observed that women's educational qualifications, English-language skills, and previous work experiences are inferior to men's. They were alarmed by the non-recognition of their qualifications, which required them to pursue further studies. Being of various ages when they migrated, these women had different motivations for quitting their homeland for a new life. All the above-mentioned factors go to explain why Bangladeshi women migrants have had such different settlement experiences. This chapter explores those issues, first using quantitative information to see how different settlement indicators vary according to gender. Qualitative information is then used to elaborate on the differences and show the effects, both positive and negative, of migration on Bangladeshi women's lives.

Indicators of successful settlement by gender: quantitative information

This section, based on quantitative data, compares gender differentials on important indicators of successful settlement. Table 8.1 presents labour market participation of the respondents by gender. The data show that women's participation in the labour market differs significantly from men's.[100] For example, 70% of women respondents are in the workforce: the corresponding percentage for men is 98%. Thus, non-participation in the labour market is much more common for women (30%) than it is for men (2%). As far as employment is concerned, more than 75% of male respondents worked full-time or were self-employed, with a corresponding figure of only 42% for women. Further, there are more women working part-time (19%) than men (14%). Thus, the table clearly

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[100] These differences are statistically significant – the p-value of chi2 statistics is 0.00, much lower than the conventional significance threshold level of 0.05.

indicates that Bangladeshi women migrants are less integrated in the labour market than men.

Table 8.1: Respondents' labour market participation (by gender)

	Gender	
Participation	Male (%)	Female (%)
Self-employed	20.2	9.5
Employed full-time	55.5	32.1
Employed part-time	14.3	19.1
Looking for job	8.4	9.1
Not looking for job	1.6	30.2
N	119	84

Despite women's lower rate of labour market participation, it is noteworthy that more women work after migration than before. It may be recalled that only 44% of women respondents were employed before migration (see Table 4.6, Chapter Four). This percentage is much higher after migration (60%). It is notable that women respondents' participation in the workforce (70%) exceeds the Australian average for women aged 20-74 years (65%) (ABS 2012). Thus, it can be assumed that migration has created (or necessitated) greater scope for women to participate in the economy.

Not only are women' as a whole less participative in the workforce, they also earn significantly less than men. This is observed below in Table 8.2, which shows the income levels of respondents across gender. The table shows that nearly half of women respondents (48%) earn less than $40,000 a year. Only 26% for men are in this income bracket. Further, only 24% of women respondents earn more than $80,000 a year. In sharp contrast, nearly half the men (48%) earn this much. That women receive a lower income than men can be attributed to the fact that in the main they work at the lower end of the job ladder, which must be considered along with the fact that many are working part-time.

Table 8.2: Respondents' personal income (by gender)

	Gender	
Income	Male (%)	Female (%)
Less than 40,000	25.8	47.9
40,001- 80,000	26.1	27.8
80,001- 120,000	35.6	20.1
120,001-140,000	10.6	4.2
140,001 and above	1.9	-
N	104	48

Despite their low income, women seem to be more satisfied with their jobs than men are, as indicated below in Table 8.3. A higher proportion of women (76%) claim to be very satisfied or satisfied with their job. The corresponding figure for men is 67%. Conversely, fewer women than men say they are dissatisfied with their job. For example, only 4% of women report job dissatisfaction, compared with 14% of men.

Table 8.3: Respondents' job satisfaction (by gender)

	Gender	
	Male (%)	Female (%)
Very satisfied	26.8	34.0
Satisfied	40.0	42.0
Fairly satisfied	19.4	20.0
Not very satisfied	9.2	4.0
Not satisfied at all	4.6	-
N	109	50

Satisfaction with life is also significantly different across gender. Interestingly, it is the women who are more satisfied with their life in Australia than their male counterparts. Table 8.4 (below) shows that more than 19% of women are very satisfied with their life in this country, compared with only 6% of men. The percentage of respondents who are satisfied with their job is also higher for women (47%) than for men (42%). By contrast, only 3% of women report being dissatisfied with life after migration, while for men this percentage is three times higher (nearly 10%).

Table 8.4: Respondents' life satisfaction (by gender)

Life satisfaction	Gender	
	Male (%)	Female (%)
Very satisfied	6.2	19.1
Satisfied	42.2	46.6
Fairly satisfied	39.0	31.0
Not satisfied	9.7	3.4
Not satisfied at all	0.9	-
N	113	89

It may be recalled that deep satisfaction with life in Australia is directly correlated to respondents' participation in the economy (as discussed in Chapter Five). So it is puzzling that women respondents, whose economic participation and income are both less than men's, report greater satisfaction with life. One logical explanation for this may be the presence of 'gendered reasons' for satisfaction that differ as between men

and women. That is to say, migration particularly benefits women in ways that are important to them than economic reward. These additional benefits may account for women's testimony that they are pleased with life in greater measure than their male counterparts. This inference would appear to be correct because it has been found that migration confers a number of identifiable benefits on many Bangladeshi women, ranging from safety to freedom and empowerment. In the following sections, qualitative information is used to elaborate Bangladeshi women's achievements and challenges, which may be related to their life satisfaction levels in the post-migration period.

Positive outcomes of migration for Bangladeshi women in Australia: Qualitative information

The women respondents in this study feel migration has brought about a number of positive changes in their lives. Chief among them is increased economic participation. Moreover, participants commonly related that migration had brought them freedom, comfort and happiness. Driving their own car, taking holidays, and exploring the beauty of Australia they identified as some of the most important aspects of life after migration. A number of respondents also expressed appreciation for their husbands' help within the household which, for socio-cultural reasons, was not often provided in Bangladesh. For other migration benefits they pointed to their children's pleasant childhood and better education compared with Bangladesh. These factors, which contribute to their high level of satisfaction with life in Australia, are discussed in the following section.

Economic participation of women in the labour market: Quantitative information provided in the previous section has shown that labour market participation for women respondents took a significant upturn after migration. Apart from educational qualifications, their greater participation is attributable to flexible work hours, the availability of child-care facilities and provision of adequate maternity leave in Australia. These factors encouraged them to join the workforce.

It should be noted in this context that women's labour force participation in Bangladesh is, generally, constrained by several factors, such as lack of all three of these conditions (Anam 2008; Faroque et al. 2013). In addition, Jahan (2010) lists as common barriers to women seeking work in the public service a 'patriarchal mentality', 'male domination', 'perceived lower social status of women', 'negative attitude of male colleagues' and,

above all, inadequate support from their family. Female respondents in this study have also identified these as deterrents to workforce participation in Bangladesh. While these elements also prevail in some sections of the Australian labour market, the degree to which they impact on women's employment is markedly different. Many women spoken to for this research related that, unlike the situation in Bangladesh, there is a 'dignity of labour' in Australia, where all work is valued. Therefore, to women with a university degree from Bangladesh, it does not really matter what sort of work they do. All these factors combine to explain the high rate of workforce participation by Bangladeshi migrants.

Consequently, Bangladeshi women explore their potential by taking on work that requires advanced educational qualifications, such as teaching, researching, banking, or working in a medical practice, IT, at local government level or in the Australian Defence Force. At the same time many others are working in child-care, aged care, beauty care and hairdressing, supermarkets and restaurants. Some women are running their own beauty or hairdressing salons, catering services and family day-care centres. Some of the respondents are working in their preferred occupations, while others have not been able to put to use educational qualification attained in Bangladesh. Yet the findings indicate that most women in the labour market feel valued because of the money they bring into the family, irrespective of whether they are working in their desired occupation.

One notable finding of this thesis is that women with lower educational qualifications are likely to integrate into the labour market more easily than those with high educational levels. Many respondents with lesser qualifications said they were aware that they would struggle to join the workforce with their qualifications and, in some cases, their level of English-language ability. To overcome this, they attended language courses as needed, and then enrolled in certificate courses (such as aged care, child-care, hairdressing, and hospitality management). The story of one such woman is related below.

Case study 8.1: Success story of a woman with lower education qualification

Maloti was born in a remote Bangladeshi village where it is rare for a woman to get the opportunity of studying for a higher degree. She was married soon after her school final, another reason she could not continue her studies. After marriage she went to live with her husband's joint family. She found "living in a joint family was good in the sense that there were lot of people who shared the responsibilities with each other. I acknowledge that sharing happiness and sadness, especially distributing the workload among the members of the family, was relaxing. However, that was not all. Hardest thing was to make people happy. There was so much complication. So I supported my husband's decision to migrate to Australia hoping that I would get a family and life of my own".

Maloti came to Australia with her husband and their two-year-old daughter. Like most Bangladeshi migrants her husband was the primary applicant when the family applied for permanent residency. But the early days of settlement were unexpectedly upsetting for Maloti. Her English was far below basic levels, as she had never practised speaking it in Bangladesh. Hence she could not communicate with people from other ethnic communities. She was too nervous to go shopping or get around on her own.

Things started to change when she enrolled in an Adult Migrant English- language Program (AMEP) which increased her confidence. She followed up the language program by completing a certificate course, and managed to get a job. Currently, she is the main breadwinner of the family; her husband, despite having high educational qualifications, has found himself unemployed. As a full-time employee Maloti earns a good salary. After paying all the utility bills and supplying the family's needs, she saves up for a trip home each year. She has also obtained her driver's licence. Her proficiency in English, her confidence, and her standard of living have all improved remarkably. She is no longer that village-woman who came to Australia five years ago.

Maloti's story confirms that in spite of little education she has settled more successfully than many highly educated women (the non-recognition of highly educated women's qualifications is addressed later in this chapter). Her migration to Australia has transformed *Maloti* from a dependent country girl into an independent woman. It has also brought freedom, privacy, and, above all, new meaning to her life. None of this would have been possible if she had not emigrated to Australia.

Freedom, comfort and happiness: As mentioned above, a number of the women respondents affirm that they are happier in Australia than they were in Bangladesh. They credit freedom, comfort, privacy, leisure, entertainment, and above all a hassle-free peaceful life for this state of happiness with Australian life. As indicated in *Maloti*'s story, many of the women in this study looked upon migration as a way to escape family complications in Bangladesh.[101] Since migrating they feel particularly valued because they have become decision-makers in their own households. The dimensions of this change are made clear by *Bithi* in these words:

> I couldn't do anything on my own back in Bangladesh. Whenever I wanted to go anywhere, I had to seek permission from in-laws. I had to answer to a lot of questions, what I was going for, who did I go with, when I was coming back, and so on. Being an educated and working woman it had been embarrassing, at the same time humiliating. Now I rule my own life. It feels really great!

Maloti's experience mirrors hers:

> When I was in Bangladesh I was always confused, and shy. I couldn't decide about anything on my own. I never thought I would drive my car and hang around all by myself. I have discovered a new 'me' in myself, who is much more confident, active and enthusiastic than ever before.

These statements by *Bithi* and *Maloti* demonstrate that Bangladeshi women enjoy freedoms in Australia they never had in Bangladesh. The freedom of their lives in Australia is acknowledged by almost all the women respondents. This replicates Ho (2006) who found that Chinese women enjoyed greater freedom after migrating to Australia.

Some women respondents report that their family relationship is stronger since they migrated. Reasons given for this included the opportunity to spend quality time with their family, which strengthened their family bond. In researching Asian immigrant families in New Zealand, Dixon et al. (2009) similarly indicate that after migration family bonds become much stronger than they were in his respondents' home countries. Although not all women interviewed for the current research used to live with an

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[101] Please refer to Chapter Four for more on this.

extended family in Bangladesh, they did report having often had to face problems and complications stemming from extended family issues.

For example, *Moona* recounted,

> I wasn't living with my in-laws but they used to interfere on my family affairs. I had a feeling like I had been monitored all the time. In spite of living on my own I was not actually on my own. Now that I am here, I am actually on my own: no one is monitoring or interfering.

Moona speaks for many Bangladeshi women. According to them, living their own way is one of the best migration outcomes of all. Also, a number of women respondents asserted that one of the great joys of their lives now is that they take family holidays together. Most respondents had stories to tell of family troubles that had undermined the chance to have a holiday break in Bangladesh. Some women also spoke of being able to save up for prolonged holidays, after which they feel mentally refreshed. It is not just going on holiday that provides these opportunities, but simply being able to 'do their own thing' which has had a significant impact on many women in this study. *Reshma* spoke very pointedly about this:

> I was not familiar with the word 'fun' as long as I was in Bangladesh. Life went on like a machine, in the same circle: responsibilities, hassle in daily life, and so many complications. Now we try to go out on weekends and have fun.

Reshma's remark could have been made by most of the Bangladeshi women surveyed for this thesis. It has been observed that in Bangladesh most women living in traditional marriages visit their parents' house once a year when their children have finished their final examinations, and this counts as their annual holiday.[102] Leading busy lives, they may think of taking a vacation. But after migration they discover life has new charms. They start off by going out as a way of overcoming loneliness, and eventually it becomes routine.

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[102] When I was a child, my mother used to travel to her parents' once a year. She had her first 'real holiday' after 42 years of married life when she and my father came to visit my brother and me in Australia. Similarly, my mother-in-law had her first holiday ever when she came to Australia in order to attend my husband's graduation ceremony. Many women in Bangladesh may not have that opportunity in their lifetime.

The findings also indicate that women who used to be housewives in Bangladesh and do not join the workforce after migrating to Australia may face fewer challenges than working women do. But this mostly depends on the economic standard their husbands' earnings can support. As long as the husband's income is adequate, and there is no economic hardship facing the family, non-working women in this cohort find Australia a much better place to live than Bangladesh. Some prefer to stay home and give quality time to their family, and in particular their children, rather than looking for work. *Reshma* exemplifies the thinking behind decisions like this:

> My husband's income is enough for the family. We also receive government allowances for the children. So I never feel like looking for a job. Moreover, I don't want to take extra stress of a working woman. If I do, I am afraid I won't be able to take care of my children properly.

Fatema was of a like mind:

> I can organise everything on my own way. I can do whatever I like. If I don't feel like cooking every day, we bring takeaway food, Children would love that too. Machines in the kitchen and laundry save my time. No extra stress.

So it is evident that women whose position in the domestic sphere has not changed much are likely to make a smooth adjustment to this different way of life, because they are less concerned about their personal career or occupational status. More importantly, they have freedom, privacy, leisure, and amusements, but above all, they report, their life is peaceful and free of hassle. They count these as the blessings of life, blessings that unfortunately were unavailable in their home country. The earlier findings of this research suggest that working women feel valued because work brings its own reward, but these women (housewives) do not feel they are missing out by not pursuing a career. This is so because of the comfort, freedom and happiness life in Australia has delivered them. Although there is no way to identify whether these women's settlement experience is better than that of the working woman, it is obvious that they face less stress. A few of them participate in social activities, such as mothers' groups at their children's school, but it is fair to say that integration is not a priority for many of them.

Women respondents attest to the usefulness and comfort conferred by the abundance of household appliances. According to them, the helping hands that lent family support in

Bangladesh have been replaced in Australia by mechanical appliances. *Indrani*, a newly arrived Bangladeshi woman, did not take long to discover how comfortable these labour-saving devices could make her life:,

> Back in Bangladesh not many people are likely to have their own cars or to use washing machines. Hot water system is not available in every house. Only rich people could afford these. While in Australia these are not the symbol of luxury, instead very important in everyday life of people, irrespective of classes.

Indrani's account, and those of other women in the cohort, put it beyond any doubt that the availability of domestic appliances renders life in Australia more comfortable than life in Bangladesh. A number of women included in their list of hassle-free domestic aids the uninterrupted supply of necessary services (electricity, gas, and water). This was in stark contrast to the situation they were used to in Bangladesh, as *Reshma* explained:

> The most common problem I experienced in Bangladesh was that water supply stopped when I was washing. The stoves ran out of gas in the middle of the cooking. Also the power shutdown when I was in the middle of something like baking, ironing, studying, or watching TV.

Reshma reports that she had not experienced these 'headaches' since coming to Australia, and this had improved the quality of her domestic life. Time spent purifying drinking water was identified as another annoying and time-consuming task back in Bangladesh.[103] In Australia, the women were pleased to discover, clean drinking water is available from kitchen taps around the clock.

It should also be noted that a number of respondents nominated the scarcity of pure water as one of the reasons they left Bangladesh (see Chapter Four). All in all, it can confidently be claimed, Australia offers a much improved lifestyle at the domestic level for women migrating from Bangladesh.

Positive family relationships: Husbands contributing around the home emerges as one of the noteworthy changes in family life reported by Bangladeshi women now living in Australia. In Bangladesh, cultural norms dictate that men are not expected to work in

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[103] To ensure safety, tap water needs to be boiled and/or filtered in most Bangladeshi households. The majority of women respondents in this study singled out water purification as a much disliked chore.

the kitchen or help their wives with household chores. In Australia, many men do vacuum-cleaning, lawn-mowing, dishwashing, and the laundry. Perhaps more importantly, many of them like to cook. They also help look after the children. *Reba* clearly approves of the change:

> My husband and I work full-time. In the weekend, he takes care of laundry and vacuum-cleaning, while I go for shopping to buy groceries. Sometimes I take one child with me, the other one stays at home with Dad. After I come back from shop I start cooking for the whole week. My husband gives me hand if he is free that time. I don't think I could have run my family and household this way if I was in Bangladesh. I couldn't even ask my husband – do this or do that. That wouldn't be acceptable, you know.

Reba's description of the way domestic duties are shared in her Australian household reflects a mutual understanding between husband and wife that would be unlikely to eventuate in Bangladesh. A significant number of Bangladeshi women went on to venture that that their relationship with their husband took a turn for the better following after migration, since they were now closer to each other than had been the case in Bangladesh. Those who used to live with extended family talk of being unable to get close to their spouse due to complicated family rules and expectations. One of the respondents who spoke in this vein was *Rani:*

> We never had a honeymoon after wedding, because he was too occupied with joint family responsibilities, so he couldn't make it. Moreover, he was a mum's pet. We didn't have much time of our own. I was not aware of his passion, likes and dislikes, any plan, even his income. Now that we are in Australia; we live on our own. You will be surprised to know I discovered him as a new man after five years of our wedding when we moved to Australia. We have begun a new life.

Rani's face beamed as she continued with her comparison:

> Well, it's true that I used to have maidservant and members of extended family to help me in household chores, but I find Australia more relaxing even though I need to handle the chores on my own. The main thing is that I have freedom in here and more importantly, I am the decision-maker. It's amazing, isn't it!

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Rani's painful recollection of the complications that flowed from living an extended family in Bangladesh struck a chord with the reminiscences of a number of participants, women in particular, during this research (see, Chapter Four). Zannoni (2010) reveals a similar experience of women and migration in a story about her mother. Although this story portrays episodes in the life of the author's mother in 1950s Italy, women's position in traditional extended families has changed very little. In spite of losing the former family support, many women find life after migration much more fulfilling, compared to how it was in their home country.

Another important finding is that, unlike migrants from other patriarchal societies, such as Asian, African, and Muslim countries (Tilbury 2007a; Mirdal 1984), Bangladeshi men who participated in this study did not complain about losing their authority over their wives in family life. Instead, they were appreciative about their wives' capacities and supported them in their endeavours. This study has discovered a number of women now engaged in professional activities or higher studies (e.g. pursuing a Master's or PhD) who emphasised their husband's support and contribution towards their professional or academic accomplishment. For example, *Naila*, a PhD candidate, revealed:

> My husband cooks, cleans, and takes care of children, whenever I need quality time before any submission, presentation etc. Without his support I couldn't have done this much.

Medical doctor *Amina*, echoed these sentiments while reflecting on her husband's support for her studies and subsequent career. Thus it is clear from the above discussion that, although the assistance of domestic workers and members of one's extended family are not available in Australia, this is offset – to a degree – by the co-operative attitude of a husband, and the access to reliable domestic appliances (discussed further below). These alleviate stress and make lives easier. More importantly, household chores are no longer seen as exclusively women's work. Interestingly, most of the women who pointed to their husbands' supportive role around the house today volunteered that their husbands were nothing like as cooperative while in Bangladesh. This research finding contrasts sharply with Johnson's (1998) where he reports that changes to traditional household roles are accompanied by conflict between husbands and wives (cited in Thomas 2003, p. 43).

Better care and education of children: It may be recalled from Chapter Four that respondents, especially women, emphasised the greater opportunities available to their children, as well as concerns over food safety, as primary reasons for migrating. A majority of women respondents observed that they could care better for their children's nutritional, health and recreational needs in Australia than they had been able to do in Bangladesh. Many also reflected on the perception that their children had been much healthier since migrating. They gave most of the credit for this to Australia's fresh air, food and drink. [104]

Significantly, the mothers of children with physical or mental disability remarked that they suffered less stress and anxiety over their children in Australia than they had in Bangladesh. They ascribed this to Australia's better health care and psychological support for people with disabilities and their families. In Bangladesh, children with disabilities are generally regarded as a burden on society, and parents are also often embarrassed for them. *Nilufar*, who has a daughter with a mental disability, recalls:,

> I had been so depressed with my daughter. There was no proper treatment for her. Moreover, neighbours, friends and relatives were always curious about her, while no one came with help and support. I can't explain how painful that was. I always wanted to hide her from other people. I never thought she would ever go to school. Now in Australia, I am so happy to see her going to school: I don't need to hide her anymore.

Nilufar goes so far as to say that migrating to Australia has saved her daughter. Not only does this country offer her daughter better care and a future, but it has saved the family from feeling a stigma that had been plaguing them for years.

Furthermore, mothers of school-age children express the utmost satisfaction with the improved care and schooling they have experienced in Australia: .

> The thing makes me happy that my children love school. They have so much fun all day long that they want to spend more time in school even when it's home time. On the other hand, I remember, school was a scary place in our childhood. We never had fun at school.

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[104] As seen in Chapter Four, interviewees have stressed that their children were frequently sick while living in Bangladesh, whereas since coming to Australia they have enjoyed good health.

Coming direct from Bangladesh, *Reshma*'s son had to enrol in school mid-year. She says he was overjoyed to see his new school:

> My son loves his new school. Back in Bangladesh he had to carry a bag full of books and notebooks that weighed more than he could bear. I had to pack the bag night before. If anything was missed, he would be scolded or punished … that was really stressful, especially for a seven-year-old. While in here, all you need is just a lunch box and drink bottle in a backpack.

Reshma also noticed that in Australia primary school students were not subjected to the intensive pressure they had faced in Bangladesh. As a working mother, *Fahmida* also pointed to the convenient timetable operated by schools which helped working parents to manage their work-life balance. *Fahmida* said,

> Children spend longer time in school which is very convenient for us. I go to office early – usually my husband takes them to school. Since I start early I leave office early, so I can pick them after school.

Fahmida's remark shows that the school timetable at her son's school here in Australia is parent-friendly. Working mothers also praised the availability of before-school and after-school care right next to the school, which they found very helpful. Since these such services and opportunities are not available in Bangladesh, the respondents looked on them as blessings that smoothed the way for them to settle well in Australia.

Driving their own car: the empowerment of migrant women: Our interview findings indicate that obtaining a driver's licence and driving a car in Australia empowered Bangladeshi women, and constituted an important step in their integration. Those respondents who drive cars say they have witnessed a change in themselves since they obtained their licence. Beforehand, many women were dependent on their husbands to drive them to work or the children to school, or to take them to shopping or to the doctor's. In case of emergency, women respondents had to use public transport, which a number found inconvenient, especially when travelling with children. *Reba* explained:

> Before I got my driver's licence, I used to walk to school to bring my son back home. I used stroller to carry the little one. That was troublesome, especially in the afternoon of midsummer days, when temperature went up to 36 degree or

more, or on the rainy days. Now that I have obtained a driving licence and can drive my own car, things are much better.

Tumpa agreed:

Driving my own car makes me feel valued. It gives new strength and confidence in my personality. I am no longer depended on my husband each time I need to travel.

As did *Maloti*:

Back in Bangladesh I was a housewife of an extended family. My sole responsibility was to make each person of the family happy and comfortable. Cooking spatula was the only thing I used to hold all the time. Now I hold the steering wheel, I am driving my own car. If I was in Bangladesh I would have been ended up inside the four walls of household, whereas in Australia I do something important, play a significant role. Isn't it fascinating!

The above quotations reflect the fact that these women possess a sense of pride, since they are no longer dependent on their husbands to pursue everyday activities. Acquiring a driver's licence and driving their own car is therefore identified as one of the important indicators of successful settlement for Bangladeshi women. The reason is that in Bangladesh men do the bulk of the driving: it is regarded predominantly a male role. In contrast, the car occupies a more central role in Australian society. A driver's licence is often used for ID, regardless of gender. Most Australians learn how to drive when they are teenagers. Private vehicle ownership is not nearly as common in Bangladesh as in Australia. In other words, cars are luxury items in Bangladesh, and most people don't own any. Among the rich who do own cars, the norm is to hire a chauffeur, who becomes as much part of the family as the domestic help. Thus people may not need to drive their own cars, and women would not even think about it. A woman in the driver's seat is a rare sight on the roads of Bangladesh. [105] So, for a woman, driving her own car is huge challenge, one more likely to be met after migration. Once they have gained

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[105] The social implications of women driving cars in Bangladesh are explained by Madhuri Narayanan (n.d.), Senior Advisor, Gender Equity and Diversity, CARE, USA. Although Narayanan specially focuses on the professional women drivers working for CARE, she emphasises that placing 'women in the driver's seat' makes the difference tor women themselves by giving them freedom of movement. On the contrary, others (the general public) may stare at a woman driver. Based on Narayanan's experiences it is observed that women driving cars is still a revolutionary notion for women in Bangladesh.

their licence, they feel valued. This thesis therefore concludes that a driver's licence has the power to work great change on the personality of a woman from Bangladesh.

Our research firmly establishes that migration to Australia has liberated and empowered Bangladeshi women migrants in several ways. One substantial change to their lives derives from their having left a traditional society for an advanced industrial society, where they became familiar with new privileges and opportunities. These privileges and opportunities bring in their wake a more comfortable lifestyle than they could have imagined in their home country. More importantly, many of them find life after migration much more rewarding. This particular thesis finding is similar to one of Martin's (2003, p. 28), where she observes that, in becoming aware of new rights and opportunities unavailable in one's country of origin, women migrants enjoy a 'greater ability to direct household priorities'.

Challenges faced by Bangladeshi women migrants in Australia

Qualitative information also reveals certain challenges commonly faced by Bangladeshi women in Australia. The research data suggest that migration has increased women's domestic workload due to the lack of support from helping hands and relatives available in Bangladesh. Giving birth and child-rearing, balancing work and parenting, all are seen as challenging by Bangladeshi women living in Australia. Other notable challenges that affect their ability to settle well are non-recognition of qualifications and economic hardship. The challenges or problems faced by Bangladeshi women migrants in Australia are discussed below.

Increased domestic workloads: The changed nature of domestic activity is identified by Bangladeshi women in Australia as a big challenge. Almost all of the respondents reported that they had domestic helpers (maids or manservants) in Bangladesh.[106] Besides, relatives and extended family members habitually played a significant role in reducing the stress of running a household. After migration they discovered that such support was not generally affordable in Australia. *Sara* recalls how she adjusted to the new reality:

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[106] This is not surprising as labour is very cheap in Bangladesh. Hiring domestic helpers is quite common in other parts of Asian countries as well, such as in China and Hong Kong (Ho 2006, p. 503).

My initial days were very stressful. Doing the chores all by myself was tiring, frustrating as well. I didn't do that much hard work when I was in Bangladesh. I used to have a helping hand who did iron my clothes before I was to go outside, for office, shopping or party. Other chores such as cleaning, washing and even cooking had been done in no time. So I was very relaxed.

Sara's words underscore how much the traditional Bangladeshi woman relies on helping hands around the home. They also serve as a reminder that the traditional housewife in Bangladesh can also look to support coming from members of the extended family. This support, as mentioned by several of the respondents, would include the doing of domestic chores, and help with child-rearing. Such assistance was particularly important to women who worked outside the home, regardless of whether they were living under the same roof as the extended family. Kinship assistance was of great significance: not only was help at hand as it was needed, but it imbued women with a sense of strength, comfort and security. *Shabnam* recalled those days:

I used to live nearby my parent's house. I used to see them almost every day, called them whenever I had any problem or needed something. I used to leave my son to my mum before I was going to work. I couldn't think of a single day without them (parents and siblings) close by. Now that I take care of everything, I miss my mum every moment, I feel how significant that support was.

It is observed that paid domestic workers reduced Sara's workload which was tantamount to physical support, while *Shabnam*'s appreciative words indicate that the support she received in Bangladesh meant more in terms of an emotional than a mere physical presence. Both kinds of support had been invaluable in their daily life in Bangladesh. So the absence of support networks came as a shock and source of distress to Bangladeshi women starting over in Australia. This finding supports the conclusions of other researchers, including Ahmed (2005), Kabeer (2000), Gardner (2002) and Ahmed (2011), which commonly shows that migration intensifies domestic workloads due to the absence of support networks, such as those provided by the members of an extended family and or hired domestic staff.

The traditional domestic role and non-participation in the labour market: Despite the strong involvement of Bangladeshi migrants in the labour market, for one section of the

participants in this study migration reduced the opportunity of engaging in paid work. A small number of the women reported that they sacrificed their career for the sake of their family. In spite of educational qualifications and English-language proficiency the expectations of a traditional gender role shut them out of participation in the workforce. The following case study is relevant in this context.

Case study 8.2: Gender role reduces labour force participation of women

Tumpa came to Australia about three years ago along with her baby boy. Her husband had arrived as a skilled permanent resident six months earlier. Tumpa's husband works as an IT professional in a government office. But she cannot get a job with her Master's degree which she earned from a college back in Bangladesh because it is not recognised in the Australian job market. To compete in this market she enrolled in several TAFE certificate courses, where she achieved higher marks than her classmates. But that job for a highly qualified person like her is still proving elusive. As a result, Tumpa has begun to doubt her capability. Now her responsibilities to her family, and specifically to her child, have discouraged her to looking for work. As for her husband, he does not think she needs to work. In his view, his income is enough to meet all their needs, and that's all that matters. He has given her free rein to use his credit card. But still Tumpa is depressed: she wants to do something off her own bat, to accomplish something that will make her feel valued. Once her son starts school, she wants to join the workforce, even though her recent failure to land a job has blunted her optimism.

Tumpa's story is one of high hopes and boiling frustration. In spite of being highly educated, she cannot find a place in the workforce. The prosperity purchased by her husband's well-paying job is enough to meet her material needs, and pay the family's bills, but it cannot satisfy the need for her to feel valued outside the home, and that has left her feeling depressed. The research data here lead to a conclusion similar to Ho's (2006) where the 'feminisation' of society leaves women confronted with the question of whether they should compromise their career ambitions to stay at home and care for their family.

Giving birth and child-rearing: Bangladeshi women possess mixed feelings about giving birth and child-rearing in Australia as compared with the same processes back in their ancestral homeland. Those interviewees who had become mothers and raised children in both Bangladesh and Australia were invited to compare their experiences. While most respondents declared that they found both experiences complicated by the absence of relatives or an extended family on hand to lend their support, a significant minority mentioned that Australia had better health care provision. Interestingly, some respondents drew attention to both aspects. *Bithi*, for example:

> My first child was born in Bangladesh. I spent most of the time of pregnancy at my mum's place. I didn't have any responsibility except for eating and sleeping in time. But when my second child was born in Australia I realised how hard it was to [be] looking after everything in the household, [and] at the same time take care of myself.

Bithi remembered with gratitude how her mother came over to stay with her for a few months, and helped her settle the baby down. But she felt more helpless than ever after her mother returned home. Most of the women respondents who had given birth and brought up their children in both countries made similar remarks. *Moona* recalled that during her first pregnancy her mother used to cook whatever food she craved and was constantly solicitous of her comfort. But in her second pregnancy, after she had moved to Australia, *Moona* lost her appetite. And this time she felt the weight of added responsibility to look after her first child. In her words,

> I was dying to taste my mom's food. I couldn't go to kitchen to try to cook. Yes, my husband was trying his best to cook, but that didn't taste good at all . I had a feeling like I was chewing plastic. I was almost starving. I was too weak to look after my first child and to do the chores.

Both *Bithi* and *Moona* reveal, each in her own way, how vulnerable are women who have to prepare for giving birth, or who must shoulder the burdens of child-rearing, without the support of an often quite numerous family surrounding them. Although *Bithi* pointed out that Australia's health-care system could offer better care and support, especially that provided by doctors and midwives – and furthermore favourably compared Australian hospitals with the Bangladeshi environment, family support has

been identified as an invaluable resource for mothers, and for these women, for purely geographical reasons, this resource was missing when they were most in need of it.

Balancing work and parenting/ motherhood: The next challenge Bangladeshi women in Australia, after giving birth and settling into the maternal role in the absence of an extended family, is to reach a balance between work and motherhood. Most working women see balancing parenthood and work as the most challenging task they face. It is obvious that a working woman will encounter different challenges to women to those faced by a housewife. The two case studies are presented below reveal the stresses endured by many Bangladeshi women migrants in Australia.

Case study 8.3: Challenge of balancing work and motherhood

After finishing her Master's degree at university back in Bangladesh, Aporna *was about to start her dream job. In the meantime she married a man who had been living in Australia. She had no other option but to come to Australia with her husband. Those early days were tremendously exciting; the new couple explored the cities of Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane. This truly was a honeymoon.*

She never felt lonely, because she had always company, and made lots of friends, from the host community as easily as from her Bangladeshi social circle. Then there was the frequent connection with her parents and other family members the family which she kept up via telephone call, Facebook and Skype. Her English was also very good, since she learned and practised it through the British Council in Bangladesh. She was well prepared to accept the changes she could foresee in her life, and eager to become fully involved with mainstream activity. Soon she landed a job in her own field. The couple also bought a new house. Everything in life was going swimmingly.

The initial shock was being told to get more bed rest during the early stages of her first pregnancy. Aporna realised for the first time that she was really helpless in Australia, even though friends came over to help "I was feeling like I had been deported to a desert. Husband's been too busy with his work, friends are also busy, no one was around me for whole day; I was all alone ... couldn't even talk on phone."

She could not help thinking, if she were in Bangladesh she would have had parents and other close relatives beside her or at least she could have hired a helping hand. Aporna

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continued, "First few days after the baby was born went well, since my husband got a leave. Friends came over to help as well. However, that did not last long. I extremely felt the absence of support from extended family that would have [been] possible only if I were in Bangladesh."

When the day came for her to return to work, she had the most shocking experience of her life. "How would I leave my six months-old baby to a child-care for the whole day?" she exclaims. It wasn't just the baby; she was petrified by the combined workload, at home as well as in the workplace. She couldn't cope with the extra loads and so decided to go part-time, though that didn't help much. Looking back at those days, she says, "It's like I had been struggling for ages, don't know when it's over. Now I really feel lonely, left out".

Eventually she quit the job. She is thinking of going back to work once her child starts school. But, after five or six years out of the workforce, she fears her skills and potential will be bypassed and the office may not accept her as warmly as it did before. Whenever Aporna thinks about her future career, she feels there is no hope to which she can cling.

The story just related carries a sombre reminder that, without the support of an extended family, motherhood may force compromises on Bangladeshi women living in Australian society. In *Aporna*'s case, in spite of her extensive education, English-language proficiency, and plenty of bonding and bridging social capital, not to mention having a husband whose income ensures that she and the whole family will be well off, she has fallen prey to depression. *Aporna*'s story is similar to *Tumpa*'s, told earlier in this section. The difference is that *Tumpa* never joined workforce due to her domestic responsibilities, while *Aporna* had to compromise a rewarding career as a consequence of becoming a mother. Meares (2010) defines this as 're-domestication' or 'compromised careers'.

The next case study introduces *Farida*, a mother of three school-aged children, who has been living in Australia for 16 years.

Case study 8.4: Challenge of balancing work and motherhood

Farida has been working for more than 14 years. She has friendly relationships with her Australian as well as other ethnic co-workers. Apart from office responsibilities everyone has family and children to be taken care of. Yet she notices that she is more stressed than the others. She is much more concerned about issues affecting her husband and children, their diet and personal well-being. Her children's performance in school is another source of anxiety. On top of everything she is deeply worried about whether her children are adapting too fast to Western culture at the expense of their ties to the religion, culture and Bangladeshi values she is keen to pass on to them. Apparently, Farida tells herself, Australian mothers don't have so many things to worry their minds about.

Farida tells this research project, "My Australian colleagues appoint baby sitter when they work late; e. g. if there is any meeting after work. They never miss official dinner. But I never attend dinner, can't avoid meeting though. I always feel guilty if I am late to get home. I never even think of keeping a babysitter. I can't imagine other woman comes over to looking after my children ... When I see my children prefer fast food instead of my very traditional home cooked meal, I get so much frustrated. I don't see anyone among my workmates is as worried as I am about children's food habit. I don't think I can give it up, even if I want to. Sometimes I feel I am lost. I don't know where I would end up."

Although the above example concerns a particular Bangladeshi working woman in Australia, *Farida*'s story has elements common to almost all Bangladeshi working women. It is fitting to observe that most working mothers' stories are similar to *Farida*'s regardless of where they come from (see, for example, Yan 2004; Purkayastha 2005; Meares 2010; Salway 2007). As indicated by Purkayastha (2005) working women face a double workload at home and work, and to no one does this description apply better than to the Bangladeshi working woman. Their concern about family well-being often makes them doubt their personal worthiness and competence, which may lead to physical and mental disorders.

Non-recognition of qualifications: Non-recognition of qualifications is particularly pronounced for women. Among Bangladeshi women migrants who are highly educated and used to working as managers or professionals, those unable to apply their skills in Australia reported feeling much more discontented than the other Bangladeshi women in this study. A number of these women had to switch to different professions that are a mismatch for the educational qualifications they gained in Bangladesh. As a result, they feel dissatisfied and even uprooted. The following four comments sum up the situation:

> I earned a postgraduate qualification, and used to be a college teacher back in Bangladesh. I had to sacrifice my career in order to come to Australia, as the decision was already made. I was made to believe that we were migrating for the well-being of the whole family. But nobody, not even I, thought about my career that time. I had a belief I would get a suitable job, while the reality is that I couldn't do that in the last six years. It is true that my husband's income is well enough to meet my family needs, but when I think about my own self. I feel so disappointed. (*Rina*, 44)

> Before coming to Australia, I had a postgraduate degree with which I was working in a prominent bank. I was highly satisfied with my job, income and lifestyle. But, three years after arriving in Australia, I couldn't manage a job in banking sector. So I attended a certificate course in child-care. I got a job immediately after I finished my program. I had also completed a diploma on child-care in order to increase my efficiency. Nonetheless, sometimes I feel this is not what I am supposed to do. (*Sadia*, 32)

> I used to work as a government officer that was a highly honoured job in Bangladesh. It was really a great feeling. However, here in Australia I would never receive that much respect. More importantly, I cannot do the same job in here, as requirement to do this job is much higher in Australia than Bangladesh, which is quite impossible for me to fulfil at this stage. But I didn't give up. I have started study again to achieve the Australian standard in my field, though I am little confused whether I would be able reach the goal. (*Sheela*, 32)

> After finishing my Bachelor and internship in medical science, I joined a hospital as a trainee doctor. I also did my postgraduate degree and joined a

hospital. I was enjoying my work. But my husband decided to migrate as he was not happy with his work. I had no other choice but to follow him. It's been five years we came to Australia. I have been so much frustrated ever since. Australia's beauty, comfort, and developed lifestyle don't attract me anymore. I am preparing to take part in Australian medical examination as requirement to work as GP. But it's so tiring and frustrating to start all over again. (*Najma,* 35)

The above statements indicate that before migration these four women were very successful in their professions, but they have not been able to turn their degrees and previous occupational experience to advantage in Australia's labour market. This has resulted in a sense of defeat consuming them. It is observed that their husbands, in most cases, are working in their preferred occupations and earning enough money to maintain a good living standard for their families. So these women are unlikely to face an economic crisis. Yet they are dissatisfied with their changed roles. It is also observed that women belonging to this particular cohort are not likely to have a sense of belonging in Australia. They always hark back to their achievements and the glorious career they left behind, which indicates that advanced education and higher degrees may not, in and of themselves, always lead to successful settlement for women: academic credentials may even become a burden to them.

Another woman interviewee, *Reema,* who works part-time as an office cleaner, was tremendously aggrieved that, in spite of earning good money, her current work created sense of waste and disenchantment. She prefers to hide her employment status from friends and family in Bangladesh. *Nilufar,* who used to be a schoolteacher, has similar feelings:

> I never thought I would be a child-carer, or a babysitter. When I first came here I used to think that this job is for uneducated women, I wasn't going to do this. But the reality is that I ended up here at last.

The above remarks clearly convey a sense of despondency among women whose educational qualifications and potential do not lead to greater success in the workplace. Highly educated women are likely to resist taking low-status jobs such as distributing catalogues or cleaning, which are the primary options for migrant women. Furthermore, they do not initially think of working in child-care or aged care, let alone supermarkets.

They place a low value on these particular jobs. They also have a feeling that people in their own community may look down on them if they accept such a lowly job.[107] Consequently, many of them decide to remain unemployed. This can be labelled 'social prejudice', but the attitude described has been widely observed in Bangladesh itself.

Loneliness and economic distress: Although most respondents say they are satisfied with their income and economic situation since migrating to Australia, a significant minority say they are undergoing economic hardship. A number of them blame family turmoil on economic adversity, which is undermining their settlement process. It is also found that when loneliness and economic stress go hand in hand a worse scenario is likely to eventuate. *Moona*'s story demonstrates the nature and consequences of economic hardship, and at the same time her loneliness. Although most migrants can fall back on a strong ethnic network and frequent home contact, and thus overcome the problem of isolation, *Moona*'s story reveals her struggle with loneliness and economic adversity alike.

Case study 8.5: Loneliness and economic distress faced by women

Moona *has been in Australia for more than six years. Her husband arrived earlier and she came to live with him after a year. But, she did not have a 'honeymoon' period like many other women in this study. On the very first day, her husband went off to his night shift, leaving her alone in the house, and that went on for days. She spent hundreds of sleepless night in a lonely country house. Once a brave girl, now Moona was startled by an owl's hoot, a swarm of buzzing bees and even the rustle of leaves. On cold winter nights when the wind was gusting,, she felt as if the house were being swept away.*

Yet, she strove to be patient, hoping one day her husband would find a suitable job. But the reality is that her husband never found work in his own field although he had

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[107] It is observed that educated women seldom take low-profile jobs in Bangladesh either. Although working in shops, restaurants or hotels is 'not bad' in the Australian context, in Bangladesh these types of employment are classified as low-status. Therefore educated women, especially those born into upper-class families, shun this type of work. Many respondents voiced concern about friends' and relatives' reactions and criticisms if they take such low-status jobs. In Australia, they do not need to worry about social prejudice of this kind.

earned degrees in both Bangladesh and Australia. The nature of his work, with its changeable rosters and weekend work, was not conducive to family life. More importantly, despite the hard work his income was not satisfactory. Although they were not starving, they were in a perpetual financial hole. In order to help her husband out, Moona went to work as a cleaner. After being a little disheartened to start with when she thought how lacking in prestige her job was, she soon took pleasure in being able to contribute to the family coffers. At the same time, she was buoyed up by making friends and establishing new network of acquaintances through her work. She soon realised she no longer felt lonely.

But, after having a baby, Moona was again stranded inside the house, with her husband still juggling his erratic rota of some night work, some day shifts, and periods when there was no work at all. Moona sighs, "I am so fed up with this life. Sometimes he goes to work in the evening and come back early morning when we are fast asleep, while sometime he leaves early morning and come back midnight, when we are fast asleep again. My children and I hardly meet him." Moona affirms that she and her husband often argue with each other and that their relationship has become tense and confrontational.

Moona's story indicates that economic hardship, apparently instigated by the non-accreditation of her husband's qualifications, has created a host of other problems mentioned above. The story also shows the spread of her loneliness, and dissatisfaction with life, that accompanied her husband's inability to take care of the family. This finding is similar to that described by Martin (2003) where she explains that a husband's occupational failure may lead to economic hardship, which often has a negative effect on his spouse's life. Dixon et al. (2009) also reveal a similar story about an Indian woman migrant in New Zealand.

The experiences of elderly women

This section focuses on the settlement experiences of elderly Bangladeshi women who migrated during the 1970s and 1980s. Based on interviews and fieldwork observations, this thesis offers a different picture of the settlement experience of Bangladeshi elderly women. For example, many of the women who migrated in the 1970s and '80s did not (and still do not) participate in the labour market. As to why they did not try to join the

workforce, the elderly women interviewed said it was not so common in those days for women in Australia to take paid jobs. For most of this period since then, these women have been housewives.

The findings suggest that the older cohort of migrant women experienced much greater isolation than more recent arrivals. This is evidently due to the Bangladeshi community having been much smaller then, and to the fact that contact with folk back in Bangladesh was necessarily intermittent in those days. We saw in Chapter Six discussed that the Bangladeshi community was much smaller 30 years ago, and early migrants faced serious difficulties in maintaining contact with home. Women in particular have been found to be much affected by the dearth of Bangladeshis in their midst and the sporadic nature of home country contact. More importantly, due to their lack of proficiency in English, they were closed off from meaningful interactions with mainstream society. Mrs *Ahmed* revealed an underlying irony in her experience:

> It's true, now I don't want to speak English, because I don't need to. But after arrival I wanted to speak English, but I couldn't. I was confused and shy, so decided to stay inside the home, which was very painful.

Mrs *Ahmed* also notes that the Adult Migration English-language Program (AMEP) was not much heard of in those days. So she, like other Bangladesh women of her age, did not undertake a language course. In her opinion,

> Going outside every day like now was not common in those days. Therefore, we didn't feel the importance on language learning. But it was really hard, I didn't even understand what's on the TV.

Similarly to recent women migrants, these now elderly women also had to cope with intensified domestic workloads due to the absence of a supportive extended family or hired help. Memories of how hard that made life here remain undimmed, as *Sultana* explained:

> I didn't know how to cook properly when I first came to Australia. Like now we didn't find recipes on YouTube. Skype was beyond our imagination, even calling home was not that frequent and easy that I would have asked my mum about a recipe. I tried to cook on my own,

did lot of experimental cooking, burnt food pots many times, and eventually I learnt. Gradually I became as good as a chef: I see everybody likes my food.

Sultana's story is typical of most women migrants who arrived in the 1980s or before. But, as mentioned earlier, they tended to stay at home and were not much concerned about joining the workforce. So the dilemma of juggling household and work duties simply did not arise. They eventually adapted to society without the benefit of today's familiar support networks. Understandably, they suffered less stress than the current working woman, because their focus was solely on home and hearth.

The poor standard of English-language skills possessed by elderly Bangladeshi women in Australia persists even today. This tends to create problems for them. For example, findings show that elderly women are largely incapable of interacting with their own grandchildren who have been born and brought up in Australia. Apparently, elderly women face more problems than men in this regard, because through their work and social engagements men have acquired the necessary language skill. Many elderly women have not learned English despite living in Australia for more than two decades. Thomas (2003) reveals similar findings about elderly ethnic migrants in Australia. In his research, Thomas asserts that inability to interact with their grandchildren makes elderly migrants feel depressed and as if they belong neither here nor over there.

Despite the dismal facts mentioned above, this thesis reveals that elderly women are generally much happier with their life now than they were in the early days of settlement. They are now surrounded by an extended family and a broad network within the Bangladeshi community. Due to information technology they are able to contact their former homeland with greater ease and frequency than before. They also enjoy ethnic television and participate in ethnic community events.

Mrs *Khan* is appreciative of this:

I can now watch Bangladeshi television programs; can talk on telephone, mobile or Skype with the relatives and friends in Bangladesh or living [in] other countries in the world. I also attend Bangladeshi community programs almost every week. So I don't feel like talk to other people or take a job.

What Mrs *Khan*'s says in this quotation indicates that elderly women are so centrally occupied with family, home contact, and community events that they do not feel the need to integrate with the host society, or to join the workforce at this stage of their lives. It is also observed that they are keen to practise their religion and celebrate religious and cultural festivals. Many of them arrange their children's weddings in Australia instead of going back to Bangladesh. All the festivities and celebrations keep the next generation, the offspring of these Bangladeshi migrants, connected with their home culture.

Findings of this research also show that elderly women who have been living for two decades or more in Australia may have a sense of belonging. More importantly, those who have extended family – for example, siblings, cousins and other members of the family – find their situation more congenial. Their everyday life, special occasions, and celebration of festivals are no less enjoyable than they used to be in Bangladesh. *Sultana*'s experiences are notable from this perspective. She has been living in Australia for 25 years. Her siblings and her husband's sibling migrated later on. Most of the people dearest to her are either close by, in another city or interstate. Some of them are working in their preferred occupations; some are not. Yet most of them live in their own house. Whether or not they are happy with their jobs, they are certainly satisfied with the lifestyle. They meet each other regularly. Their children also feel a strong family bond. On top of everything their extended family makes the children conscious of Bangladeshi social and cultural values.

Another interviewee, Mrs *Islam*, who has been a housewife all her life, looks back on it all with an air of contentment:

> Well, my home is here now. Husband, children, grandchildren and other relatives and friends: everyone has a purpose to live here. My purpose has been to keep them together. That's what I do. Yes, I miss my country: I miss the place where I was brought up. But I know my home country is no longer the place I left 30 years ago. Still we visit, try to show the children and grandchildren their ancestors' place, and that's all. No one would ever like to return.

Mrs *Islam*'s moving summary confirms that, after a certain period of time, the women who were among the earliest Bangladeshi migrants to Australia, develop a sense of

belonging here. Since children and family are most important to them, they try to find happiness in their success. Attachment to their ethnic community also makes them feel they are not alone. Despite their detachment from the host culture, they are able to realise the meaning of their life in their own way.

Furthermore, their sense of belonging can be perceived in the way they preserve their heritage and personal belongings. For instance, they decorate their houses with old photos, wall mats and souvenirs brought back from Bangladesh to make their surroundings feel like home. Mrs *Khan*'s observation is noteworthy in this regard:

> My children are grown up now, they have their own family. They are in Australia, but in different states. We talk over phone. I don't want to learn how to use Internet at this age. Our children visit us on holidays. I try to show my grandchildren how our life was like, though not sure how much they understand me. Yet I show them my old clothes, jewelleries, photos, play them my favourite music. When they admire and appreciate, I feel happy. There is nothing more I want from them except for showing respect to my values.

Mrs *Khan* is reminding us that old women are unlikely, and do not in fact wish, to change their way of life. Instead their every breath keeps their 'home' alive. This finding supports that of Woods (2004). At Woods (2004 p. 211) we find it stated that once women have the 'opportunity to interact with similar others, in terms of culture' they find a sense of belonging in their host country.

However, most of the elderly women assert that the same level of satisfaction and sense of belonging were not present in their early days. They recall those early days after arrival as lonely and frustrating, because they had no friends and/or relatives around, and more importantly they were not able to contact home as frequently as they can do now (see Chapter Six).

Conclusion

This chapter has used both quantitative and qualitative information to explore the settlement experiences of Bangladeshi women migrants in Australia. What has been revealed is the complex nature of women's economic participation after migration. On

the one hand, women's post-migration labour market participation is lower than men's. Nonetheless, women's post-migration economic participation is higher than their pre-migration rate. But, for many women, higher post-migration participation comes at the expense of occupational degradation, the experience of working at low-skilled jobs that are incommensurate with their educational history. This situation often stems from the non-recognition of pre-migration qualifications. It is also observed that further education after migration is more prevalent among women migrants.

The findings also show that migration brings freedom and empowerment for Bangladeshi women. This is true even for women with lower education qualifications. Living away from the complications of an extended family, the power to make their own decisions, and husbands' participation in the household routine, are all seen as improvements in their daily lives. As well as this, driving their own cars confers an additional advantage: it boosts their confidence level and is even seen to bring out a new dimension in women's personalities. These post-migration achievements may explain why women have greater satisfaction with their Australian lives than men do. Still, the challenges facing women migrants are no less significant than their achievements. They include increased domestic workload and a battle to balance the demands of motherhood and work. Family problems resulting mainly from economic adversity have also been observed. But it is the considered conclusion of this thesis that indicates that many Bangladeshi women, particularly the younger ones, adapt to the challenges presented by life in Australia and, in the course of time, integrate successfully.

This chapter has also revealed that the experiences of elderly women who migrated during the early 1970s or 1980s differed in character to the experiences of more recent migrants. Economic participation among women of that era was uncommon. Factors in their sense of isolation included the impossibility of contacting their home country as frequently as their younger relatives do these days, combined with the absence of a strong ethnic community to back them up, and a failure to connect with the host culture, to which their lack of proficiency in English contributed.

Elderly women interviewed during this research were mostly agreed that such isolation was the most serious problem they faced in those days. Yet it can be seen that their experience was not as complex as that of current women migrants. This may be due to their exclusive focus on family matters. The individual achievement of, for example,

having one's own career, was considered of far less significance than successfully carrying out the roles of wife and mother and managing a household.

Despite the fact that elderly women did not participate in workforce or integrate with the host culture, most of them said they were now satisfied with their life in Australia. They have what they need, and by this they mean family and friends, a strong connection to other Bangladeshis living close by, and ample opportunities to maintain their culture and, so to speak, relish the flavour of Bangladesh in Australia. They are also able to contact home every day. So they no longer feel Bangladesh is far away, a feeling that predominated during those early years in Australia. Overall, Bangladeshi women, irrespective of age, share a consensus view that migrating to Australia has brought forth a host of positive changes in their lives.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Against the backdrop of widespread international migration, the successful settlement and acculturation of migrants is an important research area in Australia and elsewhere. Existing studies on migrant settlement in Australia focus mainly on humanitarian migrants. The settlement experiences of skilled migrants, and particularly of their spouses (mainly women), have received far less attention.

This study has focused on the Bangladeshi migrant cohort which, according to the ABS (2011a), is one of the more highly skilled and educated migrant groups in Australia. Although Bangladeshi people have been migrating to Australia since the mid-1970s, substantive changes in Australian immigration policy have witnessed a rapid increase in arrivals since the early 1990s. Currently, Bangladeshi migrants are one of the fastest-growing cohorts in Australia. Despite this, no dedicated studies have previously been conducted on this migrant group.

In this context, the thesis set out to examine the settlement and acculturation experiences of Bangladeshi immigrants living in Australia. To this end, investigation has centred on the motivations of Bangladeshis who choose to migrate to Australia. The thesis proceeded to identify the facilitators of, and barriers to, successful settlement and acculturation of Bangladeshi migrants. In so doing, the role of Bangladeshi migrants' social capital – both bonding and bridging – in the acculturation process has been emphasised. To examine the role of gender in settlement outcomes, the experiences of Bangladeshi women migrants in Australia have been made another area of focus.

In line with similar methods evident in migration literature, this thesis has identified the factors affecting migrants' successful settlement or acculturation. These factors included pre-arrival characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, socio-economic or cultural background, educational qualifications, and proficiency in the host society language (English). Similarly, post-migration factors such as social capital, the recognition of overseas qualifications, attitudes of the host society towards immigrants, and government policies offering settlement support have also been examined as significant features. To map the settlement experience of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia, the thesis has sought to evaluate the importance of these factors in relation to the key settlement indicators such as labour market participation, income, job satisfaction, home

ownership, and satisfaction with life after migration. Further, in order to understand the complexity of acculturation, Berry's (1997) framework was examined, which postulates four potential acculturation outcomes: assimilation, integration, marginalisation, and separation

In its methodology, the thesis used both quantitative and qualitative data from the respondents' group. Using a structured questionnaire, quantitative information was collected from more than 200 Bangladeshi first-generation migrants living in three Australian states – New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland. These survey data were supported by in-depth qualitative information collected through semi-structured follow-up interviews with 52 respondents, using a gender-balanced sample. At the same time extensive fieldwork notes and observations have been employed to attain a clearer picture of the Bangladeshi migrant experience in Australia.

Following the introduction, literature review, and a chapter on the methodology, Chapter Four discussed the pre-migration characteristics of survey respondents. Analyses of pre-migration characteristics demonstrate that the Bangladeshi migrant cohort in Australia is relatively younger and newer; and a significant proportion of them are former students of Australian educational institutions. The results reflected the conclusion of the ABS (2011a) that Bangladeshi migrants – both males and females – are highly educated and skilled. A majority had a good command of English, previous labour market experience, and decent jobs as managers or professionals. It was established that most of the cohort were satisfied with their pre-migration jobs. Men are in most cases the primary applicants for Australian permanent visas. This is particularly so for the offshore migrants. One implication of this finding is that female migrants are coming to these shores mainly as 'tied-movers', in that they are either accompanying their male spouses or, to a lesser extent, reuniting with partners already in Australia. This latter finding broadly supports the view that women's migration worldwide is largely associational (Altamirano 1997; Thapan 2005), and contributes to the understanding that even educated women's emigration decisions tend to be dominated by a male spouse.

Chapter Four also investigated the motives for migration decisions. It was observed that economic factors are not the primary reason for the emigration of Bangladeshi skilled people; rather, they were largely influenced by deteriorating social and political

circumstances in Bangladesh. They hope that migration to a developed country will offer them a better standard of life in terms of security, education for their children, and better health care. These factors, coupled with Australia's more attractive immigration policies when compared with those of many other Western countries, persuade Bangladeshi skilled people to treat Australia as their preferred destination. There is also evidence that a substantial number of migrants who first came to Australia with their families on student visas returned to Bangladesh upon completing their studies. However, many of them came back to Australia because of adjustment problems among their children, in some cases the professional jealousy of peer groups in Bangladesh, and a failure to tolerate the socio-political instability of Bangladesh.

Furthermore, socio-cultural factors such as extended family pressure and the consequences of inter-faith marriage were identified as reasons behind the migration of a number of research participants. These findings are in contrast to the prediction of migration theories that prospects for better economic positions are the primary inducement for skilled migrants to emigrate (see, Bean & Brown 2014). The finding also qualifies other studies (Richardson et al. 2002; Ip, Wu & Inglis 1998) that have investigated the motivation of other migration cohorts in Australia. This finding points to an important factor, namely political and socio-economic instability as the cause of a 'brain drain' of skilled people from Bangladesh.

Chapter Five investigated the relationships between respondents' pre-migration and post-migration characteristics, along with several indicators of successful settlement such as labour market participation, job satisfaction, and satisfaction with life in Australia. Findings suggest that respondents' English-language skills have improved significantly since migration, particularly for those who had weak proficiency in English before migration. This, as indicated in the literature, is an indication of positive integration with Australian society by Bangladeshi migrants.

Chapter Five also showed that Bangladeshi migrants are highly integrated into the labour market; and their participation rate is much higher than the national average for a comparable age group (20–74 years). The finding indicated that respondents' initial visa category, educational qualifications, proficiency in English and pre-migration labour market experiences and occupations are significant factors affecting their labour market participation in Australia. Further, a majority of respondents report being largely

satisfied with their current jobs and income level, and believe that migration has increased their economic status. This chapter found that respondents' job satisfaction was significantly related to the nature of their current occupation or whether those jobs were a good match with their skills. Further, educational qualifications and English-language proficiency evinced a positive effect on job satisfaction. On the other hand, perceived discrimination at work had a significant negative influence on job satisfaction. These findings provide partial support for Gunasekara, Rajendran & Grant (2015) who found that nature of employment, salary, promotion and the behaviour of co-workers were significant determinants of job satisfaction among Sri Lankan and Indian skilled migrants in Australia.

A significant number of respondents expressed their satisfaction with life in Australia. Alongside English-language proficiency, the following factors positively and substantially related to the life satisfaction of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia were identified: economic success (and related variables such as current employment or occupational status, income, and job satisfaction). There is, however, little evidence that migrants' age or the length of time they have lived in Australia is significantly related to job or life satisfaction, a finding also confirmed by some recent studies on skilled migrants (Gunasekara, Rajendran & Grant 2014; Gunasekara, Rajendran & Grant 2015). Nonetheless some evidence suggests that Bangladeshis who migrated at a relatively older age encounter problems with integrating into the labour market, as well as comparable problems vis-a-vis the host society.

Chapter Five also highlighted some barriers that impinge on Bangladeshi migrants' settlement prospects. Notable among them is the non-recognition of pre-migration qualifications and (a related phenomenon) the inability to leverage pre-migration skills in the labour market. As a consequence of this, further education after migration is commonplace among Bangladeshi migrants. The non-recognition of qualifications also leads to significant occupational degradation among Bangladeshi migrants. Thus it is not uncommon to hear of Bangladeshi migrants with the highest of university degrees, or who used to work as senior officials before migrating, now working as casual tutors, running small businesses, driving taxi cabs, or working as petrol pump attendants.

Another important barrier is rapid and frequent changes in government policies regarding skill requirements for permanent residency, which create uncertainty and lead

to a significant waste of time and money. The cohort of former onshore applicants was very much to the fore in raising this concern. These frequent policy changes have long-lasting effects on migrants' employment, as well as on their family life. Moreover, slow responses from the Australian Immigration Department on bridging and permanent residency visas appear to be a major issue for many Bangladeshi onshore migrants. Such issues can slow the acculturation process of the migrants in question, as indicated by Kabir (2015).

Findings also suggest that government support programs and information for skilled migrants to integrate into the labour market are inadequate. The information available online is too general, and many respondents found that assistance from government offices was lacking. Racially discriminatory comments or behaviour, particularly emanating from strangers, is a common occurrence for many Bangladeshi migrants. However, contrary to other research findings, (see, Tilbury 2007a; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2007a) Bangladeshi migrants' experiences of racism do not appear to have significant repercussions for their satisfaction with life in Australia, possibly for the reason that any such negative effects have been outweighed by the positive outcomes of migration.

Chapters Six and Seven focused on Bangladeshi migrants' bonding and bridging capital, and the impact of these factors on the acculturation of Bangladeshi migrants. It was found that bonding capital, or the affiliation of Bangladeshi migrants within their ethnic group and with their home country, is very strong. Bangladeshi migrants stay closely attached to their own community through different social, cultural and religious events. They acknowledge the importance of maintaining their home country culture and make strong efforts to maintain their heritage culture. Findings indicate that Bangladeshi migrants remain attached to the home country culture through music and movies, as well as attending cultural and religious festivals. The availability of traditional food, costumes, music and movies has facilitated their cultural maintenance. Therefore, unlike the people who migrated during the 1980s or before, recent Bangladeshi migrants do not face serious impediments to the maintenance of their heritage culture.

This thesis also discovered that Bangladeshi migrants are concerned about the maintenance of home country culture, now and in the future, by their children. This

concern is particularly manifested in religious practices. Interviews suggest that some Muslim migrants have become more religious since they migrated. The objective is to keep their children within the realm of religion and to prevent their assimilation into the host society. The thesis further reveals that a small group of Bangladeshi Muslim migrants has become attached to different religious groups such as the *Tablighi Jama'at* (Preaching Party) whose adherents can be classified as 'neo-revivalist' Muslims (see Saeed 2003). This latter group's behaviour is largely influenced by their interactions with Muslim migrants from other parts of the world. People belonging to this small cohort do not integrate with the host society. More importantly, they prefer to be detached from the broader Bangladeshi ethnic community, considering most of the events presented by the community as 'un-Islamic'. Rather, they show a greater attachment to the particular group they belong to. This small cohort aside, the majority of Bangladeshi Muslim migrants in Australia can be classified as 'neo-modernists' or 'liberal' in terms of Saeed's (2003) categorisation of Muslims in Australia.

This thesis also shows that, due to the advances in information technology, recent immigrants have substantially minimised the social distance between home and host countries. A majority of participants were found to be in frequent communication with friends and relatives living in Bangladesh and other countries. Therefore, migrants exist in two worlds simultaneously, a phenomenon defined in the literature as trans-nationalism (Faist 2000), and this is particularly true of recent Bangladeshi migrants to Australia. Many of them create a 'mini-Bangladesh' model, striving to keep their idea of *Desh* (Homeland) alive in *Bidesh* (Foreign Land). They stress that they left Bangladesh for some reason or another, but Bangladesh never leaves them – Bangladesh lives on in their hearts. Overall, the strong bonding Bangladeshi migrants exhibit is conducive to the perpetuation of their ethnic culture and also contributes to fulfilling settlement needs such as accommodation, financial support and a healthy psychological outlook. This strong bonding with their ethnic society, combined with the maintenance of home country culture, indicates that Bangladeshi migrants are not simply assimilating to the host Australian society.

On the other hand, this study has shown that the bridging capital of Bangladeshi migrants with people from the host society is relatively weak. This is particularly true in regard to interaction with local Australians as opposed to interaction with other migrant

groups. Most participants in this study spoke of their unwillingness to actively engage with the host society. An additional finding is that their bridging capital is much weaker than their bonding capital. Thus it is found that, in spite of living in Australia for more than two decades, many migrants have forged no emotional connection with local people. Turning to participation in local community events such as school working bees, fetes, other volunteer activities, and membership in local clubs or organisations, it is observed that Bangladeshi migrants in Australia are generally disinclined to take part in these kinds of activity.

The distance they maintain from host society people may be ascribed partly to cultural dissimilarity and partly to the unwillingness of the host society members to develop affective relationships with migrants. There is also evidence some migrants' misperceptions and cultural stereotyping of Australian people may have contributed to this distance. In addition to these considerations, the strength of ethnic networks and family ties, is seen as partly responsible for widespread migrant disengagement with the host society. On the other hand, Bangladeshi migrants show substantial attachment to people from a similar cultural and religious background to their own. Thus, bridging with other South Asian migrants or other Muslims is relatively common. It is acknowledged that bridging with people from similar cultures and religion is conducive to cultural and religious maintenance.

Despite the weaker bridging capital that respondents in this study had vis-a-vis the host society, Bangladeshi migrants are integrating in Australian society in other ways. This is particularly evident from their successful integration in the labour market, the pronounced extent of job satisfaction and their professions of satisfaction with life in Australia. This successful integration may be explained by the idea that Bangladeshi migrants' high human capital – along with their strong bonding capital – works as a substitute for their somewhat weak bridging with the host society. This study thus points to the generally vital role of human and social capital in influencing the successful settlement of Bangladeshi migrants.

Chapter Eight looked at the settlement experiences of Bangladeshi women migrants in particular. The results presented in this chapter and some previous ones provide mixed evidence about the settlement experience of women migrants. It is observed that the labour market participation of women migrants is lower than the corresponding rate for

men. However, the participation of women in the labour market is higher after migration to Australia than it was before. Thus, more of the women respondents who used to be housewives in Bangladesh are working in paid jobs since migrating. Bangladeshi women migrants' relatively high rate of labour market participation, which confers a degree of economic freedom on them, can also be regarded as an avenue to integration in the host country (see Haveric 2009).

Chapter Eight further revealed that migration brings freedom and empowerment for Bangladeshi women in a number of other ways. Obtaining an Australian driver's licence and driving their own car is a notable development for so many of these women. This is particularly important from a Bangladeshi woman's perspective because, in the existing socio-cultural settings of Bangladesh, driving a car is a predominantly male domain. Similarly, it is uncommon in Bangladesh for a husband to participate in domestic chores. The findings of this study, however, point to a much higher rate of shared domestic responsibility once a Bangladeshi married couple are living in Australia. Therefore, it is interesting that Bangladeshi men in this study appear to have adjusted well to a different cultural expectation in terms of domestic help. This is also a positive migration outcome for many women. Women migrants are also happy to see better prospects for their children in Australia.

Elderly women who settled in Australia during the mid-1970s or in the 1980s faced significant social isolation during their early settlement periods. This was due to the difficulty of maintaining home country contact and the absence of a well-established Bangladeshi community in Australia at that time. Lack of English-language proficiency acted as a barrier to interaction with other people in the community. However, they no longer feel themselves isolated. The reason is that they are now connected to more members of the ethnic community. Moreover, many now have their extended family in Australia. Consequently, they have developed a sense of belonging in Australia. All the positive migration outcomes mentioned above explain the high level of satisfaction with their lives in Australia proclaimed by Bangladeshi women.

On the other hand, the thesis adduces testimonial evidence that Bangladeshi women migrants face a number of post-migration challenges. For example, notwithstanding greater workforce participation after migration, a significant number of Bangladeshi

women still do not seek paid employment. This can be largely attributed to the non-recognition of pre-migration qualifications which is more pronounced for women.

The uptake of further education after migration is more common among women than men. This further education evidently requires women to invest a lot of time and resources before they are ready to enter the Australian labour market. Occupational degradation is also common for women migrants, and it was observed that many women with university degrees were working at low-skilled jobs. It was also found that migration has increased the domestic workload for some women, due to the absence of paid domestic help or extended family networks. Some women cited depression attributed to the behaviour and lifestyle of their adult children, such as their forming pre-marital relationships in defiance of Bangladesh's cultural norms. This problem would appear likely to affect both men and women, though the latter seem to be more concerned by it.

Overall, migration to a new country generates both prospects and problems for those who undertake it. This is equally true for highly educated and skilled Bangladeshi migrants to Australia. Despite some barriers, the majority of respondents are well integrated in the labour market and consider that migration has increased their economic status. Most of them express themselves largely satisfied with their post-migration lives and believe that they fit in much better now than they did in their early days of settlement,

Notably, it is the decided view of the vast majority of respondents that their decision to migrate was right. They maintain strong bonds with their ethnic community and home country, and prioritise the preservation of their heritage culture. Their acculturation experience is highly complex, and not easily compressed into the four acculturation outcomes outlined by Berry (1997). Nonetheless, based on their degree of bonding and bridging capital, it can be argued that Bangladeshi first-generation migrants are partially integrating with mainstream society, that is, in a 'structural' rather than 'cultural or personal' sense. This thesis also posits that Bangladeshi migrants appear to live in two separate worlds. After work their body and soul yearn for home, where they eat their ethnic food, speak their mother tongue, put on traditional clothes, enjoy *Bangla* TV broadcasts, music and movies. This is an interior world, totally different from the world

on the outside where they are geographically located and spend many of their daylight hours.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this thesis the following recommendations are offered in the belief that their adoption would substantially promote the better integration of Bangladeshi migrants in Australian society.

Preparation before migration: Migrants, particularly offshore visa-holders, should prepare thoroughly prior to emigration. Their preparation should involve the collection of necessary information about the place they will be settling in and the characteristics of its resident population. This can be easily done either through ethnic community networks in Australia or through research beforehand. Such information will help to shield them from the most severe consequences of 'culture shock'. It would be regarded as an essential element of adequate preparation that some financial capital should be brought into Australia at the time of migration. This will give the skilled migrants some leeway while waiting to obtain a job suited to his or her skill set, and thus assist integration in the labour market. *More ethnic community support:* As the initial settlement period is crucial, additional support should be given to the newly arrived to help accelerate the process of acculturation, and minimise unnecessary dislocation. It is clear from these findings that help on arrival can greatly reduce initial settlement stress. Currently, newly arrived migrants received help mostly through personal networks of friends and relatives. Therefore, those without such networks are likely to be at a disadvantage from their very first minutes on Australian territory. To overcome this difficulty, Bangladeshi ethnic community organisations can offer necessary assistance to new arrivals. Most migrants report that existing ethnic organisations are principally occupied with the organisation and promotion of cultural activities rather than the settlement needs of migrants. Therefore, the establishment is recommended of one or more ethnic organisations that will provide necessary information and offer help to newcomers..

Improved relationships with Australian society: The relevant literature insists on the strong role of bridging capital in migrants' successful integration into their host society.

In particular, migrants' bridging capital is considered more conducive than bonding capital in accessing specific host country resources and creating opportunities for upward social mobility (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2015). However, one key finding of the thesis indicates that Bangladeshi migrants maintain relatively low levels of bridging capital in relation to the host Australian society. One of myriad reasons for this is that many Bangladeshi migrants harbour misconceptions or negative stereotypes of the host society culture. Therefore, it is recommended that on the one hand Bangladeshi migrants should be more pro-active in forging strong ties with people from the host society. On the other hand, they should abandon generalisations and misperceptions about Australian culture by obtaining proper information. *Government help in labour market integration:* Proper and effective government support is required for skilled migrants to integrate into the labour market. The Australian Government should acknowledge that even skilled migrants accompanied by their not-so-skilled spouses require settlement help. Online information provided by the Government is too general to meet the needs of individual migrants. This study, therefore, recommends more profound assistance be rendered to new arrivals.

Modification of government's immigration policy: Since the late 1990s, skilled migrants have been required to wait for two years after arriving in Australia before they become eligible for social security benefits. Recent studies (for example, Junankar & Mahuteau 2004) suggest that this waiting period induces migrants to accept poor or low-skilled jobs. This has proved the case for many Bangladeshi skilled migrants. Therefore, modification of the two-year waiting period for social security benefits is suggested, based on the recommendations of interviewees. This policy change would encourage many skilled migrants to wait and find employment commensurate with their skills. Moreover, relevant government policies should be introduced to speed up the evaluation process of skilled visa applications.

Future research

Future research in this field should aim to examine the experience of second-generation Bangladeshi migrants (the Bangladeshi- or Australian-born children of first-generation migrants), their acculturation (particularly the maintenance of heritage culture and the development of bridging culture), and whether they are facing particular problems in Australia. An additional topic of inquiry would be the relationships and understandings

that are evolving between first- and second-generation Bangladeshi migrants. Religious practice among Bangladeshi Muslims would also be a fruitful field for inquiry, with particular focus on the women's perspective.

This study has examined the settlement and acculturation experiences of a highly skilled migrant group in Australia. The findings arrived at indicate that even the most educated and skilled migrants may face formidable settlement challenges. Chief among these for Bangladeshi migrants to Australia is the inability of many to take advantage of their pre-migration educational qualifications. As a consequence of the non-recognition of such qualifications, women face a greater challenge in this regard. Perpetuation of traditional gender roles is also found to be an important barrier affecting women's successful settlement. Despite these barriers, however, Bangladeshis now resident in Australia believe that migration has brought a wide array of better prospects to their lives.

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APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF ETHICS APPROVAL

To: Dr Michael Leach FLSS Ms Salma Bint Shafiq
CC: Ms Robyn Watson, Research Administration Coordinator FLSS

Dear Michael and Salma,

SUHREC Project 2011/148 A study on the Bangladeshi community living in Australia
Dr Michael Leach FLSS Ms Salma Bint Shafiq
Approved duration: 23/08/2011 To 23/08/2013 [Adjusted]

I refer to the ethical review of the above project protocol undertaken by a SUHREC Subcommittee (SHESC3). Your responses to the reviews, as e-mailed on 29 July, 14, 18 and 23 August 2011, were put to and approved by SUHREC delegate(s).

I am pleased to advise that, as submitted to date, the project may proceed in line with standard on-going ethics clearance conditions here outlined.

- All human research activity undertaken under Swinburne auspices must conform to Swinburne and external regulatory standards, including the current *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* and with respect to secure data use, retention and disposal.

- The named Swinburne Chief Investigator/Supervisor remains responsible for any personnel appointed to or associated with the project being made aware of ethics clearance conditions, including research and consent procedures or instruments approved. Any change in chief investigator/supervisor requires timely notification and SUHREC endorsement.

- The above project has been approved as submitted for ethical review by or on behalf of SUHREC. Amendments to approved procedures or instruments ordinarily require prior ethical appraisal/ clearance. SUHREC must be notified immediately or as soon as possible thereafter of (a) any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants and any redress measures; (b) proposed changes in protocols; and (c) unforeseen events which might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

- At a minimum, an annual report on the progress of the project is required as well as at the conclusion (or abandonment) of the project.

- A duly authorised external or internal audit of the project may be undertaken at any time.

Please contact me if you have any queries about on-going ethics clearance. The SUHREC project number should be quoted in communication. Chief

Investigators/Supervisors and Student Researchers should retain a copy of this email as part of project record-keeping.

Best wishes for project.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Gaeth
Secretary, SHESC3

Ann Gaeth, PhD
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APPENDIX 2: CONSENT INFORMATION STATEMENT

If you are a **Bangladeshi, and currently a permanent resident (PR) or Citizen of Australia**, you are invited to participate in the following project.

Project Title: Settlement Experiences of Bangladeshi Migrants in Australia

Principal Investigator: Salma Bint Shafiq, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Chittagong, Bangladesh, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Health, Arts and Design, Swinburne University of Technology, Hawthorn VIC, Australia 3122

The project is supervised by

    1. **Associate professor Michael Leach,** Department of Politics and Public Policy, Faculty of Life and Social Sciences, Swinburne University of Technology, PO Box 218 Hawthorn VIC, Australia 3122
Phone: +61 3 9214 5357, Email: mleach@.swin.edu.au

    2. Dr. Julie Kimber, Senior Lecturer, Department of Politics and Public Policy, Faculty of Life and Social Sciences, PO Box 218 Hawthorn VIC, Australia 3122,
Phone: +61 3 9214 8103, Email: jkimber@swin.edu.au

Introduction to the Project and Invitation to participate: This project investigates the settlement experiences of the Bangladeshi migrants in Australia. This study is based on surveys and interviews conducted among the members of the Bangladeshi community in Australia. Based on the findings of the study, some recommendations for policies which may better support the Bangladeshi migrants will be developed.

Tasks involved: You are invited to complete a survey questionnaire and/or to participate in an interview with the researcher. Questions will be asked about your own experiences of settling into a new country, and adjusting to the new society and culture. The survey will take about 20 minutes to fill out and the interview will take approximately an hour.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. Your name or identity will not be disclosed at any stage of the project. You are free to withdraw your involvement from this project any time, in which case any and all information provided by you will be destroyed.

Further Information: If you decide to withdraw or want to change any of your opinion please contact the researcher, Salma Bint Shafiq on 0415629871 or e-mail sshafiq@.swin.edu.au. If you have further queries about the project, please feel free to contact my supervisors.

Concerns/complain about the project-who to contact:

This project (2011/148 Ethical review) has been approved by Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this project, you can contact: Research Ethics Officers, Swinburne Research (H68), Swinburne University of Technology, P O Box 218, HAWTHORN VIC 3122

Tel (03) 92145218 or +61 3 9214 5218 or resethics@swin.edu.au

APPENDIX 3: CONSENT INFORMATION STATEMENT (BANGLA VERSION)

অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় স্থায়ীভাবে বসবাসরত বাংলাদেশি কিংবা বাংলাদেশি অস্ট্রেলিয়ার নাগরিকদের এই প্রজেক্টে অংশগ্রহন করার জন্য বিনীত অনুরোধ জানাচ্ছি।

<u>প্রজেক্ট শিরোনাম</u>: **Settlement Experiences of Bangladeshi Migrants in Australia**

<u>প্রধান গবেষক</u>:   **সালমা বিনতে শফিক,** সহকারী অধাপক, ইতিহাস বিভাগ, চট্রগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, পিএইচডি গবেষক, ফ্যাকাল্টি অব লাইফ অ্যান্ড সোশ্যাল সাইন্স, সুইনবারন ইউনিভার্সিটি অব টেকনোলজি, হথরন, ভিক্টোরিয়া,অস্ট্রেলিয়া, ৩১২২

<u>এই প্রজেক্টটি তত্ত্বাবধান করছেন</u>

১। ডঃ মাইকেল লিচ,সহযোগী অধ্যাপক
ডিপার্টমেন্ট অব পলিটিক্স অ্যান্ড পাবলিক পলিসি, ফ্যাকাল্টি অব লাইফ অ্যান্ড সোশ্যাল সাইন্স, সুইনবারন ইউনিভার্সিটি অব টেকনোলজি, হথরন, ভিক্টোরিয়া,অস্ট্রেলিয়া, ৩১২২
যোগাযোগ: +61 3 9214 5357, ই-মেইল: <u>mleach@.swin.edu.au</u>

২। ডঃ জুলি কিম্বার, সিনিয়র প্রভাষক
  ডিপার্টমেন্ট অব পলিটিক্স অ্যান্ড পাবলিক পলিসি, ফ্যাকাল্টি অব লাইফ অ্যান্ড
  সোশ্যাল সাইন্স, সুইনবারন ইউনিভার্সিটি অব টেকনোলজি, হথরন,
 ভিক্টোরিয়া,অস্ট্রেলিয়া, ৩১২২ যোগাযোগ: +61 3 9214 8103,
  ই-মেইল: <u>jkimber@swin.edu.au</u>

<u>প্রজেক্ট পরিচিতি</u>: অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় স্থায়ীভাবে বসবাসরত বাংলাদেশিদের জীবনযাপন পরীক্ষণ এবং নতুন সমাজ ব্যবস্থায় মানিয়ে চলার ক্ষেত্রে তাঁরা কি ধরনের সুবিধা এবং অসুবিধার সম্মুখীন হচ্ছেন, তা চিহ্নিত করাই এই গবেষণা কর্মের মুল উদ্দেশ্য। এই গবেষণার ফলাফলের উপর ভিত্তি করে কিছু সুপারিশমালা উপস্থাপন করা হবে, যা নবাগত অভিবাসীদের জন্য সহায়ক হতে পারে বলে এই গবেষক আশা করেন। বাংলাদেশি অস্ট্রেলিয়ানদের সার্ভে/সাক্ষাতকারের উপর ভিত্তি করেই এই গবেষণা পরিচালিত হবে।

<u>আপনার করণীয়ঃ</u> সার্ভে প্রশ্নমালা পূরণ এবং/অথবা সাক্ষাতকারে অংশগ্রহণ করার মাধ্যমে এই প্রজেক্টে অন্তর্ভুক্ত হওয়ার জন্য আপনাকে আহবান জানাচ্ছি। অস্ট্রেলিয়ার সামাজিক, সাংস্কৃতিক, ও পারিপার্শ্বিক অবস্থার সাথে মানিয়ে চলার অভিজ্ঞতা নিয়ে বিভিন্ন প্রশ্ন এই সার্ভেতে অন্তর্ভুক্ত হয়েছে।

সার্ভে প্রশ্নমালা পুরনে আপনার আনুমানিক ২০ মিনিট সময় লাগতে পারে। আর সাক্ষাতকারের সময়সীমা হবে বড় জোর এক ঘণ্টা।

এই প্রজেক্টে অংশগ্রহণ সম্পূর্ণ আপনার ইচ্ছের উপর নির্ভর করছে। তাছাড়া আপনি ইচ্ছে করলে যে কোন সময় এই প্রজেক্ট থেকে আপনার নাম প্রত্যাহার করতে পারবেন। সেক্ষেত্রে আপনার কাছ থেকে প্রাপ্ত তথ্য নষ্ট করে ফেলা হবে। আপনি যদি এই প্রজেক্ট থেকে আপনার অংশগ্রহণ প্রত্যাহার করতে চান অথবা কোন মতামত পরিবর্তন করতে চান, অনুগ্রহ করে সরাসরি আমার সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন, এই মোবাইল নম্বরে 0415629871 অথবা ই-মেইল করতে পারেন এই ঠিকানায় sshafiq@.swin.edu.au

আমার এই প্রজেক্ট ও গবেষণা সম্পর্কে আরও কিছু জানতে চাইলে আমার সুপারভাইজারদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করতে পারেন।

Concerns/complain about the project- who to contact

This project (2011/148 Ethical review) has been approved by Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this project, you can contact: Research Ethics Officers, Swinburne Research (H68),

Swinburne University of Technology, P O Box 218, HAWTHORN VIC 3122

Tel (03) 92145218 or +61 3 9214 5218 or resethics@swin.edu.au

Research Ethics Officers, Swinburne Research (H68)

APPENDIX 4: SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Gender : ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age (Years): ☐ 18-24 ☐ 25 – 29 ☐ 30 - 34 ☐ 35 - 39 ☐ 40 – 44
☐ 45- 49 ☐ 50 – 54 ☐ 55 – 59 ☐ 60 and above

3. Marital status: ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed ☐ Unmarried

4. Religion: ☐ Muslim ☐ Hindu ☐ Christian ☐ Buddhist ☐ None/
Non-believer

SECTION B: PRE-ARRIVAL CHARACTERISTICS

5. When did you first arrive in Australia? In: _____ (month) _____ Year

6. What type of Visa did you have when you FIRST arrived in Australia?

☐ Student visa

☐ Spouse of a student

☐ Permanent resident (PR) as primary applicant

☐ Permanent resident (PR) as Spouse/dependent

☐ Temporary resident (TR)

☐ Family reunion

☐ Humanitarian visa

☐ Others, please specify _____

7. BEFORE your arrival in Australia, what was your highest formal education level?

☐ 10 years of schooling (S.S.C.) or less

☐ 12 years of schooling (H.S.C.) or equivalent

☐   Graduate/Post-graduate Diploma

☐   Bachelor degree or equivalent

☐   Masters

☐   PhD

8. Where did you earn that qualification:

☐ Bangladesh   ☐ Other country (please specify): _____

9. How would you classify the subject area of the above mentioned degree?

☐ Arts/Social Science (History, Economics, etc.), please specify: ____

☐ Commerce (Finance, Accounting, Management etc.), please specify:

____

☐ Professional or Technical (IT, Engineering, Medicine etc.), please specify:

____

☐ Science (Pharmacy, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics etc.), please specify:

____

☐ Law

☐ Others, please specify: ____

10. BEFORE coming to Australia, were you employed (part-time/ full-time) or self-employed (e.g. own business/ franchise/agency)?

☐ Yes, please specify your profession/job title: ____

☐ No, please go to question 12

11. Overall, how satisfied were you with the job you had BEFORE coming to Australia?

☐ Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Fairly Satisfied ☐ Not very satisfied ☐ Not satisfied at all

12. What was/were the main reason(s) for taking the decision to migrate/settle down in Australia (You can select more than one)?

☐ For a secure life   ☐ Better education/future for children

☐ For better economic position   ☐ Social/political unrest in Bangladesh

☐ To better utilise my skills   ☐ My spouse took the decision/influenced me

☐ Others please specify: ____

SECTION C: SETTLEMENT QUESTIONS

13. When did you obtain Australian Permanent Residency (PR) ? In: ____ (month) ____ Year

And, under which Category:

☐ Skilled- Independent   ☐ Skilled -independent (family)

☐ Skilled- Sponsored   ☐ Skilled- Sponsored (family)

☐ Sponsored by a family member ☐ Humanitarian/Refugee

☐ Family reunion   ☐ Others, Please specify ____

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14. What is your current status in Australia?

☐ Citizen, since _____ (month) _____ (Year)

☐ Permanent Resident (PR)

15. Do you live in a? ☐ Inner city of a major city ☐ Suburb of a major city

☐ Regional town ☐ Regional area

16. What is your current housing arrangement?

☐ Own home ☐ Rented accommodation

☐ Shared rented accommodation ☐ Government housing

17. After arriving Australia, did you do further study? Please choose from below and specify:

☐ Yes, (please specify from below. You can choose more than one if applicable)

☐ Language course/s

☐ Certificate 1- 4, please specify _____

☐ Diploma / Advanced Diploma, please specify _____

☐ Bachelors/Honours, please specify subject area _____

☐ Masters, please specify subject area _____

☐ PhD, please specify subject area _____

☐ Others, please specify _____

☐ No

18. Are you currently studying (doing any degree, diploma or certificate course)?

☐ Yes, please specify the degree/diploma _____

☐ No

19. How would you describe your present employment status?

☐ Self-employed (e.g. own business/ franchise/home carer (child care)

☐ Employed full-time

☐ Employed part-time or casual

☐ Looking for a job (Please go to question 23)

☐ Not looking for a job (Please go to question 23)

20. If employed/ self-employed please write down your profession/JOB TITLE: _____

21. Do you work in the industry/field in which you are trained? ☐ Yes
☐ No

22. How satisfied are you with this job/profession?

☐ Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied

☐ Fairly satisfied ☐ Not very satisfied ☐ Not satisfied at all

23. Were you unemployed and looking for work, at any time after coming to Australia?

☐ Yes , for how long: _____ (month) _____ (Year)

☐ No

☐ Did not look for a job

24. If you are married, what is the current employment status of your spouse?

☐ Self-employed (e.g. own bussiness, franchise, home carer (childcare) etc.)

☐ Employed fulltime ☐ Employed part-time or casual

☐ Looking for a job ☐ Not looking for a job

25. What kind of help did you receive when you first arrived in Australia or during your early settlement? (You can choose more than one)

☐ Housing ☐ Interacting with government ☐ Finding work

☐ Meeting people ☐ Language ☐ Others, please specify _____

☐ No help (please go to question 28)

26. Thinking of your answer above, who gave you the assistance? (You can choose more than one)

☐ Relatives ☐ Friends ☐ Bangladeshi community organisation(s)

☐ State government ☐ Federal Government

☐ Others, please specify _____

27. How satisfied were you with the level of support you received?

☐ Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Fairly satisfied ☐ Not very satisfied ☐ Not satisfied at all

28. Did you /your spouse/your children receive any government allowance(s) DURING YOUR EARLY SETTLEMENT PERIOD?

☐ Yes, (Please specify the allowance type): _____

☐ No

29(a). What is YOUR personal annual income?

☐ Less than $20,000   ☐ $20,001 to $40,000   ☐ $40,001 to $60,000

☐ $60,001 to $80,000   ☐ $80,001 to $100,000   ☐ $100,001 to $120,000

☐ $120,001 to $140,000   ☐ $140,001 to $160,000   ☐ $160,001 to $180,000

☐ $180,001 to $200,000   ☐ Above $200,000

29(b). What is your annual FAMILY/ HOUSEHOLD INCOME from all sources (including your, your spouse's income as well as Government allowance, if any)?

☐ Less than $20,000   ☐ $20,001 to $40,000   ☐ $40,001 to $60,000

☐ $60,001 to $80,000   ☐ $80,001 to $100,000   ☐ $100,001 to $120,000

☐ $120,001 to $140,000   ☐ $140,001 to $160,000   ☐ $160,001 to $180,000

☐ $180,001 to $200,000   ☐ Above $200,000

30. In your opinion, how does your family/household income enable you to support you or your family?

☐ Very well   ☐ Well

☐ Only meets basic needs   ☐ It is difficult to meet basic needs

31. How many children do you have?

☐ None (Please go to question 34)

☐ One   ☐ Two   ☐ Three   ☐ More than three

32. In your opinion, how have your children adapted to the different culture and customs of Australia?

☐ Much better than me   ☐ Better than me   ☐ the same as me   ☐ Less well than me

☐ My child/children is/are infant(s)   (Please go to question 34)

33. Have your children experienced any problems settling in Australia?

☐ Yes, what is/are that/those (please select one or more from below):

☐ Language problem   ☐ Problem at school   ☐ Racial discrimination/racism

☐ Cultural misunderstanding   ☐ other, please specify _____

☐ No

34. Have you ever faced any "racial discrimination"?

☐ Yes, Please specify from below. You can select only more than one.
    ☐ Work/employment related (i.e. job interview/promotion etc.)

    ☐ When renting/buying houses

    ☐ at government department when wanted help

    ☐ When using the services of hospital/restaurant/public transport s etc.

    ☐ Others, Please specify: _____

☐ No

35. Have you ever experienced any "racial behaviour/comment'' from the native people?

☐ Yes, Please specify from below. You can select only more than one.
    ☐ From work colleagues

    ☐ From Neighbours

    ☐ From strangers

    ☐ Others, Please specify: _____

☐ No

36. How would you assess your level of capacity in English WHEN YOU ARRIVED IN AUSTRALIA?

Speaking:	☐ Fluent	☐ Moderate	☐ Basic	☐None
Reading:	☐ Fluent	☐ Moderate	☐ Basic	☐None
Writing:	☐ Fluent	☐ Moderate	☐ Basic	☐None

37. How would you assess your level of capacity in English TODAY?

Speaking:	☐ Fluent	☐ Moderate	☐ Basic	☐None
Reading:	☐ Fluent	☐ Moderate	☐ Basic	☐None
Writing:	☐ Fluent	☐ Moderate	☐ Basic	☐None

38. How often and with whom do you speak English AT HOME? (You can choose more than one)

    ☐ Always with children ☐ Sometimes with children

    ☐ Always with spouse ☐ Sometimes with spouse

    ☐ Never speak English at home

39. How do you feel you "fit in" in Australia today as compared to your early days of settlement?

    ☐ Much better ☐ Better ☐ the same ☐ Worse ☐ Much worse

40. Overall, how is your current economic living standard in Australia as compared to your living standard before emigration?

☐ Much better　　☐ Better　　☐ the same　　☐ Worse　　☐ Much worse

Section D: CULTURAL/RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

41. How important is it for you to maintain cultural/religious traditions of your home country here in Australia?

☐ Very important　　☐ Important　　☐ Fairly important

☐ Not very important　　　☐ Not important at all

42. What particular aspects are most important in defining your cultural identity? (Please select only *TOP THREE* and place a 1, 2 and 3 in the shaded boxes below, and leave the other boxes blank)

_____ Language

_____ Religion

_____ Social values

_____ Food

_____ Music , films etc.

_____ Festivals (both cultural and religious)

_____ Costumes

_____ Others, Please specify: _____

43. Did you face any difficulty to maintain any cultural/religious practice(s) since you arrived here in Australia?

☐ Yes, Please **specify from below. Select only *TOP THREE* and place a 1, 2 and 3 in the shaded   boxes,   and leave the other boxes blank)**

_____ Language

_____ Religion

_____ Social values

_____ Food

_____ Music , films etc.

_____ Festivals (both cultural and religious)

_____ Costumes

_____ Others, Please specify: _____

☐ No, did not have difficulty to maintain any cultural/religious practice

44. In your opinion what are the most important settlement needs of the Bangladeshis in Australia? (Please select only *TOP THREE* and place a 1, 2 and 3 in the shaded boxes below, and leave the other boxes blank)

_____ Accommodation

_____ Job

_____ Welfare assistance

_____ Medical assistance

_____ Finance (Savings/ Home capital)

_____ English proficiency

_____ Networking with community/Friends/Relatives

_____ Others, Please specify _____

45. How often do you participate in the Bangladeshi community events in Australia?

☐ More than once a week   ☐ Once a week   ☐ 2 or 3 times a month

☐ Once a month   ☐ Once a few months   ☐ Never

46. How do you feel when you ask for assistance from your own community?

☐ Always feel comfortable   ☐ Sometimes feel uncomfortable

☐ Often feel uncomfortable   ☐ Frequently feel uncomfortable

because I have many needs ☐ I never ask for assistance

SECTION F: HOME CONTACT

47. How often and how do you contact with the relatives living in Bangladesh? (Please check the boxes as appropriate)

	Daily	Every few days	Weekly	Monthly	Occasio-nally	Never
Email	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Face book	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Telephone	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Video chat/Skype	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Writing letters	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

48. How often do you send money back home?

☐ Monthly ☐ Every few months ☐ Yearly ☐ Occasionally ☐ Never

<u>**SECTION G: SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OUTSIDE THE BANGLADESHI COMMUNITY**</u>

49. How often do you spend time with people other than your own community?

☐ More than once a week ☐ Once a week ☐ 2 or 3 times a month

☐ Once a month ☐ Once a few months ☐ Never

50. How often do you attend local community events (e.g. working bees, school concert, fete, craft exhibition)?

☐ More than once a week ☐ Once a week ☐ 2 or 3 times a month

☐ Once a month ☐ Once a few months ☐ Never

51. Are you an active member of a local organization (e.g. sports club, social club etc)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Used to be a member

52. What do you LIKE most about Australia? (Please write in the shaded area below):

53. What do you DISLIKE most about Australia? (Please write in the shaded area below):

54. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life in Australia?

☐ Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Fairly Satisfied ☐ Not very satisfied

☐ Not satisfied at all

55. Do you think your decision to migrate to Australia was right?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

56. Will you encourage/recommend others to migrate to Australia?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Please Note: I would like to know more about your settlement experience in Australia. So I invite you to participate in a face to face interview with me. I believe that a detail account of your settlement experience and feelings will enrich my research. If you are interested in participating in an interview, please enter your name and preferred contact details below.

Your name and contact details provided will not be disclosed anywhere and will not be used in this research or any future publication. The researcher needs these to contact you so that an interview schedule can be organised conveniently. Please write in the shaded areas:

Name :			
Unit/Road no. and name:			
Suburb:		Postcode:	
State:			
Phone:		E-mail:	

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation to complete this survey.

APPENDIX 5: SURVEY QUESTIONS (BANGLA VERSION)

<u>SECTION A: PERSONAL PROFILE</u>

১। আপনি কিঃ   ☐ পুরুষ   ☐ মহিলা

২। বয়স সীমা (বছর)ঃ ☐ ১৮ - ২৪   ☐ ২৫ – ২৯ ☐ ৩০ - ৩৪   ☐ ৩৫ - ৩৯
☐ ৪০ - ৪৪   ☐ ৪৫ - ৪৯ ☐ ৫০ – ৫৪ ☐ ৫৫ - ৫৯   ☐ ৬০ বা তার বেশী

৩।বৈবাহিক অবস্থাঃ ☐ বিবাহিত   ☐ তালাকপ্রাপ্ত   ☐ বিধবা/বিপত্নিক   ☐ অবিবাহিত

৪। ধর্মীয় পরিচয়ঃ ☐ মুসলমান ☐ হিন্দু   ☐ খ্রিস্টান   ☐ বৌদ্ধ ☐ কোনটাই নয়

SECTION B: PRE-ARRIVAL CHARACTERISTICS

৫। আপনি প্রথম কবে অস্ট্রেলিয়াতে এসেছেন ?   _____ (মাস) _____ বছর

৬। অস্ট্রেলিয়াতে প্রথম বার কি ধরনের ভিসা নিয়ে এসেছিলেন?

   ☐ স্টুডেন্ট ভিসা
   ☐ স্টুডেন্ট ভিসা (ফামিলি)
   ☐ পার্মানেন্ট রেসিডেন্ট (প্রধান আবেদনকারী)
   ☐ পার্মানেন্ট রেসিডেন্ট (ডিপেনডেন্ট)
   ☐ টেম্পোরারি রেসিডেন্ট
   ☐ ফ্যামিলি রিউনিয়ন
   ☐ শরণার্থী ভিসা
   ☐ অন্যান্য{অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন} _____

৭। অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় আগমনের পূর্বে আপনার উচ্চতর (highest) ডিগ্রি কি ছিল ?
   ☐ এস, এস,সি/এস, এস,সি' র নিচে
   ☐ এইচ, এস,সি
   ☐ গ্রাজুয়েট ডিপ্লোমা/ পোস্ট- গ্রাজুয়েট ডিপ্লোমা
   ☐ স্নাতক / সম্মান অথবা সম পর্যায়ের ডিগ্রী
   ☐ মাস্টার্স
   ☐ পি এইচ ডি

৮। আপনার এই ডিগ্রি আপনি কোন দেশ থেকে অর্জন করেছেন?

☐ বাংলাদেশ   ☐ অন্য কোন দেশ (অনুগ্রহ করে দেশের নাম লিখুন) _____

৯। আপনার এই ডিগ্রীকে আপনি কিভাবে বিশেষায়িত করবেন?

☐ কলা/সামাজিক বিজ্ঞান (ইতিহাস, অর্থনীতি, etc.), {অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন} : _____

☐ বাণিজ্য (Finance, Accounting, Management etc.),   _____

☐ প্রফেসনাল/ টেকনিকাল (IT, Engineering, Medicine etc.),   _____

☐ বিজ্ঞান (Pharmacy, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics etc.),   _____

☐ আইন

☐ অন্যান্য {অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন}: _____

১০। অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় আসার পূর্বে আপনি কি কর্মজীবী (পূর্ণকালীন/ খণ্ডকালীন চাকরিরত/নিজস্ব বেবসা বা সংস্থায় কর্মরত) ছিলেন?

☐ হ্যাঁ (তাহলে আপনার পূর্ণ পদবী লিখুন): _____

☐ না (১২ নং প্রশ্ন দেখুন)

১১ । আপনার ঐ পেশা নিয়ে আপনি কতটুকু সন্তুষ্ট ছিলেন?

☐ খুবই সন্তুষ্ট ☐ সন্তুষ্ট ☐ মোটামুটি সন্তুষ্ট ☐ অসন্তুষ্ট ☐ খুবই অসন্তুষ্ট

১২। আপনি কেন অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় আসার সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছেন? (নিচের কারণগুলো থেকে একাধিক উত্তর বেছে নিতে পারেন)

☐ নিরাপদ জীবন   ☐ বাচ্চার পড়াশোনা ও ভবিষ্যৎ

☐ অর্থনৈতিক সমৃদ্ধি   ☐বাংলাদেশে চলমান সামাজিক-রাজনৈতিক সংকট এড়ানো

☐ যোগ্যতার সদবেবহার ☐ স্বামী / স্ত্রী'র সিদ্ধান্ত মেনে নিতে হয়েছে

☐ অন্য কোন কারন {অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন}: : _____

SECTION C: SETTLEMENT QUESTIONS

১৩। আপনি কখন অস্ট্রেলিয়ার পার্মানেন্ট রেসিডেন্সি লাভ করেন? _____ (মাস) _____ বছর
আপনি কোন ক্যাটাগরিতে ভিসা পেয়েছিলেন?

☐ Skilled- Independent   ☐ Skilled -independent (family)   ☐ Skilled- Sponsored

☐ Skilled- Sponsored (family) ☐ Sponsored by a family member

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☐ Humanitarian/Refugee ☐ Family reunion ☐ অন্যান্য, অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন _____

১৪। অস্ট্রেলিয়াতে বর্তমানে আপনার ভিসা স্ট্যাটাস কি?

☐ নাগরিক, (কখন নাগরিকত্ব পেয়েছেন অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন): _____
☐ পার্মানেন্ট রেসিডেনট (PR)

১৫। অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় আপনি কোথায়/কোন অঞ্চলে বসবাস করছেন?

☐ বড় শহর   ☐ বড় শহরের অন্তর্গত কোন উপশহর (suburb)
☐ প্রত্যন্ত শহর   ☐ গ্রাম এলাকা

১৬। আপনার বাসস্থানের ধরন কি?

☐ নিজস্ব বাড়ি   ☐ ভাড়া বাড়ি
☐ শেয়ার ভাড়া বাড়ি   ☐ সরকারি বাসস্থান

১৭। অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় আসার পরে আপনি নতুন কোন ডিগ্রি বা ট্রেনিং নিয়েছেন কি?
☐ হ্যাঁ (একাধিক উত্তর বেছে নিতে পারেন)

☐ ভাষা'র কোর্স
☐ সার্টিফিকেট কোর্স 1- 4, (বিষয় উল্লেখ করুন) _____
☐ ডিপ্লোমা /উচ্চতর ডিপ্লোমা , (বিষয় উল্লেখ করুন) _____
☐ স্নাতক/সম্মান, (বিষয় উল্লেখ করুন) _____
☐ মাস্টার্স (বিষয় উল্লেখ করুন) _____
☐ পি এইচ ডি (বিষয় উল্লেখ করুন) _____
☐ অন্যান্য, {অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন} _____
☐ না

১৮।আপনি কি বর্তমানে পড়াশুনা করছেন (কোন ডিগ্রী, ডিপ্লোমা কিংবা সার্টিফিকেট কোর্স)?
☐ হ্যাঁ   (অনুগ্রহ করে ডিগ্রী/কোর্সের নাম লিখুন) _____

☐ না

১৯। বর্তমানে আপনি কি কর্মজীবী?
☐ স্বকর্মে নিয়োজিত (own business/ franchise/home carer (child care)
☐ পূর্ণকালীন চাকরিরত

☐ খণ্ডকালীন চাকরিরত

☐ চাকরি খুজিছি, কিন্তু পাচ্ছিনা (২৩নং প্রশ্ন দেখুন)

☐ চাকরি খুজিছিনা (২৩নং প্রশ্ন দেখুন)

২০। কর্মজীবী হলে আপনার পেশা কি ? (অনুগ্রহ করে নিচে আপনার আপনার পূর্ণ পদবি লিখুন, আপনি যদি নিজেই নিজের প্রতিষ্ঠান বা ব্যবসায় নিয়োজিত থাকুন, তা উল্লেখ করুন: _____

২১। আপনি যে বিষয় নিয়ে পড়াশুনা কিংবা ট্রেনিং গ্রহণ করেছেন, চাকরি কি সেই একই বিষয়ে করছেন?   ☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

২২। আপনার বর্তমান চাকরি/পেশা নিয়ে আপনি কতটুকু সন্তুষ্ট ?

☐ খুবই সন্তুষ্ট ☐ সন্তুষ্ট ☐ মোটামুটি সন্তুষ্ট ☐ অসন্তুষ্ট ☐ খুবই অসন্তুষ্ট

২৩। অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় আসার পর কখনো কি আপনি বেকার (চাকরি খুজিছিলেন, কিন্তু পাচ্ছিলেন না) ছিলেন?

☐ হ্যাঁ (কতো দিন?) : _____ (মাস) _____ (বছর)

☐ না

☐ চাকরি খুজি নাই

২৪। আপনি যদি বিবাহিত হয়ে থাকেন আপনার স্বামী/ স্ত্রী কি কর্মজীবী?

☐ স্বকর্মে নিয়োজিত (e.g. own bussiness, franchise, home carer (childcare) etc.)

☐ পূর্ণকালীন চাকরিরত   ☐ খণ্ডকালীন চাকরিরত

☐ চাকরি খুজছেন, কিন্তু পাচ্ছেননা   ☐ চাকরি খুজছেননা

২৫। অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় আসার পর শুরুর দিনগুলোতে কি ধরনের সাহায্য /সহযোগিতা লাভ করেছিলেন? (অনুগ্রহ করে টিক দিন, একাধিক উত্তর বেছে নিতে পারেন)

☐ বাসস্থান   ☐ সরকারি অফিসে যোগাযোগ   ☐ কর্মসংস্থান

☐ লোকজনের সাথে যোগাযোগ ☐ ভাষা

☐ অন্যান্য, {অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন} _____

☐ সাহায্য পাইনি (২৮ নং প্রশ্ন দেখুন)

২৬। এই সাহায্য/সহযোগিতা আপনি কার কাছ থেকে পেয়েছিলেন ? (একাধিক উত্তর বেছে নিতে পারেন)

☐ আত্মীয়   ☐ বন্ধুবান্ধব   ☐ বাংলাদেশী কমিউনিটি

☐ সরকার (State)   ☐ সরকার (কেন্দ্রীয়)   ☐ অন্যান্য, _____

২৭। এই সাহায্য/সহযোগিতায় আপনি কতটুকু সন্তুষ্ট ছিলেন?

☐ খুবই সন্তুষ্ট   ☐ সন্তুষ্ট   ☐ মোটামুটি সন্তুষ্ট   ☐ অসন্তুষ্ট   ☐ খুবই অসন্তুষ্ট

২৮। অস্ট্রেলিয়াতে শুরুর দিনগুলোতে আপনি (অথবা আপনার স্বামী/ স্ত্রী অথবা আপনার সন্তান) কি কোন ধরনের সরকারি সাহায্য পেয়েছিলেন ?

☐ হ্যাঁ, (অনুগ্রহ করে সাহায্যের ধরণ লিখুন): _____
☐ না

২৯। (অ) আপনার (নিজস্ব)বার্ষিক আয় কত?

☐ $২০০০০ এর কম   ☐ $২০০০১ to $8০০০০   ☐ $8০,০০১ - $৬০০০০

☐ $৬০০০০১ - $৮০০০০ ☐ $৮০০০১ - $১০০০০০ ☐ $১০০০০১-$১২০০০০

☐ $১২০০০১- $১8০০০০ ☐ $১8০০০১- $১৬০০০০ ☐ $১৬০০০১- $১৮০০০০

☐ $১৮০০০১- $২০০০০০ ☐ $২০০০০০ এর বেশি

২৯। (আ) আপনার পরিবারের সর্বমোট বার্ষিক আয় কত? (আপনার স্ত্রী/ স্বামীর আয় ও যদি কোন ধরনের সরকারি সাহায্য পেয়ে থাকেন, তা সহ)

☐ $২০০০০ এর কম   ☐ $২০০০১ to $8০০০০   ☐ $8০,০০১ - $৬০০০০

☐ $৬০০০০১ - $৮০০০০ ☐ $৮০০০১ - $১০০০০০ ☐ $১০০০০১-$১২০০০০

☐ $১২০০০১- $১8০০০০ ☐ $১8০০০১- $১৬০০০০ ☐ $১৬০০০১-$১৮০০০০

☐ $১৮০০০১- $২০০০০০ ☐ $২০০০০০ এর বেশি

৩০। পারিবারিক মোট আয় আপনার আর আপনার পরিবারের চাহিদা মেটাতে কতটুকু সক্ষম বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

☐ খুবই ভালো   ☐ ভালো
☐ শুধুমাত্র মৌলিক চাহিদা মেটাতে সক্ষম   ☐ মৌলিক চাহিদা মেটানোই কষ্টকর

৩১। আপনার কতজন সন্তান আছে?

   ☐ সন্তান নেই (অনুগ্রহ করে ৩৪ নং প্রশ্ন দেখুন)

☐ এক   ☐ দুই   ☐ তিন   ☐ তিনের বেশী

৩২।আপনার তুলনায় আপনার সন্তানরা অস্ট্রেলিয়ার ভিন্ন সংস্কৃতি ও প্রথার সাথে কতটুকু মানিয়ে চলতে পারে বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

☐ অনেক ভালো   ☐ মোটামুটি ভালো   ☐ আমার মতই
☐ আমার চেয়ে খারাপ ☐ আমার সন্তান / সন্তানরা এখনও অনেক ছোট (৩৪ নং প্রশ্ন দেখুন)

৩৩। অস্ট্রেলিয়াতে মানিয়ে চলার ক্ষেত্রে আপনার সন্তান/সন্তানরা কোন অসুবিধার সম্মুখীন হচ্ছে কি?

   ☐ হ্যাঁ, (অনুগ্রহ করে চিহ্নিত করুন, একাধিক উত্তর বেছে নিতে পারেন):

      ☐ ভাষা নিয়ে সমস্যা   ☐ স্কুলে সমস্যা   ☐ বর্ণবৈষম্য
      ☐ সাংস্কৃতিক ভুল বুঝাবুঝি   ☐ অন্যান্য, {অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন} _____
   ☐ না

৩৪। আপনি কি কখনও বর্ণবাদী আচরণের/ বৈষম্যের মুখোমুখি হয়েছেন?

      ☐ হ্যাঁ, (অনুগ্রহ করে চিহ্নিত করুন, একাধিক উত্তর বেছে নিতে পারেন):
            ☐ কাজের ক্ষেত্রে (i.e. job interview/promotion etc.)
            ☐ বাড়ি কেনা কিংবা ভাড়া নেয়ার সময়
            ☐ সরকারি কোন কার্যালয়ে
            ☐ হাসপাতাল, রেস্তোরাঁ কিংবা পাবলিক ট্রান্সপোর্টে
            ☐ অন্যান্য, {অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন} _____
      ☐ না

৩৫। আপনি কি কখনও স্থানীয় লোকদের কাছ থেকে বর্ণবাদী আচরণের/ বৈষম্যের মুখোমুখি হয়েছেন?
      ☐ হ্যাঁ, (অনুগ্রহ করে চিহ্নিত করুন, একাধিক উত্তর বেছে নিতে পারেন):
            ☐ সহকর্মীর কাছ থেকে

☐ প্রতিবেশীর কাছ থেকে

☐ অচেনা কারও কাছ থেকে

☐ অন্যান্য, {অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন} _____

☐ না

৩৬। অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় শুরুর দিনগুলোতে বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে আপনার ইংরেজি জ্ঞানের মাত্রা আপনি কিভাবে মূল্যায়ন করবেন ?

কথা বলাঃ ☐ খুব ভালো ☐ ভালো ☐ মোটামুটি ভালো ☐ ইংরেজি জানতাম না

পড়াঃ ☐ খুব ভালো ☐ ভালো ☐ মোটামুটি ভালো ☐ ইংরেজি জানতাম না

লেখাঃ ☐ খুব ভালো ☐ ভালো ☐ মোটামুটি ভালো ☐ ইংরেজি জানতাম না

৩৭। বর্তমানে বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে আপনার ইংরেজি জ্ঞানের মাত্রা আপনি কিভাবে মূল্যায়ন করবেন

কথা বলাঃ ☐ খুব ভালো ☐ ভালো ☐ মোটামুটি ভালো ☐ ইংরেজি জানিনা

পড়াঃ ☐ খুব ভালো ☐ ভালো ☐ মোটামুটি ভালো ☐ ইংরেজি জানিনা

লেখাঃ ☐ খুব ভালো ☐ ভালো ☐ মোটামুটি ভালো ☐ ইংরেজি জানিনা

৩৮। আপনার বাড়ীতে ইংরেজি কথা বলার চর্চা কেমন হয়? [একাধিক উত্তর বেছে নিতে পারেন]

☐ সবসময় সন্তানদের সাথে ☐ মাঝে মাঝে সন্তানদের সাথে

☐ সবসময় স্বামী/ স্ত্রীর সাথে ☐ মাঝে মাঝে স্বামী/ স্ত্রীর সাথে

☐ কখনোই ইংরেজি বলিনা

৩৯। অস্ট্রেলিয়াতে বসবাসের প্রথম দিনগুলোর তুলনায় বর্তমান সময়কে আপনি কিভাবে মূল্যায়ন করবেন?

☐ অনেক ভালো ☐ ভালো ☐ একই রকম ☐ খারাপ ☐ অনেক খারাপ

৪০। সামগ্রিকভাবে অস্ট্রেলিয়াতে বর্তমানে আপনার অর্থনৈতিক অবস্থা অভিবাসী হওয়ার পূর্বে দেশে আপনার অর্থনৈতিক অবস্থার তুলনায় কতটা ভাল/খারাপ ?

☐ অনেক ভালো ☐ ভালো ☐ একই রকম ☐ খারাপ ☐ অনেক খারাপ

৪১। অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় আপনার দেশের ধর্মীয়, সাংস্কৃতিক প্রথা ও ঐতিহ্য রক্ষা করা আপনার জন্য কতটুকু গুরুত্বপূর্ণ?

☐ অনেক বেশী ☐ বেশী ☐ মোটামুটি বেশী

☐ সামান্য গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ☐ মোটেও গুরুত্বপূর্ণও নয়

৪২।নিচের কোন বিষয়গুলো আপনার দেশের (বাংলাদেশ) সাংস্কৃতিক পরিচয় তুলে ধরে বলে আপনি মনে করেন? (অনুগ্রহ করে আপনার মতে সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ তিনটি ১,২,৩ এভাবে চিহ্নিত করুন)

_____ ভাষা

_____ ধর্ম

_____ মূল্যবোধ, বিশ্বাস এবং/ অথবা আচার ব্যাবহার

_____ খাদ্য

_____ সংগীত, চলচ্চিত্র ইত্যাদি .

_____ উৎসব (ধর্মীয় ও সাংস্কৃতিক)

_____ পোশাক

_____ অন্যান্য (অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন: _____

৪৩। অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় বাংলাদেশের ধর্মীয় ও সাংস্কৃতিক প্রথাগুলো পালন করতে আপনি অসুবিধার সম্মুখীন হচ্ছেন কি?

☐ হ্যাঁ (অনুগ্রহ করে আপনার মতে সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ তিনটি ১,২,৩ এভাবে চিহ্নিত করুন)

_____ ভাষা

_____ ধর্ম

_____ মূল্যবোধ, বিশ্বাস এবং/ অথবা আচার ব্যাবহার

_____ খাদ্য

_____ সংগীত, চলচ্চিত্র ইত্যাদি

_____ উৎসব (ধর্মীয় ও সাংস্কৃতিক)

_____ পোশাক

_____ অন্যান্য (অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন: _____

☐ না, বাংলাদেশের ধর্মীয় ও সাংস্কৃতিক প্রথা গুলো পালন করতে কোন অসুবিধা হচ্ছেনা

SECTION E: SETTLEMENT NEEDS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

৪৪। আপনার মতে বাংলাদেশীদের অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় সফলভাবে বসবাসের জন্য মৌলিক প্রয়োজনগুলো কি কি ? (অনুগ্রহ করে আপনার মতে সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ তিনটি ১,২,৩ এভাবে চিহ্নিত করুন।)

_____ বাসস্থান

_____ কর্মসংস্থান

_____ কল্যাণ মুলক সহযোগিতা (Welfare assistance)

_____ চিকিৎসা সহযোগিতা

_____ সঞ্চয় (Savings/ Home capital)

_____ ইংরেজিতে দক্ষতা

_____ যোগাযোগ {networking with community/friends/relatives

_____ অন্যান্য (অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন)_____

৪৫। আপনি বাংলাদেশী কমিউনিটি ইভেন্টে (social gathering, cultural programs, emergency) কতটা অংশগ্রহণ করেন?

☐ সপ্তাহে একবারের বেশি ☐ সপ্তাহে একবার ☐ মাসে দুই/তিন বার

☐ মাসে একবার ☐ কদাচিৎ ☐ কখনোই না

৪৬. বাংলাদেশী কমিউনিটির কাছ থেকে সাহায্য/ সহযোগিতা চাইতে আপনি -

☐ সবসময় স্বাচ্ছন্দ্য বোধ করি ☐ মাঝে মাঝে অস্বস্তি বোধ করি

☐ অস্বস্তি বোধ করি ☐ সবসময় অস্বস্তি বোধ করি

☐ কখনও সহযোগিতা চাইনি

৪৭। বাংলাদেশে অবস্থানরত আত্মীয় পরিজনদের সাথে কতটা/কিভাবে যোগাযোগ করেন ?

	প্রতি দিন	কয়েকদিনপর পর	সপ্তাহে একবার	মাসে একবার	কদাচিৎ	কখনোই না
ই-মেইল	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ফেইস বুক	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
টেলিফোন	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ভিডিও চ্যাট (Skype)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
চিঠি	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

৪৮। আপনি কতদিন পর পর দেশে টাকা পাঠান ?

☐ মাসে একবার   ☐ কয়েক মাস পরপর   ☐ বছরে একবার

☐ অনিয়মিত ভাবে   ☐ একেবারেই না

SECTION G: SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OUTSIDE THE BANGLADESHI COMMUNITY

৪৯।আপনি বাংলাদেশী কমিউনিটি ছাড়া অন্য কোন কমিউনিটির লোকদের সাথে কতটা সময় কাটান?

☐ সপ্তাহে একবার এর বেশি   ☐ সপ্তাহে একবার   ☐ মাসে দুই/তিন বার

☐ মাসে একবার   ☐ কয়েকমাসে একবার   ☐ কখনোই না

৫০। আপনি স্থানীয় কমিউনিটি ইভেন্টে (e.g. Working bees, school concert, fete, craft exhibition) কতটা অংশগ্রহণ করেন?

☐ সপ্তাহে একবারের বেশি   ☐ সপ্তাহে একবার   ☐ মাসে দুই/তিন বার

☐ মাসে একবার   ☐ কয়েক মাসে একবার ☐ কখনোই না

৫১। আপনি কি স্থানীয় কোন সংস্থার (e.g. Sports club, social club) সদস্য?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না   ☐ আগে সদস্য ছিলাম এখন নেই

৫২। অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় কোন বিষয়টা আপনার সবচেয়ে পছন্দের ? (অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন)

_____

৫৩। অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় কোন বিষয়টা আপনার সবচেয়ে অপছন্দের ? (অনুগ্রহ করে লিখুন)

৫৪। সামগ্রিকভাবে, অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় আপনার জীবন নিয়ে আপনি কতটুকু সন্তুষ্ট?

☐ খুবই সন্তুষ্ট   ☐ সন্তুষ্ট   ☐ মোটামুটি সন্তুষ্ট   ☐ অসন্তুষ্ট   ☐ খুবই অসন্তুষ্ট

৫৫. আপনি কি মনে করেন আপনার মাইগ্রেশান এর সিদ্ধান্ত সঠিক ছিল?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না   ☐ নিশ্চিত নই

৫৬. আপনি কি অন্যদের ও অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় মাইগেশান – এ উৎসাহিত করবেন?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না   ☐ নিশ্চিত নই

** বিশেষ দ্রষ্টব্যঃ অস্ট্রেলিয়াতে আপনার জীবন যাপন ও অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পর্কে আরও বিশদভাবে জানতে আমি আগ্রহী। আপনার অভিজ্ঞতা ও অনুভূতির গল্প আমার গবেষণা কে আরও সমৃদ্ধ করবে বলে আমার বিশ্বাস। আপনি যদি আমার সাথে সাক্ষাতকারে অংশ নিতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে নিচে আপনার নাম ও যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা লিখুন। এই পৃষ্ঠায় সরবরাহকৃত নাম, ঠিকানা ও টেলিফোন নম্বর আমি আমার কোন গবেষণায় কখনোই ব্যাবহার করবোনা। পরবর্তী কোন প্রকাশনায়ও আপনার পরিচয় কখনো উল্লেখ করবোনা। এছাড়া তৃতীয় কোন ব্যক্তির নিকট কখনোই আপনার পরিচয় প্রকাশ করবোনা। সাক্ষাতকারের সময় ও স্থান আপনার সুবিধা অনুযায়ী নির্ধারণ করা হবে। তাই আপনার সাথে আমার যোগাযোগের প্রয়োজন হতে পারে। সেজন্যই আপনার ঠিকানা সংযুক্ত করার জন্য অনুরোধ জানাচ্ছি।
নামঃ
ঠিকানাঃ
টেলিফোন নম্বরঃ
ই-মেইলঃ
আপনার সময় ও আন্তরিকতার জন্য অসংখ্য ধন্যবাদ

APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (SEMI-STRUCTURED)

1. Why did you migrate? Why did you choose Australia?

2. Could you please tell me about your initial days in Australia? What kinds of difficulties you experienced, (using public transport, contacting home country, celebrating festivals, availability of *halal* food)? Did you receive any kind of help from any person (s), institutions or organisations?

3. How was your initial accommodation? Who arranged that? How was the payment system (if in shared house)? When did you get your own accommodation? Do you currently live in own house?

4. Did you leave behind any of the closest members of your family when you first arrived in Australia? Could you please share your feelings about those days?

5. Did you have friends or relative already living here before your arrival? If yes, did you receive help from them? What kinds of help did you received? How satisfied were with that help?

6. Did you face any difficulties in finding a job when you first arrived in Australia? How long did you have to wait? Who helped you (any friend, relatives, and associations)? Did you receive any help, cooperation, or suggestions from friends, relatives, associations or Australian government services when you were unemployed?
    Besides, have you received any cooperation from any of those organisations during your early days in Australia? Was that helpful in your settlement?

7. Did the highest qualification earn from either Bangladesh or any other country help you to get a suitable job after coming to Australia? Are you working in your preferred occupation? Is your occupation is related to the subject you studied or you were trained for? Is the current job in Australia is equivalent to the job in the former country?

8. Have you been living in this area since you arrived? Have you seen any difference between living in a regional town and a city?

Culture & Religion

How significant is it for you to maintain the religious and cultural rituals from your home country? How do you adapt through religion here in Australia? What do you

think about values (Bangladeshi as well as Australian)? How do you resolve the difference?

Women's experience:

1. Are you employed? how do you maintain/manage two resonibilities (home and work)? what kinds of problems do you experience?

   How do you compare your previous days back in Bangladesh with the current days in Australia? Can you please compare the experinces in regards to child birth and child rearing in two countries? Please talk about the facilitators and barriers.

2. Have you experienced any problems to adjust with the western culture here in australia?

About Children:

1. what do you think about your children's future? are you worried? why/why not? You or your spouse, who worry most? Please explain.

2. Are your children facing any difficulties to adjust? Do they experience problems in play ground, school or child care?

3. How do you pass on your values (cultural & religious) to your children? Do you want your children to assimilate with the host society, or maintain the exclusiveness of the heritage culture?

4. Do you experience or have you ever experienced problems/conflict while teaching your own values to them? Do they obey willingly or oppose/ reject /react?

Interaction with the host society:

1. Have you got friends from host community or other ethnic communities? How is your relation with them? Do you visit their place and vice versa? How often?

2. How much assistance do you recieve from the Australian collegues/ workmates in your workplace? Have you experienced or do you experience any discrimination from them? If so, please explain detail.

3. Apart from workplace have you faced discrmination or racism in people's behaviour?

Satisfaction with the life in Australia:

1. Do you think the migration to Australia was a good decision for you and your family? How satisfied are you with your current lifestyle?

2. Do you consider Australia home? Why/why not? Do you expect to return to your former home country to live permanently? Why/why not? Do you expect to emigrate to any other country?

3. Current days are better than the initial days- Do you agree or disagree? What do you think about this?

4. Will you encourage recommend any friends/relatives/members of family to migrate to Australia?

What do you like most in Australia?
What do you dislike most in Australia?

Would you like to share anything else about your experience in Australia?

APPENDIX 7: CONSENT FORM

Swinburne University of Technology

Project Title: A Study of the Bangladeshi Community Living in Australia

Principal Investigator: Salma Bint Shafiq, PhD candidate, Faculty of Life and Social Sciences

Supervisors: 1. Associate Professor Michael Leach
2. Dr. Julie Kimber

1. I consent to participate in the project named above. I have been provided a copy of the project consent information statement to which this consent form relates and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. *In relation to this project, please circle your response to the following:*

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher	**Yes**	**No**
I agree to allow the interview to be recorded by electronic device	**Yes**	**No**
I agree to make myself available for further information if required	**Yes**	**No**

3. I acknowledge that:
   (a) my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation;
   (b) the Swinburne project is for the purpose of research and not for profit;
   (c) any identifiable information about me which is gathered in the course of and as the result of my participating in this project will be (i) collected and retained for the purpose of this project and (ii) accessed and analysed by the researcher(s) for the purpose of conducting this project;
   (d) my anonymity is preserved and I will not be identified in publications or otherwise without my express written consent.

By signing this document I agree to participate in this project.

Name of Participant:
………………………………………………………………………

        Signature & Date:
………………………………………………………………