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Monograph Series

Adolescents and Youths in Bangladesh: Some Selected Issues

November 2006

Research and Evaluation Division, BRAC

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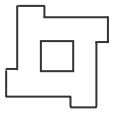

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Adolescents and Youths in Bangladesh: Some Selected Issues

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Paper 1

Education Status of the Youths in Bangladesh

Samir Ranjan Nath

INTRODUCTION

Our national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam pointed out a number of attributes that characterize youth – enthusiasm, energy, boldness, free from narrowness, openness, courageous, etc. The poet strongly discouraged bracketing the youths within any age limit (Islam 1932).

Youths are generally known as the main force of a nation. At this stage of life, people start to contribute to their family, society and the nation. The amount as well as the quality of contribution however depends on prior investments made in terms of human capital, and how enabling the overall environment is to the concerns and aspirations of youth. It is the education provision of the nation, which in general plays the vital role in preparing its people towards contributing in nation building. Importance of education for upward social mobility and building a meritocratic, democratic society and polity was recognised by many influential development thinkers (Smith 1776, Marshal 1890, Sen *et al.* 1995). Education prepares its people to participate meaningfully in their own development and the society at large. However, the extent to which education plays a part in nation building also depends on the overall socio-political environment and commitment towards quality education at all levels. .

For operational relevance, youth is defined based on age in the development literature especially when it comes to designing interventions. There is however, no common definition of youth. Although the United Nations considers people aged 15-24 years as youth, but both the upper and lower limits vary from one country to another. For instance, Hong Kong considers people aged 10-24 years as youth; it is 15-29 years in Sri Lanka and Malaysia, 15-30 years in Singapore and the Philippines, 15-40 years in Nepal, and 15-34 years in India. According to

the Bangladesh youth policy of the Government of Bangladesh people aged 18-35 years are considered as youths. On the other hand, conventionally age 15 years and above is considered in measuring adult literacy rate. Considering the age range mentioned in the national youth policy and the provision of lower age limit in calculating adult literacy rates this chapter considers people aged 15-35 years as youth. Over 38% of the Bangladesh population fall in this age range, which constitutes over 53 million in number – half of them are females and 70% live in rural areas (BBS 2003). Again, 44.8% of the total rural population are youth, which is 36.2% in case of urban population[1].

This paper aims to explore the educational situation of the youths in Bangladesh. This includes education provision for youths, their current enrolment status, and educational attainment including literacy skills. In addition to national level estimates gender, residence, and age-wise situation are also explored.

METHODOLOGY

To know the education provision for youths, latest available source of the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) was used. For other purposes, *Education Watch* household survey and literacy survey databases were used. Nationally representative sample-based *Education Watch* databases are available for the years 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2005. Details of the methodology used in the *Education Watch* surveys are available elsewhere (Chowdhury *et al.* 1999, 2002; Ahmed *et al.* 2003, 2006). However, Table 1 provides the *Education Watch* sample by survey year at a glance. The BANBEIS source is based on the census of the post primary educational institutions in 2002 (BANBEIS 2003).

Table 1. The sample at a glance

Year of survey	Number of districts covered	Number of villages/ *mahallahs*	Number of households	Population aged 15-20y	Youth population (15-35y)
1998	64	312	42,548	22,761	81,333
2000	64	281	30,051	17,608	55,983
2002	64	268	3,840	2,414	6,427
2005	64	1,088	23,971	15,488	44,787

Source: *Education Watch* household survey databases, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2005

[1] Of the total rural population in Bangladesh 40.9% aged below 15 years, 36.2% between 15-35years, and 22.9% over 35 years; these figures are respectively 34.2%, 44.8% and 21% for urban population. The national figures of this are nearer to the figures in rural areas.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR THE YOUTHS

There are seven different categories of educational institutions for the youths in the country. These are general secondary education, college education, madrassa education, university education, technical and vocational education, professional education, and teacher education institutions. Majority of these institutions are for teaching secondary education through general stream followed by madrassa education. These are respectively 51.7% and 30.5%, totalling 82.2%, of the total number of educational institutions for the youths. Only 3.4% of the total educational institutions for the youths are run by the State and the rest are privately managed. However, the government subvention is there in almost all the institutions.

Not all the students of the general secondary and madrassa education provisions can be considered as youth because of their age below 15 years. It can be calculated from the *Education Watch* database that 42% of the pupils of general secondary educational institutions and half of those in the madrassas are youth (aged 15 years and more). An approximate estimate shows that a total of seven million youths (aged 15-25 years) are currently enrolled in various types of educational institutions. If total population of this age group is about 30 million in the country – 23.3% of them are currently enrolled as pupils in any educational institutions. From the available information, it was not possible to estimate the number of youths among the teachers or the facilitators in these institutions.

The general secondary, college, madrassa and university are the popular education provisions where majority of the youth students enrol. The youths study subjects like humanities, business, and science in these institutions. General secondary educational institutions are for secondary schooling only. Some of the colleges provide secondary education and the majority provides higher secondary or graduate level education. Some of the colleges have provision for Masters level education. In the madrassa stream, the Dakhil madrassas provide secondary education only, the Alim madrassas provide both secondary and higher secondary education. The Fazil madrassas teach up to graduate level, and the Kamil madrassas teach up to the Masters level. Only the Bachelor and the Masters level education are provided in the universities.

Table 2. Number of educational institutions and youth pupils by type

Type of educational institution	Number of institutions by management type			Number of youths as pupils
	Government	Private	Total	
General secondary education	317	12,958	13,275	34,28,096
College education	251	2,383	2,634	15,68,671
Madrassa education	3	7,817	7,820	16,99,021
University education	21	52	73	1,50,584
Technical and vocational education	153	1,405	1,558	1,34,016
Professional education	58	128	186	60,032
Teacher education	74	54	128	27,801
Total	877	24,797	25,674	70,68,221

Note: Pupils' aged below 15years were excluded from general secondary and madrassas category. All students in other categories can be treated as youth.
Sources: BANBEIS (2003). Bangladesh Education Statistics 2003, *Education Watch* database 2005

The technical and vocational education includes polytechnic institutes, vocational training institutes, commercial institutes, and some other institutes that provide training in areas such as textile, agriculture, business management, survey, graphic arts, grass and ceramic, etc. Total number of students in this provision would not exceed 150,000.

The professional education provision includes technology colleges, general medical and dental colleges, homeopathic/unani/ayurvedic colleges, nursing training institutes and art colleges. All of these provide Bachelor level degrees. On the other hand, the teacher education provision includes training institutes and colleges for the primary and secondary school teachers, physical education colleges, technical/ vocational training for the teachers, and higher secondary teacher training institutes. Total number of students in these two provisions would not exceed 100,000.

Besides, the Department of Youth Development under the Ministry of Youth and Sports provides skills development training in different vocational trades through its 310 training centres across the country. Other ministries like Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment may have similar training programmes. It should be mentioned that the total volume of technical and vocational, professional, and teacher education provisions is so small in the country that it is difficult to capture them through national sample survey. Thus, the following sections would not address any of these, though these education streams are of vital importance in the context of the changing economic landscape of Bangladesh and should be researched.

ENROLMENT IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

As already mentioned, the data sets used for this chapter only allows us to see the current enrolment situation of the youths aged 15-20 years. Youths those enrolled in any type of educational institution at least for a day during the last six months of the surveys were considered as currently enrolled. According to this definition, the net enrolment rate was calculated as 36% in 2005 (Table 3). This rate is 37.5% for the males and 34.5% for the females (p<0.001). Slightly more than a third of the rural youths (33.9%) and 46.8% of those in urban areas were currently enrolled in any type of educational institutions (p<0.001).

Table 3. Net enrolment rate of the youths aged 15-20 years by residence and sex, 2005

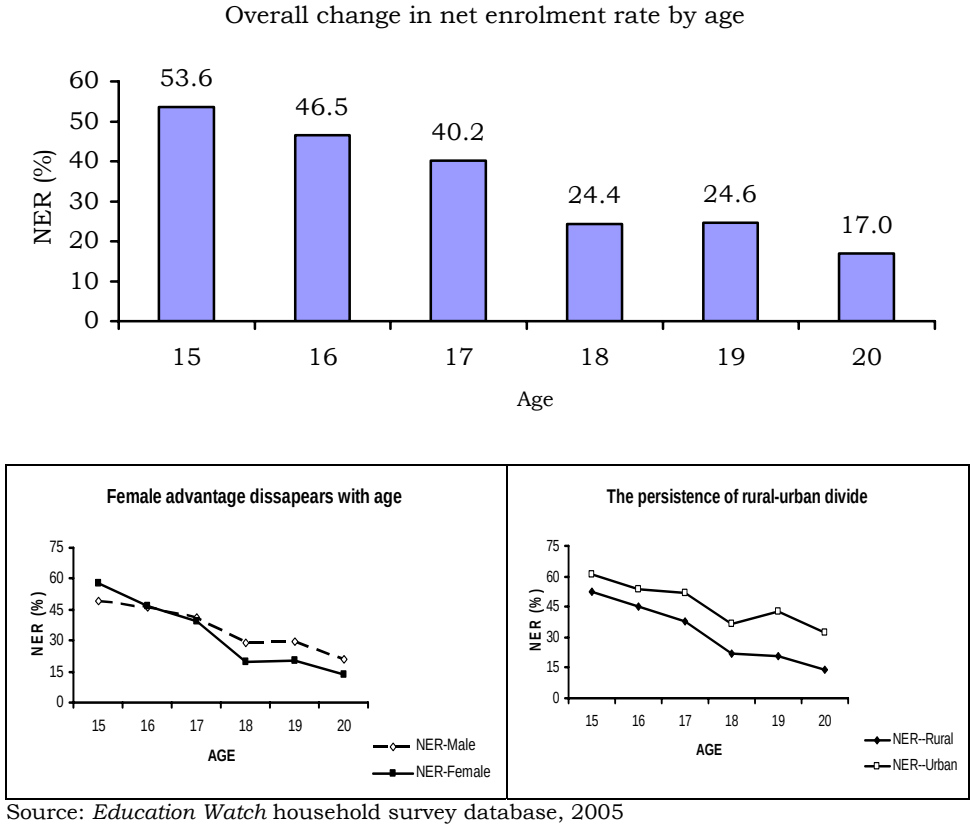
Residence	Sex			Level of significance
	Males	Females	Both	
Rural Bangladesh	35.5	32.3	33.9	p<0.001
Urban Bangladesh	48.2	45.5	46.8	ns
All Bangladesh	37.5	34.5	36.0	p<0.001
Level of significance	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	

Source: *Education Watch* household survey database, 2005

The net enrolment rate of the youths, at the aggregate level, was found slightly lower in 2005 compared to the previous years. For instance, it was over 37% in 1998, 2000, and 2002, which reduced to 36% in 2005. However, these differences were not statistically significant. When data were segregated by area of residence of the youths or sex no homogeneous trend was observed in respect to year of survey. The rates were mostly similar in 1998 and 2005.

Although not much variation was observed in the net enrolment rate over time, but a significant reduction was noticed in the rate of never schooled youths. The rate of non-schooled youths was 23.2% in 1998, which reduced to 17.6% in 2000, 16.6% in 2002 and to 8.7% in 2005. The reduction in never schooled youth has been very sharp over the last seven years. Opposite of this is the increase of ever-schooled youths. In 2005, 9% of the males and 8.3% of the females, and 9.2% of the rural youths and 6.1% of the urban youths of this age group were found without a step into schools.

Figure 1. Net enrolment rate of the youths aged 15-20 years by age, 2005



Source: *Education Watch* household survey database, 2005

As expected, a statistically significant negative relationship was observed between youths' school enrolment rate and their age (Fig. 1). At the aggregate level, more than half of the youths' of age 15 years were currently enrolled, which reduced to 17% by the age of 20 – a lapse of over two thirds within five years. Although the rate of enrolment was higher for the females than males at age 15 and almost equal at age 16, the gap gradually increased afterwards disfavouring the girls. Among the youths of age 20, only 13.5% of the females and 20.8% of the males were currently enrolled in any educational institutions. On the other hand, the rates were always (in all ages) higher for the urban youths than their rural counterparts. Nearly a third of the urban youths of age 20 and only 13.8% of those in rural areas were currently enrolled in any educational institution in 2005.

Area-wise analysis shows that the net enrolment rate was highest in the municipalities followed by the metropolitan cities – the rates were respectively 49.1% and 44%. We find the lowest figure for the youths of

rural Sylhet division – less than a quarter of them were currently enrolled. Of the six rural divisions, Barisal topped the list with 38.9% enrolment rate followed by Khulna and Rajshahi divisions (36.5% and 36.1% respectively).

Five major causes emerge when the respondents of the household surveys were asked to mention the main reason of out of schooling of the youths (Table 4). Although it is known that each and every case of out of schooling has a multidimensional face, however, the respondents were asked to mention the most important reason against each out of school youth. 'Scarcity of money to run educational expenses' came out as the most important reason (37.9% of the cases). Nine percent of the youths had to work at home or outside for their family, thus they could not enrol in school. Both the causes are linked with economic poverty. Dislike of school was the cause of out of schooling for over a fifth of the youths and it was 'failure in the exams' for additional five percent – both the causes are rooted in the school system, syllabus, classroom environment and related maters. Nearly 18% of the out of school youths were not in school because they got married and had their own family. Male-female difference was quite significant in some cases. For instance, poverty as well as school related causes were very much pronounced among the males than the females. A possible cause may be - 'not liking school' and taking the step not to go to school requires certain power, which females are less likely to have compared to their male counterparts. Poverty related cause might affect females less due to the stipend programme. On the other hand, marital cause was mentioned for 34.3% of the females and only 0.5% for the males.

Table 4. Percentage distribution of out of school youths aged 15-20 years by causes of out of schooling, 2005

Causes	Sex		Residence		All
	Males	Females	Rural	Urban	
Scarcity of money	42.5	33.6	37.0	43.5	37.9
Need to work at home or outside	12.6	5.4	9.4	5.8	8.9
Youth does not like school	30.2	11.2	20.3	21.7	20.5
Failures in exams	5.5	4.5	5.1	3.9	5.0
Marriage	0.5	34.3	18.2	15.5	17.8
Others	8.7	11.0	10.0	9.6	9.9

Source: *Education Watch* household survey database, 2005

YEARS OF SCHOOLING COMPLETED

This section analyses the full cohort of the youths aged 15-35 years. The latest survey (*Education Watch*, 2005) showed that nearly a quarter of the youths (24%) of this age range have never been to any type of educational institution, 15.2% went to school but left school before completing primary education (Table 5). This means that over 60% of the youths had completed the full cycle of primary education and a portion of them were currently enrolled. Of the total youths 44.4% had five to nine years of schooling, 13.3% had completed secondary or higher secondary schooling and only 3.1% were graduate. Otherwise, 16.3% of the total youths had 10 or more years of schooling i.e., completed high school education.

Table 5. Distribution of youths (aged 15-35 years) by level of education and sex, 2005

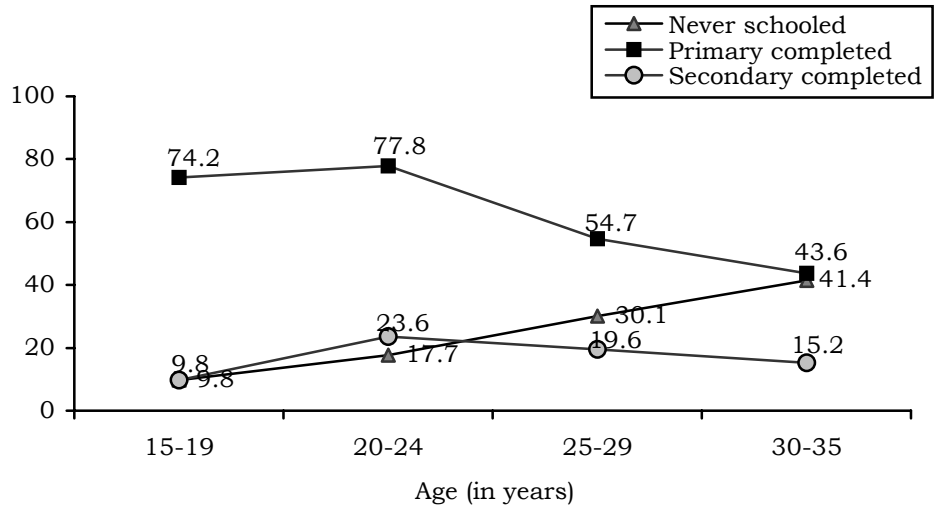
Level of education	Sex		Residence		All
	Males	Females	Rural	Urban	
Never schooled	21.4	26.4	26.2	13.5	24.0
Classes I – IV	15.7	14.8	16.2	10.6	15.2
Classes V – IX	43.1	45.4	44.9	41.9	44.4
Classes X – XII	15.4	11.3	10.9	24.5	13.2
Classes XIV – XVI	4.4	2.0	1.8	9.5	3.1

Source: *Education Watch* household survey database, 2005

Gender-wise analysis shows that 26.4% of the female youths and 21.4% of the male youths had never been to school. These rates were 26.2% for the rural youths and 13.5% for the urban youths. Over three quarters of the urban youths had completed the full course of primary education and 34% of the same moved for 10 or more years of schooling. Among the rural youths, 57.6% completed the primary education cycle and 12.7% completed the high school education. Among the four groups of the youths (by residence and gender) the rural females were found to be the most deprived group than others and the urban males were the most privileged group. The proportion of primary school completing youths were 55.7% among the females and 59.6% among the males in the rural areas and 73.5% among the females and 78.8% among the males in the urban areas. Similarly, proportions of high school completing youths were respectively 9.7% and 16% among the females and the males of rural areas, and 30.7% and 37.8% among the females and the males of urban areas.

Age-wise analysis of the youths' schooling is analysed and presented in Figure 2. It shows that proportion of youths never enrolled in school significantly increased with the increase of their age. Highest proportion of primary or secondary school completion was observed in the age group 20-24 years. The currently enrolled youths of age 15-19 years have the opportunity to study further, but what about the youths aged over 24 years? Most of them who are not in any educational institutions will not have a chance to increase the level of schooling. Over 30% of them never been to any school and a big portion did not complete primary schooling (45.3% in 25-29 age group and 56.4% in 30-35 age group). Less than a fifth of these youths completed high school education. The primary school enrolment revolution happened after they passed their primary school going age. As most did not complete even primary education, their level of knowledge might be very low in relation to quality of education. Due to lack of remedial and/or alternative vocational type streams implications for an educated work force are clear.

Figure 2. Proportion of never schooled, primary completed and secondary completed youths (aged 15-35 years) by age, 2005



Source: *Education Watch* household survey database, 2005

The above gender segregated analysis provides important information. Among the early aged young population, the females were more likely to be schooled and completing primary education than their counterpart males. A reverse relationship, in this regard, was observed among the youths aged 20 years or more. Over a third of the females and a quarter of the males aged 25-29 years have never been to any educational institutions. This rate was 46.3% for the females and 36.1% for the males

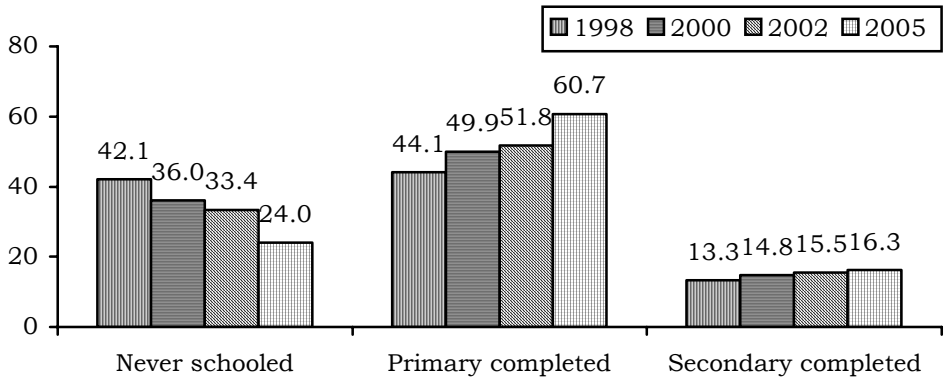
aged 30-35 years. In terms of completing primary or secondary schooling the females of 25-29 years were about 10 percentage points behind their male counterparts. The gaps were even higher for the youths aged 30-35 years.

A steady improvement has been observed in the schooling of the youths during the last seven years (Fig. 3). Following is the list of improvements:

- The proportion of never schooled youths reduced 18.1 percentage points, i.e., more than 2.5 percentage points per year;
- The proportion of primary school completing youths improved 16.6 percentage points, i.e., more than two percentage points per year; and
- The proportion of secondary school completing youths improved three percentage points, i.e., less than 0.5 percentage points per year.

This shows that the rate of improvement in secondary school completion was much lower than that in the rate of ever schooled youths and primary school completing youths.

Figure 3. Proportion of youths (aged 15-35 years) never schooled, primary completed and secondary completed by year, 1998-2005



Source: *Education Watch* household survey databases, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2005

Gender as well as residence-wise analysis was done to find the differences in performance for different groups of the youths. The situation was better for males and urban youths than their respective counterparts in both the years (1998 and 2005). The analyses show that the improvement was much more pronounced for the females than the males, and among the rural youths than those living in urban areas (Table 6).

Table 6. Percentage points changes in various enrolment indicators during 1998-2005

Changes in enrolment indicators	Sex		Residence	
	Males	Females	Rural	Urban
Decreased in never schooled youths	15.8	20.0	19.5	12.2
Increased in primary school completing youths	14.6	18.5	17.8	12.6
Increased in secondary school completing youths	2.4	3.9	3.1	4.3

Source: *Education Watch* databases 1998, 2005

Area-wise analysis shows that in 2005 over three quarters of the youths in the metropolitan cities and the municipalities completed full cycle of primary education. This rate was over 60% in two areas viz., rural Chittagong and Barisal divisions. The lowest rate was found in rural Sylhet division (54.3%). Improvement occurred in all the areas during 1998-2005. The rate of improvement was 17-18 percentage points in the rural divisions and 12-13 percentage points in urban areas.

Above analyses clearly shows that we are getting more and more youths completing primary and secondary education in the country over time. Another way of seeing this trend is that the entrants in the youth cohort in recent years are more educated than the earlier years. This is obviously an effect of the increasing emphasis on primary and basic education both by the government and the non-government organizations and female stipend programme of the government at the secondary level[2].

Positive correlation between youths education with that of their parents is obvious. But how much the youths aged 15-35 years could progress regarding educational attainment compared to their parents is an interesting question. The 2002 data shows that 70% of the mothers and 53.2% of the fathers of the youths never enrolled in any school. The similar rate for the youths was 33.4%. Thus, the youths of this generation progressed 36.6 percentage points from their mothers and about 20 percentage points from their fathers. This is a huge advancement in our education sector. The female youths progressed 35.5 percentage points from their mothers and the male youths 23 percentage points from their fathers. In respect to primary school completion, the female youths progressed 30 percentage points from their mothers and the male youths progressed 18 percentage points from their fathers.

[2] Introduced in the mid 1990s in rural secondary and higher secondary level institutions including madrassas as an incentive to education for rural girls. In order to continue stipend the girls are required to fulfil two conditions – (1) attain 45% marks in exams and 75% attendance rate. The monthly stipend varies from Tk. 25 to 60 depending on level of education.

YOUTHS IN THE MADRASSAS

We do not have full information of the youths in Bangladesh receiving madrassa education at least once during their lifetime. The databases also lack data on the amount of time the youths spent in the madrassas. Our databases allow us only to find out the proportion of youths aged 15-20 years currently enrolled in the madrassas.

In 2005, 15% of the currently enrolled youths aged 15-20 years were in the madrassas (Table 7). This proportion was higher for the males than the females (18% vs. 11.9%; $p<0.00$). The rural youths were ahead of their urban counterparts in this regard (17.7% vs. 4.8%; $p<0.001$). It is to be mentioned that more than a fifth of the currently enrolled rural male youths were studying in the madrassas, whereas it was 3.3% for the female youths in the urban areas. Majority of these youths enrolled in the Dakhil or Fazil madrassas, which have recognition in the Madrassa Education Board of the government. However, 1.7% of the total currently enrolled youths were in the un-recognized Islamic institutions like Kawmi, Kharizi or Hafizia madrassas. They are 11.3% of the all madrassa students of this age group.

Table 7. Proportion of currently enrolled youths aged 15-20 years receiving madrassa education by residence and sex, 2005

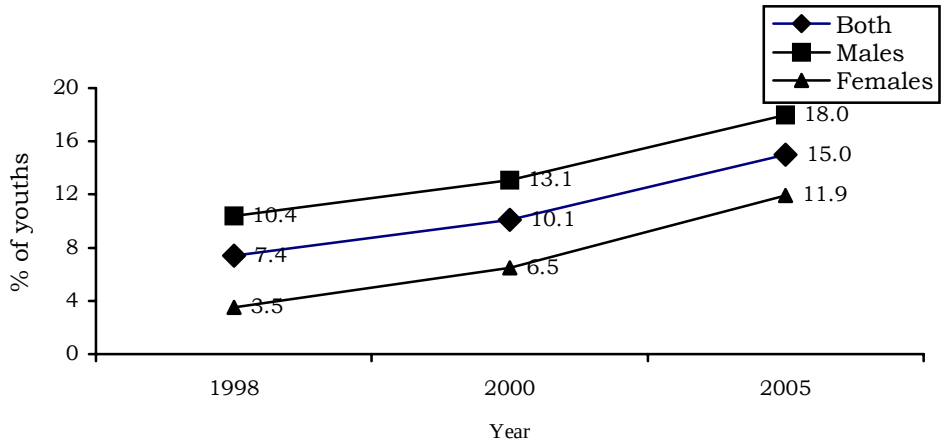
Residence	Sex			Level of significance
	Males	Females	Both	
Rural Bangladesh	20.9	14.3	17.7	p<0.001
Urban Bangladesh	6.3	3.3	4.8	p<0.01
All Bangladesh	18.0	11.9	15.0	p<0.001
Level of significance	p<0.001	p<0.001	P<0.001	

Source: *Education Watch* household survey database, 2005

Proportion of youths in the madrassas has been increasing over time. It has increased from 7.4% in 1998, to 10.1% in 2000 and to 15% in 2005 (Fig. 4). Although the rate of the females in the madrassas was always lower than that of the males, but the rate of increase was faster for the females than the males during 1998-2005. Area-wise such analysis shows that proportion of madrassa students increased mostly in the rural areas, not in the urban areas. For instance, in rural areas the percentage of madrassa students was 8.6% in 1998, which increased to 11.8% in 2000 and to 17.7% in 2005. On the other hand, the figure for urban areas was 3.3% in 1998, 3.4% in 2000, and 4.8% in 2005.

Proportion of currently enrolled youths in the un-recognized madrassas also increased slightly over time – 1.3% in 1998 to 1.6% in 2000, and to 1.7% in 2005. However, the share of unrecognized madrassa students in the total madrassa students has decreased over time – 17.6% of the madrassa students were in the unrecognized madrassas in 1998, which reduced to 15.8% in 2000 and 11.3% in 2005. This indicates that the growth of madrassa students took place mostly in the recognized madrassas.

Figure 4. Proportion of currently enrolled youths (aged 15-20 years) in the madrassas by year and sex, 1998-2005



Source: *Education Watch* household survey databases, 1998, 2000, 2005

Area-wise analysis shows that rural Barisal division was in the top of the list in having the highest madrassa enrolment. In 2005, a quarter of the youths aged 15-20 years in Barisal division was currently enrolled in the madrassas. The youths of rural Chittagong and Sylhet divisions followed them – respectively 20.3% and 17.3% of the currently enrolled youths of these two areas were in the madrassas. Increase of madrassa students during last seven years (1998 to 2005) was also the most rapid in rural Barisal division (15.7 percentage points) followed by rural Chittagong division (11.7 percentage points).

LITERACY SITUATION

Literacy situation was assessed in two ways - firstly, by asking an adult person of the households about the literacy status of each person of the households, and secondly, by taking a literacy test. We have reported literacy data for three years (2000, 2002 and 2005) and test-based literacy data for 2002 only. Reported literacy was assessed dichotomously (literate or not). A person was reported as literate if she/ he claimed to be able to read and write a simple letter in any language. On the other hand, a four-level literacy scale was adopted for test-based literacy assessment (literate-advanced, literate-initial, semi-literate, non-literate)[3]. A person with at least initial level literacy skills was considered as literate. Youths aged 15-35 years were brought under analysis in both the cases.

Table 8. Reported literacy rate (%) of various youth groups by year, 2000-2005

Youth groups	Year			Increase (2000 to 2005)
	2000	2002	2005	
Males	53.6	59.0	69.2	15.6
Females	47.0	52.6	62.9	15.9
Gender gap (M-F)	6.6	6.4	6.3	
Rural areas	46.3	51.9	61.0	14.7
Urban areas	67.7	72.4	78.9	11.2
Urban-rural gap	21.4	20.3	17.9	
All	50.2	55.5	64.1	13.9

Source: *Education Watch* household survey databases, 2000, 2002, 2005

In 2005, the reported literacy rate was 64.1% for the youths aged 15-35 years (Table 8). The literacy rate was 61% for the rural youths and 78.9% for the urban youths. The females were 6.3 percentage points behind their male counterparts (62.9% vs. 69.2%). However, the gender difference was largely similar in both the areas.

The literacy rate of the youth population increased significantly over time. A half of the youth population was literate in 2000, which increased to 55.5% in 2002 and 64.1% in 2005 (Table 8). The rate of improvement

[3] *Possession of skills in reading, writing, and numeracy related to familiar contents and contexts and the ability to use these skills in everyday life in order to function effectively in society* was the definition used for literacy test. The test instruments covered 24 items and total score was 100. Scores for each level of literacy was non-literate: <25%, semi-literate: 25-49%, literate-initial: 50-74%, and literate-advanced: 75%+.

per year was slightly faster between 2002 and 2005 than between 2000 and 2002. On average, the youth literacy rate increased about 14 percentage points over last five years i.e., nearly three percentage points per year. Although the rate of improvement was mostly equal for the males and the females, but it was higher among rural youths than the urban youths (14.7 percentage points vs. 11.2 percentage points). Otherwise, the gender gap in youth literacy was almost equal in every year, however the urban-rural gap decreased over time. The urban-rural gap was 21.4 percentage points in 2000, which reduced to 20.5 percentage points in 2002 and to 17.9 percentage points in 2005.

A statistically significant negative relationship was observed between age of the youths and literacy rate in all the three surveys. According to the last survey (in 2005), the literacy rate was 78.3% among the youths aged 15-19 years, which reduced to 70.4% at age 20-24 years, 58% at age 25-29 years, and 46.8% at age 30-35 years (Table 9). A steady improvement in literacy rate was observed over time in all the age groups of the youths. However, the rate of improvement was slower among the youths of age 30 years and above than the others.

Table 9. Reported literacy rate (%) of the youths by age and year, 2000-2005

Age group	Year			Increase
	2000	2002	2005	(2000 to 2005)
15 – 19y	64.6	71.7	78.3	13.7
20 – 24y	55.3	60.4	70.4	15.1
25 – 29y	42.5	44.7	58.0	15.5
30 – 35y	37.8	39.8	46.8	9.0

Source: *Education Watch* household survey databases, 2000, 2002, 2005

In 2002, when a literacy test was administered the youth literacy rate was found to be 48.5% - seven percentage points lower than the reported literacy rate. The test-based literacy rate was 55% among the males and 43.2% among the females. It was 44.3% among the rural youths and 68.6% among the urban youths (Table 10).

Table 10. Test-based literacy rate (%) of various youth groups by age, 2002

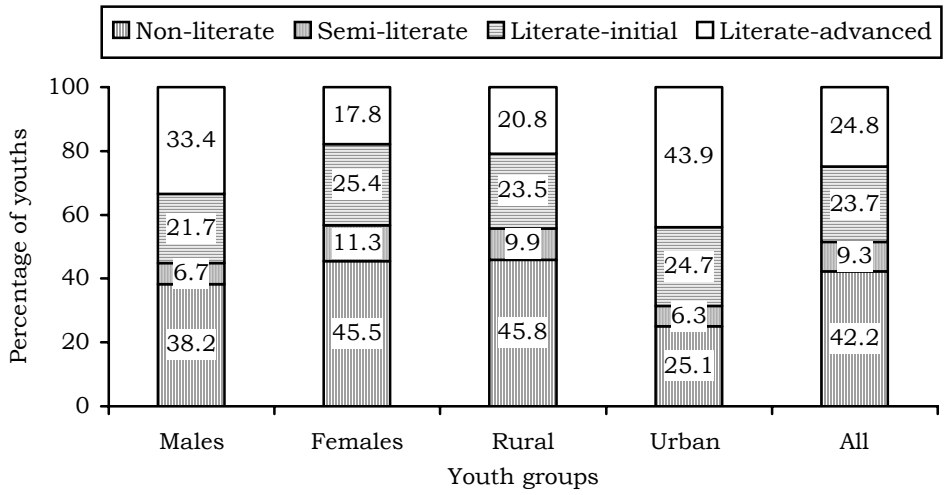
Youth groups	Age				All
	15-19y	20-24y	25-29y	30-35y	
Males	67.5	62.1	46.8	40.9	55.0
Females	60.7	44.0	31.4	30.1	43.2
Rural area	61.0	47.5	33.2	29.3	44.3
Urban area	79.0	71.4	64.1	59.2	68.6
All	63.8	51.7	38.2	35.2	48.5

Source: *Education Watch* literacy test database, 2002

Age wise analysis shows that the literacy rate was 63.8% among the youths aged 15-19 years, which reduced to 51.7% at age 20-24 years, 38.2% at age 25-29 years and 35.2% at age 25-30 years (Table 10). Similar trend was observed when data were segregated by gender or residence of the youths. The gap between reported and test-based literacy rates decreased with the increase of age of the youths. Again, the gap was higher among the females and the rural youths than their respective counterparts.

Of the four levels of literacy skills, 24.8% of the youths fell in advanced level, 23.7% in initial level, 9.3% in semi-literate level and 42.2% in non-literate category (Fig. 5). Like as the aggregate literacy rate, the advanced level literacy rate of the youths in urban areas was higher than that of the rural youths. Proportion of advanced level literates in the urban areas was almost equal to both advanced and initial level literates in the rural areas. The advanced level literacy rate was higher for the males than the females. At the national level, more than a half of the literate youths had advanced level literacy skills. The proportion of advanced level literate youths was greater than the initial level literates in urban areas and among the males. It was the opposite among the females and rural youths.

Figure 5. Percentage distribution of various groups of youths (aged 15-35 years) by levels of literacy skills, 2002



Source: *Education Watch* literacy test database, 2002

CONCLUSION

This is the first attempt to explore the educational situation of the youths in Bangladesh based on available databases, especially from the *Education Watch* project. As the project is not a youth focused one, the possibility of missing a number of youth focused indicators is there.

A person becomes youth after passing his/her schooling age. This gives enough time to be educated up to secondary level. However, due to various constraints our children start their primary schooling late. Even then, first 14 years of life should be enough for completing at least primary schooling if favourable condition exists. Again, dropout from school for various reasons is a barrier to primary school completion in Bangladesh. The government and the non-government agencies have been investing more and more to improve both primary and secondary education for decades. Various studies have demonstrated its impact on children's participation in school and gender parity in this regard.

As expected, decade long investment on children's schooling has actually impacted on improvement in educational status of the youths. Decrease in the proportion of never schooled youths and increase of primary and secondary school completers clearly showed such influence. At present less than a quarter of the youths are never schooled, and the rate is decreasing by over 2.5 percentage points per year. The rate of primary school completers improved more than two percentage points per year. Although the males and the urban youths are still ahead of their respective counterparts, the females and the rural youths are progressing faster than their respective counterparts. Improvement of youths' education from their immediate past generation is an impressive one. Such improvement for the females was more than double.

Influence of schooling was found in the literacy skills of the youths. Probably the literacy rate was highest in this group of population than any others – younger or older. If reported literacy is considered, about two thirds of the youths were found as literate in 2005. This rate has been improving at a rate of nearly three percentage points per year since 2000. Test-based assessment also showed a good result – nearly half of the youths were found to be literate in 2002.

One important observation was that whatever the indicator is (enrolment, completion or literacy rate) the situation was much better among the youths aged 15-24 years than the older youths. This indicates that the

youths aged 25 years and above did not get enough opportunity of schooling at their young age. Finally, it can be hoped that current initiatives in primary and secondary education would give us more educated youths in future if the current trend of improvement continues.

We just analysed the status of education of the youths in this chapter. What about the impact of such education in their world of work? It is important to study the relevance of education in youth life. Again, information lacks on various types of vocational education in which the youths are the mainly targeted. Various types of vocational institutions exist including garment training institute, computer training centre, driving institute, etc. Quality of these private provisions needs to be examined. Interesting studies can be done on gender and community norms around marriage, security and education; and on education and employment.

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Paper 2

A Day in the Life of a Bangladeshi Adolescent: Using Time Use Data to Identify Differences in Adolescent Lifestyles

Mehnaz Rabbani

INTRODUCTION

The analysis of time use has become of interest to social scientists all over the world since time was recognized as a household resource that is allocated to maximize utility (Becker, 1965). Being a scarce resource, how individuals distribute time among various activities depends on a complex combination of social and economic determinants. Among the most common areas of interest in the literature are the difference in time use by gender and age. A comprehensive review by Ilahi (2000) found that the returns from time is low for the poor and that the poor work longer hours for subsistence. Gender roles are prominent in time use in most communities and men are to spend more time on paid work. However, if we classify housework as work, women all over the world work more than men. Analysis of time use is able to present a clearer picture of lifestyles because it provides a more accurate picture of invisible unpaid household production work (Vickery, 1977). Shocks and changes in household structures change the time allocation of individuals. Over the years, time use surveys have gained importance in the academia as an alternative tool in understanding social and economic problems.

How do adolescents of Bangladesh spend their time? Like adolescents of many developing countries, Bangladeshi adolescents work, play, attend school, meet friends and undertake family responsibilities during this transitional period of their lives. Since agricultural work is the main occupation of Bangladesh, adolescents are often engaged in helping out their families in agricultural work. Cain, in his review of children's

activities in rural Bangladesh (1977), describes how children play an active role in the economic activities of the household. By the age of 13, a child works as much as an adult and is a net producer.

However, with steady growth in the economy, increased incentives for schooling and closer links with urban areas, the daily activities of adolescents in rural areas have changed since Cain's research three decades ago. The reduced importance of agriculture in the economy, access to financial services for the poor, access to national and international media, better infrastructure and higher school enrollment have both improved choices for adolescents, and increased competition between the various uses of their time.

This paper takes a closer look at how adolescents of Bangladesh spend their time, and identifies questions for further research. Using time use data from a national survey of adolescents in 2005, this study presents their daily time use to understand the differences in their lifestyle. The first section describes the data and sample used for this study. The second section explores the differences in time use by gender, age, work status, economic status, marital status and region. The third section summarizes the main findings.

DESCRIPTION OF DATA AND BASIC PROFILE

About 15,000 adolescents were interviewed in this nationally representative survey conducted by BRAC in 2005. Using the sequential recall method, data were collected by asking respondents to report all activities of a day, and the duration of each activity in minutes. The sample size for this study, after cleaning for reporting and entry errors, is 14,872 adolescents. For the purpose of this paper, activities are categorized into leisure, housework, work (paid and unpaid), socializing, selfcare, education (in and out of school), sickness, media, travel and other miscellaneous activities (complete list provided in Annex 1). One day is defined as the duration between waking up in the morning and sleeping at night. The average day reported in the data is 15 hours long. Respondents reported 18 activities per day on average.

Paid and unpaid work are aggregated as 'work'. However, we separated those adolescents that work for pay to find differences in time use. Also, certain activities such as attending NGO meetings, singing and shopping could be categorized differently. Some might shop for fun (in which case it should have been a leisure activity), while for others it is a chore. Since the data did not collect context variables, it is not possible to make these fine distinctions.

Table 1 and Table 2 present the distribution of the sample by age and sex.

Table 1. Distribution by sex

Sex	Rural	Urban	Total
Male	5,041	1,578	6,619
Female	6,284	1,969	8,253
Total	11,325	3,547	14,872

Table 2. Distribution by age

Age group	Male	Female	Total
<=14	3,153	3,047	6,200
15 to <=19	2,082	2,548	4,630
>19	1,384	2,658	4,042
Total	6,619	8,253	14,872

Most adolescents lived with their families, 70% lived with at least one of their biological parents (89 for male, 55 for female). Twenty-four percent lived with husbands/in-laws (41 for female), while the remaining 6% live with others. This includes adolescents living with relatives, in others' houses as domestic workers and those living in hostels. Since the survey was mainly a household survey, there was inadequate representation for domestic and independent child workers.

Forty-seven percent of the adolescents were currently enrolled in school. Of them, who did not go to school, 16% were below 14 years, 37% between 15-19 years, and 46% were above 19 years. Forty-four percent of the adolescents are full-time students. 23% full-time workers, while 30% were neither. Table 3 shows the school/work status of adolescents by age group.

Table 3. Distribution by activity

School/work Status	Age group			
	≤14	15 to ≤ 18	>19	Total
Full-time work	622	1,351	1,458	3,431
Full-time student	4,787	1,469	258	6,514
Work and study	135	190	103	428
Idle	656	1,620	2,223	4,499
Total	6,200	4,630	4,042	14,872

The proportion of full-time workers increases with age. Girls in Bangladesh marry early and are not generally encouraged to participate in the labour market. Men marry at a much later age than women. Table 4 shows that over 39% of female adolescents were married by the age of 19 while 1.7% males were married at this time. Seventy-six percent of 24 years old men were unmarried while only 18.5% of their female counterparts were single at this age.

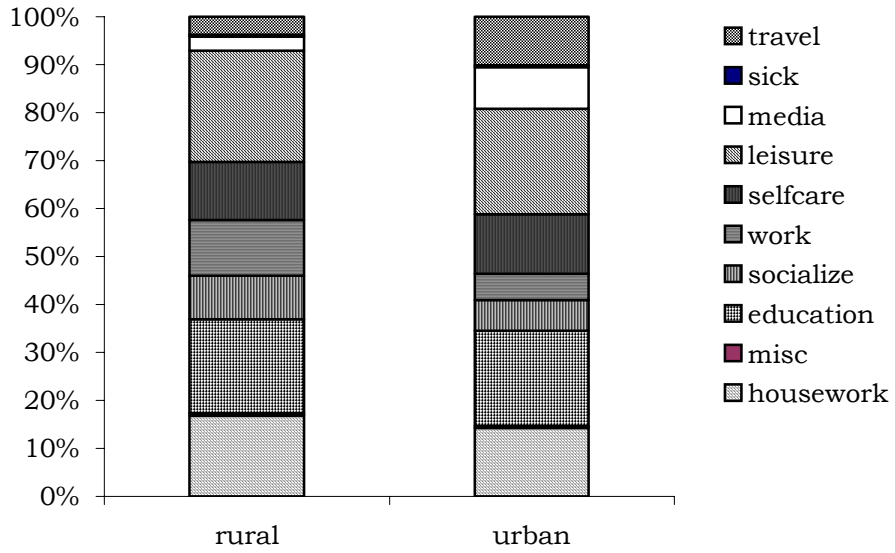
Table 4. Distribution by marital status

	Male		Female	
Age group	Unmarried (%)	Married (%)	Unmarried (%)	Married (%)
<=14	100	0	99.18	0.82
15 to <=19	98.27	1.73	60.68	39.32
>19	76.3	23.7	18.55	81.45
Total	94.5	5.5	61.32	38.68

TIME ALLOCATION OF BANGLADESHI ADOLESCENTS

On average, a Bangladeshi adolescent spends 23% of his/her day for leisure, 20% for education, 16% for housework, and 10% for work. However, the variances of these figures are large. Time allocation of individual adolescents depends on their sex, location, economic status and work status. A first look at the proportion of time spent by rural and urban adolescents on the various activities listed shows that rural adolescents spend significantly more time on housework, work and socializing than their urban counterparts while urban adolescents spend more time on media and daily traveling. The differences in time spent on education and selfcare between rural and urban adolescents are not significant.

Figure 1. Time use by residence



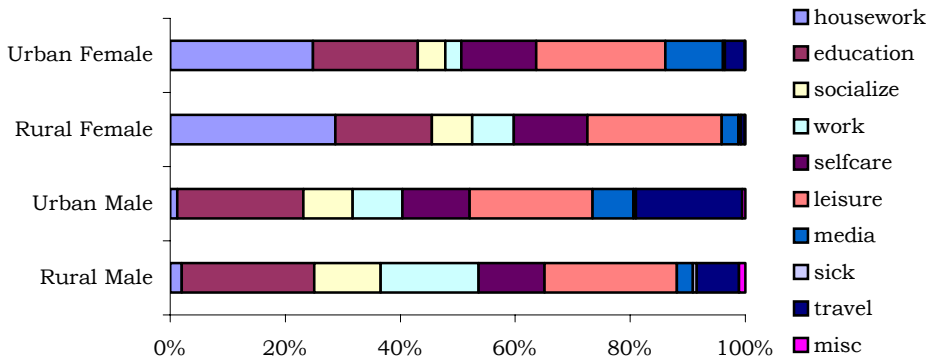
TIME ALLOCATION BY GENDER

Bangladesh, given its cultural and economic context, is similar to other developing countries when it comes to distinct allocation of time by sex (Ritchie, Lloyd and Grant, 2004). Girls spend more time in leisure, housework and selfcare, while boys spend more time in work, school and training, socializing and other miscellaneous activities (Table 5). The largest difference is in the case of housework – girls spend 26% more time than the boys. Although girls spend more time on leisure and self-care, the difference is only 1%. Boys spend 6% more time in education compared to girls.

Table 5. Time allocation by gender

Time allocation by gender			
Activity	Male	Female	Difference
	Proportion of day		(Female-Male)
Housework	0.02	0.28	0.26
Miscellaneous	0.01	0.00	-0.01
Education	0.23	0.17	-0.06
Socialize	0.11	0.06	-0.04
Work	0.15	0.06	-0.09
Selfcare	0.12	0.13	0.01
Leisure	0.23	0.23	0.01
Media	0.04	0.05	0.01
Sick	0.01	0.00	0.00
Travel	0.10	0.01	-0.09

Figure 2. Time use by gender



Given the differences in rural and urban contexts, it is useful to disaggregate the sample to get a clearer view of how girls' and boys' days differ. Figure 2 shows the time allocation of adolescents in rural and urban Bangladesh by sex.

The direction of differences within rural and urban adolescents by sex complies with the overall gender picture. In general rural adolescents work longer hours than urban adolescents. Urban adolescents spend more time in daily traveling (or commuting). If we weigh activities by the time spent on each activity, education and leisure are equally important for urban boys. Leisure is important for all adolescents but social activities are particularly important for rural boys.

Table 6. The 3 most time consuming activities in the day of an adolescent

	1	2	3
Rural male	Education and Leisure	Work	Social activities
Urban male	Education	Leisure	Travel
Rural female	Housework	Leisure	Education
Urban female	Housework	Leisure	Education

The findings reveal that education is much less important for adolescent girls than boys. Work is a priority for rural boys only, while socializing does not appear in the list for anyone except for rural boys. It is evident that leisure is an important activity in the days of all adolescents. For rural girls, the main leisure activities are relaxing at home and praying (73 % and 19% of all leisure activities reported). Seven percent reported playing sports, which is a contrast to more than 21% of rural boys reporting playing sports. Rural boys also spend much less time on

relaxing at home or praying than their female counterparts. Leisure activities of urban girls are not much different from rural girls, but only 5% reported playing sports. Urban boys also spend less time on sports than rural boys (5% less). This is expected, given the scarcity of playing fields and sports facilities in urban areas.

The highest proportion of adolescents that reported praying as a daily activity were rural girls. Interestingly, urban boys report praying more than rural boys and urban girls. Rural boys are the least religious compared to the other adolescents. Praying requires a certain amount of time and space, which might be unavailable in the rural boys' schedule, since mostly they work outside. In this respect rural girls spend most time inside the house, which explains why they can spend more time in praying. Also, praying might be considered more of a 'civilized' activity, which signals a level of social status in the urban setting. The accessibility of mosques from both the workplace and home might be a determinant of praying for urban boys.

Girls spend much time on housework, regardless of their location, although the urban girl spends 4% less of her time on housework than the rural girls. Boys spend more time on paid and unpaid work outside the home, but the rural girls work almost as much as the urban boys. Rural boys work almost twice as much as urban boys and also remain in sick bed for longer, compared to any of the other adolescents.

Boys spend more time on education, but the gap between girls and boys in this respect is slightly smaller in urban areas. Rural girls and boys spend roughly the same proportion of time on leisure activities, while urban girls spend slightly more time on leisure than urban boys. Urban girls spend the highest proportion of time on media (watching TV and listening to radio), followed by urban boys. The time spent on media is the same for rural girls and boys, which supports the fact that enjoying media is a social rather than individual activity in rural areas.

Socialization, for most adolescents, means visiting friends and relatives. Rural adolescents spend much more time in social activities compared to their urban counterparts. Rural boys spend the highest proportion of time (3% more than urban boys) in socializing compared to the others. Rural girls spend 2% less time in socializing than urban boys. Urban girls have the least time for socializing, almost 7% less than rural boys.

Boys spend more time for daily traveling and chores outside the house, which is expected, given the social restrictions on girls' mobility. Urban girls spend almost half the proportion of time on traveling compared to rural boys. Urban boys have to spend much more time on traveling than rural boys – the difference is over 11%.

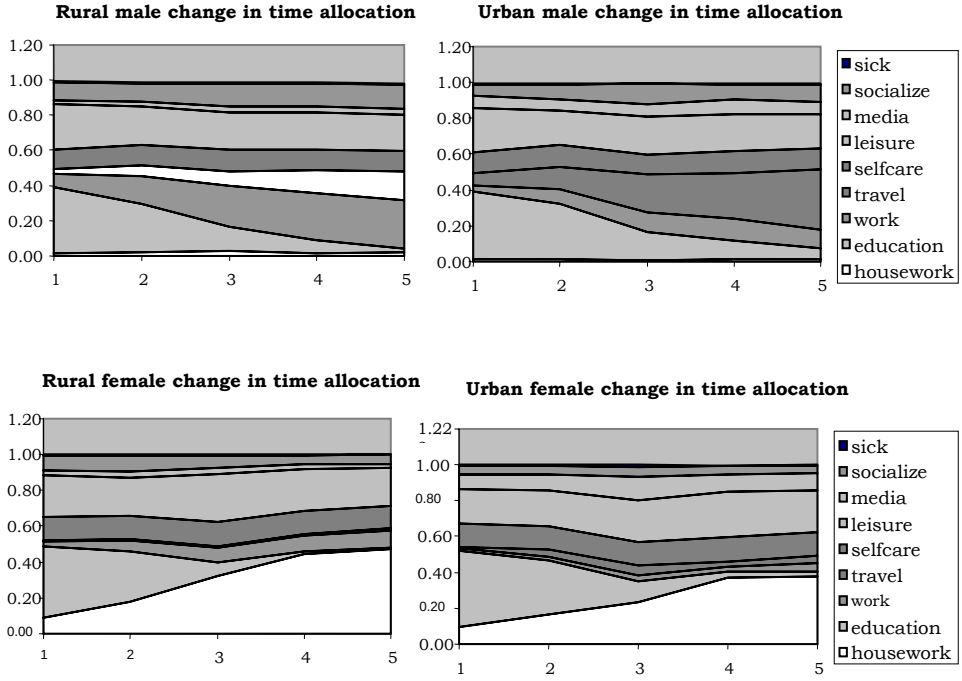
Urban boys, on average, spend more than 18% of their time in traveling. However, a closer look at the distribution of this figure shows that half of these boys did not travel at all. It is only older boys who were engaged in paid work spent time in traveling. Seventy-six percent of the boys who commute in urban areas were above 15 years, while more than half of the boys who did not commute were below 14 years. Urban boys above the age of 15 years who work full-time, commute for an alarming five hours a day. Part-time workers commute for about three and half hours, full-time students travel for three hours and idle boys travel for less than an hour.

The nature of work is largely responsible for the five hours of commuting required for work in the case of urban boys. More than 30% of them were engaged in service and business. The average commuting time for these boys was around 50% of the day, which indicates that much of their work requires traveling. For urban boys aged above 14 years who were not engaged in service or business, average traveling time falls to 20 % of the day. Although according to our categorization, traveling to work is a part of time spent on work, urban boys seem to have reported most of their traveling time without reference to their work. Again, in the absence of context variables, it is not possible to clearly distinguish the purpose of travel. But it is evident that urban boys, working or not working, spend a large proportion of their day in commuting.

CHANGING ALLOCATION OF TIME WITH AGE

What adolescents do on a regular day of their lives also depends on their age. The age of respondents for our data ranges from 10 to 24 years. This is a wide range, from children to adolescents and young adults. The change in time allocation with age shows how priorities and responsibilities change within the span of 14 years of the life cycle. Grouped into five age groups (Group 1 – 10 to ≤12, Group 2 - >12 to ≤15, Group 3 - >15 to ≤18, Group 4 - >18 to ≤21, Group 5 - >21 to ≤24), the sample gives us a clear picture of when the major transitions occur, and when the major differences between girls and boys emerge. The change in activities differs by sex and from rural to urban (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Time allocation patterns

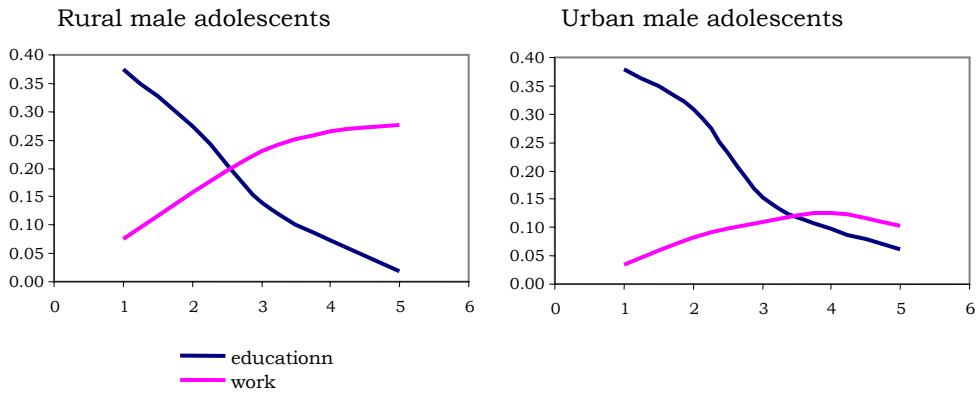


By the age of 12, all adolescents spend around 40% of their time on education. As for the remaining day, girls already spend 9-10% of their time on housework. Rural boys spend 7% of their day on work, while urban boys spend 4%. The 12 years old rural boys spend twice the time on social activities than urban girls. Urban girls of this age spend the least time on leisure activities such as reading and playing, but the most time on watching TV and listening to radio. The major differences in time use by sex becomes visible at a very early age.

As they get older, rural boys spend more and more time on work. Their workload increases by 9% as they move from age Group 1 to age Group 2, and by a further 7% as they approach the age of 18 years. The transition from school to work happens mostly between Group 2 and 3, i.e., roughly from the age 16 to 18. Time spent on social activities rises around this time also. Leisure time falls by 4% and is replaced by travel time (a rise of 4%) from Group 1 to Group 2.

Urban boys experience sharper falls in time spent on education around the age of 15 years. Boys in the age Group 3 spend 15% less time on education than boys in the age Group 2.

Figure 4. Time allocation for education and work of males by residence



As evident from Figure 4, urban boys do not replace education with work as much as rural boys do. However time spent on education does not fall as low for urban boys compared to their rural counterparts. The horizontal intersection of education and work shows that work becomes more important than education much earlier for rural boys. Work takes up almost all the time older rural boys used to spend on education. In the case of urban boys, however, the replacement of education with work is not clear enough. A lot of their time is eventually taken up by traveling/commuting and leisure activities.

For girls, the replacement of school is housework. Girls experienced a rise and fall in time spent on leisure, as they grow older (Fig. 5). This is explained by the fact that girls leave school at around the time they are expected to get married. At this time their leisure time increases. However, after marriage girls take on more housework in their husband's families, which is why leisure time falls again. We explored this in more detail in subsequent section.

Leisure and involvement in social activities have important implications for policy implementation strategies. In a review of measuring subjective well-being, Kahneman and Krueger discuss how time spent on leisure and social activities are associated with positive emotions and happiness.

The sharp rise and fall in leisure time is both smaller and comes later for urban girls compared to rural girls. The amount of leisure time a rural girl of 12 years spends is not much different from the time she spends at the age of 24. In comparison, a 24 years old urban girl spends more time on leisure than she used to when she was 12. Although urban girls end up with more leisure time, their participation in social activities is less

than rural girls. High NGO participation of rural women and insecurity in mobility for urban girls might be possible reasons for these differences.

Figure 5. Time spent on leisure activities by age

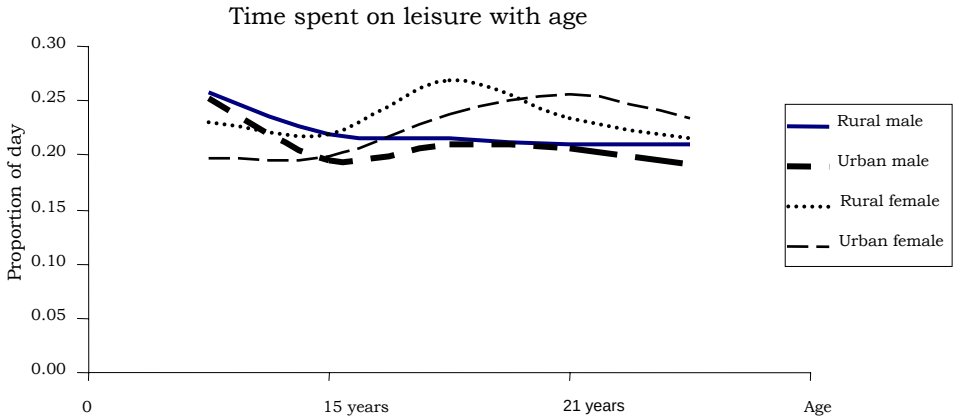
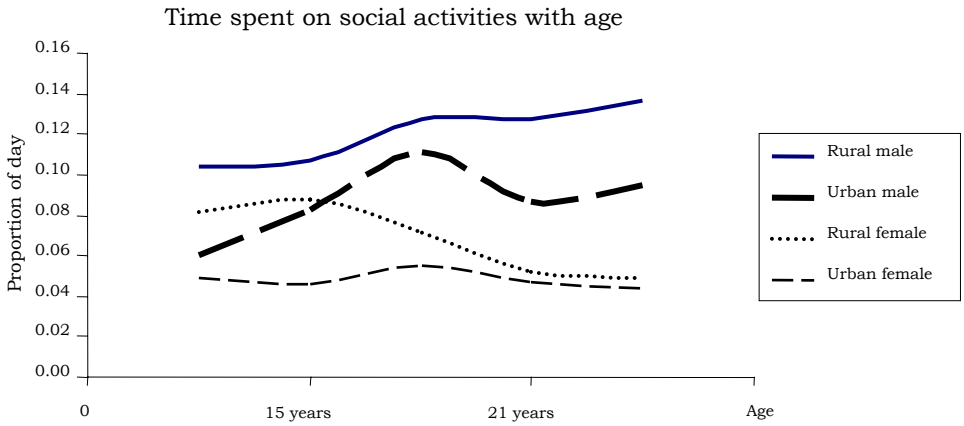


Figure 6. Time spent on social activities by age



The fall in leisure time is more gradual for male adolescents. Urban boys face a rise in leisure time around the age of 15, which is also the time when they start dropping out of school. On average all boys enjoy less leisure than girls after 15 years, but spend a lot more time on social activities.

Time spent on socializing falls for girls as they grow up, while it rises slightly for boys. After marriage, girls' socializing time drops drastically. A 16 years old unmarried girl spends 5% more of her day on socializing than a married 16 year old. The share of work is not only consistently

higher for boys, but also rises faster as they grow compared to girls. Time allocated to self care remains constant with age for both girls and boys.

The scope for participation in social activities is low for girls, especially for urban girls. Rural girls drastically reduce time on social activities as they grow older. Social interaction is often viewed as the channel for dissemination of both market and non-market information. Hence urban girls are the most deprived in this respect.

The unequal exposure to media is also important for information dissemination. Although we have little understanding of the media content that adolescents are being exposed to, the literature (focused mainly in the West) view media as a negative influence on adolescents (Villani 2001). Csikszentmihalyi, Larson and Prescott (1977), in their study on the adolescence experience in the US, deem television viewing as 'an affectless state associated with deviant behaviour and antisocial personality traits'. Strasburger and Donnerstein (1999) raise concerns over not only the negative impacts of media on adolescents, but also the time that is spent on media. According to these academics of pediatrics, adolescents' time is better spent on leisure that involves more physical activity.

Time spent on TV in urban Bangladesh is a result of limited space for other leisure activities, such as playing for urban adolescents. However, the media could also be viewed as an entry point for public advocacy. According to our finding, it is a potential tool for reaching information to urban girls, but not so much for rural girls. For rural adolescents, the time for watching TV is mostly at the end of the day.

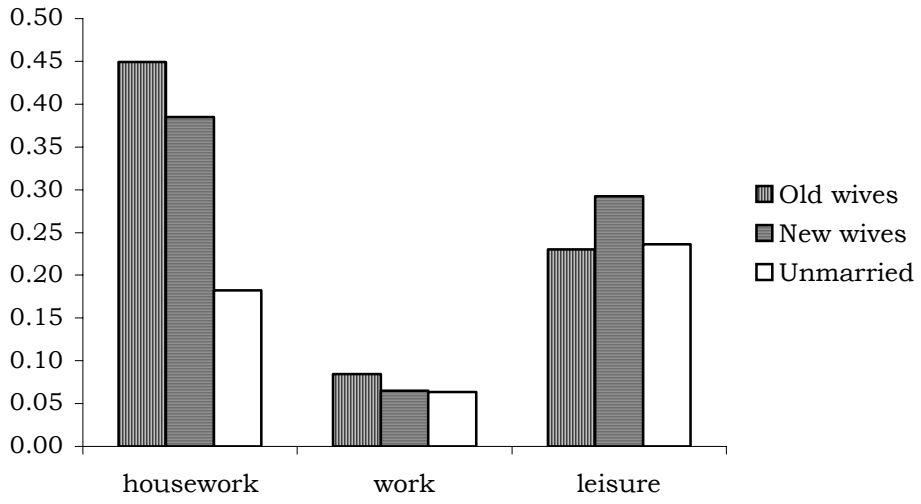
How does a girl's day change when she gets married?

In the previous section, some of the changes in time use for girls as they grow is explained by marriage. Marriage is seen as one of the biggest steps towards adulthood for adolescents in all parts of the world. Since it is customary for girls in Bangladesh to move in with their in-laws after marriage, it is expected that there is some change in their lifestyle at this time. The median age of marriage for girls is 15 years in urban areas and even lower in rural areas (Amin, Selim, Waiz, 2006). To get a better understanding of what happens to the time use of girls when they get married, we took only girls aged 14 to 19 years from our sample for this section and disaggregated them by marital status. Out of 3,135 in this age group, 33% were married. A first look reveals that married girls spend a lot more time on housework and work than unmarried girls. The chances of a married girl spending any time on education are next to nil. There is no difference in time spent on selfcare due to marriage. Before marriage, girls spend more time on socializing but less time on leisure compared to after marriage. This shift indicates restriction in physical

mobility after marriage, since socializing involves going out and meeting friends and relatives.

Before drawing conclusions from the above discussion, it is worth noting that the work and housework that is obligatory for a married girl might differ by age and also by years of marriage. There is a general understanding that a newly married girl usually has to conform more to the demands of the husband's family, but is not necessarily capable of taking on all the household chores right away. As she spends more time in the family, she is likely to have more voice and also have more domestic responsibilities. If we regard girls who got married after 2002 (three years prior to the date of interview) as 'new wives' and those who have been married for more than thee years as 'experienced wives', we found that experienced wives spend more time on housework (at least 7% more than new wives). Experienced wives also spend slightly more time on work (mostly helping out in family enterprises) and less time on leisure activities. Although time spent on self care is often regarded as an indicator of empowerment (Amin, Suran, 2005), there is no difference in the time spent on selfcare between these two groups of married women. Only when we isolate urban girls, we find that unmarried girls who are above the age of 17 years spend slightly more time on self care compared to the younger or rural or married girls.

Figure 7. Change in time use as wives



In agreement with Figure 6, marriage brings a sharp fall in time for social activities. There is no such fall in leisure time due to marriage. There is no difference in time spent on social activities within married girls,

regardless of their age or their years of marriage. New wives are the best placed in terms of leisure time. An experienced wife spends almost the same time on leisure as an unmarried girl. This finding is confirmed when we disaggregate the girls further by age. A younger wife (14-16 years old) spends more time on leisure than her unmarried counterpart, but an older wife (17-19 years old) spends less time on leisure than her unmarried counterpart. Although we found that unmarried girls did less housework than married girls, young married girls (14-16 years old) spend the same proportion of their time on housework as unmarried girls of their age. Older girls (17-19 years old) in general, do more housework than younger girls, regardless of their marital status, with married older girls spending more time on it than their unmarried counterparts. Unmarried girls of all ages have more time to watch TV and listen to the radio.

Another distinct group within married girls are mothers. Haris and Spyridon, in a survey of intra-household time allocation in seven European countries find that although more married women are engaged in paid labour, child care is not shared by both parents. While the father is still perceived as the 'bread winner', mothers are primarily responsible for children's care and well-being. The scenario in Bangladesh is not any different. Married girls who have at least one child spend almost half of their day on housework, 15% more than non-mother married girls. Hence this extra 15% can be attributed to childcare. Consequently mothers have much less time for leisure activities, social activities and media exposure.

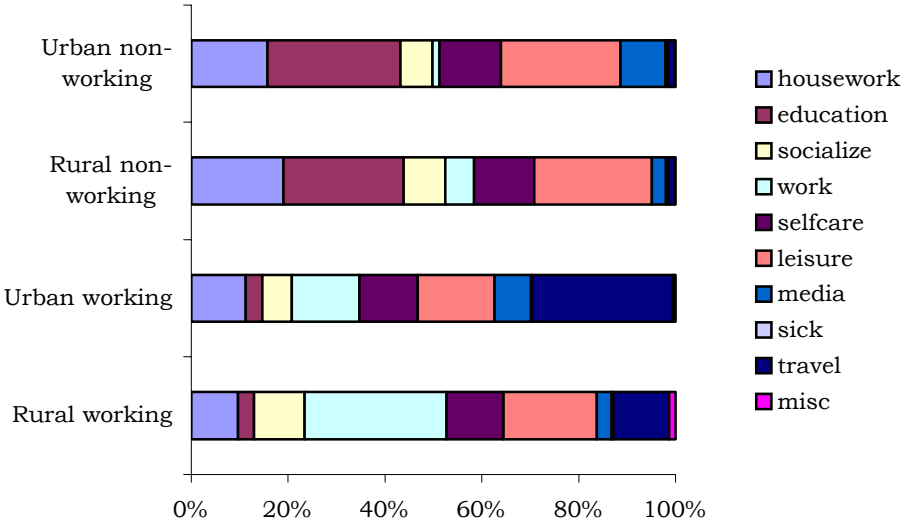
Working and non-working adolescents

While on the topic of leisure, it is important to note that all leisure is not voluntary. The two hours of leisure a full-time working adolescent has, is different from the two hours that an unemployed adolescent has. Figure 8 compares the time allocation of adolescents by their work status. Respondents who reported any income generating activity (paid work) as their main occupation are categorized as 'working'. As expected, the non-working adolescents have much more leisure time than the working adolescents. However, working adolescents spend more time on socializing than the non-working. Adolescents who are not involved in any income generating activity at all, spend 20% less time on socializing than those who are partly or fully engaged in work. This might be because working facilitates meeting people and socializing, or it might be because adolescents who do not work are particularly prone to not socialize.

Those who are engaged in full-time work spend 30% more time on socializing than full-time students. Work creates scope for participation in social activities more than schools. This might be because of higher

independence of working adolescents, better social networks created through the workplace or simply extra effort and planning on the part of working adolescents to make best use of their time after work. Social activities reported in the data include attending social functions such as weddings, funerals and religious gatherings, visiting friends and relatives, attending NGO meetings and participating in cultural functions.

Figure 8. Time allocation of working and non working adolescents



Although the definition of work status used in the above section is indicative of patterns, it is obvious that there is considerable overlap between working and non-working adolescents. Instead, if we categorize the sample into full-time workers, full-time students, part-time workers/students and idle/unemployed, we found that those who work full-time, spend no time on any form of education. Table 7 shows that 23% are involved in full-time work. The chances of coming from a household with a literate household head is highest for the adolescents who work and study, followed by the full-time students. Out of all adolescents with literate parents, less than 50 % were full-time students. Almost 28 % were idle and 20 % were full-time workers. Only 4 % of boys studied and worked at the same time.

About half of the full-time working girls are married and have children. So, these girls have little leisure time left after childcare, housework and work. A 22 years old working mother, for example, spends 64% of her time on work, 26% on housework and childcare, and 10% on selfcare With this routine, she has no time left for herself, i.e., for socializing,

Table 7. Male female time allocation by work/study status

	Full-time work	Full-time school	Work and school	Idle	Total
Male	39.1	49	3.96	7.95	100
Female	10.21	39.63	2.01	48.14	100
Total	23.07	43.8	2.88	30.25	100

relaxing or watching TV. In contrast, a 22 years old working father, who also has to spend more than 60% of his time on work and 10% on self care, spent the remaining 30 % of his time on leisure activities.

What are idle adolescents doing?

The activities of adolescents out of school have received much attention from academics in western literature. In a study on the association of juvenile crime with school attendance, Jacob and Lefgren (2003) found that non-attendance in school is positively related to delinquent behaviour in adolescents. Although the western concept of juvenile crime is not necessarily applicable to Bangladesh context, it is important to know how adolescents who are not engaged in full-time work or school are using their time.

According to our data, one-third of the adolescents in Bangladesh are idle – not studying or working for a living. 85% of these adolescents have had some level of schooling. Surprisingly more of the girls who are idle (almost 15%) have received some form of technical training compared to boys (13%). Thirteen percent of these boys had never been to school, while the corresponding figure for girls is 16%. What are these idle adolescents doing?

Table 6 shows that girls constitute most of this idle population (88%). Almost half of all female adolescents are neither working nor studying. Sixty-nine percent of these girls were married and spent more than 40% of their time on housework, including child care (more than three-fourths of the married idle adolescents had children). Unmarried girls in this category spend less time on housework (about 30 %) and more time on leisure. More than 70% of these girls were under the age of 18.

Although the time use of married girls as discussed leads us to believe that married girls do not work in Bangladeshi society, almost half of the girls who are engaged in full-time work are married. The unmarried working girls are mostly below 18 years of age. There are hardly any married girls who study full-time, and even fewer who work and study at the same time.

Box 1 narrates the daily routines of four idle adolescents with similar characteristics, with slight differences to show the differences in their time use.

Case studies of four idle adolescents

- Rabi (not real name) is a 15 years old boy living in a village in Thakurgaon, a district in Rajshahi division. He does not go to school or work for a living. His family is comprised of six members – his parents, two brothers and a sister. His father is the only earner. They are well-off in terms of economic status. Rabi reported his routine for a day as follows:

  Woke up at 5.30 am and looked after livestock. Between 6-7 am he took a shower and had breakfast. From 7am to 12 pm, he processed paddy for the household. Between 12 pm to 2 pm he took a shower, had lunch and took a nap. From 2 to 3 pm he helped in the family farm. From 3 to7 pm, he played sports with friends. Around 7 to 8 pm he tended to the livestock again. He had dinner at 8 pm and watched TV for 2 hours before going to bed.

- Asad (not real name) is also an 'idle'. He is 15 years old. He lives in a village in Noakhali. He also has two brothers and a sister. His mother is the head of their family, but has no regular income source. His family is not well-off like Rabi's family. Asad's routine was as follows:

  Woke up after 5 am. He showered, offered prayers and had breakfast. From 6 to 9 am, he visited friends. From 9 am to 6 pm he played sports. He took a nap from 6 to 7 pm. He offered his prayers again and went to sleep at 8 pm.

- Farida (not real name) is a 15 years old unmarried girl living in Dinajpur. Her family is almost identical to Rabi's, only she lives in a urban area. Her day went as follows:

  Woke up at 6 am. She cleaned the household and dishes for half an hour. She had breakfast from 6.30 to 7 am. She watched TV from 7 to 9 am. During 9-11 am, she cooked. She watched TV again from 11 am to 1 pm. Then she washed clothes and took a shower. From 1.30 to 2 pm she had lunch. She took a nap from 2 to 5 pm. Then she cleaned again for a few minutes and then watched TV for 2 hours. From 7 to 9 pm she read a book. From 9 to10 pm, she watched TV and then had dinner and went to bed.

- Shumi (not real name) is a 15 years old unmarried girl living in Maulvi Bazar, Sylhet. She lives in a family identical to Farida's in a rural area. Her day went as follows:

  She woke up at 7 am. She showered and offered her prayers. She cooked for almost an hour. She had breakfast at 8 am. Then she cooked, cleaned and collected water till 10.30 am. Then she took a nap till 11 am. From 1 1am to 1 pm, she cooked. cleaned and did laundry. Then she showered for an hour, offered her prayers and had lunch at 3 pm. Then she took a 2 hour nap from 4 to 6 pm and cooked again for an hour when she got up. From 7 to10 pm she watched TV. She had dinner for half an hour and watched TV till midnight before going to sleep.

The time use details of the four adolescents in our case study reveal some important issues. Boys belonging to families with assets and enterprises such as Rabi spent a lot of time working, even if they did not recognize this work as their main occupation. Although Rabi's family is rich enough to afford education for him, he does not go to school because he is needed in the household to look after the livestock and help in the family farm. Boys like Asad, who come from poor families, do not have much to contribute at home or outside. Asad spends most of his time playing or hanging out with friends. He does not go to school simply because he cannot afford it. The exposure to delinquent and risky behaviour is expected to be high for boys like Asad.

For girls, the picture is a little different. All these girls who are not in school or paid work, spend most of their time on housework. For girls in families with farms or home enterprises, helping out in the businesses come in addition to housework. Neither Farida nor Shumi went out of the house in the entire day they reported. In contrast, going out and playing took up a considerable portion of the boys' time. The rural urban contrast is also evident from their cases. Farida spent more than 6 hours watching TV. Although Shumi's family has a TV, she watched TV only at night (when the rest of the family usually get together to watch TV) after all her day's chores were done. Farida, on the other hand, watched TV intermittently throughout the day. This portrays how for urban adolescents, there is no fixed time for watching TV. The availability of cable channels is also a reason for urban adolescents to spend more time on TV.

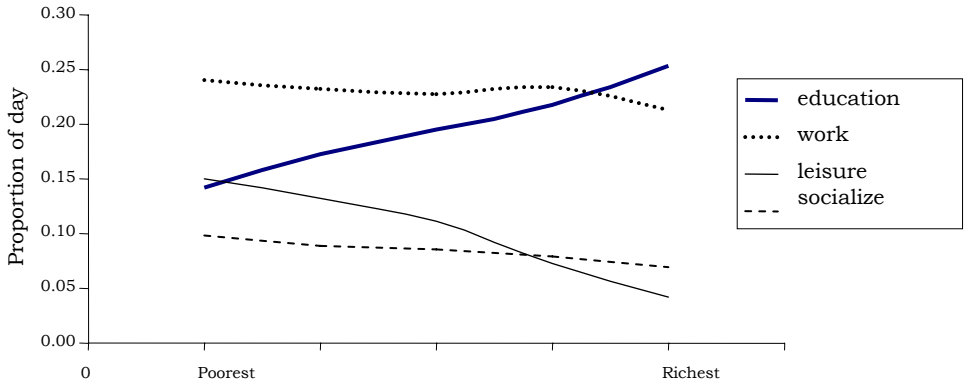
Economic status and time use

The earlier sections presented in detail the differences in time use by sex, age, location and work status of adolescents. Another important factor in determining time allocation is economic status. Given that the poor are time poor, do poorer adolescents work more and play less? Simply looking at time allocated on work, study, leisure and socialization, it turns out that poorer adolescents do work more, but do not study more than their richer counterparts (Fig. 9). Rich adolescents study more, work less and socialize less than poor adolescents.

The richest adolescents spend 10% more of their time on education and 10 % less of their time on work compared to the poorest adolescents. If we categorize economic status into three (poor, middle class, and rich based on an asset index), we found that the highest proportion of poor adolescents (36%) are idle, compared to 29% of the middle class and 22 % of the rich. Twenty-seven percent of the poor are working full-time – 5% more than the middle class and 9 % more than the rich adolescents. More than half of the rich adolescents are in school full-time, while 46% of the middle class and only 36% of the poor adolescents are full-time

students. The proportion of adolescents working and studying at the same time is also highest among the rich.

Figure 9. Time allocation by economic status



Richer girls spend slightly less time on housework than poorer girls, which is expected, since richer families can afford to hire others for much of the unpaid work that girls usually undertake. So, poor adolescents work more. But richer adolescents are not playing more as a result. They are investing their time on education rather than on leisure or social activities.

We know from our earlier sections that leisure and socialization vary considerably between rural and urban areas. The richest rural married girls spend almost 10% more of their time on housework than their urban counterparts, while the poorest married girls are more similar across location in this respect. The poorest rural girls spend only 5% more of their time on housework than their urban counterparts. Girls' leisure time in urban areas increase with economic status, but it stays the same for rural girls and all boys of different economic standing. Time spent on media rises with economic status, but the increase is slower for rural adolescents.

The proportion of time spent on social activities falls slightly with economic status, except in the case of urban boys. The poorer the families are, the more time adolescents have to spend on social activities. Middle class urban boys spend less time on social activities than both the urban poor and rich boys.

Traveling or commuting time falls with economic status for both girls and boys. However, boys spend a lot of time on this activity, and the difference in time spent on traveling is not much different between urban

boys of the poorest three quintiles. The poorest urban girl still spends less time on traveling than the richest urban boy.

Regional differences in time use

The days of adolescents also differ by their location in the country. Adolescents allocate their time depending on the socioeconomic conditions of the area of residence. The distribution of our sample by division is shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Distribution of sample by division

Division	Sample	%
Barisal	1,146	7.71
Chittagong	2,680	18.02
Dhaka	4,360	29.32
Khulna	1,947	13.09
Rajshahi	3,861	25.96
Sylhet	878	5.9
Total	14,872	100

Although the overall trends in gender differences and rural urban differences are the same, there are some regional variances. Adolescents in Sylhet spend the least time on education. The average Sylheti adolescent spends 15% of his/her time on education, compared to 25% spent by a Barisali adolescent. The gender gap in education (difference in average time spent on education between girls and boys) is highest in Khulna, followed closely by Chittagong. There is almost no difference in the time spent on housework by girls of all regions. Adolescents in Rajshahi work the most compared to adolescents of other divisions, but the gender difference in time spent on work is highest in Sylhet. In fact among all girls, Sylheti girls work the least. Girls in Sylhet spend 3% of their time on work, while girls in Rajshahi spend three times more on paid and unpaid work. Sylheti adolescents also lead in terms of time spent on social activities followed by adolescents of Khulna.

Adolescents who live in Dhaka division expectedly spend the highest proportion of time on media and travel. Adolescents of Sylhet and Barisal have the least exposure to media. Time spent on leisure activities is considerably low for adolescents in Rajshahi, but the gender gap in time spent on leisure is the highest in Sylhet. Sylheti girls spend 28% of their time on leisure activities, which is more than any other adolescent's allocation on leisure.

Bangladesh is characterized mostly by flat low-lying land, with only one-tenth of the country consisting of hilly areas. Although most of our

sample comes from the plain lands of Bangladesh, about 17% of the sample is from other geographical areas. Chars, hawrs, riverside areas and hilly areas are generally distinguished by low income and poor infrastructure development.

Adolescents in char areas have little or no scope for travelling outside the chars. Hence they spend very little time on travelling. Plain land adolescents spend twice as much time on travelling as char adolescents. Plain land adolescents also enjoy the highest exposure to media. Adolescents living in the hawr areas spend the least time on media, almost five times less than the plain land adolescents.

Figure 10. Time spent on education and work

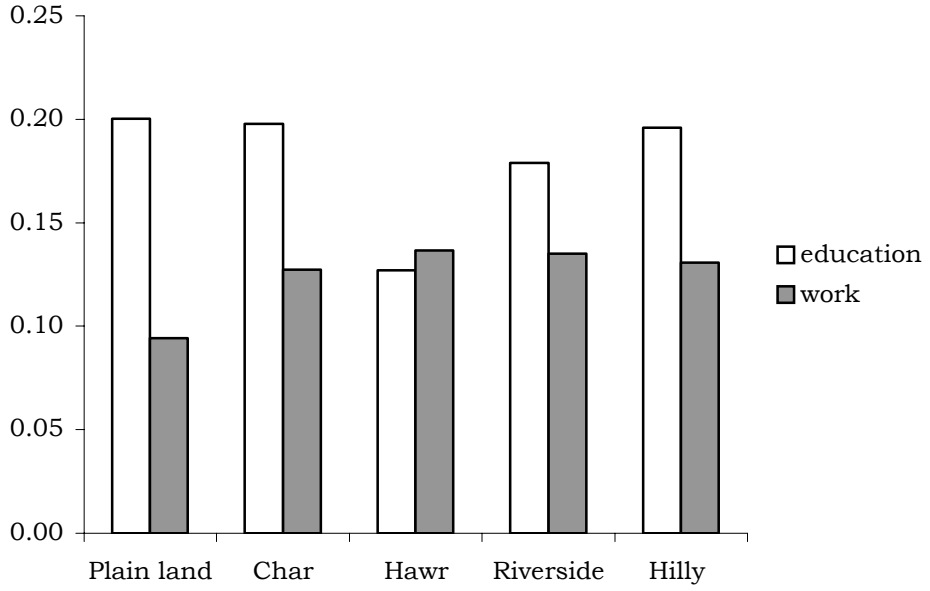


Figure 10 presents the proportion of day spent on work and education by adolescents of different geographical areas. Plain land adolescents work the least compared to adolescents of other areas. Adolescents of hawr areas spend the least time on education and most time on work. However, hawr adolescents also spend more time on social activities compared to others.

The gender gap in time spent on education is the highest in the hilly areas, whereas there is no such gap for adolescents in hawr areas. This reveals that there is limited opportunity for hawr adolescents to access education in general.

CONCLUSION

The adolescence experience in Bangladesh will define the future adults of the country. As indicated in the literature on adolescents, this is a crucial area of interest not only for the family and parents, but also for policy makers and academics. This paper investigated the days of adolescents with a number of important findings. Leisure and social activities, usually seen together in most time use studies was disaggregated. This has revealed that much of the leisure of boys is outside the house, interacting with others (what we define as socializing). For girls, there is limited social interaction, and more leisure time alone within the house.

The gender gap is striking. Gendered roles are apparent from early on. Although girls and boys of 10-12 years old spend equal time in school. The girls do housework and boys work outside the house after school. Girls, in both rural and urban areas spend most of their time inside the household, doing housework or watching TV. There is little scope for socializing or playing for girls. Even with universal education provisions for girls, boys have more time to allocate to studying than girls. Education is the most important activity of the day for most boys, while for girls it falls below housework and leisure in priority.

The experience of adolescence varies largely between rural and urban areas. Rural adolescents have low exposure to media, but active social lives compared to urban adolescents. Rural boys work outside the household twice as much as urban boys, exposing them to higher health risks. Rural boys also socialize more outside the household, which puts them in the top of the list for behavioural risks. However, rural boys also play the most. Urban adolescents grow up with little or no scope to play.

For rural boys, the transition to adulthood is defined by the replacement of full-time school to full-time work. For urban boys, growing up also means more time spent on commuting. For girls, marriage is the turning point in their lives, when schooling disappears and socializing is restricted. Girls' major task, however, remain the same - doing housework.

Commuting and media seem to have a major presence in the lives of urban adolescents. Urban girls spend the most time watching TV or listening to the radio. Urban boys spend more time on commuting than working or studying.

The poor are working more than the rich, but that does not imply that the rich are playing more. The rich adolescents are in fact, playing less than the poor. They are spending more time on education.

Since we have a fair picture of what the adolescents of Bangladesh are doing with their time, we have to confront the question of whether they are growing up right. Passing strong judgments on the quality of life based on time allocation is difficult. Is studying for most of the day better than working for most of the day? Is staying in and watching TV in urban areas worse than spending hours commuting in the crowded and insecure streets of the cities? Does playing and socializing all day put the Bangladeshi adolescent at any risk for undesirable behaviour? Deciding on what is desirable for the subjective well-being of adolescents is a crucial research need, but beyond the scope of this paper.

While some of these questions require further research on the impacts of each activity on the development of adolescents, some answers are more apparent than others. Commuting time, as evidenced in several studies, is particularly unpleasant time for everyone. However, it seems that it has become an essential part of urban adolescents who work full-time. Academics in other parts of the world have suggested policies to reduce time in commuting so that people can allocate their time on more enjoyable activities. Another suggestion is to make commuting time less unpleasant by improving conditions of public transport and reducing pollution. As discussed earlier, much of the time spent in traveling by urban boys is due to the nature of work they are engaged in. An in-depth evaluation of alternative working conditions is required to assess if this commuting time is optimal for adolescents' development in our context. Reducing time spent on undesirable activities is not the end of the story for our urban adolescents. Facilities and easier access to engage in desirable activities, such as playing and socializing, is required to bring about better developmental outcomes.

If the disproportionate amount of time spent on one activity hampers the healthy balance required for adolescents in their time use, interventions should also be designed to reduce time required to do housework for the girls of Bangladesh. Girls are spending more time on housework than education or work from a very early age. Social restrictions limit the time use options for girls, resulting in low social involvement and engagement in the formal labour market. Feminist economists suggest public or private provision of certain services such as child care in order to reduce the burdain of unpaid work on women.

Both academics and practitioners rightly recommend adolescents as targets for bringing about social and development changes. However, in order to intervene we need to understand what constitutes a healthy allocation of time for adolescents. The findings of this paper bring forth

the imperative call for studying the impact of the activities that adolescents of Bangladesh are engaged in, on their overall development.

Annex 1.

List of reported activities

Leisure	**Selfcare**
Relax/nap	Bath/shower
Read a book	Eat
Play sports	Sleep
Practice singing (own)	**Sick**
Draw/paint	Stay in sick
Pray/meditate	Hospitalized
Work	**Media**
Help in family farm	Listen to radio
Sell produce from family farm	Watch TV
Collect fruits for eating	**Education**
Day labour	Work on computer
Carpentry	Private tuition
Make handicraft goods	Technical training
Tutor	School
Drive rickshaw/boats	Travel to and from school
Earth digging for own home	Study at home
Beg	Sing (with tutor)
Work in mechanic stores	**Travel**
Tailor	Travel to visit friends and relatives
Travel to and fro work	Travel for delivering or running errands
Housework	**Misc**
Cook	Fight with spouse
Clean	Stayed at relative's house
Collect water for family	Shopping
Do laundry	**Socialize**
Tend to sick members	Attend social functions
Feed/ Breast feed	Visit relatives and friends
Bathe children	Attend religious functions
Read books to children	Attend NGO and village meetings
Serve guests	Attend drama rehearsals

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Paper 3

Transition to the Labour Market: What Opportunities does it Hold for Adolescents in Bangladesh?

Mahjabeen Rahman and Munshi Sulaiman

INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are the greatest asset for the present and future of any country. In 2001, adolescents comprised of around one-third of the total population of Bangladesh (BBS). They have the potential to be converted into human capital and contribute positively towards the development of the country. After all, reaping the benefit of demographic transition depends on the pace of human capital accumulation (Bratti *et al.* 2001). However, in developing countries like Bangladesh, they are also one of the most vulnerable groups of the population. In these countries, for only a privileged group the period of adolescence is marked by sound health and stable family conditions. Nevertheless**,** it can also be a period of vulnerability because of intense and rapid transitions to new roles and responsibilities as caretakers, workers, spouses, or even parents (Chong *et al.*. 2006). In the face of poverty and deprivation that characterize most developing countries, it is thus crucial to understand not only the opportunities that the country is able to offer its adolescents, but also their vulnerabilities.

Most of the developed countries prioritize on keeping their adolescents involved in capacity building activities, the main instrument for which is education. Unfortunately, there are many among the adolescents in developing countries who are not in school and therefore may be at higher risk for many negative outcomes. The labour markets in these countries do not hold opportunities that would protect and promote their best interest, which could inhibit their capacity as human capital. Given the background of inexperience in decision making and weak status in family and society, they can hardly make a realistic choice of a career. Thus, it is important to learn more about the timing, nature, and

consequences of the key transitions towards adulthood that the adolescents undergo, and in particular how these play out amongst the most vulnerable groups (Donaldson 2006) and design strategies to provide adolescent girls and boys with a safe, healthy, and productive transition to the responsibilities of adulthood. In order to effectively address the socioeconomic dimensions adolescent employment, livelihoods, enterprise and decent work must also be understood and analyzed in the context of the broader issues of poverty, equity and growth (Grierson and Schnurr 2003).

Relatively little is known about work expectations and social influences operating on the success of entry into the world of work for young people, especially in countries like Bangladesh. In the social settings of these countries, gender disparity may also play a role in the favoured access of male participants to the labour market, which is why this study compares different dimensions of livelihood among male and female adolescents. The transition from education to income earning or economic activities is an important stage of adolescent life which may arrive quite early in context of adolescents in Bangladesh. The early involvement of the young in the workforce is a major area of concern across developing countries, as is unemployment among those seeking work. This paper addresses these issues to reflect on what young people's work opportunities are in Bangladesh and their choice between work and school. The study is based on the Bangladesh Adolescent Survey 2005, which was carried out by the Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC with the association of Population Council (USA).

The findings for the study are organized as follows. The age of transition from school to work is explored in the first part of the next section. The subsequent two parts identify the broad patterns in their occupational engagement and expectations regarding occupation. After that, the match or mismatch between expectations and present employment pattern is considered. An attempt is made in fifth part to see whether financial market participation and vocational training can reduce the extent of mismatch. The final section concludes the paper with some discussions.

FINDINGS

Transition from human capital acquisition to employment

The period before adulthood is the time for preparation by obtaining required skills to take responsibility of own lives. Two crucial choices are made by or for an adolescent, which are about continuing education and entering into work. Moving from school to work is one of the major transitions that happen during adolescence. However, girls in Bangladesh are usually denied either of these options. They get married and completely indulge themselves in household works. Employment at early and mid adolescence can be considered as child labour. However, we do not involve in the discussions of whether and how child labour is harmful to the society. Adolescents may decide to work for various reasons ranging from necessity out of poverty to driving self-esteem from the works (Brown 2001). Therefore, in our discussions engagement of adolescents in work is not necessarily a negative phenomenon.

Figure 1 presents the transition from school enrolment to involvement in income generation. At the age of 10 years, most of the young people (90%) were in school. At age 15, 50% remained in school and by age 24, 50% were working and only 5% were in school – the rest were neither working nor in school. Over the years, the percentage of adolescents involved in both remained more or less the same, whereas an increasing percentage was involved in neither of these activities.

At very early stages of adolescence, when adolescents are expected to be involved in the process of accumulating human capital through education, some of them were already involved in economic activities. This shows an early transition of adolescents from education to the workforce, which characterizes inhibition of the human capital acquisition process.

Important differences in the primary involvement by area of residence and sex of adolescents are portrayed in Figure 2. The school to work profiles differed vastly across boys and girls located in the rural and urban regions.

Figure 1. Primary involvement by adolescents: school or work

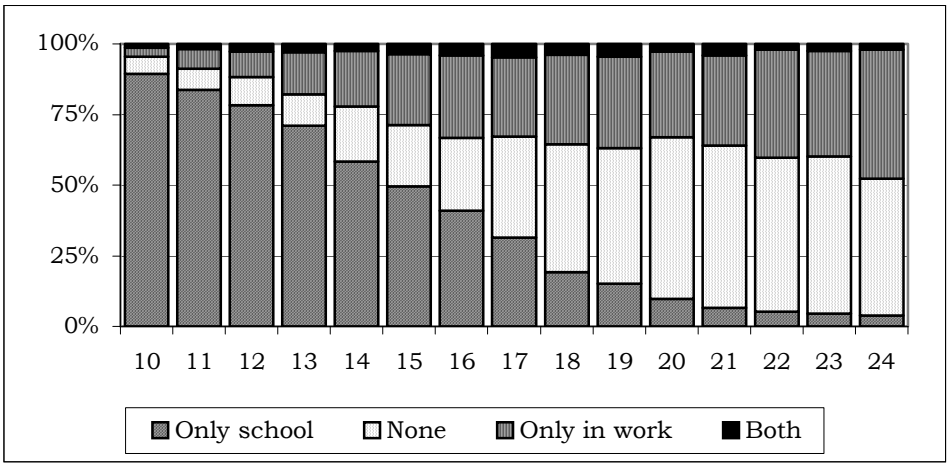
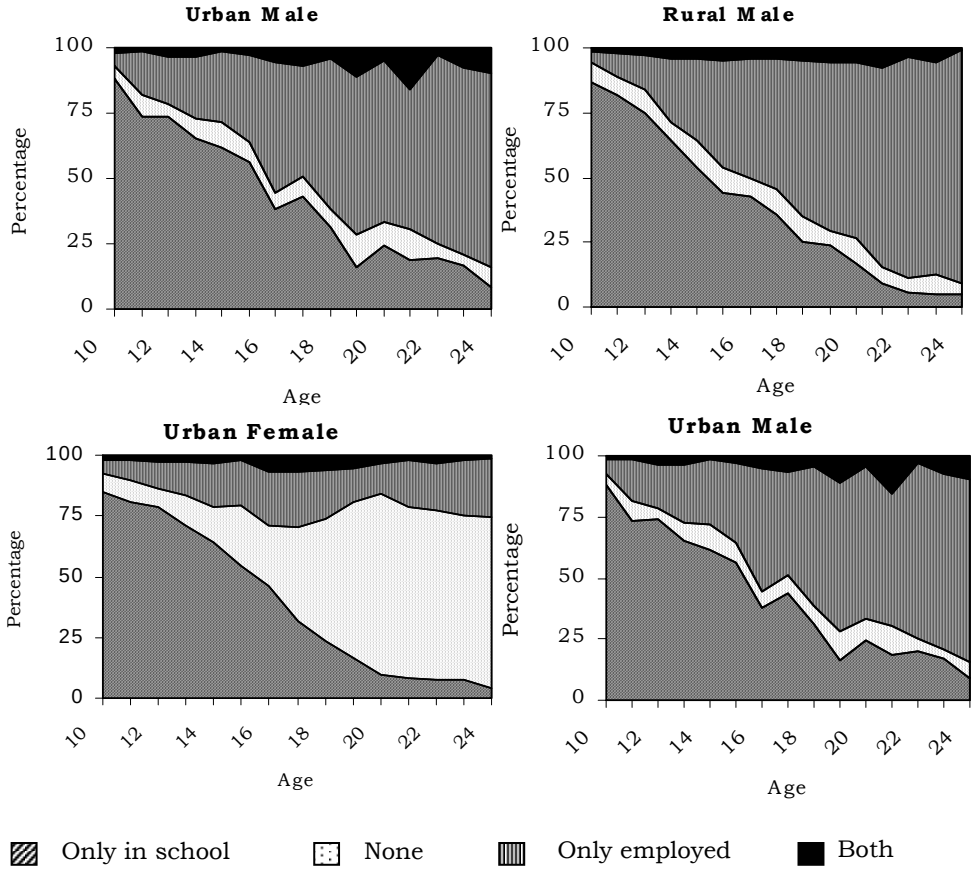


Figure 2. Employment and schooling status by location and sex



In the rural region, while the transition out of school happened with a similar age pattern for boys and girls, a much higher percentage of rural boys were engaged in income earning activities, whereas a large percentage of rural girls went neither to school nor work. As a result, while all boys at age 24 had been classified as working, a much smaller percentage of girls were similarly classified. Girls at lower stages of adolescence seemed to be involved in both education and economic activities, while this trend continued until youth for boys. In urban areas, a more or less similar pattern was noticed.

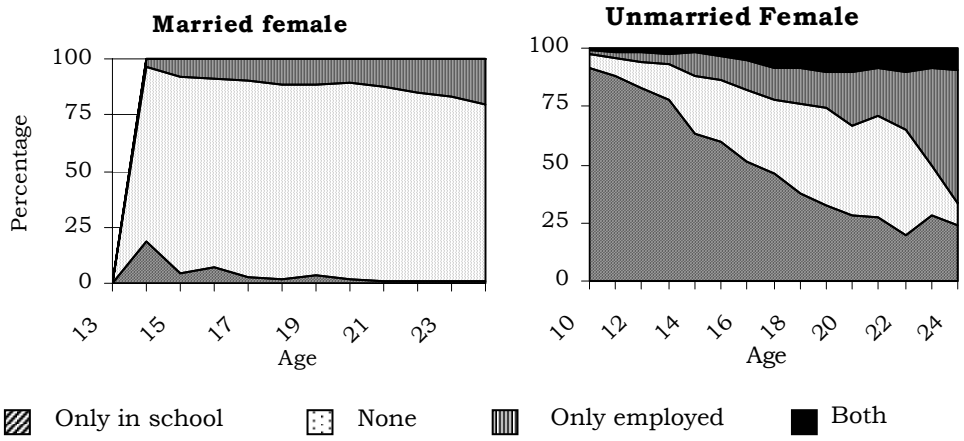
At age 16, more than half of the boys were involved in income earning. Entry into labour force at such an early stage reflects lower level of human capital accumulation. This may translate into 'demographic burden' rather than 'demographic gift'. In 1999-2000, labour force participation of males and females aged 15-19 were 56% and 23% respectively. Therefore, there had not been any significant change in entry into labour force for the new cohort of males while for females it declined.

As girls became older, their involvement in either education or employment went down compared to the boys and the proportion involved in neither of these activities became predominant. The pace of leaving school was almost the same for rural and urban females until about age 15, after which rural females dropped out at a slightly higher rate with almost none of them remaining in school at age 24. Extent of working among the urban female adolescents was the highest at the age of 18 after which a decline was observed over the next two age groups. At the age group of 20-24, the fertility rate among females was found to be the highest (BBS 2005). Therefore, this decline in the labour market participation by females may be explained by the possibility that by this age most of them undertook the responsibilities of parenthood.

In the backdrop of our society, marriage may have played an important role behind the transition of girl adolescents out of school. As shown above, the study-to-work profiles were different for girls and boys and to some extent may be explained by entry into marriage for girls. Evidently, boys left to go to work and girls to get married. As a result, while all men at age 24 have been classified as working, only about 25% of girls were similarly classified (Fig. 2). Though the minimum legal age of marriage for girls is 18 years, over 60% of the girls got married by the time they reached that age. For this reason, Figure 3 further portrays the relationship between the marital status of female adolescents and their involvement in these two mainstream activities. The distribution of status broken down by marriage actually shows that gender differences could be explained entirely by marriage. About 25% of married females reported work as their primary occupation at age 24. Almost none were in school. However, among unmarried females 15% were going to school and

working, 25% were in school and only 10-15% were doing nothing. Being married at a very early age, a significant portion of married female adolescents were found to be involved in neither of these activities which implies that they were involved only in household responsibilities. An interesting finding is that after marriage, a higher percentage of adolescent females moved into the labour market, whereas the involvement in education declined.

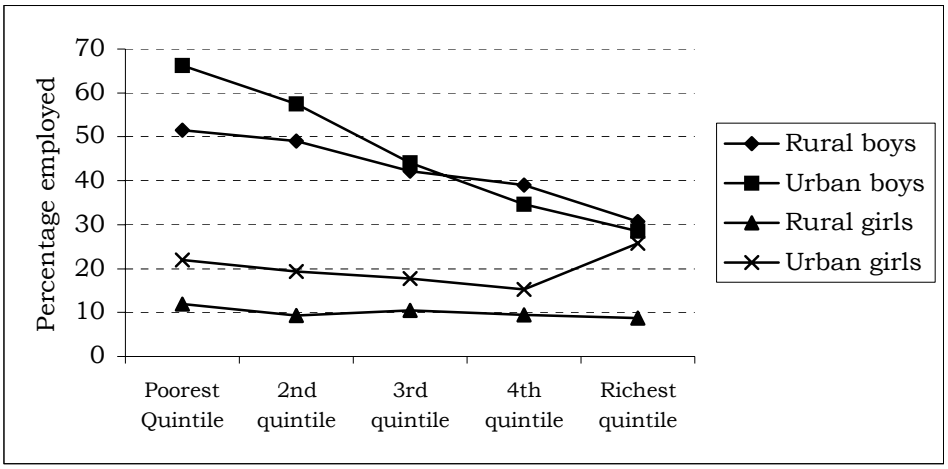
Figure 3. Employment and school going status of married and unmarried female adolescents



Economic status is likely to play a big role in entering into labour force at this relatively early stage. Adolescents from economically depressed family backgrounds were more likely to be forced into working rather than studying. This should have an impact on the percentage of adolescents working as economic agents as well as their employment pattern. Figure 4 presents the proportion of employed adolescents belonging to different wealth quintiles[1] by region and sex. The wealth quintiles represent the economic well-being of the household. Evidently, the propensity to work was strongly determined by the residence and poverty status of the household. Even gender differences converged for the wealthiest quintile. The pattern of participation in the labour force varied the least by wealth status for rural girls, which remained steady at around 10%. In contrast, urban girls belonging to the bottom four wealth quintiles were about twice as likely to be employed as rural girls. Interestingly, the percentage employed among urban girls jumped to 27% for the richest quintile.

[1] A wealth index was formed by households' asset holdings following Filmer and Pritchett (2004).

Figure 4. Extent of employment across wealth ranks (%)



A secular decline in employment from poorest to richest was observed among the urban boys. In urban areas, boys from relatively worse-off households participated more in the labour force compared to similar households in rural areas. The likelihood of work was about the same for urban and rural boys and urban girls when it came to the richest quintile.

Determinants of schooling-employment decision

We explored the factors that may affect the decisions between work-for-money and education. Annex 1 presents the factors that may have played a role in the transition of adolescents into the labour force. Controlling for other variables, rural female adolescents were 9% less likely to be involved in employment than the urban adolescent girls. These rural female adolescents remained both out of school and out of employment. However, for boys, rural or urban location did not have any significant association with choice of schooling and work. Age was apparently an important factor in the transition from school to work among both male and female adolescents. Regression coefficients for age follow the pattern as depicted in Figure 1. However, one noteworthy fact is that the probability of being neither in school nor in work increased by about 2% for male adolescents as their age increased by one year from their mean age (15 years). Not being engaged in work after dropping out of school at the age of 16 or 17 could generate frustration among them and guide them to participate in detrimental activities.

Association between years of schooling completed and participation in income earning yields an interesting result (Table 1). Higher educational attainment had positive association with enrolment in school for girls

though the likelihood was five times higher among the boys. However, returns to schooling seemed to be low in the form of a lower likelihood for obtaining paid employment and significantly diminished for both boys and girls. The effect remained the same when the estimate was restricted among those who are out of school. However, extent of paid employment for adolescents significantly increased after passing SSC (Table 1). Similar scenario is observed in the national labour force participation rate (Rushidan 2005).

Table 1. Engagement in paid employment for out-of-school adolescents (%)

Education	Male	Female
No education	84	23
Class I – V	84	16
Class VI – X	81	15
Passed SSC	79	19
HSC or above	84	23

Given low quality of education, return from primary or secondary education was negligible. Though secondary formal education failed to translate into greater extent of participation in paid labour, vocational training had strong positive association with involvement in work for pay. The effect was similar for both male and female adolescents. Poverty level of the households[2] had significant association with the employment-schooling status of the adolescent boys. However, it was not such a dominant factor for females. Female adolescents from the richest quintile were 1% and 4% more likely to be in school compared to those from middle class and poor households respectively. Probability of no-school no-employment was highest among the bottom 40%.

Getting married was one of the key events that influenced the schooling and employment status of the adolescents. Among the adolescents, married females were 24% less likely to be employed and 8% less likely to be in school, compared to unmarried females. After getting married, the female adolescents in Bangladesh engaged themselves only in household works. However, the scenario was reversed for the male adolescents. For them, getting married means taking up the responsibility of breadwinning as reflected by an 'over 40%' greater chance of being involved in paid labour for married males than the unmarried ones.

Among different demographic characteristics, household size was negatively associated with engagement in paid work. Interestingly, a higher number of income earners in the household increased the

[2] Households were ranked in three categories viz. bottom 40%, 2nd 40% and top 20% using the wealth index.

probability of work[3]. For an extra earning member in the household, the probability of working increased by 2% for females and by 8% for males. It is probably easier to find suitable work when there are more earners in the households. Education of the household head increased, albeit marginally, the probability of staying in schools.

Financial market participation had some influence on the schooling-employment decision of the male adolescents only. Taking loans did not increase the probability of remaining in education, which is understandable by the fact that the extent of student loans is almost non-existent in Bangladesh. Participation in the labour and financial markets were positively associated. Though the effects were relatively weak, participation in the financial market might have had significant influence on the types of employment in which they were engaged.

During adolescence, attitudes and behaviour are likely to be shaped by role models. Not having an appropriate role model can be a manifestation of hopelessness. It is often claimed that female adolescents in Bangladesh, especially in rural areas, do not have any role models to follow, which results in low level of aspirations regarding their lives. Therefore, it is important to investigate whether such lack of aspirations hinders them from participating in income earning activities directly. For this, we used a question on role model as proxy variable. A significant portion (48%) reported that they want to be like themselves. It is interesting to note that chances of reporting that they are 'doing nothing' (household works only) were 10% higher among adolescent females who aspired to be themselves. On the other hand, participation in clubs and other outdoor activities was positively associated with labour market participation by female adolescents. However, in case of male adolescents, the effects were equivocal.

Regarding religion, Muslim girls were less likely to participate in paid work and more likely to engage in household work only, while there was no significant influence of religion on boys' working decisions. This is reasonable when the prevalence of the norm of purdah[4], especially in rural areas, is considered.

Though the regression coefficients provide a lot of information about the directions and levels of association of the exploratory variables, it is useful to explain the effects constructing some cases. Table 2 presents the probability of being involved only in paid work where the first three cases are for females and cases 4 to 6 are for males.

[3] To minimize bias arising from endogeneity, number of earning members excluding the adolescent who was interviewed has been considered.

[4] Muslim females are required by religion to cover certain portions of the body. However, the implication of 'purdah' crosses the boundary of mere physical covering and basically encourages the seclusion of females through avoiding direct contact with other males.

A 'typical' rural poor female adolescent (case 1) had 40% probability of doing paid work while in urban areas (case 3), the corresponding figure was 78%. Female adolescents from a middle class family in rural areas were quite unlikely to do any work for payment. These sharp variations in participation in the labour market may have cropped up from the differences in opportunities for these groups of adolescents. However, one can easily imagine that adolescents from the middle class often do productive work for no payment, such as, processing rice produced by the households. Poor adolescent boys of both rural and urban areas are almost certain to do work for payment in some form or other. The boys from the middle class can afford not to participate.

Table 2. Predicted probability of being only in paid work

	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5	Case 6
Sex	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male	Male
Location	Rural	Rural	Urban	Rural	Rural	Urban
Age	18 years	18 years	18 years	18 years	18 years	18 years
Education	No Education	Class 9	Class 5	No education	Class 9	Class 5
Wealth rank	Bottom 40%	Second 40%	Bottom 40%	Bottom 40%	Second 40%	Bottom 40%
Marital status	Married	Married	Unmarried	Unmarried	Unmarried	Unmarried
Live with parents	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Vocational training	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Adolescent is the head	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Cultivate land	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Household size	3 members	Average	Average	3 members	Average	Average
Number of earner	1	Average	Average	1	Average	Average
Head's education	No Education	Class 5	No education	No education	Class 5	No education
Loan taking	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Aspire to be her/himself	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Club involvement	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Religion	Islam	Islam	Islam	Islam	Islam	Islam
Division	Rajshahi	Dhaka	Dhaka	Rajshahi	Dhaka	Dhaka
Probability of being employed only	0.40	0.07	0.78	0.99	0.31	0.97

Occupation pattern

Given the extent of engagement of adolescents in income earning activities, we looked at their main occupations in this section. Over 80% of the out of school adolescent girls in urban areas were primarily engaged in household work only (Table 3). The corresponding figure in rural areas was 93%, which shows the extent of their involvement in work for earning as we have seen in earlier sections.

Over half of the females involved in some income earning activity reported household work as their main occupation. They participated in income earning activities, mostly different kinds of self-employment, alongside their main responsibility of household work. Such engagement was more prevalent in rural areas (65%) than in urban locations (36%)*.

Table 3. Adolescents by main occupations (only those who are out of school)

	Present main occupation						
	Own agriculture	HH work	Day labour	Self employed	Service	Business	Unemployed
Overall	6	55	11	8	4	7	7
Rural female	0	93	2	2	1	1	2
Rural male	21	0	26	19	2	14	17
Urban female	0	80	9	2	7	0	1
Urban male	2	0	19	18	23	22	15
Division							
Dhaka	5	53	10	8	9	6	8
Chittagong	7	54	11	8	3	7	10
Sylhet	6	51	11	8	5	7	12
Rajshahi	7	57	14	8	2	7	5
Khulna	8	57	12	9	2	7	4
Barisal	7	59	7	12	2	6	7
Age group							
Pre-adolescence	7	20	24	10	4	6	28
Early adolescence	9	33	20	12	3	6	15
Mid-adolescence	9	43	15	13	4	9	8
Late adolescence	4	67	9	7	4	4	5
Youth	6	66	7	6	4	7	4
Young adulthood	6	63	8	7	6	8	2
Mean years of schooling	4.56	4.97	2.92	3.77	6.35	5.26	4.58
Male	4.61	-	3.14	3.50	6.75	5.39	4.64
Female	2.5	4.97	1.88	5.92	5.56	3.16	4.09
Observations	513	4379	911	665	354	526	585

Figures presented are row percentages

In rural areas, male adolescents were involved in own agriculture while urban males were employed mainly in the service and business sectors. Day labour and self-employment also seemed to be common professions for both urban and rural males. According to the National Labour Force Survey, 26% of male workers are employed as day labourers (BBS 2000).

*Calculations not shown here

The extent of day labourers among adolescent workers was higher (29%) when the unemployed and students were excluded. Therefore, the new generation of workers is not being provided with better opportunities.

Unemployment was the highest among male adolescents looking for work in both urban and rural areas. Across all divisions, the adolescents were found to be predominantly involved in household work, which probably reflected the involvement mainly by females. The rate of unemployment seemed to be highest in Chittagong and Sylhet (around 10%) and lowest in Khulna (around 4%), which may be explained by the socio-demographic characteristics of these divisions.

Those working at the pre-adolescent stage were mostly involved in wage employment, which also employed majority of adolescents in all age groups. A large percentage of adolescents at all stages were also self-employed. The rate of unemployment among those looking for work was the highest at this stage of adolescence (around 28%) compared to the others. Irrespective of their age, adolescents out of school were mostly involved in household work. However, as they moved towards young adulthood, prevalence of household work as main occupation increased.

Schooling seemed to have some influence over the choice of occupation as the mean years of education varied across different professions. Those employed in the service sector had the highest mean years of schooling and then came the business sector. In contrast, those with the lowest level of schooling seemed to prefer to be wage employed. The service sector employed the most educated male and female adolescents while surprisingly, self employed females also had high mean years of schooling.

Table 4 shows the types of main occupation of the adolescent boys who are out of school by their wealth groups. It is not surprising that the extent of wage employment was higher among the poor. Different kinds of self-employment were also chosen by boys coming from poor households. Engagement in business was concentrated among boys from relatively well-off categories.

Table 4. Main occupation of adolescent boys by region and wealth group

	Rural			Urban		
	Poor	Middle class	Rich	Poor	Middle class	Rich
Own agriculture	15	28	19	2	2	0
Wage employment	35	19	16	25	12	8
Self employment	23	19	10	22	14	7
Service	2	3	4	22	24	27
Business	9	15	25	15	30	30
Unemployed	15	16	24	13	15	25

(Only those who are out of school were considered)

A clear, and understandably so, the difference in work opportunities for boys in rural and urban areas was that services were available predominantly in urban locations. Wage employment was slightly more prevalent in rural areas. It is interesting to note that engagement in own agriculture was most prevalent among middle class boys in rural areas.

Occupational expectations

This section focuses on the anticipation of adolescents regarding choices available for them in the labour market as presented in table 5. A general feature of occupational aspiration found among the adolescents in Bangladesh was an overwhelming preference for services. Around half of the adolescents aspired to be involved in service for income earning in future. Level of expectation of being involved in service was the lowest among females in rural areas. The second preference of occupation was business for boys and self-employment for girls. The distinction in second choice of occupation between the boys and girls was quite remarkable. Boys hardly aspired to take self-employment and business was not an option for girls.

We have seen that occupational aspirations differed between male and female. How does then the perceived gender role among females influence their occupational choice? The respondents were asked about their perception on difficulties for females to have a good conjugal life if they get engaged in income generation. Those who think it would be difficult were more likely to prefer self-employment to service.

Aspiration relating to income earning activities by age group shows that as adolescents matured, they came closer to reality and had given up aspirations of getting involved in services. Those who reported that they want to take up business or self-employment were mostly in their late adolescents. One of the major factors determining the chances of aspiring about services was the level of educational attainment. About 80% of the adolescents whose educational achievement was above SSC, aspired to get good jobs. The level of education is likely to correlate with wealth status of the households from which the adolescents come. Therefore, a greater proportion of adolescents from better-off households aspired to be in services.

Financial market participation shows some association with occupational preferences. Among the adolescents who have had experience of taking loans, the major preferred occupation was self-employment. In contrast, service seemed to be the priority for the non-borrower group. Causality between job preferences and financial market can arise in either way. Borrowing is often essential to take up self-employment or business. Moreover, perceived access to financial markets by adolescents can ease the switch from 'planning to get a job' to 'becoming an entrepreneur'.

Table 5. Aspirations Regarding Future Occupation

	Desired occupation					
	Agriculture	Business	Self-employed	Service	Household work only	Other/ unspecified
Overall	6	13	22	49	4	4
Rural male	9	28	5	52	0	6
Rural female	7	1	37	42	8	3
Urban male	2	32	4	56	0	5
Urban female	1	1	32	57	6	2
Age group						
Pre-adolescence	4	8	9	73	2	4
Early adolescence	6	14	15	59	3	4
Mid-adolescence	6	16	19	50	3	5
Late adolescence	7	11	33	36	7	4
Youth	8	16	34	27	7	4
Young adulthood	9	19	36	23	7	5
Education groups						
No education	15	17	35	20	6	4
Class I – V	7	13	21	49	4	5
Class VI – X	4	12	23	53	4	4
Passed SSC	2	13	11	69	2	3
HSC and above	0	11	4	79	1	4
Wealth group						
Poor	10	15	26	39	5	4
Middle class	5	13	20	52	4	4
Rich	2	11	17	59	3	5
Loan group						
Borrower	9	16	37	26	6	5
Non-borrower	6	13	20	52	4	4
Group (female only) by perception of difficulty in conjugal life for working women						
Difficult	4	1	40	41	9	2
Not difficult	7	1	34	47	7	3
No answer	4	0	27	58	6	3
Observations	923	1,452	2,585	5,249	517	496

Figures reported are row percentages

Mismatch

To what extent the opportunities that the adolescents are provided by the economy match their aspirations is explored in this section. We have seen that one's preferences are set by her/his socioeconomic status, level of education and experience in the labour market. Table 6 shows that 25% of those involved in agriculture wanted to continue in that sector. However, aspirations of those doing business were mostly concentrated in that sector. About half of the self-employed adolescents would like to switch to business. About one-third of the adolescents involved in services would prefer to discontinue that for business. This reflects that though service was the top most priority for the adolescents, available job opportunities did not necessarily meet their expectations forcing them to think about alternatives.

Table 6. Present main occupation and aspirations

Main occupation now	Desired occupation					
	Agriculture	Business	Self-employed	Service	Household work only	Other/ unspecified
Own agriculture	25	48	8	13	0	6
Business	2	72	9	9	0	8
Self-employed	6	46	17	19	0	13
Service	1	34	4	58	0	2
Household work	9	1	55	17	12	3
Day labour	20	37	12	25	1	6
Student	2	5	7	82	1	3
Unemployed	11	34	13	31	1	10
Other	3	19	28	31	0	9
Total	6	13	22	49	4	4

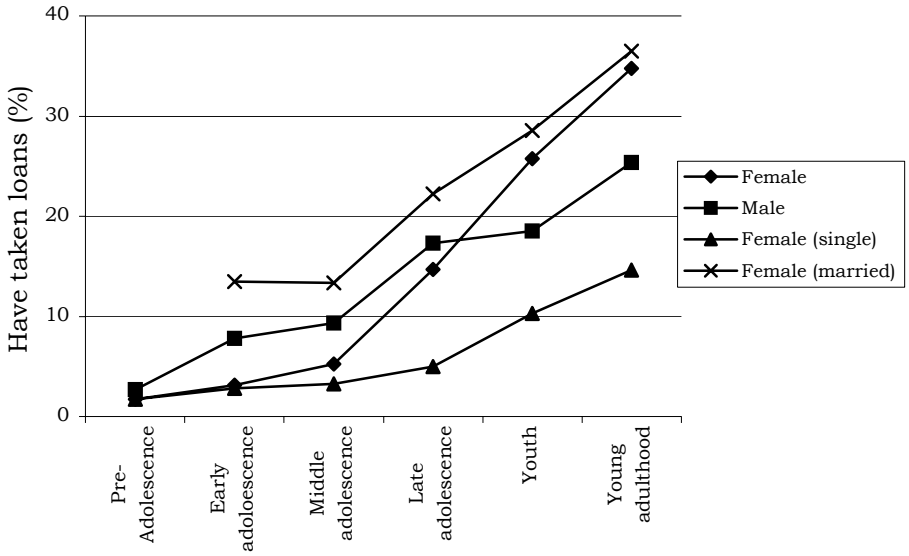
Over half of the females involved mainly in household work would prefer self-employment. They were likely to suffer the highest extent of mismatch between aspirations and reality. Obviously, no one wanted to be a day labourer and those who have taken up that option wanted to be involved in business or service. Moreover, 20% of the day labourer adolescents wanted to involve in own agriculture. Comparable figures for people in other sectors show that day-labourers lie at the bottom of occupational ladder followed by agriculture. Such low social value of agriculture is a possible hindrance to its development, though the sector is of utmost importance to any developing economy.

Adolescent students were still living with the dreams of an ideal life, which is to get a good job. Over 80% of them cherished to be in services. As they came out of school for work, this share will almost certainly fall.

Loan and training as possible entry points

This section measures the importance of access to financial markets and its impact on the ability of adolescents to be employed in his/her desired profession. Job training is also expected to ease the entry of adolescents into a preferred position in the job market. Figure 5 presents formal and non-formal borrowing by adolescents at different stages of adolescence across sex and marital status. The percentage of taking loan steadily increased for both male and female adolescents as they advanced to later stage of adolescence. The highest percentage of borrowing occurred among married females irrespective of the stage of adolescence. Male adolescents tended to borrow more compared to females prior to late adolescence, but thereafter, it was the other way round.

Figure 5. Financial market participation at different stages of adolescence (borrowing)



To better understand the borrowing behaviour of adolescents, their socio-demographic profile is presented in Table 7. It shows the percentage of adolescents who have taken loans, the average loan amount and the percentage of adolescents who have actually used the loan themselves by residence, division, geographic location, education level, and sources of borrowing. In both rural and urban areas, the majority of borrowers were females and among them, rural females borrowed more than the other groups. This is also reflected in the average amount of loan taken, which was higher among females. Rural males seemed to be least interested in borrowing compared to the other groups. However, male adolescents in both areas had more control over the financial resources obtained through borrowing compared to females. Borrowing among adolescents varied slightly across divisions, the percentage being highest in Dhaka and Sylhet. Female adolescents were less in control over their loans as higher percentages among male adolescents were able to use their loans themselves, irrespective of the division of residence or geographic location. Less educated women had a higher propensity of taking loans, which declined gradually with education. This effect may have overlapped with the effect that marriage and age seemed to have on female adolescents. Interestingly, female adolescents with education below the secondary level tended to borrow more than males, but this scenario changed for higher levels of education. Considering control over loans, there was a sharp difference between males and females. Association between education and control over borrowed money was not clear.

Table 7. Sociodemographic profile of adolescents participating in the financial market (loan)

	% taking loans		Average loan amount		Control over loan (%of self-usage)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Household type						
Rural	10	15	4691	7159	91	45
Urban	11	14	6260	5748	89	56
Division						
Barisal	9	13	4808	6780	91	61
Chittagong	9	12	5683	6828	88	54
Dhaka	12	13	4189	6443	91	53
Khulna	11	16	3405	6293	92	41
Rajshahi	9	20	6903	5181	88	39
Sylhet	13	11	5743	6338	98	60
Geographic location						
Plainland	10	16	5197	6035	91	46
Char	8	8	4197	6969	94	38
Haor/Baor	9	7	7207	13044	87	50
Riverside	12	13	3088	4921	83	62
Hilly area	10	15	5543	5618	87	63
Education level						
No education	12	23			89	46
Class I – V	8	14			92	47
Class VI – X	12	14			91	46
Passed SSC	17	11			88	70
HSC and above	17	12			86	58
Loan source (col %)						
NGO	23	71	8221	6694	81	36
Bank	5	2	25306	8792	66	48
Moneylenders	5	2	7875	9237	94	68
Friends-relatives	62	24	2090	3568	96	80
Others	5	1	4518	10648	91	79

Interestingly, female adolescents tended to rely mostly on semiformal loans received from NGOs, whereas male adolescents preferred informal sources. Financial institutions (such as banks, etc.) were a major source of borrowing for male adolescents, but females received large amounts from moneylenders, banks, and NGOs. Surprisingly, on average, male adolescents took larger volume of loans from NGOs and banks compared to female adolescents. Regardless of the source of loan, a much lower percentage of female adolescents were actually able to use the loans themselves compared to males.

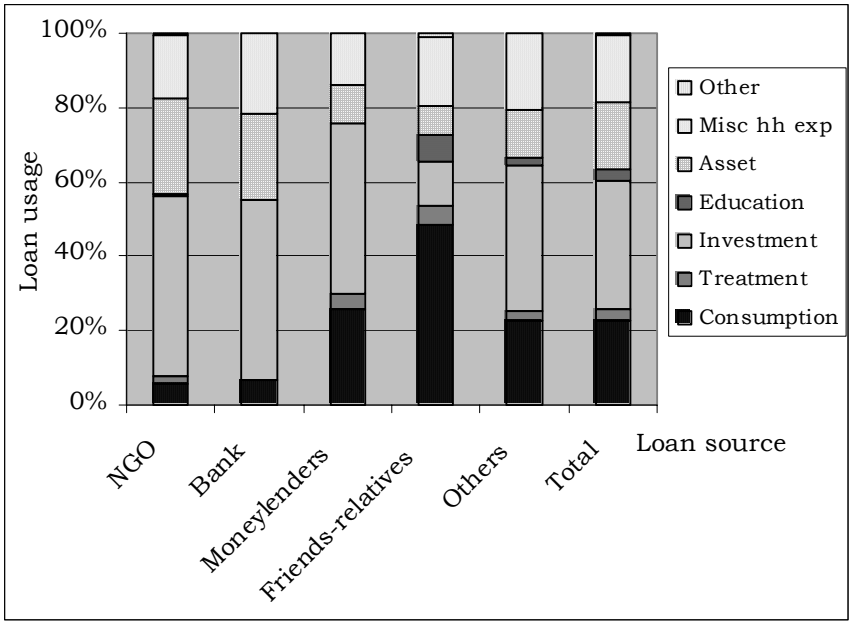
Table 8 presents an overview of the financial market participation of adolescents differentiating between rural and urban areas. Quite large percentages of female adolescents, both rural and urban, depended on semi-formal sources (NGOs, etc.), while rural and urban male adolescents preferred borrowing from informal sources (friends/relatives, etc.). More male adolescents were able to use loan themselves. Urban males had relatively less control over their loans compared to their rural counterparts, but urban females seemed to be better-off in this regard. Among adolescents, major areas of loan use were consumption, investment and purchase of assets. Interestingly, female adolescents tended to allocate their loans more productively compared to males as noticeably larger percentages of females used their funds on investment and asset purchase. Male adolescents tended to consume significantly larger percentages of their loans than females and urban male adolescents had a higher tendency to spend loan on consumption related activities.

Table 8. Loan profile by gender and residence

	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Source of loan				
NGO	26	74	15	62
Bank	6	2	4	2
Moneylenders	5	2	4	1
Friends-relatives	58	21	73	34
Other	5	1	5	1
Used by her/himself	91	45	89	56
Usage of loan				
Consumption	39	11	46	18
Treatment	3	3	2	3
Investment	24	41	23	37
Education	5	2	6	3
Asset purchase	9	25	6	20
Miscellaneous expenses	19	17	14	19
Other	0	1	3	0

Borrowing in the formal, semi-formal and informal financial sectors increased the resources available for spending by adolescents. Figure 6 shows different sectors in which the adolescents tend to allocate their loan.

Figure 6. Use of borrowed funds from different sources by adolescents (%)



Almost half of the borrowings from the formal and semi-formal sources were spent on investment related activities, whereas a similar proportion of funds obtained from the informal sector was consumed. Around 25% of loans from banks and NGOs were also used productively to purchase assets. Large percentages of loans were also spent on carrying out day-to-day household expenditures. Surprisingly, insignificant portions of borrowed amounts were used to fund higher education.

Table 9 shows the financial borrowing profile of adolescents. Adolescents who depend on business as livelihood were more likely to have taken loans. Around 20% of the self-employed adolescents also reported dependency on borrowing at some point. Surprisingly, around 24% of the female adolescents involved in household work took loans, for which the reasons may have been consumption or investment, etc. Female adolescents involved in agriculture seemed to have complete control over their borrowed funds, whereas in almost 40% of the cases females involved in other occupations were not able to spend their funds themselves. Though a small percentage of students actually borrowed, more than 90% of them were able to use borrowed funds themselves. Though the percentages of control over own borrowed funds were much higher among male adolescents compared to females, wastage of funds seemed to be the lowest among those involved in business.

Table 9. Participation in the financial market by occupation

Present main occupation	Loan taken (%)		Having control over loan (% of borrower)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agriculture	13	10	88	100
Business	23	48	94	56
Self-employment	19	21	89	56
Service	15	16	89	65
Household work	0	24	-	42
Unspecified/Other	7	5	90	25
Wage employment	14	12	85	58
Student	6	3	94	95

Vocational training is often prescribed to reduce unemployment and make use of human resources by increasing their skill level. The extent of taking vocational training (Table 10) by the adolescents' formal education level shows that it plays a complementary role rather than substituting formal education. After taking vocational training, the adolescents were likely to get self-employment or service.

Table 10. Extent of taking vocational training

Education	% took training	Main occupation	% took training
No education	10	Agriculture	10
Class I – V	12	Household work	18
Class VI – X	19	Day labour	21
Passed SSC	32	Self-employed	50
HSC and above	41	Service	43
		Business	26
Total	16		

However, it may not always be the case that the type of vocational training received will match the actual occupation of the adolescent. In context of the tight job market in Bangladesh, the likelihood of failure to be employed in the desired occupation is quite high for the adolescents, even if he/she may have received vocational training for the job. Thus, it may be interesting to look at the factors that may help adolescents find their desired occupation.

Annex 2 presents the results for the probit regression models (1-5) which consider access to financial loans and vocational training as the key factors that may affect the ability of adolescents to be employed in their desired jobs along with other determinants that may affect labour market participation. Since the adolescents who are students are yet to enter into work, the estimates considered only the out of school adolescents. Regression (5) focuses on females. Clearly, adolescents who had borrowed resources from the financial sector were more likely to be employed in their desired professions. However, adolescents who entered

the job market at a much older age may find it easier to fulfill their goals, irrespective of whether or not they have borrowed in the financial market. In general, receiving some sort of vocational training hardly helped the adolescents in achieving their goals in livelihood. Especially female adolescents seemed to be significantly less likely to achieve their goals in choosing their desired profession. Adolescents living in rural areas had a much higher likelihood ending up in the wrong profession compared to living in urban areas. Even though the effect was very small, education seemed to make it easier for adolescents to work in their desired field. Those from economically better-off families were in an advantageous position to fulfill their career goals, which might have been due to their access to higher education or financial support received from their families. Watching television appeared to have raised the expectations of adolescents in terms of their goals and thus those who did not watch TV seemed to be more realistic in choosing a profession. Interestingly, the occupation of the household head seemed to matter because it affected the resources available or expectations of the adolescents. Adolescents whose parents were day labourers had a lower likelihood of joining their desired careers, while those with parents in the service or business sector were relatively better-off. Adolescents located elsewhere other than the capital city, Dhaka, were less likely to be able to pursue their desired careers.

When it comes to female adolescents, both access to resources through borrowing and exposure to vocational training acted as contributing factors towards working in their desired professions. However, rural females seemed to be in a disadvantageous position compared to urban ones as they were unable to work as desired. Marriage also acted as a barrier between female adolescents and their job market preferences. However, those who were from a relatively well-off family or had a parent working in a white-collar job were more likely to pursue their desired careers.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Very few young people begin with formal employment opportunities when they first begin work. Most young people would like a job with tenure and salary. This is reflected in their statements regarding desired occupation. Such aspirations are strongly conditioned by background factors such as education and sex. Boys are more likely to state that a '*chakri*' (job) is their desired choice whereas a fair number of young women prefer self-employment. Here gender trajectories diverge very clearly.

Young people become active financial managers from a young age. The survey documents very high propensities to borrow and save. Men tend to borrow from friends and relatives whereas young women appear to have access to savings and loans through NGOs particularly in rural areas.

Having active role models is strongly associated with working and going to school. Being able to envision a future that is concrete and evident in the form of real role models appears to increase the propensity of working and going to school for women. The causal direction is not clear but there is high collinearity. There are also similarly strong effects of religious affiliation and membership in community groups such as clubs. These affects seem to be stronger for girls than boys hinting at different gender dynamics with regard to work. In general, participating in paid work is relatively new for women and may thus be more influenced by the acceptability of work as a social norm. For boys, work is more routinely a part of their adult life. For girls, reporting that they work for pay in the least is relatively novel. Thus, conducive social structures and support from peer groups are important for taking up paid work.

The process of entering into work is very gradual (see time use data), as is the pattern revealed by exploring work for cash. It begins with informal opportunities in the farm or in casual employment. With age, the trajectories are quite different for boys and girls. The vast majority of boys spend most of their time in income earning activities by the time they are 24. A similar proportion of women are engaged in household work. Opportunities for income generating employment are slightly better in urban areas, the majority of which are casual wage workers.

Returns to education are negative both for boys and girls. While the results from the current data may be unduly affected because they focused on a population under 25 years of age, similar findings were

reported for Bangladesh and India. Negative returns to education in the labour market, in the context of rapidly rising school attendance, deserves more in-depth exploration. It is likely that job growth is greatest in the semi-skilled and unskilled sectors and limited in sectors that require greater education. It may also be a reflection of failures in the education system that it is unable to impart the requisite levels and kinds of skills required in the labour market. Hence, those who continue schooling are not immediately rewarded in the labour market. It may also be driven by the fact that reservation wages are higher for those who can afford higher education and continue schooling with support from families. This is indicated by the relatively high level of education of the young people who reported own agriculture as their primary education.

Annex

Table 1. Determinants of transition into the work force: a multinominal logistic model

	Female				Male			
	Only in school	Only employed	None	Both	Only in school	Only employed	None	Both
Rural (1=yes, else 0)	-0.000	-0.085***	0.087***	-0.002	0.022	-0.022	-0.005	0.005
	(-0.01)	(-5.10)	(4.81)	(-1.40)	(0.93)	(-0.79)	(-0.30)	(0.72)
Age	-0.051***	0.017***	0.036***	-0.002***	-0.187***	0.184***	0.016***	-0.012***
	(-12.69)	(8.43)	(9.29)	(-4.16)	(-31.99)	(34.90)	(5.59)	(-7.87)
Years of schooling completed	0.017***	-0.024***	0.005	0.001***	0.088***	-0.071***	-0.027***	0.011***
	(5.51)	(-4.95)	(0.91)	(2.71)	(9.46)	(-6.80)	(-4.63)	(3.62)
(Schooling completed)^2	0.002***	0.000	-0.003***	0.000**	0.007***	-0.009***	0.001*	0.001***
	(7.45)	(0.88)	(-4.57)	(2.43)	(9.26)	(-9.72)	(1.91)	(3.56)
Have voc training (1=yes, else 0)	-0.028***	0.222***	-0.201***	0.006***	-0.234***	0.301***	-0.054***	-0.014**
	(-4.79)	(11.72)	(-10.16)	(2.79)	(-13.23)	(13.39)	(-3.75)	(-2.51)
Belong to bottom 40% (1=yes, else 0)	-0.038***	-0.011	0.050**	-0.001	-0.139***	0.187***	-0.036*	-0.012
	(-4.33)	(-0.64)	(2.51)	(-0.70)	(-5.27)	(5.83)	(-1.93)	(-1.61)
Belong to 2nd 40% (1=yes, else 0)	-0.014*	-0.002	0.016	0.000	-0.060**	0.096***	-0.034**	-0.001
	(-1.80)	(-0.14)	(0.88)	(-0.52)	(-2.42)	(3.18)	(-2.03)	(-0.23)
Married (1=yes, else 0)	-0.084***	-0.242***	0.340***	-0.014***	-0.294***	0.403***	-0.079***	-0.029***
	(-7.37)	(-11.65)	(15.23)	(-3.82)	(-10.54)	(9.87)	(-2.72)	(-3.87)
Live with parents (1=yes, else 0)	0.083***	-0.126***	0.040	0.003**	0.111***	-0.209***	0.084***	0.014**
	(7.09)	(-5.62)	(1.53)	(2.01)	(4.04)	(-6.38)	(5.02)	(2.05)
Adolescent is HHH (1=yes, else 0)	0.027	0.021	-0.100	0.052	-0.199***	0.289***	-0.097***	0.007
	(0.32)	(0.47)	(-1.11)	(0.90)	(-4.19)	(4.89)	(-3.61)	(0.36)
Household size	0.001	-0.011***	0.009**	0.000	0.004	-0.013**	0.009**	0.001
	(0.93)	(-3.03)	(2.46)	(-0.55)	(0.68)	(-2.18)	(2.43)	(0.87)
Number of earners excluding respondent	-0.018***	0.024***	-0.006	0.000	-0.049***	0.081***	-0.031***	-0.001
	(-4.51)	(2.90)	(-0.67)	(0.37)	(-4.03)	(5.84)	(-3.62)	(-0.20)
Education of Head (years of schooling)	0.003***	0.002	-0.005***	0.000*	0.011***	-0.012***	0.003	-0.002**
	(4.01)	(1.17)	(-3.01)	(1.85)	(4.26)	(-3.83)	(1.38)	(-2.37)
Never took loan (1=yes, else 0)	-0.003	0.009	-0.005	-0.001	0.061**	-0.078**	0.038*	-0.021**
	(-0.18)	(0.52)	(-0.24)	(-0.61)	(2.02)	(-2.16)	(1.94)	(-1.99)
Aspires to be him/herself (1=yes, else 0)	-0.075***	-0.022*	0.101***	-0.004***	-0.258***	0.232***	0.053***	-0.027***
	(-8.20)	(-1.85)	(7.07)	(-3.00)	(-15.65)	(11.95)	(4.31)	(-4.86)
Involved in club etc. (1=yes, else 0)	-0.026***	0.066***	-0.041*	0.002	-0.031	0.041	-0.021	0.011
	(-2.67)	(3.01)	(-1.72)	(0.98)	(-1.07)	(1.21)	(-1.06)	(1.36)
Muslim (1=yes, else 0)	-0.006	-0.077***	0.083***	0.000	-0.013	0.002	0.011	-0.001
	(-0.71)	(-4.08)	(4.05)	(0.26)	(-0.48)	(0.06)	(0.63)	(-0.08)
Barisal Division (1=yes, else 0)	-0.006	-0.008	0.013	0.000	-0.032	0.094**	-0.052***	-0.009
	(-0.66)	(-0.34)	(0.55)	(0.15)	(-0.97)	(2.33)	(-2.79)	(-0.89)
Chittagong Division (1=yes, else 0)	-0.007	0.000	0.004	0.003*	-0.020	0.011	0.001	0.008
	(-0.99)	(-0.02)	(0.23)	(1.82)	(-0.80)	(0.37)	(0.05)	(0.88)
Khulna Division (1=yes, else 0)	0.051***	-0.013	-0.044*	0.005*	0.070**	-0.017	-0.082***	0.029
	(3.22)	(-0.75)	(-1.92)	(1.95)	(2.23)	(-0.49)	(-5.38)	(0.02)

Table 1 continued

Table 1 continued

Rajshahi Division (1=yes, else 0)	0.023*** (2.62)	0.017 (1.13)	-0.045** (-2.55)	0.004** (2.21)	-0.034 (-1.50)	0.092*** (3.32)	-0.075*** (-5.19)	0.017** (2.04)
Sylhet Division (1=yes, else 0)	-0.025*** (-3.44)	-0.072*** (-4.61)	0.100*** (5.73)	-0.003** (-2.15)	-0.071** (-2.12)	0.049 (1.16)	0.031 (1.16)	-0.009 (-0.74)
Predicted at average	0.06	0.15	0.78	0.00	0.30	0.52	0.15	0.04
Observations	8285				6628			
Pseudo R^2	0.52				0.44			

Figures shown are marginal effects, t-values are shown in parenthesis.
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Table 2. Probability of getting desired occupation

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Out of school adolescents				
	Both male and female				Female only
Loan taken (1=yes, 0 otherwise)	0.021* (1.88)	0.020* (1.81)	0.022* (1.94)	0.013 (1.12)	0.021*** (2.65)
Taken Vocational training (1=yes, 0 otherwise)	-0.016 (1.57)	-0.016 (1.51)	-0.015 (1.44)	-0.018* (1.77)	0.068*** (8.21)
Female (1=yes, 0 otherwise)	-0.102*** (9.38)	-0.100*** (9.20)	-0.104*** (9.60)	-0.094*** (8.55)	-
Rural (1=yes, 0 otherwise)	-0.071*** (6.39)	-0.058*** (4.98)	-0.040*** (3.43)	-0.036*** (3.10)	-0.029*** (3.53)
Education (years of schooling completed)	0.006*** (4.24)	0.006*** (3.82)	0.006*** (4.35)	0.005*** (3.28)	0.001 (0.78)
Wealth index	0.010*** (3.88)	0.007** (2.54)	0.007*** (2.61)	0.006** (2.15)	-0.002 (1.50)
Married (1=yes, 0 otherwise)	0.007 (0.68)	0.007 (0.63)	0.009 (0.83)	-0.019 (1.52)	-0.103*** (11.22)
Number of siblings	0.004** (1.99)	0.004* (1.80)	0.004* (1.80)	0.003 (1.26)	-0.001 (1.07)
Watch television (1=No, …, 3=yes)	-0.027*** (4.16)	-0.027*** (4.16)	-0.030*** (4.62)	-0.029*** (4.41)	-0.002 (0.53)
HH head's profession (1=Agriculture, 0 otherwise)	-	0.013 (1.06)	0.013 (1.02)	0.012 (0.97)	0.002 (0.21)
HH head's profession (1=Day labour, 0 otherwise)	-	-0.041*** (3.20)	-0.040*** (3.12)	-0.040*** (3.14)	-0.008 (0.93)
HH head's profession (1=Service, 0 otherwise)	-	0.046** (2.53)	0.036** (2.00)	0.033* (1.83)	0.058*** (4.47)
HH head's profession (1=Small business, 0 otherwise)	-	0.060*** (3.92)	0.064*** (4.17)	0.064*** (4.17)	0.002 (0.26)
HH head's profession (1=Household work, 0 otherwise)	-	-0.011 (0.68)	-0.012 (0.73)	-0.013 (0.78)	-0.010 (0.92)
Chittagong Division (1=Yes, 0 otherwise)	-	-	-0.075*** (6.54)	-0.075*** (6.58)	-0.012* (1.67)
Barisal Division (1=Yes, 0 otherwise)	-	-	-0.093*** (5.90)	-0.091*** (5.75)	-0.028*** (2.99)
Sylhet (1=Yes, 0 otherwise)	-	-	-0.056*** (3.52)	-0.055*** (3.48)	-0.010 (1.07)
Khulna (1=Yes, 0 otherwise)	-	-	-0.072*** (5.64)	-0.073*** (5.76)	-0.006 (0.68)
Rajshahi (1=Yes, 0 otherwise)	-	-	-0.065*** (6.01)	-0.065*** (6.06)	-0.007 (0.97)
Age of adolescent	-	-	-	0.007*** (4.63)	-
Observations	8036	8036	8036	8036	4108

(Only those who are out of school were considered)
Absolute value of z statistics in parentheses
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

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Paper 4

Growing up and Reproducing: Knowledge and Practices of Young People in Bangladesh

M. Showkat Gani and Syed Masud Ahmed

INTRODUCTION

Concept of adolescent or adolescence is shadowy in modern society and the definition varies from culture to culture. In various studies, the age range for Bangladeshi adolescents also varied markedly[1]. Adolescents are individuals who are between childhood and adulthood, in the process of reaching sexual maturity. World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescents as those aged between 10-19 years and youths as those aged between 15-24 years and both adolescents and youths together are considered as young people (WHO 2003). Almost one-third of the world's population is currently between the ages of 10-24 years. In Bangladesh, the young population[2] are also proportionate to world's young population, which is almost constant for last ten years (NIPORT, Mitra & Associates and Macro International 2005).

In 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) defined reproductive health (RH) as "state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the RH system and to its functions and process..." After the Cairo conference (ICPD 1994) and the Hague conference (ICPD+5 1999), adolescent RH has been recognized as one of the major health and development concerns in many developing countries. The GoB has in recognition of its importance included this as a priority issue in the recently concluded Health and Population Sector

[1] Age range: 10 -19 years in Nahar *et al.* (1999), 15-24 years in Barkat & Majid (2003), 10-19 years for SC/USA (2003), 13-19 years in Bhuiya *et al.*. (2004); 10-19 years in Hasan *et al.*. (2005), 13-19 years in Huq *et al.* (2005)

[2] In 2004, Bangladesh has a population of about 140 million

Programme 1998-2003 (GoB 1998). Besides, a number of national and international organizations have field activities related to RH issues. These are: Adolescent Development Program of BRAC, *Kishori Abhijan*[3] of Urban Family Health Partners (UFHP), Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in Asia Project of UNFPA, *Kaishar*[4] of Save the Children USA (SC/USA) etc.

Generally, the RH knowledge among Bangladeshi adolescents is very low and many adolescents are lacking information about changes associated with puberty, sexuality, contraception and sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS (Nahar *et al.* 1999; Barkat and Majid 2003; SC/USA 2003; Bhuiya *et al.* 2004). A major proportion of them think that normal physical functions/sexual behaviours like menstruation, nocturnal emission and masturbation are abnormal events in life. Studies revealed that during menstruation, 80% of adolescent girls use pieces of old rags (*nekra*) as pads and only a small proportion use sanitary napkin (Ali *et al.* 1996). In a recent study among 237 students from a private university at Dhaka found that the youngsters have a little or no access to sexual and reproductive health information (Yugi 2006).

In Bangladesh early marriage, especially among the females, is quite high, 68% of young women (aged 20-24 years) marry before their eighteenth birthday. The adolescent fertility rate is one of the highest in the world with 135 births per 1000 women younger than 20 years, which is five times higher than that of Sri Lanka (MOHFW 1999; NIPORT, Mitra & Associates and Macro International 2005). About 30% of Bangladeshi female adolescents already became mothers and another 6% are pregnant with first child. The young women are expected to suffer a greater burden of ill health than the rest of the population particularly during pregnancy and child birth. Around 49% women are receiving antenatal care from medically trained provider, but skilled attendance during delivery and post-natal care within 42 days of delivery are much lower in proportion (13.2 and 17.8 respectively) (NIPORT, Mitra & Associates and Macro International 2005).

Till date, most of the knowledge about adolescents in Bangladesh originated from small scale studies or large scale studies with limited focus (ACPR 2003). For informed designing of an adolescent programme, comprehensive data from nationally representative sample is needed. The adolescent survey carried out by BRAC attempts to fill in the knowledge gaps by collecting data from a nationally representative sample on different aspects of adolescent and youth lives including socio-demography and economy, education, health including reproductive

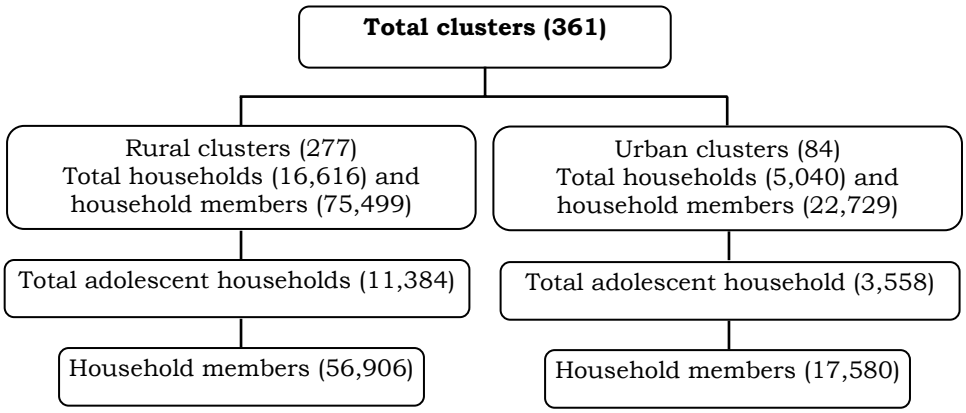
[3] *Kishori Abhijan* means "Adolescent Girls' Adventure"
[4] *Kaishar* means Knowledge and Attitude Improvement of Sexual Health for Adolescents' Responsibility (in Bangla means the period of Adolescents)

health and sexuality, life-style, social capital, time use and work, and gender and role model. This study presents data from the survey related to physical, mental and sexual changes as well as marriage, family planning and pregnancy care.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The 2005 Adolescents Survey in Bangladesh (ASB) conducted by the Research and Evaluation Division (RED) of BRAC used Integrated Multi-Purpose Master Sample (IMPS) (BBS 2004) designed to collect data with emphasis on gender and poverty status. The data were collected by employing a two-stage sampling procedure during April-August 2005. A total of 361 primary sampling units (PSU) or clusters were used, 277 in rural areas and 84 in urban areas. The households in each PSU were listed and numbered from 1 to 200, starting from the north-west corner of the villages/*mahalla*[5]. From this listing, 60 households (referred to as secondary sampling units) were selected in a systematic random sampling procedure and only one adolescent (referred to as third sampling units or ultimate sampling units) was taken by Kish Method[6] from each households. In this sampling, each division of Bangladesh was stratified into two sub-groups, namely, male and female.

Figure 1. Diagram for the sample distribution of this study



[5] Mahalla is a smallest identifiable area in the urban area

[6] Kish method is a useful method of selecting one person from a household when more than one eligible members of the target population are available. Available from**:** http://www.musc.edu/bmt737/spring2001/Kate/D&C/subthr.htm (accessed on 3 March, 2005).

MEASURING HOUSEHOLD WEALTH INDEX

The method used in calculating household wealth index in this study was developed by Filmer and Pritchett (2000) who have shown that the wealth index performs as well as a more traditional measure such as household-size-adjusted consumption expenditures. Following this approach, a set of household level variables was identified to include in the construction of wealth index[7]. These were radio, television, cot, mosquito net, cycle, motorcycle, quilt, chair/table, clock, almirah, showcase, sofa, fridge, fan, sewing machine, CD player, alna, mobile, water, sanitation and electricity. Each of the variables was recoded into categorical dicho tomous (yes-no) variable. A total of 21 dichotomous variables was created and standardized. The principal component analysis was run with all constructed variables with certain criteria. The component score coefficient matrix was multiplied by the standardized variables to produce factor scores which were termed as household wealth score. The wealth scores were classified into quintile for this research.

[7] Steps to produce the wealth index: A set of household level variables was identified to include in the construction of wealth index. These were water, latrine, electricity, radio, television, cot, mosquito-net, cycle, motor cycle, quilt, chair/table, clock, almirah, showcase, sofa, fridge, fan, sewing machine, CD player, alna, mobile etc. Each of the variables was recoded into categorical dichotomous (yes-no) variable. Thus, we created twenty one dichotomous variables. All variables were then standardized. The principal component analysis (factor analysis) was run with all constructed variables with the criteria as follows: only one factor to be produced, no rotation, principal components extraction, factor score to be calculated with regression method and print only component score coefficient matrix. The component score coefficient matrix was multiplied by the standardized (sampling weight) variables to produce factor scores which were termed as household wealth scores. The *household wealth* scores were classified into quintiles for this research.

DATA ANALYSIS

Two types of questionnaires were used for collecting data: the household questionnaire; and the individual adolescent questionnaire. In the household questionnaire, information on household possessions and amenities were collected. The individual questionnaire provided information on the characteristics of adolescents as well as information relating to specific reproductive health. At first, the knowledge, attitude and practice of RH issues were analysed through univariate distribution. Finally, bivariate relationships were examined between the RH indicators and the socioeconomic and regional (divisional and residential types) variables. Some statistical tests like chi-square and student's t tests were performed to measure the significance of differences among different categories.

RESULTS

Household and population characteristics

The household characteristics of all samples in the 2005 ASB is shown in Table 1 by urban-rural residence. The population coverage was 74,486 of which 76% were from rural and 24% from the urban areas. The mean household size was 5.0, with around 12 percent female headed households. The sex ratio was similar in the sampled households.

Table 1. Population and household level information of the study samples

Indicators	Residence		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Total population	17,580	56,906	74,486
Mean household size	4.9	5.0	5.0
Female headed households %	12.1	11.4	11.6
Sex ratio (m/f)	1.04	0.99	1.00
Total adolescents	3558	11384	14,942

Basic socio-demographic information of the population covered in this study is shown in Table 2 by age, marital status, literacy and occupation. Almost 60% of the population was below 25 years of age and less than 6% of the population was aged 60 years or older. Proportion of children under 10 years were greater in the urban areas. The urban population was also characterized by greater literacy level (63% vs 46%) and mean years of schooling (5 years vs. 4 years), and greater proportion of service holders (11% vs. 2%) and traders (11% vs. 6%) compared to the rural population. The rural population also married early (57%) compared to their urban counterpart (53%).

Basic socio-demographic information of the population covered in this study is shown in Table 2 by age, marital status, literacy and occupation. Almost 60% of the population was below 25 years of age and less than 6% of the population was aged 60 years or older. Proportion of children under 10 years were greater in the urban areas. The urban population was also characterized by greater literacy level (63% vs 46%) and mean years of schooling (5 years vs. 4 years), and greater proportion of service holders (11% vs. 2%) and traders (11% vs. 6%) compared to the rural population. The rural population also married early (57%) compared to their urban counterpart (53%).

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of the study households

Indicators	Residence		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Age in years %			
<5	9.4	11.2	10.8
5-9	9.5	11.6	11.1
10-24	39.4	36.6	37.3
25-59	36.7	34.3	34.9
60+	4.9	6.2	5.9
Mean age (SD)	24.9 (±17.4)	24.6 (±18.8)	24.7 (±18.5)
Marital status (10+ years) %			
Never married	42.3	37.4	38.6
Married	52.8	57.0	56.0
Widow, separated and divorced	4.9	5.6	5.5
No schooling (5+ years) %	25.3	36.1	33.5
Mean year of schooling (5+ years) (SD)	5.4 (±4.6)	3.6 (±3.6)	4.0 (±3.9)
Occupation %			
Agriculture-own and share cropper	1.0	9.8	7.7
Household work	27.2	32.6	31.3
Wage employed	7.5	8.0	7.9
Self employed	6.3	5.4	5.6
Service including high official	11.3	2.1	4.4
Businessman	10.8	5.9	7.1
Student	30.9	31.4	31.2
Unemployed	4.0	3.8	3.8
Others	1.0	1.0	1.0
Total	17,580	56,906	74,486

Note: Wage employed are all kinds of agricultural and nonagricultural wage related workers; Occupation was considered for those aged 6-59 years.

Table 3 presents the demographic and socioeconomic information of the adolescents and youths. Proportion of early adolescents (10-14 years) in rural areas (43%) was greater than their counterparts in the urban areas (37%); in contrast, the proportion of youths (20-24 years) in urban areas (32%) was greater than their counterparts in rural areas (26%). The urban adolescents and youth surpassed their counterparts in both mean years of schooling and level of education attained. Majority of them were either student (46%) or involved in domestic chores (29%). There were more adolescents and youth from urban areas engaged in services than those from the rural areas; the reverse was true for involvement in agriculture.

Physical changes

Perceived physical changes during adolescence by the study population is shown according to age and sex (Table 4). Plausibly, adolescents (10-19) were more knowledgeable about visible secondary physical characteristics such as increase in height and weight and appearance of beard and moustache (males more than females), but not such characteristics

as increase in breast size (females more than males). An age gradient in knowledge among adolescents was observed. On the other hand, youths (20-24 years) were more knowledgeable about such secondary sex characteristics as menarche/nocturnal emission, change in voice, appearance of pubic/arm pit hair, enlargement of sex organ or appearance of pimples. In all these, females trailed behind the males and the proportion never exceeded 35% at the maximum with one exception (menarche for females 72%). Around 30% of the early adolescents (10-14) of both sexes were unaware about these physical changes. The male female differences in all the characteristics was statistically significant. Interestingly, a small proportion of the young male adolescents and youths mentioned about the female's changes like increment of breast size (6.6%); on the other hand, more than a quarter of young female adolescents and youths mentioned (28%) about the male's changes like appearance of beard and moustache (Table 4).

Table 3. Socio-demographic characteristics of the study adolescents and youths

Indicators	Residence		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Age in years (%)			
10-14	36.7	43.2	41.7
15-19	31.3	31.1	31.2
20-24	32.0	25.7	27.2
Mean age	16.7	16.0	16.1
Marital status (%)			
Never married	74.1	71.7	72.2
Married	25.2	27.8	27.2
Divorced, separated or widowed	.6	.6	.6
Year of schooling (%)			
No schooling	10.3	11.7	11.4
Primary (I-V)	39.0	50.4	47.7
Secondary (VI-IX)	43.7	36.7	38.4
Higher secondary +	6.9	1.2	2.6
Mean years of schooling (SD)	5.9 (±3.5)	4.9 (±3.0)	5.1 (±3.2)
Occupation (%)			
Agriculture-own and share cropper	.4	4.4	3.5
Household work	26.1	30.6	29.5
Wage employed	7.0	5.9	6.1
Self employed	4.4	4.5	4.5
Service	7.6	.8	2.4
Businessman	4.9	3.1	3.6
Student	45.6	46.4	46.2
Unemployed	3.8	4.1	4.0
Others	.3	.2	.2
Total	3,558	11,384	14,942

Table 4. Perceived physical changes during adolescents by the study population (%)

Knowledge of physical changes %	Male				Female				Chi-Square test
	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	Male vs. Female
Increase height & weight	54.3	72.2	72.8	63.8	45.4	52.7	52.7	50.0	p=0.000
Start menstruation/ nocturnal emission	4.4	30.0	43.8	20.7	34.9	93.2	94.0	72.0	p=0.000
Appearance of beard and moustache	45.9	79.8	83.4	64.4	14.9	34.6	38.1	28.5	p=0.000
Change in voice	22.1	44.6	47.3	34.4	14.3	33.2	31.3	25.6	p=0.000
Increase of breast size	1.9	9.9	12.4	6.6	24.4	54.9	59.2	45.1	p=0.000
Appearance of pubic hair or hair on armpit	4.9	19.9	28.6	14.6	2.1	7.7	9.8	6.3	p=0.000
Appearance of pimple on the face	6.1	16.9	17.4	11.9	1.6	4.2	4.1	3.2	p=0.000
Enlarge of sex organ	1.2	6.3	7.5	4.1	.8	3.1	3.8	2.5	p=0.000
Other changes	.9	.9	.4	.8	.9	1.5	1.5	1.3	p=0.002
Do not know	29.4	.5	.2	14.2	30.8	.2	.1	11.4	p=0.000
Total	3166	2091	1386	6643	3058	2565	2676	8299	

Menstruation and nocturnal emission

Above 80% percent of the respondents reported that they had already started menstruation or experienced nocturnal emission; the median age at first menstruation or nocturnal emission being higher for males than female (14 years vs. 13 years) (Not shown in Table). Around 1/3rd of the study population had received prior advice on these issues, 1/4th faced problems while only 7% discussed these problems with a physician (Table 5). Interestingly, though more females than males received prior advice, they also had encountered more problems and contacted physician more frequently. Adolescents and youths residing in urban areas (38% vs 33%) and having some education (35% vs 28%) had more frequently received prior advice than the others. A SES gradient (proxied by wealth quintiles) in prior advice and physician contact was observed, disfavouring the poorest (Table 5).

Emotional changes

Around 67% of the study population were aware about emotional changes occurring during the period of adolescence, males significantly more than the females (p=0.000) (Table 6). The level of knowledge increased with age for both sexes. Around 17% of them reported to have experienced emotional problems due to these changes, especially at late

adolescence (15-19 years) and youth (20-24 years), more among resident of urban areas, females and those with some education (Fig. 2). Interestingly, this reported emotional problem increased progressively as the SES (proxy by wealth quintiles) improved.

Table 5. Experiences following menstruation/nocturnal emission by study population

Background Characteristic	Had prior advice on what to do %	Problems encountered %	Problems discussed with doctor %	Total
All	33.9	23.8	7.4	9830
Age in yr	*		***	
12-14	31.5	24.9	4.6	1403
15-19	33.5	23.4	7.4	4380
20-24	35.1	24.0	8.5	4047
Sex	***	***	***	
Male	20.5	9.3	2.8	3557
Female	41.4	32.1	10.1	6273
Years of schooling	***			
None	28.5	23.6	6.2	1225
Some	34.6	23.9	7.6	8605
Residence	***		**	
Urban	37.7	23.7	8.7	2507
Rural	32.6	23.9	7.0	7323
Wealth index	***		***	
Poorest	30.5	23.8	5.3	1388
2	31.2	23.9	6.9	1724
3	33.0	23.6	7.1	2177
4	35.7	24.1	7.6	2236
Least poor	36.9	23.7	9.2	2305

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 6. Knowledge on mental or emotional changes during adolescence

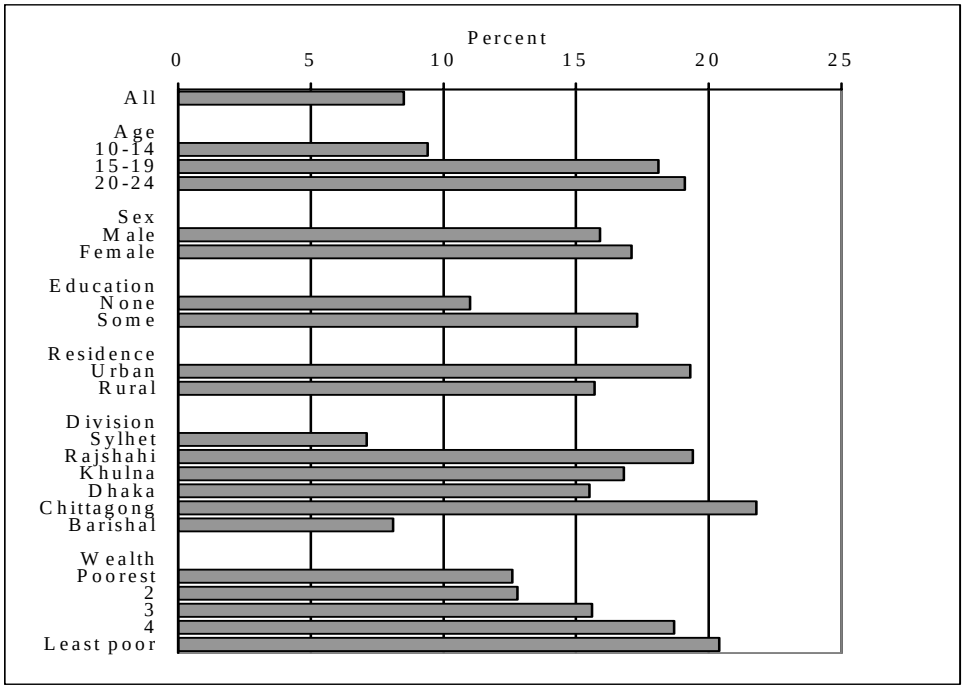
Background Characteristic	Mental or emotional changes %			Chi-square test
	All	Male	Female	Male vs. Female
All	61.5	54.6	67.1	p=0.000
Age in year				
10-14	30.9	25.3	36.7	p=0.000
15-19	81.7	78.4	84.4	p=0.000
20-24	85.2	85.5	84.4	p=0.728
Total	14942	6643	8299	

Marriage

Marriage in Bangladeshi society is defined as the onset of legal union between man and woman for leading conjugal life for establishing a family that has been solemnized in accordance with certain religious

norms. Marriage and marriage-related information of the study adolescents and youth are presented in Table 7 and Table 8.

Figure 2. Emotional problems encountered by the study population due to emotional changes during adolescence



The prevalence of marriage increased with age, especially in case of females (Table 7). In youth (20-24 years), around 69% of the females were married in contrast to only 30% among the males. Proportion of married individuals decreased with some education, residence in urban areas and poor SES (proxy: wealth quintiles). First marriage at 18 years was mostly reported for the females (70% against 3% for males) and some schooling, residence in urban areas and poor SES (proxy wealth quintiles) was associated with low prevalence. Rajshahi and Khulna divisions had the highest proportion and Sylhet the lowest proportion of marriage at 18 years (Table 8).

Family planning

Family planning methods related information was collected from respondents aged 12-24 years by asking to name the ways or methods by which a couple could delay or avoid pregnancy. If the respondents did not mention a particular method spontaneously, the interviewer described the methods and asked whether the respondents had heard

about these. In this way, the knowledge, current users, and the sources of family planning methods were assessed.

Results show that at least one modern family planning method was known to almost all respondents (95%), and at least one traditional method was known to 23% of them (Table 9). On average, a young person had heard of four family planning methods. In all methods except condom, the knowledge of female population was markedly higher than that of the male population (p<0.001).

Table 7. Marital status of the study population

Background Characteristic	Unmarried	Currently married	Separated/ Divorced/ Widow/Widower	Total
All %	72.2	27.2	.6	14942
Age in yr	***	***		
10-14	99.3	.6	.05	6224
15-19	73.0	26.3	.7	4656
20-24	29.9	68.8	1.3	4062
Sex	***	***		
Male	93.4	6.5	.1	6643
Female	55.3	43.7	1.0	8299
Years of schooling	***	***		
None	52.9	45.4	1.7	1700
Some	74.7	24.8	.4	13242
Residence	**	**		
Urban	74.1	25.2	.6	3558
Rural	71.7	27.8	.6	11384
Division	***	***		
Barishal	76.5	23.4	.1	1148
Chittagong	77.0	22.8	.2	2690
Dhaka	72.9	26.5	.7	4377
Khulna	68.6	30.4	1.0	1957
Rajshahi	67.8	31.4	.7	3891
Sylhet	76.7	22.9	.5	879
Wealth index	***	***		
Poorest	68.5	30.3	1.2	2415
2	68.1	31.1	.8	2820
3	69.8	29.7	.5	3196
4	73.9	25.7	.4	3248
Least poor	79.3	20.3	.3	3263

Note: **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 8. Age at first marriage below 18 years whose current age is 20+ years

Background Characteristics	Male		Female	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
All	3.0	1386	69.6	2676
Years of schooling	***		***	
None	7.4	203	76.4	551
Some	2.2	1183	67.8	2125
Residence	***		***	
Urban	1.8	441	60.7	698
Rural	3.5	945	72.7	1978
Division	--		***	
Barishal	4.5	67	65.1	172
Chittagong	2.2	226	60.5	441
Dhaka	3.1	417	67.6	785
Khulna	2.9	207	76.7	387
Rajshahi	3.6	385	78.4	736
Sylhet	0	84	50.3	155
Wealth index	***		***	
Poorest	4.9	143	75.8	463
2	6.7	223	77.9	557
3	4.3	303	74.8	564
4	.9	347	67.8	543
Least poor	.8	370	52.3	549

Note: **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 9. Knowledge of family planning methods (%)

Knowledge of FP methods †	All	Male	Female	Chi-square test Male vs. Female
Any method	94.8	92.2	96.8	p=0.000
Any modern method	94.8	92.2	96.8	p=0.000
Pill	92.4	87.4	96.1	p=0.000
IUD	29.6	11.5	43.1	p=0.000
Injectables	74.4	62.1	83.6	p=0.000
Condom	79.9	84.7	76.3	p=0.000
Female sterilization (Ligation)	56.4	41.1	67.7	p=0.000
Male sterilization (Vasectomy)	34.5	24.3	42.0	p=0.000
Emergency contraceptive pill	6.0	3.5	7.8	p=0.000
Norplant/Implant	12.1	2.3	19.4	p=0.000
Any traditional method	22.8	13.0	30.0	p=0.000
Periodic abstinence	20.6	11.2	27.7	p=0.000
Withdrawal	5.1	2.5	7.0	p=0.000
Other[1]	2.2	2.0	2.3	p=0.000
Mean number of methods known	4.1	3.3	4.7	p=0.000
Number of adolescents and youth	11,986	5,119	6,867	

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001; [1]slemma, medicine prepared from trees, *kabiraji*, homeopath etc; †All respondents of adolescents whose age 12 or above were eligible for the reproductive health issues (n=11,986)

Current use of contraception

Current use of contraception of this study is defined as the proportion of study population (12-24 years) who reported using any family planning methods currently. Overall, 18 percent of them were using at least one method, with 17 percent a modern method and only one percent a traditional method (Table 10). Pill was the most frequently used method among the respondents (12%). No schooling and residence in urban areas was associated with use of any modern method while some schooling and residence in rural areas was associated with use of any traditional method. Poor SES was associated with greater use of both modern and traditional methods compared to the least poor. Respondents from the middle class households (second and third quintiles) were the main user of modern methods as well as traditional methods.

Table 10. Current user of family planning methods by socioeconomic status and divisions

Background characteristic	Modern method (MM)				Any MM	Tradi-tional method	Any method	Total
	Pill	Injection	Condom	Others[1]				
All [mf]	11.9	3.1	2.4	.2	17.4	1.1	18.4	11,986
Current age in yr	***	***	***	--	***	--	***	
12-14	.3	.03	.1	0	.4	0	.4	3268
15-19	7.7	1.8	1.7	.1	11.1	1.0	12.0	4656
20-24	26.0	7.1	5.2	.6	38.3	2.3	40.3	4062
Years of schooling	***	***		**	***		***	
None	18.1	6.5	3.0	.6	27.8	.9	28.6	1379
Some	11.1	2.6	2.4	.2	16.0	1.2	17.1	10607
Residence	*		***			**		
Urban	10.6	3.2	3.6	.1	17.2	.7	17.8	2970
Rural	12.3	3.1	2.0	.3	17.5	1.3	18.6	9016
Division	***	***	*	***	***		***	
Barishal	12.8	4.5	1.6	.5	19.1	3.0	21.8	862
Chittagong	7.6	2.0	2.0	.05	11.1	.8	11.9	2148
Dhaka	10.7	2.6	2.7	.1	15.8	.8	16.6	3498
Khulna	13.4	5.2	2.2	.5	21.1	1.6	22.3	1586
Rajshahi	16.7	3.5	2.9	.2	23.1	1.2	24.2	3213
Sylhet	4.3	.9	1.5	.9	7.5	.4	8.0	679
Wealth index	***	***	***	*	***	**	***	
Poorest	10.9	4.4	1.2	.5	16.9	1.0	17.7	1769
2	13.9	4.5	1.8	.3	20.4	1.7	22.0	2137
3	14.6	3.0	2.5	.3	20.2	1.5	21.5	2608
4	12.0	2.7	2.3	.1	16.7	1.0	17.7	2733
Least Poor	8.2	1.7	3.8	.1	13.3	.7	13.9	2739

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001; [1]IUD, EC pill, Norplant, Vasectomy, Ligation etc.; Traditional

Figure 3 shows the distribution of sources from where the users received the modern contraceptives. Nearly two-third of modern contraceptive users bought these from the drug retail outlets. Around one in every five obtained these from public sector health facilities such as Union Health

and family Welfare centres (UHFWC), 13% from field worker and 8% from hospitals. Additionally, 1.3% used these from non-medical sources such as friends, relatives and Traditional providers. Moreover, compared to the male youths, significantly higher proportion of female youths collected their contraceptive items from the public sector e.g. UHFWC, family welfare workers and hospital (p<.001) (Not shown in Table).

Figure 3. Sources of contraceptive methods among the modern method users (%)

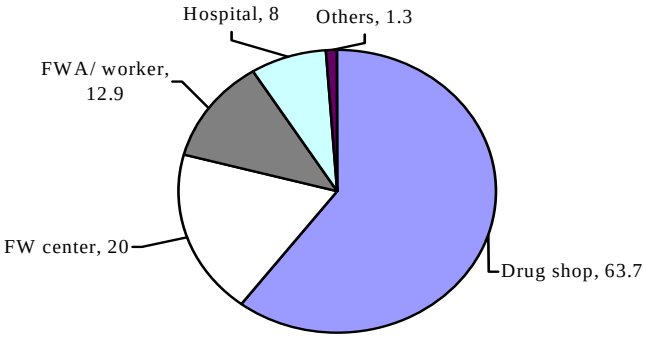


Table 11. Age at first pregnancy below 19 years among ever married young female

Background characteristic	Age at first pregnancy %		Never pregnant %	Total	Median age at 1st pregnancy
	≤19	19+			
All †	65.1	17.3	17.6	3710	17.0
Years of schooling	***		***		
None	74.4	15.1	10.5	669	17.0
Some	63.0	17.8	19.2	3041	18.0
Residence	***	***	*		
Urban	58.6	21.1	20.4	840	18.0
Rural	67.0	16.2	16.8	2870	17.0
Division	***	***	*		
Barishal	58.5	17.9	23.6	246	18.0
Chittagong	64.3	20.1	15.6	557	18.0
Dhaka	61.8	18.9	19.3	1081	18.0
Khulna	69.1	15.2	15.7	547	17.0
Rajshahi	69.4	13.7	17.0	1090	17.0
Sylhet	58.2	27.0	14.8	189	18.0
Wealth index	***	***	***		
Poorest	71.4	15.6	13.0	667	17.0
2	68.5	15.2	16.2	788	17.0
3	68.3	14.6	17.1	852	17.0
4	63.6	18.0	18.4	773	17.0
Least Poor	51.4	24.8	23.8	630	18.0
Total	2414	643	653	3710	

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001; † Ever married all female adolescents (n=3710)

Age at first pregnancy

Like early marriage, early pregnancy is also a common event for the female married youths in Bangladesh (Table 11). Data show that nearly two-third of the ever married young females had already begun childbearing at 19 years or below with a median age of 17 years; of them, only 18 % were yet to start motherhood. Early pregnancy (at age ≤19 years) was associated with no schooling, residence in rural areas, poor SES (proxy: wealth quintiles), and who hailed from. Khulna and Rajshahi divisions. Those who still were not pregnant had some schooling, resided in urban areas, least poor and hailed from Barisal division.

Antenatal care

The perception of female adolescents and youths (12-24 years) about the necessity of antenatal care was universal irrespective of sex (Not shown). The government hospitals, health centers and clinics were identified as the most reliable sources of antenatal checkup by the study population (91.3%), and these sources were more frequently mentioned by the males. The respondents also mentioned other non-government providers of ante-natal checkup such as non-government satellite clinic or hospitals (25%), private doctor (14%), other health care providers (7%) etc.

Tetanus toxoid (TT) vaccinations

Number of TT injections received during the first pregnancy is presented in Table 12. These results may underestimate the actual extent of protection from tetanus, since the respondents were asked about the vaccinations received only during the first pregnancy and excluded previous TT vaccinations. Overall, 78% of the respondents received two or more TT injections during her first pregnancy, while another 12% received one injection. No TT vaccination was associated with no schooling, poor SES (proxy: wealth quintiles) and living in the Sylhet division.

Table 13 illustrates the knowledge of respondents on pregnancy complications for which a doctor's help is required. Awareness of life-threatening conditions during pregnancy was low among the study population. One-third of the young females were aware about one of the pre-eclampsia symptoms such as giddiness or blurred vision while 1/5th was aware about other important symptom, headache. Knowledge on other life-threatening conditions (e.g., excessive bleeding) was found to be poor. Awareness about common complications of pregnancy such as excessive nausea and vomiting was better, especially among females (82% vs 56% among males).

Table 12. Tetanus toxoid (TT) vaccine during first pregnancy

Background characteristic	Number of TT injections %			Total
	None	One	Two +	
All†	10.1	12.4	77.5	3058
Current age in yr	***			
12-14	50.0	0	50.0	4
15-19	17.0	15.2	67.7	787
20-24	10.3	8.7	80.9	2267
Years of schooling	***			
None	16.8	8.5	74.7	600
Some	10.9	10.9	78.2	2458
Residence				
Urban	13.3	10.0	76.7	669
Rural	11.8	10.5	77.7	2389
Division	**			
Barishal	11.7	10.1	78.2	188
Chittagong	13.8	10.2	76.0	471
Dhaka	11.0	9.7	79.2	872
Khulna	11.5	10.0	78.5	461
Rajshahi	10.6	11.2	78.2	905
Sylhet	23.6	11.8	64.6	161
Wealth index	**			
Poorest	15.0	10.7	74.3	580
2	13.9	9.2	76.8	660
3	12.4	9.3	78.2	707
4	8.1	12.7	79.2	631
Least Poor	10.8	10.2	79.0	480

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001; †Ever pregnant all female adolescents including the current pregnancy (n=3,058).

Table 13. Knowledge on pregnancy complications for which a doctor's help is required

Knowledge of diseases/complications during pregnancy*	All	Male	Female	Chi-square test Male vs. female
Life threatening complications/diseases				
Giddiness/ Blurring of vision	32.5	23.6	38.3	p=0.000
Headache	21.3	21.8	21.0	p=0.352
Swelling of legs and hands	19.3	15.2	21.9	p=0.000
Fever	8.2	12.3	5.5	p=0.000
Convulsion	7.5	6.0	8.6	p=0.000
Respiratory distress	3.3	2.6	3.7	p=0.002
Excessive bleeding	1.7	1.7	1.8	p=0.772
Other complications/diseases				
Excessive vomiting/ Nausea	72.5	56.5	82.4	p=0.000
Pale eye/ weakness	21.7	19.5	23.2	p=0.000
Lower abdominal/back ache pain	17.2	18.5	16.3	p=0.007
Burning sensation in hands and feet	7.6	7.1	7.8	p=0.222
Number of adolescents and youth	8759	3477	5282	

Note: Multiple responses accepted; * All married respondents aged 12 and above were analysed; for unmarried respondents, those aged 15 and above were also included (n=8,759)

Table 14. Place of delivery (first child) for pregnant female adolescents and youth

Background characteristic	Place of delivery (1st child)				Total
	Home	Public health facility[1]	Private health facility[2]	Other[3]	
All[†]	84.9	9.6	3.5	1.9	2851
Age at 1st pregnancy (years)	***	***	***		
≤18	86.9	8.0	3.0	1.7	2300
18+	76.6	14.9	6.0	2.5	551
Years of schooling	***	***	***		
None	92.7	4.9	1.0	1.4	576
Some	82.9	10.9	4.4	2.0	2275
Residence	***	***	***	P=.083	
Urban	74.1	16.4	6.8	2.7	622
Rural	87.9	7.8	2.6	1.7	2229
Wealth index	***	***	***		
Poorest	93.4	4.9	.4	1.3	547
2	90.2	5.3	1.9	2.6	621
3	88.0	8.1	2.4	1.5	666
4	82.3	10.9	5.0	1.7	576
Least Poor	65.8	22.2	9.5	2.5	441

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001; [1]Public health facility- MCWC/UHC/Hospital; [2]Private health facility- NGO Clinic/Private clinic/Nurses' residence; [3]Abortion accidental/willingly; [†]Ever pregnant female adolescents, excluding the current pregnancy (n=2851)

Post-natal care

The status of post-natal care of the above mothers is shown in Table 16. Compared to ante-natal care, lesser proportion of the respondents (18%) reported receiving post-natal care during the first child birth, both for mother and the child. Seeking post-natal care was associated with age beyond 18 years, some education, residence in the urban areas and better SES.

Table 15. Skilled attendance at birth of the study population at birth of first child %

Background characteristic	Assistance during delivery (for 1st child)				Total
	Health professional[1]	Other professional[2]	Relatives and friends	Other[3]	
All[†]	15.4	73.2	9.8	1.9	2851
Age at 1st pregnancy	***	***	*		
<19	13.3	74.8	10.3	1.7	2300
19+	24.0	66.8	7.3	2.5	551
Years of schooling	***	*	***		
None	8.0	77.1	13.7	1.4	576
Some	17.2	72.3	8.7	2.0	2275
Residence	***	***	***	P=.08	
Urban	28.3	66.2	2.9	2.7	622
Rural	11.8	75.2	11.7	1.7	2229
Division	***	***	--	*	
Barishal	6.3	82.8	8.6	2.3	174
Chittagong	15.5	77.9	6.2	.9	438
Dhaka	17.3	74.5	6.9	1.6	813
Khulna	19.4	72.1	5.1	3.5	433
Rajshahi	13.4	66.4	18.5	1.9	853
Sylhet	14.3	85.0	0	1.4	140
Wealth index	***	***	***		
Poorest	5.7	79.7	13.3	1.3	547
2	7.7	77.8	12.2	2.6	621
3	12.6	75.8	10.5	1.5	666
4	18.8	72.4	7.3	1.7	576
Least Poor	37.9	56.0	3.9	2.5	441

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001; [1]doctor, midwife, paramedics; [2] TTBA, TBA, Village doctor, *Kabiraj* etc; [3]Abortion accidental/Willingly; [†]Ever pregnant female adolescents, excluding the current pregnancy (n=2,851)

Table 16. Percentage of mothers and newborn babies who received post-natal care

Background characteristics	Received check up after delivery		Total
	Mothers	Newborn	
All†	18.0	17.6	2851
Age at 1st pregnancy (years)	***	***	
≤18	15.6	15.2	2300
18+	27.9	27.8	551
Years of schooling	***	***	
None	8.7	9.0	576
Some	20.4	19.8	2275
Residence	***	***	
Urban	26.8	25.2	622
Rural	15.5	15.5	2229
Wealth index	***	***	
Poorest	9.0	10.1	547
2	11.6	10.8	621
3	14.7	13.2	666
4	23.1	22.0	576
Least Poor	36.5	37.4	441

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001; †Ever pregnant female adolescents, excluding the current pregnancy (n=2851)

DISCUSSION

The survey on adolescents and youths (10-24 years) was done to get nationally representative information on different issues of interest and as such is unique in Bangladesh. The areas covered included socio-economic and demographic characteristics, health, education, livelihood, life-styles etc. This report analysed data on the perception of the adolescents and youths regarding physical, emotional and sexual changes occurring during the period of adolescence as well as issues related to reproduction such as marriage, pregnancy and family planning. The study population was found to be poorly informed about the above changes during adolescence as well as poorly prepared for the task of reproducing in terms of knowledge and practice. An unmet need of information on reproductive health exists as the family, schools or existing health systems is currently not addressing this need of the adolescents and the youths.

The proportion of adolescents and youths (age 10-24) in this survey (37%) was found to be slightly higher than a recently conducted national survey (32.5%) (NIPORT, Mitra & Associates and ORC Macro 2005). This may be because in the latter survey, men aged 15-54 years (women of 10-49 years) were included only, which may have reduced the total proportion of the 10-24 years age group. The adolescents' and the

youths' knowledge on visible physical changes during adolescence (e.g., increase in height and weight, appearance of beard and moustache, changing in voice, enlargement of breasts) was found to be better than what was found in earlier studies (Nahar *et al.* 1999; SC/USA 2003). However, knowledge on secondary sexual characteristics (such as menstruation or nocturnal emission, appearance of pubic hair/arm pit hair, enlargement of sex organs) was very poor among both sexes, consistent with literature (Jejeebhoy Quoted in Barkat & Majid 2003, Nahar *et al.* 1999). Findings also show that adolescents and youths from poor SES, without any schooling and living in rural areas are especially disadvantaged in this respect and warrants our attention.

Currently married population (10-24 years) among the study adolescents and youths in this study showed a downward trend (27%) compared to the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (36%) (NIPORT, Mitra and Associates & ORC Macro 2005). However, the proportion of first marriage below legal minimum age for women (18 years) has shown an upward trend (70%) with implications for population growth in the country. This upward trend is also noted in the BDHS Survey (NIPORT, Mitra & Associates and ORC Macro 2005). As a consequence, early pregnancy was also found to be higher (65% vs 33%). Though the proportion of the respondents (age 12-24 years) who started childbearing (at age 18 or less) was almost double in the 2005 adolescents survey compared to the proportion of women age 15-19 who had begun their childbearing time published in a report of the 2001 BMHSMS (NIPORT, ORC Macro, JHU and ICDDR,B 2003), the median age was found to be almost the same in both the surveys. Thus, early marriage continues to be a significant deterrent of fertility decline in Bangladesh and requires concerted efforts for its reduction. These are likely to be more effective if the campaign/programmes are targeted to the group of adolescents who are illiterate, live in rural settings, and at the bottom of the wealth quintiles. Also, priority should be given to geographic targeting as well because this tendency is more prevalent in the Rajshahi and Khulna Divisions.

The adolescent and youth population (15-24 years) were found to use any modern method and any method of contraception in much lesser proportion than the BDHS (NIPORT, Mitra and Associates & ORC Macro 2005). Also, the major source of contraceptive methods (64%) was found to be private drug retail outlets in contrast to the public sector (57%) reported in the BDHS.

Pregnancy related knowledge (e.g., fertile period in the menstrual cycle) among adolescents was found to be drastically lower in this survey. Only a small proportion (7%) of the female respondents (12-24 years) could identify correctly the fertility period in the menstrual cycle and corroborated the findings from a recent study (Huq *et al.* 2005). However,

it is much lower than what was observed earlier (Rob *et al.* 2001). This decrease in knowledge has serious implications for fertility regulation, especially with respect to the traditional methods.

On the other hand, this survey found the proportion of young females not receiving two or more TT injections at first pregnancy to be around 10% which is an improvement over what was found in another national survey (15%) (NIPORT, Mitra and Associates & ORC Macro 2005). However, the proportion seeking post-natal care remained disappointingly low, as found in the other survey. There is a marginal improvement in births occurring in the health facility (13%), compared to 9% in the earlier survey which has remained the constant for the last eight years (NIPORT, Mitra and Associates & ORC Macro 2005).

CONCLUSION

This nationally representative survey of the adolescents and youths found some gaps and caveats in their knowledge and practice with respect to life-cycle changes and reproductive role, and identified specific areas where attention needs to be given to improve the situation. Interventions should be informed by this knowledge and designed according to their felt (and un-felt) needs.

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ACRONYMS

ANC	Antenatal Care
ASB	Adolescents Survey in Bangladesh
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BDHS	Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey
BMMS	Bangladesh Maternal Health Services and Maternal Mortality Survey
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ICDDR,B	Centre for Health and Population Research
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IMPS	Integrated Multi-Purpose Master Sample
IUD	Intrauterine Device
MM	Modern Method
MOHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
PNC	Postnatal Care
PSU	Primary Sampling Units
RED	Research and Evaluation Division
RH	Reproductive Health
SC/USA	Save the Children, United States of America
TT	Tetanus Toxoid
UFHP	Urban Family Health Partners
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization

Paper 5

Morbidity, Health-seeking Behaviour and Life-style Characteristics of the Adolescents

Syed Masud Ahmed

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the period of life when transition from childhood to adulthood occurs and covers the age range of 10 to 24 years (WHO 1986). Instead of one homogeneous stage, it is divided into three distinct stages: early adolescence (10-14 years), late adolescence (15-19 years) and youth (20-24 years). The period is characterized by biological (from onset of puberty to sexual and reproductive maturity), psychological (change in cognitive and emotional patterns) and economic transition (from one of total dependence to economic independence) which prepares a child to be an active member of the society. Factors like introduction and extension of compulsory education, laws prohibiting the employment of juveniles, increasing opportunities for paid employment (especially for women) etc. have contributed to this 'modern' phase of life especially in the traditional societies of the low-income countries worldwide (WHO 1986, Amin *et al.* 2002).

Adolescents are generally a healthy population group with low morbidity and mortality figures (CRC 2003). However, curiosity, peer pressure, rapid transition to new roles and responsibilities, and lesser parental and societal control increase the risk of adopting risky health behaviour by them. The impact of poverty and political and social conflict on families and communities also erode traditional safety nets and increase their vulnerability in contemporary world. The 'storm-and-stress' view of adolescence by the psychoanalysts (Freud 1971, cited in Östgård-Ybrandt 2004) and its variants (Annet 1999) suggests that adolescence is a period of life that is difficult-both for the adolescents and those around them as exploration of self and identity seeking occur in this period. As such, protection of health and well-being, and promotion of healthy life-

styles for the adolescents are emphasized by the World Health Organization (WHO 1999).

Currently, 31% of the population of Bangladesh is adolescents (10-24 years) (BBS 2003). This age group will contribute substantially to the population size in future. According to one estimate, the 15-24 age group will increase by 21% to reach 35 million by 2020 (Barkat and Majid 2003). This stage of life has only recently emerged as a distinct stage of life with health, education and livelihood implications. The Government of Bangladesh has recently given increased importance to their health by prioritising it in the national programmes (GoB 1998). There is lack of information on overall health and lifestyles of adolescents on a national scale. Till date, a number of small scale studies have been done on adolescents to explore their health and livelihood issues. These studies found adolescents to be poorly informed with regard to their health and well-being, body and sexuality (Barkat and Majid 2003). Very little is known about their health needs, including reproductive health needs (Nahar *et al.* 1999). Opportunities for paid employment in garments sector created a period of adolescence for the young girls with implications for their long-term reproductive health (Amin *et al.* 1997). A pilot project to empower adolescent girls documented substantive improvements in specific health-related knowledge following health education and life-skills training (Amin *et al.* 2002). In a Voices of the Youth study (embracing 10-24 years), participants opined that "escaping or avoiding poverty is the best way to ensure a healthy lifestyle" (Ali *et al.* 2006).

Data on national level is required to design an informed intervention for the health, education and livelihood aspects of the adolescents. To fill in this information gap, a nationally representative population-based survey on different aspects of the lives of the adolescents was done by the Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC in 2005. This paper reports findings on morbidity prevalence, health-seeking behaviour and life-styles of the adolescent from this survey.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study sites, study population and sampling

The data for the adolescent (10-24 years) survey were collected using a two-stage sampling procedure during April-August 2005. A total of 361 primary sampling units (PSUs) or clusters were surveyed, 277 in rural areas (villages), and 84 in urban areas (*mahalla*[1]). The households in each PSU were listed and numbered from 1 to 200 and the survey started from the north-west corner of the villages/*mahalla*s in each PSU. From this listing, 60 households (referred to as secondary sampling units) were selected in a systematic random sampling procedure and only one adolescent (referred to as third sampling units or ultimate sampling units) was taken by Kish Method[2] within each households.

Data collection

Pre-tested structured questionnaires were used in face-to-face interviews by trained interviewers organized into field survey teams, after obtaining informed consent. The interviewers received six days training which included didactic lectures followed by practice sessions at different households outside the sample villages. These were backed by long de-briefings at the end of the day. The day-to-day field activities of the teams were fine-tuned by a field supervisor. The whole survey activity was supervised and managed by the study coordinator who made frequent field visits for spot checking the quality of interviews and providing assistance and guidance when needed. Whenever necessary, re-interview was done by the supervisors for securing reliable and valid data. Households were visited on three repeated occasions at weekly intervals, if the first attempt was not successful due to absence of the respondents. When these repeated attempts failed, the interview was called off.

Wealth index was constructed following the method developed by Filmer and Pritchett (2000). The assets included for developing the index were: table, bed-cot, quilt, watch, radio, television, bi-cycle and electricity. Each of the variables was recoded into categorical dichotomous (yes, no)

[1] mahalla is a smallest identifiable area in the urban area

[2] Kish Method is a useful method of selecting one person from a household when more than one eligible members of the target population are available from: http://www.musc.edu/bmt737/spring2001/Kate/D&C/subthr.htm (accessed on 3 March, 2005).

variable. Eight dichotomous variables were created and standardized. The principal component analysis was run with all constructed variables with certain criteria. The component score coefficient matrix was multiplied by the standardized variables to produce factor scores which were termed as household wealth score. The wealth scores were further classified into quintiles.

Self-rated poverty status of the household was determined by eliciting respondent's perception about the state of household's annual consumption expenditure in relation to income in the past year, which is documented as a valid indicator of household stratification in rural Bangladesh (Sen, 2001). Households were thus categorized as being in 'chronic deficit' (when running in deficit always) or in a 'non-deficit' state.

Any acute illness episode occurring among study adolescents during the preceding two weeks was elicited and information gathered on whether treatment was sought. When more than one episode of illness was reported, data were collected with reference to the major illness, i.e. that one which was longest in duration. In cases where healthcare providers were consulted additional information was obtained on the type of practitioner, and associated costs including service fees, medicine and transportation. The treatments sought were grouped into five categories (Ahmed 2005):

1) Self-care (including self-treatment): extending from no medication other than rest and nursing to the use of common home-remedies (e.g., oral saline), over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, or herbal preparations without consultation with any healthcare provider.
2) Drug store salesmen (unqualified allopath): when consultation was made with drug store salesmen for diagnosis and treatment (excluding purchase of OTC drugs without consultation).
3) Traditional: when treatment was sought from herbalists (*Kabiraj*) and faith healers; also included are homeopathic practitioners, although negligible in proportion.
4) Para-professionals: comprised providers who have had some kind of institutional training on 'modern' i.e., allopathic medicine: a) village doctors (*Palli Chikitsok*) with variable training in diagnosing and treating common ailments, mostly from private institutions of questionable quality; b) medical assistants who complete a three-year medical assistant training programme from a public institution; and c) various government and non-government community health workers who have had variable periods of basic preventive and curative health care training.
5) Professional allopath: registered medical graduates, the MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) doctors.

RESULTS

The morbidity prevalence (with two weeks recall) among the study adolescents was found to be around 24% (Table 1). No variance in prevalence by age groups, sex (either adolescent or household head) and wealth quintiles was observed. However, variation was seen by division with Khulna and Rajshahi having the lowest prevalence (around 21%) and Sylhet the highest (31%).

Table 1. Morbidity prevalence (two weeks days recall) %

	Any illness during past 15 days %	N
All	24.5	14942
Age in years		
10-14	25.3	6224
15-19	24.3	4656
20-24	23.5	4062
Sex		
Male	25.4	6643
Female	23.8	8299
Household headship		
Male	23.8	13209
Female	30.1	1733
Formal schooling of household head (years)		
None	23.4	6224
1-5	25.6	4096
>5	25.1	4622
Division		
Barisal	26.7	1148
Chittagong	29.7	2690
Dhaka	23.6	4377
Khulna	21.0	1957
Rajshahi	21.6	3891
Sylhet	31.4	879
Wealth index		
Poorest	24.9	2415
2	24.3	2820
3	23.3	3196
4	25.1	3248
Least poor	24.9	3263

Table 2 presents health-seeking behaviour of the adolescents who suffered an illness episode during the reference period. Overall, majority of the sick adolescents either resorted to self-care (32%) or sought care from salesmen at drug retail outlets (35%). Professional allopaths (MBBS doctors) were consulted in only 15% of illness episodes. With the increase in age, frequency of treatment-seeking from professional allopaths increased significantly ($p<0.001$). Women were found to practice self-care more than men ($p<0.001$), and sought treatment from drug store salesmen much less frequently than men ($p<0.001$). Some schooling was associated with lesser use of drug store salesmen and greater use of professional allopaths compared to those having no schooling, though the differences were not significant. SES (as measured by wealth quintiles) also had an influence on health-seeking behaviour, especially in case of use of allopathic medicine of any type. Adolescents from the poorest households were found to use drug store salesmen more frequently than the least poor ($p<0.05$), while the former used professional allopaths less frequently than the latter ($p<0.001$).

Table 2. Health-seeking behaviour of the study population (15 days recall) %

	Health-seeking behaviour					
	Self-care	Traditional healers	Drugstore salesmen	Para-professionals	Professional allopaths	N
All	31.6	5.2	35.4	12.8	15.5	3664
Age in years						
10-14	31.3	5.6	36.9	13.9	13.1	1576
15-19	32.0	5.8	34.5	12.0	16.2	1133
20-24	31.7	3.7	34.6	12.0	18.6	955
x^2 significance	ns	ns	ns	ns	p<0.001	
Sex						
Male	27.2	5.2	40.5	12.9	14.8	1685
Female	35.4	5.2	31.3	12.8	16.1	1979
x^2 significance	p<0.001	ns	p<0.001	ns	ns	
Years of schooling						
None	31.9	4.2	39.7	12.3	12.7	408
Some	31.6	5.3	35.0	12.9	15.9	3256
Wealth index						
Poorest	32.6	5.5	39.9	11.1	11.6	602
2	34.7	5.7	35.6	15.2	9.2	686
3	30.6	6.2	36.9	12.6	14.6	746
4	30.0	3.9	34.9	14.3	17.5	816
Least poor	31.0	4.8	31.7	10.8	22.6	814
x^2 significance	ns	ns	p<0.05	p<0.05	p<0.001	

ns: not significant at 5% level

Interesting differences in health-seeking behaviour were seen in the different divisions (Table 3). Barisal division was characterised by greater use of self-care (40%), and lesser use of professional allopaths (8%) compared to other divisions. On the other hand, para-professionals were much less frequently used in the Barisal (9%), Khulna (10%) and Sylhet

(8%) divisions than the rest. Professional allopaths were most frequently used in the Chittagong (21%) and Sylhet (19%) divisions.

Table 4 presents data on expenditures due to illness among adolescents during the reference period. As can be seen, in most of the instances, only a very modest amount was spent, more so for the 20-24 years age group. However, the range of expenditure was quite large (from none to several thousand Takas, not shown in table).

Table 3. Health-seeking behaviour of the study population (15 days recall) by six administrative divisions (%)

	Health-seeking behaviour					N
	Self-care	Traditional healers	Drugstore salesmen	Para-profe-ssionals	Profe-ssional allopaths	
All	31.6	5.2	35.4	12.8	15.5	3664
Division						
Barisal	39.9	3.9	39.9	8.8	8.2	306
Chittagong	32.9	4.5	27.2	15.8	20.7	799
Dhaka	29.1	4.0	39.9	12.7	14.8	1033
Khulna	34.6	5.6	35.9	9.8	15.1	410
Rajshahi	30.2	7.3	35.0	14.8	13.2	840
Sylhet	27.9	5.8	39.9	8.0	19.2	276
x^2 significance	p<0.01	p<0.05	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	

Table 4. Expenditure incurred for illness in last 15 days: median (min, max)

	Expenditure incurred for illness in last 15 days (median (mode))	N
All	50 (20)	2881*
Age in years		
10-14	50 (20)	1240
15-19	50 (20)	886
20-24	70 (10)	755
Sex		
Male	50 (20)	1388
Female	50 (20)	1493
Wealth index		
Poorest	50 (20)	462
Least poor	70 (20)	663

*Out of the 3,664 study population, 783 had not taken any treatment, thus 2,881 cases were considered for expenditure purpose.

Next, we explored adolescent's knowledge on tobacco/tobacco products and perception about its harmful effects (Table 5). Majority of the adolescents were aware about the addicting properties of tobacco/ tobacco products, but only a tiny minority could name the active product in it i.e., nicotine. Males were more knowledgeable than the females

(p<0.001), with knowledge increasing with age in case of the formers. Both males and females perceived cough and lung cancer as the most common harmful effects of tobacco/tobacco products, males proportionately greater than the females (p<0.001). Similar trends in knowledge (about active ingredients) and perception (about harmful effects) were observed for alcohol as well (Table 6).

Adolescents could name common addicting substances such as *ganja,* phensidyl and heroine, males more so than the females (p<0.001) (Table 7). Friends, relatives and television were the three most frequently cited source of knowledge by the adolescents regarding addicting substances. For males, friends were the most common source (p<0.001) whereas for females, it was the relatives (p<0.001). Among the mass medias, television as a source of information far surpassed the radio or the newspaper. The former was cited in around 46% of cases. Perception regarding different harmful effects of addicting substances varied between males and females (p<0.001) (Table 8). An age gradient in level of knowledge (increasing with age) was seen among the males, but not females.

Table 5. Adolescent's knowledge on tobacco/tobacco products and its harmful effects by age and sex (multiple responses) (%)

	Age groups								x^2 significance
	Male				Female				M vs F
	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	
Knows that the followings may be addicting									
Tobacco (Cigarette etc.)	93.3	96.0	96.0	94.7	92.5	95.1	95.0	94.1	ns
Tobacco products (preparation from tobacco leafs)	91.2	95.5	96.3	93.6	90.1	95.0	94.8	93.1	ns
Knows about nicotine as active ingredient	3.0	16.3	25.0	11.8	1.6	6.4	4.9	4.2	p<0.001
Perceived harmful effects of tobacco									
Chronic cough	52.1	67.1	71.2	60.8	43.7	59.5	65.2	55.5	p<0.001
Low vital capacity	2.7	7.5	10.2	5.8	3.6	7.3	8.4	6.3	ns
Raised blood pressure	1.9	4.4	4.8	3.3	1.2	2.3	2.2	1.9	p<0.001
Lung cancer	66.7	82.0	82.3	74.8	55.8	69.8	67.4	63.9	p<0.001
Others	11.4	14.1	15.3	13.1	15.2	18.9	19.2	17.6	p<0.001
Don't know	11.1	1.8	0.8	6.0	15.4	5.4	4.6	8.8	p<0.001
N	3166	2091	1386	6643	3058	2565	2676	8299	

*except low vital capacity for which the difference between male and female is insignificant at 5% level

Table 6. Adolescent's knowledge on alcohol and its harmful effects by age and sex (multiple responses) (%)

	Age groups								x^2 signifi-cance
	Male				Female				
	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	M vs F
Knows that alcohol may be addicting	95.9	99.1	99.6	97.7	96.7	99.0	99.6	98.4	p<0.01
Knows about ethyl alcohol as active ingredient	0.6	6.7	13.6	5.2	0.8	3.3	2.5	2.1	p<0.001
Perceived harmful effects of alcohol									
Euphoria	6.6	11.2	13.9	9.6	6.6	9.5	8.9	8.3	p<0.001
Disorientation	19.3	26.7	25.3	22.9	15.7	22.1	19.7	19.0	p<0.001
Loss of judgment	25.2	39.6	40.3	32.9	23.0	33.3	31.5	28.9	p<0.001
Liver damage	27.9	46.3	51.2	38.6	25.2	38.1	42.0	34.6	p<0.001
Sense of guilt	12.8	19.1	21.1	16.5	23.1	29.2	28.1	26.6	p<0.001
Others	5.5	6.3	6.0	5.9	10.3	10.7	9.5	10.1	p<0.001
Don't know	32.2	11.5	9.5	20.9	26.3	12.5	11.5	17.3	p<0.001
N	3166	2091	1386	6643	3058	2565	2676	8299	

Table 7. Adolescent's knowledge on addicting drugs and its harmful effects by age and sex (multiple responses) (%)

	Age groups								x^2 signi-ficance
	Male				Female				
	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	M vs F
Which of the followings are addicting drugs?									
Cannabis Indica (*ganja*)	90.4	98.8	98.9	94.8	88.0	95.9	94.9	92.7	p<0.001
Bhang	14.0	35.0	46.2	27.3	13.3	26.7	26.5	21.7	p<0.001
Charas	3.7	13.2	19.8	10.0	2.2	6.6	5.9	4.7	p<0.001
Fermented rice	33.2	56.3	67.5	47.6	27.8	45.3	43.7	38.3	p<0.001
Marijuana	2.1	6.1	8.7	4.7	2.0	5.3	3.8	3.6	p<0.001
Phensidyl	56.7	86.3	90.7	73.1	37.5	58.4	56.1	49.9	p<0.001
Heroine	66.9	90.4	92.6	79.7	63.8	82.6	80.2	74.9	p<0.001
Opium	7.0	29.4	41.9	21.3	5.4	17.4	16.8	12.8	p<0.001
Pethidine	3.9	17.7	27.9	13.3	4.7	16.4	13.8	11.2	p<0.001
Morphin	1.4	6.8	9.8	4.8	.8	4.7	3.0	2.7	p<0.001
Valium	.7	2.3	4.0	1.9	.5	2.2	1.2	1.3	p<0.001
Cocaine	3.1	13.2	18.7	9.5	1.7	7.6	5.5	4.7	p<0.001
Others	9.5	5.5	5.2	7.3	15.7	13.7	14.1	14.6	p<0.001
Source of knowledge									
Text book	14.0	26.2	24.9	20.1	13.2	26.5	16.7	18.4	p<0.001
Friends	33.3	64.1	74.7	51.6	23.9	28.2	28.2	26.6	p<0.001
Relatives	41.3	32.1	32.7	36.6	47.4	53.4	60.4	53.4	p<0.001
Newspaper	2.8	9.9	15.4	7.7	1.3	2.3	2.9	2.1	p<0.001
Radio	6.1	11.2	13.6	9.3	5.7	8.8	7.9	7.4	p<0.001
Television	43.4	51.1	53.8	48.0	42.8	51.1	42.8	45.4	p<0.001
Cinema	4.9	7.5	8.8	6.5	2.6	2.0	2.2	2.3	p<0.001
Others	10.1	10.4	10.0	10.2	10.2	10.2	12.0	10.8	ns
N	3166	2091	1386	6643	3058	2565	2676	8299	

Note- Multiple responses considered

Table 8. Perceived harmful effects of addicting drugs by age and sex %

	Age groups								x^2 significance
	Male				Female				
	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	M vs F
Perceived harmful effects of addicting drugs									
Drowsiness	19.9	39.3	45.5	31.3	23.9	38.8	38.2	33.1	p<0.05
Euphoria	7.0	12.4	13.9	10.1	3.9	6.5	6.5	5.5	p<0.001
Disorientation of time, place and person	14.7	26.1	28.1	21.1	10.6	16.8	15.5	14.1	p<0.001
Abnormal behaviour	37.4	58.5	62.5	49.3	44.0	60.7	59.7	54.2	p<0.001
Quarrelsome	10.1	16.9	19.4	14.2	9.5	14.5	15.2	12.9	p<0.05
Loss of control of movement	27.6	40.2	42.9	34.8	36.4	48.1	48.6	43.9	p<0.001
Others	.9	1.1	.9	1.0	1.7	1.9	1.3	1.6	p<0.001
Don't know	36.3	9.9	6.5	21.8	24.5	9.3	8.6	14.7	p<0.001
N	3166	2091	1386	6643	3058	2565	2676	8299	

Table 9. Role models of adolescents by age and sex %

	Age groups								x^2 significance
	Male				Female				M vs F
	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	
Perceived role model									
Myself	30.2	47.3	58.2	41.4	36.7	57.2	71.7	54.3	p<0.001
Respected professional	38.1	26.9	20.1	30.8	32.3	19.7	11.1	21.6	p<0.001
Teacher	11.7	4.5	2.2	7.4	19.8	12.1	7.7	13.5	p<0.001
Business	3.4	8.4	10.0	6.4	.2	.2	.1	0.2	p<0.001
Service	3.2	1.3	1.2	2.2	3.4	3.0	1.3	2.6	
Family Planning worker	.1	.1	.1	.1	2.4	2.9	2.7	2.6	ns
Player	3.0	2.1	1.2	2.3	.2	.2	.1	.2	p<0.001
Cinema actor/actress	2.0	1.6	.8	1.6	.6	.3	.4	.4	p<0.001
Political leader	1.3	1.7	1.4	1.4	.4	.5	.2	.4	p<0.001
International leader	.03	.5	.1	.2	.1	.1	.1	.1	ns
Other	6.4	5.3	4.5	5.7	2.7	3.1	3.8	3.2	*p*<0.001
N	3166	2091	1386	6643	3058	2565	2676	8299	

Following on our investigation into the life style factors of the adolescents, we asked about their perceived role model (Table 9). The question asked was: Like whom you want to be (in your life)? Interestingly, majority of them replied that they want to be like themselves (male 41% and female 54%, p<0.001). This was followed by 'respected professional', 31% in case of males and 22% in case of females (p<0.001). For both, a reverse age gradient was seen i.e., the proportion decreased as age increased. This was opposite to what was seen in case of the first response. Also, more females wanted to be teachers than males (p<0.001).

Exploring further into the life style related information, we found that adolescents of all age and sex enjoyed viewing cinema (around 58%), and listening radio (around 23%) for entertainment most commonly (Table 10). Males enjoyed reading books etc. and viewing TV and drama more frequently than the females (p<0.001). Plausibly, places of worship was visited much more frequently by males compared to females (p<0.001).

Majority of the female adolescents (91%) thinks that 'purdah' is necessary while going into the public sphere (Table 11). Except school, mobility of females was much less in places like market, health centre or cinema compared to males (p<0.001). For health centres, mobility increased with age in both sexes while for market, mobility decreased with age for the females.

Table 10. Life-style habits and social participation of the adolescents by age and sex %

	Age groups								x^2 signi-ficance
	Male				Female				
	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	M vs. F
Life style habits									
Enjoys viewing cinema	54.1	61.5	63.1	58.3	61.0	62.1	50.2	57.8	ns
Enjoys reading books, magazine etc.	4.1	14.8	22.6	11.3	4.6	7.2	4.9	5.5	p<0.001
Enjoys listening radio	19.2	26.9	28.9	23.7	21.9	27.4	21.4	23.5	ns
Enjoys viewing TV	41.9	47.7	48.1	45.0	41.5	41.7	35.8	39.8	p<0.001
Enjoys viewing drama	1.5	3.6	6.6	3.2	1.7	2.5	1.6	1.9	p<0.001
Social participation									
Involvement with social organizations	2.9	17.1	27.7	12.6	1.6	11.7	29.0	13.6	ns
Visits places of worship	71.2	73.9	75.2	72.9	15.7	4.2	4.0	8.4	p<0.001
N	3166	2091	1386	6643	3058	2565	2676	8299	

Note: multiple responses considered

Table 11. Mobility of the adolescents to public places by age and sex %

	Age groups								x^2 significance
	Male				Female				
	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	M vs. F
Thinks purdah is necessary while going outside home	--	--	--	--	88.5	92.3	94.0	91.4	
Visited in last one month									
School	75.5	34.6	13.1	49.6	80.1	24.2	4.1	38.3	p<0.001
Market	87.4	94.2	94.7	91.0	19.8	13.7	10.3	14.9	p<0.001
Health centre	7.7	8.7	11.2	8.7	6.2	10.1	14.3	10.0	p<0.01
Cinema	3.1	14.2	13.0	8.6	.3	.5	.2	0.3	p<0.001
Village fair	8.1	10.0	8.9	8.9	2.9	1.5	.9	1.8	p<0.001
N	3166	2091	1386	6643	3058	2565	2676	8299	

Note: multiple responses considered

Co-residence with parents was much more common for males compared to females (p<0.001), decreasing with age in both groups (Table 12). The latter are found to co-reside with spouse more commonly than with others, from late adolescence. Both males and females stated that they have friends from the opposite sex as well as religious minorities. Males were having more friends from religious minorities compared to the females (p<0.001). No such difference was observed in case of friends from opposite sex.

Table 12. Co-residence and friends of the adolescents to public places by age and sex (multiple responses) (%)

	Age groups								x^2 signi-ficance
	Male				Female				
	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	10-14	15-19	20-24	All	M vs. F
Co-residence									
With parents	83.0	76.2	54.0	74.8	82.2	41.6	8.1	45.8	p<0.001
With husband/wife	0	0	.4	.1	.5	33.9	75.1	34.9	p<0.001
With in-laws	0	.1	.2	.1	.4	8.1	10.3	5.9	p<0.001
With grand-parents	2.2	1.3	.8	1.6	1.7	1.0	.1	1.0	p<0.001
With siblings	.4	2.5	3.5	1.7	.4	1.8	.4	0.9	p<0.001
With others	2.3	5.0	21.7	7.2	3.0	3.1	2.7	2.9	p<0.001
Has friends from									
Opposite sex	13.8	28.9	39.0	23.8	14.0	28.6	35.8	25.5	p<0.05
Opposite religion	20.3	34.4	41.1	29.1	16.8	22.6	14.2	17.7	p<0.001
N	3166	2091	1386	6643	3058	2565	2676	8299	

DISCUSSION

A nationally representative survey on adolescents and youths (10-24 years) was carried out by BRAC during 2005 to improve our understanding about different aspects of their lives. This knowledge is required for designing informed interventions for them who comprise around one-third of the population of Bangladesh. The survey covered different aspects of their lives such as socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, health (including reproductive health), education, socialization, violence, work and child labour, marriage and dowry, violence, etc. This study presented descriptive data on morbidity, health-seeking behaviour, knowledge about addicting substances and life-style characteristics from the larger survey.

Morbidity prevalence among adolescents was found to be quite high in this supposedly healthy population group compared to national average of 19% (BBS 2006) or as found in other studies from BRAC (Ahmed *et al.* 2000; Ahmed *et al.* 2001; Ahmed *et al.* 2004). The adolescent survey was carried out during April-August 2005 which covered the full monsoon period when there is increased prevalence of seasonal illnesses such as common cold, upper respiratory tract infection, etc. Eliciting information on detailed morbidity profile could have clarified this

observation more specifically. The preponderance of illness among those from female-headed households indicates the vulnerability of these households. Also, no effect on morbidity by SES (as measured by wealth quintiles) was seen among the study population. This suggests the powerful influence of environmental and seasonal risk factors on disease prevalence which outweigh the protective benefits of higher SES, as seen elsewhere (Ahmed *et al.* 2003).

The health-seeking behaviour of the study adolescents observed in this study broadly agrees with that observed for disadvantaged population groups earlier (Ahmed 2006), with one important exception. In that study, para-professionals were used much more commonly than the sales people from drug retail outlets, with similar dominant therapeutic role of self-care. One reason for their low usage among adolescents may be the fact that the para-professionals, especially the CHWs who are the majority among them, are mainly trained in health problems of children and women and as such do not address the adolescent group.

Female adolescents were found to resort to less costly healthcare such as self-care more and they also used the relatively costly unqualified providers (vs. self-care and traditional medicine) in lesser proportion compared to male adolescents. Such trends are also noted for women in both developing (Pokhrel *et al.* 2005, Buor 2004, Yount 2004) and developed (Fernandez *et al.* 1999) countries alike, including Bangladesh (Ahmed 2005). In Bangladesh, this may be due to the prevailing patriarchal norms which discourage women to be treated by male providers (Schuler *et al.* 2002) in a scenario where available healthcare providers are predominantly males. In rural Bangladesh, women (including adolescent women) also require taking permission from husbands or in-laws, and also find someone to accompany them, before seeking out care from qualified providers (Levin *et al.* 2001, Streatfield 2001). However, there are indications that this situation is changing for better in recent years (Pitt *et al.* 2003).

Division-wise differences in health-seeking behaviour revealed the vulnerable condition of Barisal where use of semi-qualified para-professionals/qualified professionals was the lowest. This draws our attention to the scarce distribution of health facilities in this highly riverine coastal division. Also, the relationship between SES and type of healthcare used is revealed by greater use of costly professional allopaths in the relatively affluent Sylhet and Chittagong divisions.

The expenditure on illnesses was found to be very modest in this population. This is not surprising given the fact that this is the most healthy period of life and most illnesses in this age group is trivial in nature which do not require costly therapeutic interventions. However,

this can vary according to the SES of the adolescents, as revealed by the wide range of variation.

Adolescents were generally aware about the addicting substances (including tobacco and alcohol) and the consequences of addiction, but few appeared to possess in-depth knowledge (such as active ingredients responsible for addiction or harmful effects of addicting drugs etc.). The greater level of knowledge and awareness observed among the males is plausible, given the greater exposure of the male adolescents to outside world compared to the females in the context of Bangladeshi society.

The importance of television as a prime source of information to this age group besides friends and relatives overriding print media, is revealed in this study. Thus, the usefulness of this electronic media for reaching the adolescents with health education and health promotion messages should be kept in mind while designing interventions.

A role model is an individual who is perceived as exemplary or worthy of imitation. Adolescents who have positive role models are more likely to do well in school and have higher selfesteem; they also are less likely to abuse substances (Yancey *et al.* 2002). In this study, majority of the adolescents projected her/himself as the desired role model (proportion increasing with age) which does not conform to studies elsewhere (Yancey *et al.* 2002; Harris Interactive 2002). In those studies, adolescents (12-17 years) most commonly cited a family member (mostly parents) as their role models. Thus, adolescents in this study may be more self-confident and have positive self-image than adolescents elsewhere. Citing of respected professionals (more by males) and teachers (more by females) as the next bests, points to their perceived status and influence in the society in the eyes of the adolescents. Contrary to popular belief, popular icons from the sports or cine world could attract only a tiny fraction to be worthy of their role models.

Viewing cinema and TV appeared to be the major source of entertainment for the adolescents in this survey. Studies in the USA have documented the harmful effects of mass media (especially TV), on adolescent health issues related to violence and aggression; sex; obesity, nutrition, and eating disorders; and alcohol and tobacco use (Brown *et al.* 2002). This kind of research is also needed in Bangladesh to assess the magnitude of the health and behavioural impact of mass media, especially TV on adolescents. Of interest to note the observation that a very small proportion of adolescents enjoyed reading books. The proportion was much less among the females (5.5%) than the males (22.6%). Again, the proportion increased with age among the males while it decreased with age among the females. The gendered nature of domestic chores disfavouring female adolescents to find leisure time may be responsible for this observed difference (Cain *et al.* 1979).

Interesting differences in mobility in public places was seen between the two sexes. Female adolescents reported to have visited public places like school and market in last one month much less than the males while they visited health centres more than the males. This points to the permissive attitude of the society towards womens' visiting public places like health facilities for seeking health care, as also womens' presumed responsibility in taking care of illnesses in the household, especially the children. However, this attitude is not reflected in other arenas.

Female adolescents were found to reside less frequently with their parents, as a large proportion of them get married by this period. That the traditional family norm is changing from extended to nuclear one is also corroborated from findings on co-residence (Razzaque 1997). This is shown by the larger proportion of female adolescents residing with spouse than with in-laws or others, excluding parents. Also, the adolescents displayed a more liberal attitude in terms of having friends from opposite sex or religion.

In conclusion, it can be said that the survey revealed interesting findings on selected aspects of health and life-styles of the adolescents. Differences in health and life-styles were found to exist with respect to SES, geographic location, gender and age. Policy makers and programme implementers should be cognizant of this knowledge while designing relevant interventions for the adolescents. Also, the effect of media vis-à-vis adolescents and youths provides important direction towards its optimum use for communicating on issues related to health and other matters.

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Paper 6

Dowry and the Transition to Marriage

Hanne Cecilie Geirbo and Nuzhat Imam

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is crucial part of adulthood in Bangladesh. There are few, if any, socially accepted roles for adults outside marriage, with an exception for widowhood. A large number of marriages in Bangladesh involve a dowry (BRAC/Population council 2004). For most adolescent girls, the ability of her guardians to raise enough dowry will have significance for how her adult life will be. For an adolescent boy, the amount of dowry he and his guardians can successfully claim, functions as a sign of his quality as a breadwinner and marriage partner. Dowry is thus an institution that highlights vulnerability and dependence as female attributes and entitlement as a male attribute.

We will see how the practice of dowry is a means of transition to socially sanctioned adult statuses. At the same time, the practice of dowry implies a continuity in that the vulnerability and dependence of the female child and the entitlement of the male child are perpetuated in the married status.

This chapter is based on a qualitative research conducted in Domar *upazila*[1] in Nilphamari district in 2005. Nilphamari is one of the poorest districts of Bangladesh. The main livelihoods in Domar are agriculture and service. There are few employment opportunities for women. During the last 5 years, there have been two major investments; a cold storage and a milk chilling plant. The improved economy is visible in the commercial centre, where the number of shops and the variety of goods for sale has been steadily increasing. Still, Domar is on the low end of the economic scale in Bangladesh.

[1] *Upazila* is the lowest administrative unit of the government.

We chose to limit the research among Muslims because of the differences between the Islamic and the Hindu family laws and the consequences this has for marriage transactions. There is considerable variation in dowry practice within the country, but the broad pattern of giving and taking is similar in the mainstream population in different areas.

THE CHANGE FROM BRIDEWEALTH TO DOWRY IN BANGLADESH

The practice of dowry is illegal in Bangladesh, but it is widely practiced. The near-universal practice of dowry is however a fairly new phenomenon in Bangladesh. Up to the independence in 1971, bridewealth (*pon*) was the common practice among Bangladeshi Muslims (Rozario 2001: 131-135, White 1992:102). Bridewealth refers to marriage transactions that go from the groom's side to the bride's side in connection with the wedding. Elderly people we talked to in Domar confirmed that bridewealth and not dowry was paid when they got married. There are several theories that attempt to explain the transition from bridewealth to dowry in Bangladesh. These are discussed at length elsewhere (Geirbo and Imam 2006), and here we will limit us to mentioning three different theoretical perspectives on this development.

"Marriage squeeze" theories argues that dowry occurs when there are more women than men in the marriage market, and that bride wealth occur when the situation is opposite. Women have to offer a dowry to be able to compete on the marriage market. Even in societies where there is no significant disproportion between men and women, like in Bangladesh, this theory can provide an explanation for the practice of dowry. If people believe that there are more women than men on the marriage market, they will act corresponding to this belief. Social and cultural ideas about men, women and marriage are also significant for creating an imbalance between marriageable men and women. In rural Bangladesh, the socially accepted marriage age for a woman is lower than for a man. As the norm is that a man should marry a woman who is several years younger than him, this creates a tighter marriage market for women than men. Adding to this are ideas about the importance of marriage for women. Failure to get your daughter married is a source of shame. There are popular beliefs about grave consequences of this failure, among them that parents who die before their daughters are married will burn in their graves until their marriages take place. The urgency to get daughters married does not correspond with the wish to marry off a son, and this gives the parents of a potential groom a benefit in negotiations (Rozario 2004).

Oldenburg (2002) proposes a socioeconomic explanation model. She argues that today's practice of dowry in South Asia has to be seen as a product of the policies of the colonial rule. The British created male,

individual ownership in land. Males became the dominant legal subjects. Both the masculinisation of the economy and the recruitment to the British army made sons more desirable than daughters. Work in the army or in the bureaucracy was a source of cash and land rewards. Families of grooms with access to such jobs started to demand dowry. Parents of potential brides knew that a good dowry was the way to secure the best groom, and hence contributed to the practice (Oldenburg 2002:3-18).

Rozario argues that the shift from bridewealth to dowry has economic reasons, but that it was ideologies of purity and honour that sustained the practice. Traditionally, post harvest processing of rice was women's work, conducted manually in the courtyard. Gradually, technology that minimizes women's role in rice production has been introduced. Because of this, women were increasingly seen as an economic burden rather than productive members of the household. At the same time, the overall economical system became increasingly capitalist, and the system of prestige changed from one based on aristocratic values to one based on accumulation of money. As education and urban employment were largely only available to men, parents of grooms started to demand dowry as a reimbursement of their investment in their son (Rozario 2001:141-9).

According to Rozario, the reason why the dowry practice persists cannot be found in the economy, but has to be sought in the ideologies that connect concepts of purity and honour with women. These ideologies existed in the time of bride wealth also, but a bride's honour and purity was less likely to be contested, as the girls were less exposed to the outside world because formal education and outside employment was less common for girls. With the increase of education and salaried employment for women came increased concerns about their purity, and dowries compensate this. Rozario argues that another implication of the increased concern about purity and honour is that prestigious grooms tend to choose brides who are considerably younger than them, so they will be less likely to have lost their purity. Older women will remain unmarried unless their age and corresponding doubtful purity is compensated for with a big dowry (Rozario 2001:147).

MARRIAGE TRANSACTIONS

A number of economic transactions are connected to both the formalization of a marriage contract and the ending of it in rural Bangladesh. Some of these are juristically and religiously sanctioned, and some are sanctioned by local norms. In Domar we found four major marriage transactions: *demand*, *dan*, *mohr* and *bhoron-poshon*. Literature from other places in Bangladesh tells us that these transactions are generally practiced in the mainstream population, but their form varies from place to place. As we have explored forms of marriage transactions specific to Domar, we use local terms to avoid confusion with practices elsewhere. *Demand* is the term used in Domar to refer to the transaction that in the literature is mostly referred to as dowry, or with the Bangla term *joutuk.*

Demand and dan

Demand is what the groom's side demands of cash and kind from the bride's side. Our informants distinguish this from *dan*. Some define *dan* as the non-cash part of transactions from the bride's side to the groom's side and some define it as gifts given willingly by the bride's side. In practice, this distinction is often blurred, as it is not always clear what is demanded and what is given voluntarily. This is especially the case among better off people. The respondents with higher education defined their form of wedding transactions as an expression of love for the bride or as a social obligation to the groom's family, not as something demanded by the groom's side. Among the better off, a strategy of avoiding claims of cash and kind is to mention what is intended given before the groom's side gets the opportunity to ask for anything. The groom's side often indicates what they want as gifts rather than outright ask for it.

Negotiating a demand

Among the poor, the *dan* and *demand* are mostly agreed upon in detail before the wedding takes place. The sum is often very large in relation to their income (BRAC 2005). *Demand* is commonly given in instalments. A part of it is given before or during the marriage registration. It is common that the groom's father receives the first instalment. There are witnesses from both sides present at this transaction. The remaining instalments are usually given to the groom, often in presence of his father.

The norm is that *demand* should be agreed upon before the wedding. However, it happens that claims of *demand* come after the wedding too, both when a *demand* was agreed upon before the wedding and in marriages formalized without *demand*. When *demand* is claimed after the wedding, there is no formal negotiation, as it is done before the wedding takes place. The bride's family is thus more vulnerable, as they have already given their daughter and have no socially sanctioned institution of negotiation.

In general, both the bride's side and the groom's side spend sums that are large in relation to their income on a wedding. This is true for both the low and the high end of the economy scale in the village. However, the groom's side commonly uses the *demand* to cover their expenses. As the *demand* is mostly given in instalments, the groom's family sometimes has to spend more money than they were given in the first instalment on the wedding expenses. Still, the bride's family usually covers all or most of the expenses at the time of the wedding, in addition to continue giving *demand* in instalments over a shorter or longer period.

Factors that determine demand

The *demand* depends first and foremost on the perceived quality of the groom. As he is the one requesting wealth to be transferred to him, it is his qualities that are the focus. However, the quality of the bride can also be a significant factor. If she is perceived as being of higher quality than the groom, he might be willing to reduce his *demand* to marry her. If she is perceived as being of low quality compared to him, he might be willing to marry her in exchange for a higher *demand*. A female college teacher told that in her family they usually pay two-three lakh taka in *demand*. However, for one of her relatives, they had paid ten lakh because she is dark skinned and the groom has a good government job.

A certain level of education is considered a desirable attribute of a bride. A girl who can read, write and count has skills that will make her better able to fulfil obligations as wife and mother. A wife with enough education to take skilled employment is also a potential source of income. However, because the norm is that a girl should marry up in status, the guardians of a girl will try to find a husband who has the same level of education or higher. With the level of the groom's education, the *demand* increases. Therefore, it can be expensive to marry off a well-educated girl. One poor woman suggested that the ideal level of education for a girl is grade six or seven. She argued that this is a functional level of education, but not one that calls for a groom with a very high *demand*.

A mother of a sixteen years old girl, who has finished her SSC examination, balanced the gains of more education against the increase

of *demand* needed to be paid:

> If I give more education to my daughter, I have to give more *demand* at her marriage, as in that case I have to find a groom with a salaried job (*chakri*). An educated girl would never agree to marry a van driver or a day labourer. He has to be a businessman or should have a salaried job. But to get a groom like this one must pay a very high *demand*.

Among the higher educated respondents, some held the view that a bride with skilled employment will get married with less *demand*, as she will be a potential source of income for the family.

Mohr and bhoron-poshon

Mohr (also called *mohorana* and *denmohor*) is a sum of money or property that according to Islamic law are given by the groom to the bride immediately after the wedding. According to Islamic law, it is the property of the bride, and poor people view it as a safety net if her husband divorces her (Rozario 2001:136, 186, Sen 1998: 79). In Bangladesh, the amount of *mohr* is registered in the wedding document (qabin nama). In Domar, *mohr* is commonly calculated in relation to the *demand* given, as either the double or the triple amount. However, it is not common to give the *mohr* at the time of the wedding. According to local norms, *mohr* should only be claimed after a divorce. In practice, it hardly happens that the whole *mohr* is given. What is given back after a divorce is often the same amount that was given as *demand*.

Bhoron-poshon is money that a man gives his ex-wife to cover her living expenses three months after a divorce. If the wife has to stay with her natal family during the marriage, her husband is supposed to pay *bhoron-poshon* to his father-in-law to cover his expenses for her stay. *Bhoron-poshon* is decided at the same time as *mohr*. After a divorce, *bhoron-poshon* is claimed together with *mohr*.

Demand is a transaction connected to inauguration of a marriage contract, and it goes from the bride's side to the groom's side. *Mohr* is in practice a transaction going from the husband to the wife after a divorce. This suggests that *demand* is the right of the husband and *mohr* is the right of the wife. However, when we look closer, we see that *mohr* is not understood as an absolute right; it is dependent on what is given to the groom. Moreover, a woman is only seen as being entitled to *mohr* if she does not initiate the divorce and only if she is acknowledged as being without responsibility for the factors that led to the divorce. Therefore, we see that whereas *demand* is seen as the entitlement of the groom, the entitlement to *mohr* is being dependant upon whether he has received his entitlement; a *demand* and a dutiful wife.

Demand as a means of transition

Demand is widely considered to be a requirement for a girl to access married status. But *demand* is also understood as enhancing the likelihood of a secure transition into the new status as wife and daughter-in-law, as well as a secure transition out of married status in case of divorce. For a groom, *demand* often represents a start capital that ensures his transition to the status of breadwinner for a wife and future children.

Demand as start capital

We were told that the most common practice in Domar is that the groom's father receives the parts of the dowry given before the wedding. Commonly, parts of the dowry are given as instalments after the wedding, often over many years. These instalments are given to the groom himself. The transition to marriage for a man means getting responsibility for creating a livelihood for his wife and the children that might come. Setting up a business or buying an income-earning device like a rickshaw van requires capital. Capital is also necessary to get certain kinds of employment. There is often a *ghush* (informal and unofficial payment to access a service or a good) involved in getting a government job. We were told that to get a job as a primary school teacher you have to pay between 80,000 and 100,000 taka. Grooms who are aiming for government jobs will often include this expense in their dowry claim.

Demand as a means to secure the transition to married life

Our respondents often stated that if a girl's parents are not able to raise a dowry, she will not get married. As there are few, if any, socially sanctioned statues for never married adult and able women in Bangladesh, the consequences of not being able to get married are grave. However, for girls from well off families lack of dowry would not mean that she can not get married at all. It would mean that she would not be married to a person who matches her social status.

Demand is seen as a necessary means for a woman to enter a socially acceptable marriage. But it is also perceived as a means of achieving security for the woman in her marriage. Most of our respondents stated that fathers give *demand* to ensure a happy married life for the daughter. If a daughter brings a large *demand*, her parents hope that she will be well treated in her in-laws house. They hope she will get her needs provided for, be loved and respected. *Demand* is thus seen as a transaction that will smoothen the daughter's integration into a new stage of life. However, *demand* is only expected to have this effect if it is

paid in full. If it is not paid in accordance with the schedule negotiated, the daughter is in danger of being abused.

Demand as a means to secure transition out of married life

A motivation behind giving *demand* is to give the daughter security within her marriage. Another strong motivation is securing her in case of divorce. As we saw above, the right to *mohr* is seen as depending on the *demand* given. If no *demand* was given, the right to *mohr* in case of divorce is not acknowledged by most of our respondents. Moreover, the size of *demand* determines the amount of *mohr* she is seen as entitled to. A strong motivation behind giving *demand* is thus to make sure that the daughter will get some money if her husband divorces her.

Giving *demand* is not only seen as a security measure in case the marriage fails, it is also seen as a measure to avoid divorce. The rationality is that a man who knows that he has to give money to his wife if he divorces her will think twice before he does this. As one woman formulated it:

> If *demand* is given in a marriage, the husband don't dare to tell the wife to leave, because then she will say: "Ok, I am leaving, but first give me back what my father has given to you." But when *demand* is not given, a husband can leave his wife anytime. If there were no *demand*, then every man would have married one woman after another.

This practice is not only a motivation for giving *demand*, but also for giving as large *demand* as possible. If we see the norm of paying back the *demand* after a divorce in connection with the norm that a woman who leaves her marriage willingly does not have the right to *mohr*, we see that it is a likely strategy for a man who wants a divorce to force his wife to be the one initiating it by making her living conditions unbearable. Then he will get a divorce and will not have to pay compensation.

TO WHICH EXTENT ARE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN ABLE TO TAKE CHOICES ABOUT *DEMAND*?

By far the majority of marriages in Bangladesh are family-arranged. The family looks for a suitable match, receive and evaluate proposals and negotiates with the other family. How much influence the prospective bride and groom have varies from none to substantial, but grooms have generally more influence than brides. All over Bangladesh, *demand* is a central part of most marriage negotiations. In the following paragraphs we will discuss to which extent prospective brides and grooms have the power to take choices regarding their *demand*.

The limits of agency

There are few, if any, socially accepted statuses outside marriage for women in rural Bangladesh. A never married, physically and mentally able woman will not fit in any socially sanctioned category of statuses. Her sexuality is seen as posing a threat to the honour of her family and community. There are also limited opportunities for employment for women, and a woman who chooses not to marry is likely to not only be socially marginalized but also economically marginalized. Men are also expected to marry, but as the accepted marriage age for men is much higher than for women, a man can postpone his marriage for a long time. If he chooses not to marry at all, he is likely to be regarded as someone who has failed to adjust to the norms of society, but his un-institutionalized sexuality is not likely to be perceived as a social risk to his family and community. Marriage is thus not urgent for men in the same way as it is for women. Unless the bride has very desirable attributes, like wealth or a highly regarded family-background, refusing to give dowry will reduce her chances of getting married significantly. As the consequences of not being married are large for a woman, raising a large enough dowry becomes crucial for her living conditions in the future.

Even though a bride might want her wedding to be without dowry, her parents might have objections other than concern for her future well-being. One reason that her parents may insist on giving a dowry, is that giving something to the groom's side is seen as a social obligation. Not fulfilling this obligation can distort their reputation in the community. The mother of a newly wed girl said that they could have been labelled unsocial if they hadn't given anything to the groom's side:

> If we didn't even give money for the wedding expenses, I think they still would have married my daughter, as they were so interested. But they might have said that we are unsocial, that we don't know the social norms, that we don't know how to be great.

Giving a large *demand* can also be a way to display economic ability and hence make a statement about the family's social status.

When we asked people in Domar whether paying a large *demand* will increase the social status of the bride's natal family, they said that the only gains the bride's family gets from paying a high *demand*, is that she will live happily in her in-laws' home. However, we can not rule out that the natal family increases social status by giving a large *demand*. If so, this is another factor that links a girl's *demand* to her parents' status and reputation.

Women have limited possibilities for taking part in the decision-making about their own *demand*. Being the receiver of *demand*, men have a larger autonomy in this matter, but also they face limitations. One factor is that the groom's father commonly receives the part of the *demand* that is given at the time of wedding. Refusing to take dowry will thus implicate denying the father the money and goods that he is expecting to get. Not only are fathers counting on receiving this at the time of his son's wedding, they also consider themselves entitled to it. To take *demand* is commonly viewed as getting investments in a son reimbursed. Parents have spent money, sometimes a large sum relative to their income, on raising their son to be capable of looking after a family. This investment benefits the bride, and should therefore be reimbursed by her parents. The bride's parents are not seen as having this entitlement, even though their investments in their daughter benefits her in-laws. The groom's parents are also widely seen as being entitled to have their expenses for the wedding reimbursed by the *demand*. This entitlement of the parents makes it difficult for young men to refuse to take *demand*. It can also lead to sanctions from the community. One of our respondents told us about a college-educated relative that had refused to take *demand*. The neighbours criticise him for refusing to take *demand* after his father has spend a lot of money on his education. "Now he can't leave his house for shame", she said.

> Not taking *demand* is often met with suspicion from the community. It suggests that there is something wrong with the groom that makes him unable to claim a *demand*. The risk of being a victim of this kind of rumours is another factor that makes the choice of not taking dowry more difficult for a groom.

The agency of grooms is larger that the agency of brides, but they are constrained by parents' perceptions of entitlement to reimbursement and

the risk of sanctions from the community. However, choosing to not take *demand* can also be a strategy for making a claim to a high social status.

Not taking *demand* as a strategy of gentrification

Not taking *demand* is a possible strategy of gentrification for those who already have a relatively high socioeconomic position. By not taking *demand*, a man can claim a position as a man with modern views. Not taking *demand* can also underline his status as a wealthy man, as it suggests that he is so wealthy that he doesn't need *demand*. However, according to our educated and well off respondents, *demand* is common in their segment, and it is often several lakh. Not taking *demand* seems thus not to be a common strategy for gentrification in Domar. The case of the college-educated man who was shamed by the community for not taking *demand*, also suggests that this strategy of gentrification is risky. Likewise, refusing to give *demand* is a possible strategy of gentrification, but not one that seems to be common in Domar at the moment.

Refusing to give *demand* only works as a strategy of gentrification for those who can successfully claim that they could afford to give if they had wanted to. For poor families who cannot successfully make such a claim, the discourse of love-marriage and elopement offers new possibilities for manipulations of the institution of *demand*.

Elopement as a strategy for avoiding *demand*

According to our informants, self-arranged marriage (Kishwar1999:195), or love-marriage, as it is commonly called, happens increasingly. We found both positive and negative views on love marriage, but all considered love marriages without the parents' consent negative. This is viewed as shameful for the families involved. Some said it is an increasing problem that young boys elope and get married before they are matured and able to support a family.

Data from Dhaka slums shows that self-arranged marriages are sometimes encouraged by parents as a strategy to avoid *demand* (Rashid 2005)[2]. Our data suggests that whether it is *demand* or not in a love-marriage depends on whether the alliance is accepted or not[3]. If the parents do not accept the union after the couple has eloped, a *demand* is mostly not given, as the union is considered disgraceful. However, if the parents come to accept the union, we were told that a *demand* is often

[2] Even though a *demand* is not requested at the time of the wedding, the claim may come later, sometimes several years after, so this strategy is not necessarily successful in the long run (Rashid 2005).

[3] In *love marriages* where the couple has higher education, demand seems to be not common. However, this does not mean that there are no transactions between the families. Often the bride's family gives costly gifts to the groom's side in these kinds of marriages.

given to strengthen the marriage and to increase the status of the bride in the in-law's house. We did not find that encouraging a girl to elope is a common strategy to avoid paying *demand*. However, one respondent indicated that this happens, saying that parents will only encourage their daughter to elope if they have to. An incidence that occurred during the period of our fieldwork might also have been the outcome of such a strategy. A twelve-year-old girl without a father had run away and got married to a man who is already married and has three children. His wife consented to getting a co-wife to avoid divorce for the sake of her children. We were told that the mother of the girl agreed because she can not afford a *demand*, and could not see how she could get her daughter married without. It does not seem likely that a very young girl runs away with a much older man because she is romantically attracted to him. In this we see that the discourse of love-marriage offers possibilities for pragmatic manipulation, as the concept of elopement has been used as a strategy for avoiding giving *demand*.

Male entitlement and female risk

As we have seen, the general view is that men have unquestioned entitlement to *demand*, whereas a paid *demand* does not give women entitlements towards her in-laws, only a hope that they will treat her well. Women are entitled to *mohr*, but only on the condition that *demand* is paid and that she has fulfilled her obligations as a wife. A man's parents are entitled to reimbursement of expenses for his upbringing in the form of *demand*. Parents of daughters are not seen as being entitled to the same, even though it will be her in-laws that will enjoy her skills and virtues after she is married. We asked an elderly man why this is so. He answered:

> A girl is considered as a curse in this country. Unless she is given *demand*, nobody would marry her. How would she live if nobody marries her?

This answer points to a central aspect of how girls and women are perceived; as being at risk. They are seen as being vulnerable to not only physical risk, but also social risk. Marriage is the ultimate security for a woman. There are no socially accepted statuses for women outside marriage. A married woman risks losing her livelihood if her husband divorces her. She also looses her auspicious status. Even if she is abused in her marriage, being unmarried poses physical and social risks that are so great that an abusive marriage is often preferred. An unmarried girl's chance of getting a husband of quality is spoiled if she becomes the victim of rape or is seduced. It can even spoil her chances of getting married at all.

Women are also subject to social risks to a great extent. Before marriage, a girl can easily obtain *durnam*, bad reputation. This happens if she does something that conflict with the norms for girls' behaviour. It can also happen if a girl is not married when she has become adult in the eyes of the local community. Then people in the community can set out rumours that the girl has a relationship with a boy, that she has been rejected by a potential groom, or that there is something wrong with her that prevents her from being married. Being a victim of *durnam* makes it very difficult to get a good match. Well off and educated people tend to get their daughters married far above what is seen as mature age among the poor. Respondents explained that the daughters of well off people are not at risk for getting *durnam* if they get married late, because wealth gives people the ability to control others so that they will not dare to inflict *durnam*.

A woman is not only vulnerable to social risk; she also represents a social risk for her family and community. A mature unmarried girl is considered a shame for the whole neighbourhood. We did not get further explanations as to why it was so, but we suggest two reasons. One reason might be that to marry off a girl is seen as a responsibility for the whole community when the parents fail in doing this. A mature unmarried girl becomes a sign of negligence of community responsibility, and is thus a source of shame for the neighbourhood. Another plausible reason has to do with to the connection between a woman's conduct and the honour of her community. A woman's sexual conduct influences the reputation of her family and wider community. An unmarried, mature girl thus represents a threat to her community, as there is a risk that she might engage in an illicit relationship (Rozario 2001:104).

An unmarried girl not only represent a social risk, she is also commonly believed to represent a metaphysical risk to her parents. We were told that it is a *farz* (compulsory religious duty) to get a daughter married when she reaches maturity. There are popular beliefs about grave consequences of this failure, among them that parents who die before their daughters are married will burn in their graves until their marriages take place.

CONCLUSION

Challenging the perceptions of risk and entitlement

The practice of *demand* is the cause of much stress and dependency for both men and women in Bangladesh. However, there are also strong motivations for both giving and taking *demand*. The strongest motivation we found for giving *demand* was concern for the daughter's security in her married life and in case of divorce. This is linked to the perception of women as being inherently connected to risk. At one level, this has to do with practical and economic conditions in Bangladesh, i.e. scarce opportunities for women to create a livelihood independently. At a deeper level, this is linked to social and metaphysical perceptions of female purity that inhibits women's mobility.

While women are perceived as being inherently at risk, men are perceived as inherently entitled. A groom and his parents are seen as entitled to receive money, valuable goods or both from the bride's family. This transaction does not, however, entitle a woman to good treatment in her new home, nor does it unconditionally entitle her to getting her *mohr* in case of divorce.

Demand is just one of many expressions of an ideology where men and women are understood as unequally entitled. This has to be challenged systematically among both girls and boys from an early age. Schools are of primary importance here.

As there are strong motivations for both taking and giving *demand*, advocacy efforts would gain from targeting the causes of the motivations of *demand*. Reducing the risk factors that make married status and *demand* crucial for women is a way to combat the practice. One way to do this is by implementing livelihood programmes for adolescent girls. If a girl and her parents are confident that she will be able to support herself in case of a divorce, *demand* will loose its importance as a security measure. Livelihood programmes will also create self-esteem so that girls will start questioning their roles as burdens of their parents and in-laws.

Employed women in the local community can function as role- models that show that women can successfully support themselves as well as family members. Female NGO-staff are potential role- models because their works bring them in close contact with the local community.

However, we met NGO-staff who considered their female colleagues to be unsuitable marriage partners because of the nature of their work. This attitude is also documented elsewhere (Goetz 2001:142-143). This needs to be challenged internally in order for NGOs to successfully approach the security motivations behind the practice of *demand*.

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Paper 7

Early Marriage in Bangladesh: An Examination of the Social Institutions and Processes

Nasheeba Selim

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh has early marriage by most international comparisons. There is increasing consensus that there has been relatively little change in marriage or factors contributing to the persistence of early marriage. According to the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) of 2004, 46% of young girls aged between 15-19 years and 11% of girls (aged 10-14 years) are married in Bangladesh (UNICEF 2006). Compared to young girls, 3% of men aged 15 -19 years are married (Ibid). While there have been various quantitative investigations examining the phenomena of early marriage in Bangladesh, there has been little in-depth systematic analysis that explains the persistence of early marriage pattern in Bangladesh. There are extensive literature looking at dowry in terms of its impact on the cash economy, its history and sanskritization, etc. but there has been scarce work examining the relationship between early marriages and dowry and how the level of poverty of a given family and a community influence early marriages. Research in this area has mainly focused on the age at marriage and factors that increase possibilities of early marriages within the micro-level analysis, as well as, possible policy recommendations to prevent child marriages (UNICEF 2005). However, there has not been substantial analysis that traces the macro level inter-linkages of poverty, cultural norms and traditions such as dowry, that drive early marriages in particular countries and regions.This paper specifically explores the role of poverty and the rise in dowry in explaining the anomalous pattern of stagnant age at marriage in Bangladesh.

Even in the international context, early marriage within the broader socioeconomic and cultural context is worth examining for researchers

interested in the transition to adulthood for young girls and boys in the developing countries. In absolute terms, data shows that age at marriage is rising for girls, and even men are marrying at later ages. If these delays are in fact related to men's higher expectations of job status, and better employment that enables setting up a stable household after marriage, and shifting gender roles resulting in delayed marriages for women as well, it is imperative to document these constantly changing patterns of behaviour to better understand policy implication both at the individual and societal levels (Caterline, Mensch & Singh 2005). The global literature on early marriage suggest most work to have been done in relation to protecting girls' reproductive rights within the human rights framework in understanding the potential harms of early marriages (UNICEF 2005). This has been crucial in putting the issue of stopping child marriages (marriages taking place where the girl is under 18 years old) on the international agenda. Nevertheless, to prevent early marriages one must explore the casual links between early marriages and poor outcomes among women (Ibid), and examine the socio-economic and cultural factors such as dowry, poverty levels, traditional beliefs that promote early marriages for girls. Furthermore, the DHS data on trends in age at marriage among women show that although marrying in their teenage years is decreasing for girls across regions, there are still substantial proportions of women marrying extremely early. Most of these early marriage patterns are concentrated in West and Middle Africa, South and South East Asia and Caribbean and Central America (Caterline *et al.* 2005). Nearly 40% of women from 60% of the population in developing countries marry before 18 years of age. Among these, approximately 40-50% young girls in South Asia and South East Asia are married before they reach the age of 18 (Growing up Global 2005). This merits further study in understanding why despite the various policies at the national and international levels to prevent early marriages, it still emerges as a prominent phenomenon.

Bangladesh presents an interesting case because most literature in this field argue that with modernization and urban development early marriages decline. As Gary Becker (1973) argues that as the age differential between men and women narrow, and men and women achieve greater economic and social equality women's incentive to marry decreases. In Bangladesh, increasingly women are entering the labour force. Simeen Mahmud states while in absolute terms women's participation in the labour force is still lower than that of men, the labour force participation rate (LFPR) for women is growing at a faster pace than that of men (Khundker and Sobhan 2001). There are more women economically engaged and are earning a market wage (Ibid). Despite these positive changes, women's age at marriage remains low as stated earlier and more importantly the age at marriage is stagnant in the Bangladeshi context. It can be argued that dowry plays an ultimate role in marriage decisions, and unless early marriage theories account for the

relationship between dowry and early marriages, early marriages in Bangladesh cannot be explained adequately.

The other factor that increases the age at marriage is education for girls. There are evidences that with higher education rates, girls tend to marry later. Additional schooling is argued to create incentives for women to delay marriage. However, for South and South East Asia where there have been the largest increases in educational attainment among young people, especially young girls, the decline in early marriage is significantly lower compared to other regions such as the Middle East (Caterline *et al.* 2005)

Given the anomalous nature of early marriages in Bangladesh, this paper uses a broader analytical framework that examines the inter linkages between rising dowry and escalating marriage transactions, cultural traditions and norms overriding all other considerations in marriages, and poverty and early marriages in Bangladesh. This paper is based on a qualitative study undertaken with adolescent girls in rural Bangladesh that examined some of the broader underlying causes of early marriage among young girls.

METHODOLOGY

This paper focuses on the qualitative data[1] based on case studies of married and unmarried adolescent girls, in and out of school both working and non-working, to explore marriage choices and decisions such as what are some of the factors that drive early marriages and conditions that allow certain families to wait longer.

This study draws data from a three-year intervention research on adolescents started in 2001 with a baseline survey (2001) carried out on 6000 male and female adolescents aged 13-22 years and the midline survey conducted in the same areas on only the female adolescent respondents (2,386) in 2003, as part of an ongoing intervention research. The research was undertaken in three rural districts of Bangladesh _ Sherpur, Chapai Nawabganj and Chittagong. We chose these regions to represent a range of quality of life for rural adolescents. Sherpur is a relatively poor area where there is a low level of education and also has low levels of religious practices. Also our findings from the qualitative study show that girl in Sherpur got married quite early and their dowries were also lower compared to Chittagong or Chapai Nawabganj. Chittagong is a relatively wealthier region with a large population of migrant workers, and many marriages take place between young girls

[1] The data were collected from individual adolescents (22 girls in total from three study areas) and was triangulated with informal discussions with family members and neighbours.

and men working in the Middle East. It is also a relatively more conservative area. Chapai Nawabganj is located near the western border, and has a history of greater mobility of women, and has a relatively liberal social environment compared to the other regions.

Data were collected during April-June 2005, during which we repeatedly consulted the previous data to enrich our interview material and the case studies. The research also drew extensively on previously case study material over the three year period. The analysis of the previous data[2] helped us gather background information, place their experiences in the social context of their families and the community, and map out significant turning points in their lives that might explain their decisions regarding marriage or guide future decisions in this matter.

We did not use previous information on the respondents to develop individual checklists for each case that corresponded to their specific stories. In most cases, the discussion were informal and included the young girls, as well as their parents and guardians, younger siblings, the neighbours and in some cases their in-laws families and friends.

Some of the themes that emerged from our case studies[3] are discussed in this paper. However, it is important to note that these themes about marriage decisions among poor and non-poor families in rural Bangladesh reflect the perspective of the girls and their families. We have focused on mapping out some of the changes the girls and their families have gone through over the three-year period and analyzed how it has changed their decisions regarding marriage. Their experiences and perceptions of when and why to marry-off daughters at a particular time depends on a number of factors among which three emerged as broad over-arching characteristics[4] _ the regional variations (the expectations and culture of marriage differ across regions), the poverty levels of the families, and the access to education for girls.

[2] The data were collected over a three year period from 2001 to 2004.

[3] The case studies incorporated the perceptions and experiences of the young girls and their families, key informants and role models if any, who played an important role in shaping the girls ideas about marriage and other choices.

[4] The themes were identified by analyzing the data to draw out recurring issues and concerns identified by the participants and by examining regional patterns as a key variation.

FINDINGS

The themes that emerged from our in-depth interviews about the lives of married and unmarried girls can be grouped into three broad analytical themes: a) the marriage process and institutions; b) the norms and preferences prevailing the marriage process; and c) the poverty links to the marriage process. Within this analytical framework, this study focused on five major components that influence and to an extent explain some of the socioeconomic and cultural dynamics of early marriages in rural Bangladesh:

i) Change in Poverty (sliding into poverty because of family crisis, natural disaster, etc.) status;
ii) Community Characteristics (community pressure, religious norms, role models and aspirations, marriage timing proposals and customs);
iii) Insecurity or *Ijjat* (honour);
iv) The role of dowry, and
v) The role of the *Ghotok* (marriage broker) in the marriage process.

Change in poverty (sliding into poverty because of family crisis, natural disaster, etc.) status and early marriage

Economic status and marriage timing

Poverty plays an important role in marriage decision in the Bangladeshi context. Families that are relatively well-off and do not have to worry about everyday survival can afford to wait longer to marry off their daughters. In such cases, factors such as, finding a suitable groom with good family background, the ability to pay a good dowry to secure a happy married life for their daughter influence both the timing and the choice of groom in the marriage process. A case that reflects these assumptions is Anita's family in Sherpur. Anita's case is interesting because despite Anita's plain looks and dark skin (an attribute that is looked down upon among girls in Bangladesh), her father was able to marry her off well.[5] Anita comes from an economically solvent family and her father's well-off economic position has meant that they could afford to wait until they found a groom who was willing to overlook her lack of beauty in return for a sizeable sum of dowry given to her husband. As

[5] Anita's marriage was considered a very good match because her husband is good looking and despite Anita's plain looks had agreed to marry her.

her father said, “I did not care much about how wealthy they are, as I have plenty to give my daughter. The most important thing was that he was handsome and better looking than my daughter.” Anita’s case lends to one of our underlying assumptions that if a family is relatively well-off and can afford a good dowry, they can wait to select a groom according to their likings and ignore other proposals. As her mother told us, Anita had been receiving numerous proposals as early as when she was 13 or 14 years old, and at times they had had to device innovative ways to fend-off prospective grooms, such as pretending that they cannot even pay a Tk. 10,000 as dowry.

Slide into poverty and change in marriage aspiration

A slide into poverty often changes the aspirations of young girls and their families. Either due to deaths in the family, tragedies such as burning down of the house and having to rebuild their lives from scratch changed the aspirations of that family. A slide into poverty can push families to marry their daughters off earlier than expected, especially if the dowry demands are relatively low. The underlying reason for this may be that while marrying her off will require a dowry payment that is seen as a one time economic loss compared to having an extra mouth to feed over a longer period of time. For example, Hena’s family in Sherpur has been through real hard times. Their economic situation has deteriorated significantly in the last few years. Their house was burnt down two years before, and they lost everything except the clothes they were wearing. During this hardship, her brother, the only earning member of the family, decided to leave the house and stay with his in-laws. This brought on even harsher times draining the family both emotionally and financially. It was during these hard times that Hena was married-off. As has been mentioned in the conversation with the family, we believe that the marriage was arranged to take the burden of an extra mouth to feed off the family, even if it meant selling land to pay for her dowry. While this proposal was refused earlier, when the proposal was brought to them a second time, the family decided that given their economic condition, and the low demand of a dowry, it would be best to marry Hena off as quickly as possible. Furthermore, as Hena’s mother mentioned, “Eventually we would have had to marry her off. She has no father and no proper guardian and people were bad mouthing us that we cannot marry off our daughter because she has no father. It was also important to consider that my son is the only earning member of the family, and he has to feed his own family as well as look after us. It is only fair to try to minimize the burden we have placed on him. Today or tomorrow we would have to marry Hena off and what we can we do but marry her off if a proposal is there for her.” This case shows that when families for different reasons slide into poverty, their marriage decisions and choices for their daughters may change as a survival strategy for the family. The slide into poverty is closely linked to dowry demands and

costs associated with marriage. In many cases, families who initially were keen on allowing their daughters to study, with the change in poverty status and lack of support, families often decide to marry the girl off as soon as a proposal with minimum dowry is presented to them. One such case is Maleka in Chapai Nawabganj illustrates this point well. Maleka is about 19 or 20 years old. She comes from a relatively well-off family. Her father had a book business and took care of their land. However, her family has been through a very tough time recently. Her older brother passed away last February and exactly a year after that her father also passed away this February. They both suffered from heart disease, which runs in the family. Since the deaths, the economic situation has deteriorated significantly and now with both earning members gone, the family lives on the money given to them by Maleka's maternal uncles. Both her uncles are highly educated. Before the tragedy, Maleka was set on doing well in her exams; continued her studies as far as her parents could afford to keep her in school. But now with both her father and brother gone, she sees herself as a burden on her mother and would like to get married as soon as there is a relatively good proposal for her. While her criteria for a good boy was set high with requirements such as he would have to be educated at least as far as herself or higher, earn a living through a good job and come from a good family, now she would be content to settle for someone who can earn money and will be able to provide for her well. Her case shows us how a shift in the family economic position can alter the aspirations and the expectations around a girls' marriage and her future significantly.

Community characteristics (community pressure, religious norms, role models and aspirations, marriage timing proposals and customs)

Social norms, religious norms and community pressure and marriage decisions

Interestingly it is the poor families who seem to be less concerned with what the community thinks of them waiting on the marriage, as they are too busy trying to make a living to worry about village talk. For example, as will be discussed below while Kaneez's family from Chapai Nawabganj is concerned to marry off their daughter and even pay dowry, nevertheless they pay little attention to what the community has to say about Kaneez's marriage. The community seems to have created significant pressure on the family to marry Kaneez off, as she is getting older. "People have started talking about the delay in marrying Kaneez off. They say that she is getting older and we cannot pay for her and that is why we do not marry her off, etc. But people can say whatever they want. Their ill-mouthing is not affecting us physically, now is it? It's not like their bad talks are making our body rot or anything! Let them talk. We do not have time to listen to their talks as we have to put food on the table and concentrate on surviving."

Generally the social norm across the regions is that if they receive a good proposal (the standard of good differs across the regions) they will marry their daughter off, no matter what the age is and very few stray from this expectation. The social norms also play a role in dowry negotiations. Social norm dictates that all families have to pay dowry and even though some families feeling very strongly about not taking or giving a dowry because it is a sin according to Islam to do so, they have to give in and pay the money regardless of their religious beliefs. For example, Kaneez's mother from Chapai Nawabganj has an interesting take on the issue of dowry. Kaneez comes from a conservative and religious family. All five of her paternal uncles are Jamati (part of the religious-political group, Jamat-E-Islami). As her mother explained, "According to the Islamic rules, those who either take or give dowry, the children of that family become bastards. So if we go against the rules of the Quran and the Hadith (the Prophet's saying) then we would be going against Allah and become *kafers*. Her father and uncles are willing to help out the boy with money to set up a business or something after the marriage if needed but they will not pay dowry." But at the same time her mother recognizes that these days no one gets married without a dowry. Thus, she is prepared to give a dowry for Kaneez but even then marrying her off is proving to be difficult, as they do not have the kind of money that is demanded by the different proposals that come for Kaneez. There seems to have been a significant shift in their perspective on dowry since our last visit. On previous visits we saw that proposals that asked for dowry for Kaneez were immediately turned away, but now the family is considering proposals with dowry demands, only that their ability to pay is much lower than the existing market rate of dowry.

Nevertheless, religious norms still play a key role as well, where the belief is that keeping girls with the natal family after they have started to menstruate is a sin and thus they should be married off as soon as possible. As Bimala's (Sherpur) uncle explained, "If parents let their daughters stay unmarried after they have started bleeding, they will rot in hell." All families have to concede to the social norm and community pressure of fulfilling their responsibility as parents by marrying your daughter off as soon as possible, but wealthier families like Anita's in Sherpur are in better position to ignore the social pressures and wait until they find an appropriate match for their daughter.

Choice in marriage (aspirations) and role models

In most cases where we found that the girl did not consent to marriage or was opposed to the particular match, the marriage has not worked out very well. But the interesting point here is that even if the girl is unhappy in the marriage, leaving her husband has not surfaced as a viable option in any of the cases. For example as Hena from Sherpur told us, "I am unhappy from all perspectives. If the family waited a bit longer, I could

have married someone who did not live so close to my parents. If I had a guardian and we had more money, the family could have spent more and marry me off to a boy who lives further away from here. Then we would not quarrel every day and everybody would not know about my family problems. That would have been ideal." But given their economic situation, she had no choice but to consent to the marriage and once married, as she sadly informed us, "I will have to manage somehow as this is my fate and cannot be changed."

Another case that point to the same direction is that of Yasmin from Sherpur. Yasmin was married to boy from a far off village. He comes from a poor background as well, but a little better off than Yasmin's family. He is illiterate and stays with Yasmin's family and occasionally drives a rickshaw. His earnings are erratic and infrequent. He is lazy and does not have very high ambitions in life. As expected, Yasmin is not very happy with her husband. In fact she clearly told us that she did not consent to this match. She was vehemently opposed to it, but her parents paid no heed to her. As Yasmin said, "I did not like him from the first time I set eyes on him. I did not like the way he looked. And now he does not give me any money to buy hair oil, soap and other necessities I need." At one point, Yasmin divorced her husband with the consent of her family, but he refused to accept it, and her parents remarried her to the same husband a second time (again Yasmin protested against the second wedding). Though Yasmin is quite unhappy with her husband and does not want to be married to him, she does not seem to have the option of going against her parents particularly her father.

Another similar case that supports the above argument is the marriage history of Shahana from Sherpur. After being married off at 16 to her maternal cousin, Shahana has faced consistent abuse at the hands of her husband. Her husband is a rickshaw puller, but his working habits are erratic and he has a gambling habit. Often he blows off most of his income in gambling and if Shahana protests against his gambling, he beats her frequently. Even after at one point Shahana had asked for a divorce with her family's support, she was unable to break the marriage. When probed about what had happened, Shahana told us that when they went to the marriage office to get a divorce her husband found out, came to the Kazi's office and persuaded her mother and aunt to give him another chance. He was so persistent that her family gave in and decided to give him another chance provided he lives in her house, and earns money and provided for Shahana. Shahna's case points to the argument that once a marriage takes place, no matter how dire the situation there is little incentive to break it off as to avoid social stigma of having a divorced daughter living with the family, as has been the case with Shahana. But more importantly, even when the family feels they can afford to break off the marriage and even "Look for another boy for our Shahana even if it means more dowry," the community or *Shamaj*

(society) plays a role in resisting such measures taken by the family, especially if the boy is willing to admit his faults and change his behaviour. Lastly, girls like Shahana have very little agency to resist a match especially if the parents are set on the match and eventually these women resign to their fate and live in an unhappy marriage to save the family reputation.

In the case of Shahana or Yasmin, even if they attempted to divorce their husbands they were not successful in the face of family and community pressures. Also the above-mentioned girls come from relatively poor families and thus, we thought maybe returning to their natal homes and becoming a burden to the families would also be a factor in staying in the marriage.

A different perspective on having choice in the marriage also points to the inability of girls to leave a marriage as seen in the case of Shirin from Chapai Nawabganj. Though Shirin married according to her own choice, she still seems to be unhappy and frustrated with her husband and the marriage in general. Shirin married her cousin against both her parents and in-law's wished. Her in-laws were especially against the match as the economic status of Shirin's family's was below that of her husband's family. Her husband works as a construction worker, but does not find work on a regular basis. He works when there are jobs available, and thus there is no steady income. Shirin has a 2 years old son. Shirin is overworked and stressed over their financial difficulties, and even though her in-laws have finally agreed to the marriage, it does not seem that they have a very good relationship with their daughter in-law. When we asked if they visit often, she did not answer us and steered the conversation in another direction. From her responses, her rather indifferent attitude and the conversations with the neighbours we felt that Shirin was not happy in the marriage and maybe because she married against the wishes of her parents and her in-laws. She feels that she can not even voice her resentment because she married according to her own choice. She has no option to leave the marriage as she will not receive the usual support from her natal family either.

Role models in the lives of the young girls also play a key role in marriage decisions. Our fieldwork suggests those girls who have aunts, uncles or other relatives who are well-educated or have a less than usual perspective on marriage, the future of women, etc. have different aspirations in life as well. Poppy from Chapai Nawabganj, for example, has grown up under the influence of her maternal uncles and aunt. Her uncles are all well educated. She has three uncles: one works as a manager in a well-known company, her middle uncle works with an NGO while the youngest is still studying at Rajshahi University. Poppy looks up to her uncles and her aunt for guidance and they have supported her decision to continue studying. It is evident that her maternal family

dictates the decisions in Poppy's family well-being and Poppy gets her high ambitions from her uncles. Furthermore, when we asked Poppy what type of a boy would be suitable for her, she was very determined to marry someone like her uncles; someone who works in the service sector, is at least passed his BA, and comes from a well-educated and well mannered family. After finishing her BA, Poppy plans to work like her uncles, maybe in an NGO or in the teaching profession. Poppy prefers to be a teacher as she loves teaching younger kids. Poppy tutors a few young children and uses the money for books and other school expenditures. Since her father passed away, the family has faced economic hardships. It has been the support and guidance of her maternal uncles that help Poppy to continue studying and delay getting married. She looks up to her uncles to fight against the odds set against her and succeeds in attaining a higher education.

Proposals, time spent negotiating a marriage

There is considerable regional and economic class variation in the waiting time to marriage from the time a marriage proposal is initiated to the time it is solemnized. For families in Sherpur (relatively poorer region as a whole) the time spent between a proposal and the wedding taking place is quite short. The proposal follows a pattern of informal discussion between the *Ghotok*/relative who brought the proposal and the girl's father, or older brother or uncle, then setting a date for some elders and the groom to come see the bride in her natal home and then another meeting where the dowry is negotiated and the date is set. Both formal meetings take place at the bride's house and elaborate preparations have to be made to receive the groom's family. It is interesting to note that in Sherpur the whole process, starting with the informal proposal, takes only a few days, two or three days at the most. Some reasons behind this is that if the girl's family waits too long, someone else might take away the groom and shorter preparation time also entails lower expenses.

A case from Sherpur that lends evidence to this custom is Bimala's family. Bimala got married at the age of 13. Her parents arranged the marriage without asking for her consent. The prospective groom came with his sister's husband to see her first. Later that day the rest of his family came to reach a firm agreement *'Paka kantha'*[6]. However, on the day of the *Paka kantha* after an agreement on the terms of the marriage was reached the families decided there was no point in waiting and formalized the marriage contract by registering with the Quazi. A party was held two days later, when Bimala was given away to the groom's family by her parents. The dowry was set at Tk. 3,000 and the whole sum was paid the day of the wedding. Her parents also gave her silver earrings, gold nose-ring, clothes and her husband gave her clothes and

[6] Paka Kantha refers to the meeting where the final decision about a match is taken.

shoes. The whole process of the marriage (including paying off the dowry, holding a wedding ceremony and giving away the daughter) was completed in three days since the proposal was brought to Bimala's family.

Furthermore, one of the main factors that delay marriages is collecting a dowry for their daughter. As Pushpita's family from Sherpur stated, "The only reason we asked for two months since the proposal came for Pushpita, before we arranged the ceremony was to be able to collect the dowry money and raise money for the other wedding formalities." Bimala and Pushpita's short engagement and rushed marriages are not unusual in Sherpur.

In contrast, the period between the first informal proposal and the marriage in Chittagong is longer. Part of the ulterior motive behind rushed marriages maybe to save expenses_ it is acceptable to spend less in these rushed marriages since elaborate ceremonies take time. Sherpur is a poorer region, where families do not have as much to spend. One example that illustrates this point is Shahana's family from Chittagong. Shahana comes from a well-off family and thus, despite many proposals, her family was able to wait for a good proposal. She is currently betrothed to her brother-in-law's younger brother. Even then, her mother was unwilling and has insisted on waiting another two years before the marriage takes place, so Shahana can complete her HSC exams. Thus, the engagement period for Shahana will in fact be 4 years if she is married after two years. Thus, time spent negotiating a marriage depends largely on the economic condition of the family as well as the regional norms in the community.

Insecurity or *Ijjat* (honour) and marriage decisions

Marriage decisions are also closely linked with the issue of safety and honour of both the girl and her family. In most cases we found that when girls grow up there parents fear that if kept home for too long they would stray and have an affair and tarnish the family name. This a crucial driving force in marrying young girls off as soon as possible. Also as soon as girl looks old enough physically, young boys in the village might start to bother her and parent are concerned with the security of the girl, and as they have to be married off anyway, the sooner the better. We have come across this notion in several of our case studies. One such case is the marriage of Beauty from Chapai Nawabganj. She was married as young as 13 years old. When we asked her mother about it, she told us that the family was worried that given the present state of the community and her beauty, (Beauty is a pretty young girl with fair skin and sharp features) if kept too long at home, she might get into trouble with the rowdy village boys. Also, people around the village start talking if a girl gets too old and is not married off soon. If such talk made rounds in the

community, the family honour could be tarnished and Beauty's prospects of marriage would be negatively influenced as well. Beauty's mother did not like to give the community to bad-mouth her family and say mean things about Beauty and since there was a good proposal at hand there was no reason not to marry her off. "We knew that good proposals do not come around very often and we did not want to miss the chance of marrying her off into a good family." Beauty's case points to the importance of safely securing a future for the daughters in family as soon as possible, especially if she is good looking and thus, poses higher risks for disasters such as, eloping or becoming victims to young men's greed.

This shows that how looks play an important role in the marriage process and some of our respondents also mentioned looks to be one hand, an important bargaining power factor, but also an impediment in the marriage process on the other hand. For prettier girls there is a rush to be married off early for safety reasons, and often not enough time is spent in looking for a suitable and good boy. The fear of the girl's safety was an issue that cuts across regions and while in Chapai Nawabganj, girls do tend to marry later the sense of insecurity is as stark in Chapai Nawabganj as it is elsewhere. Furthermore, our conversation with Beauty's family and the neighbours brought one key theme in the marriage process. In the rural Bangladeshi marriage system there are many traditions and social norms that have evolved over time and every family who wants to marry their daughter well must abide by these rules. There is no bypassing these rules and girls have to follow the social norms of *ijjat* and security and a good family follows the unwritten rules related to dowry, marrying girls off as soon as there is a good proposal.

The role of dowry

Dowry plays probably the most crucial role in the marriage negotiations. There are several links between dowry, the economic well-being of the family and the timing of the marriage as will be discussed below. Firstly, we found that everybody needs to pay dowry regardless of their economic situation. However, as expected the regional variations in dowry match the overall poverty levels in each region with Sherpur being the poorest and demanding the least amount in dowry and Chittagong's standards being the highest given the region is considerably wealthier.

The definition of dowry varies across regions as well. For example while in Sherpur, everything given to the groom's family is considered dowry. In Chapai Nawabganj only cash money given to the groom is defined as dowry. This is well illustrated in the case of Beauty's family in Chapai Nawabganj, who paid no cash money as dowry to the groom's family. Initially when we probed about dowry they clearly told us that nothing was given for Beauty's marriage. After probing into the matte further, Beauty's parents told us though the boy's family did not want any

money, they in fact did ask for the watch, ring and cycle. However, these are not considered dowry, as it was not a demand for cash money. The expectation for jewellry for Beauty or gifts for her husabnd thus does not count as a demand made by the groom's family. This was interesting given that in other regions, such as Sherpur anything that is asked for by the groom's family is part of the dowry negotiation process.

Secondly, for the poorer families across the regions dowry is the main consideration in the marriage of their daughters. With poorer families, the sense is that girls are not meant to be kept forever, and as soon as the dowry money is collected the girls should be married off because if they wait too long on it the money will be spent for some other purpose in the family. Some families are so poor that they see the marriage of their daughter even with a dowry as a one time cost rather than keeping her home and having extra mouth to feed. Hasna from Sherpur supports this argument well. Despite Hasna's protests to the match made for her, Hasna's mother married her off even when the family was facing economic hardships resulting from their house being burnt down, just so she could relive her son from having an extra mouth to feed.

For families where the girls are still unmarried it is because given their standards of a good boy they have not been able to collect enough for a sizeable dowry. This was well supported through several of our case studies.

Education plays an important role in dowry negotiations. Surprisingly while in Chittagong and Chapai Nawabganj the trend was as expected, which is that with higher educated boys the families need to pay more in dowry as the boy is worthy. Thus, further a girl is educated the more dowry she needs as she wants to be married to a boy equal to her in educational qualifications or higher. And thus, families who were economically solvent allowed the girls to study as much as they wanted as dowry would be no problem and the main concern is to find boys of the same status as themselves. But in Sherpur the consensus was slightly different where families felt that if girls study more they can get a job and work to earn afterwards. This would mean that they would directly contribute to the husband's family and the dowries for such girls are in fact lower than for those with less education. Furthermore, education also has mixed responses, as some believe more education would mean less chances of molding her as the groom's family would want to and thus she is less desirable and would need more dowry than others. The most obvious link between dowry and poverty vis-à-vis marriage is that the families who can afford to pay a good dowry usually take their time in finding a suitable boy and marry their daughter off, i.e., they have the luxury of shopping around.

The families with less economic resources try to negotiate a dowry that is manageable and they feel would be acceptable for a match, and as soon as they have the money to settle the marriage of their daughters. A lower dowry takes precedent over other matters such as family background, the boy's character, etc. An example of this can be seen with Jesmin in Sherpur where the family had enough reasons not marry off Jesmin to this particular man, who is lazy and does not have very high ambitions in life. But regardless of Jesmin's protests the minimum amount of dowry pushed the father to marry off Jesmin here.

In some cases, such as Amena in Chapai Nawabganj, the situation is even worse where the only reason why she hasn't been married yet is the lack of a dowry. In Amena's case, where she is getting too old (17 years old) and there is a sense of urgency in marrying her off but lack of money for a dowry prevents the family to even consider any proposal seriously. As Amena's mother explains, "What would be the point of looking into proposals? In fact, Amena does not receive proposals. How could she? We have nothing. Amena does not have earnings, no land; we will not be able to give anything else either. And that's why there are no formal proposals for Amena."

The human face of the marriage process – *The Ghotok*[7]

The relationship between the *Ghotok* and marriage process is an interesting and dynamic one. While the *Ghotok* often (both professional ones and informal ones) plays a crucial role in making or breaking a marriage, his/her position in the marriage process can be both highly esteemed status or simply a party that is trying to swindle money from the marriage parties. The social norms related to *Ghotok*s vary across regions. The prevalence and acceptance of *Ghotok*s (professional) in Chapai is a lot less than in Chittagong. In Chapai the feeling is families who cannot marry their daughters off either because they are getting too old, are not very pretty and don't have a good reputation need *Ghotok*s to marry off their daughters.

In Chittagong, on the other hand, the prevalence of *Ghotok*s are much higher. Another interesting difference is that in Sherpur, *Ghotok*s have a fixed rate of taking Tk. 100 for every Tk. 1,000 dowry from the families and they take money from both parties. In Chittagong and Chapai, *Ghotok*s take money only from the groom's family and they have no fixed rate. The higher the dowry price, the more the *Ghotok* gets and he also gets clothes from the bride's family as a gift of appreciation.

[7] The ghotok is a commonly used Bengali term that refers to the marriage broker (in our study we have defined ghotok as the professional marriage broker rather than relatives such as aunts or uncles who also act as marriage brokers in the marriage process.)

However, the one trend that is similar across the regions is that the boy's family actively seeks a *Ghotok* to find a suitable match for him, while the girls' family is less inclined to do so. In the case of the bride's family of the girl, the *Ghotok* approaches the family independently when they have a boy who wants to marry. This indicates that the social norm of marrying a girl off as soon as they look old enough prompts the *Ghotok* to bring proposals even if the girl's family has not actively sought him out.

CONCLUSION

There is no general consensus on why young girls get married as early as 12 or 13 years old in Bangladesh. While this study points to some of the broader issues linked to poverty that drive families to marry off their daughters as early as possible, there needs to be more systematic in-depth examination of the poverty linkages to marriages as well as a thorough investigation that unpacks the marriage process and institutions that vary across the regions in Bangladesh.

Some of the findings from this qualitative study suggest the cultural practices in rural Bangladesh largely define the marriage process and govern the marriage institutions. As has been discussed in this paper, there are strong notions of parental obligation, religious norms, social norms, insecurity/*ijjat* issues that drive the practice of early marriages in the regions studied. As has been seen in the case of Bimala from Sherpur for example, the family holds a belief that if the parents are not able to marry off their daughter before she becomes an adult (an indicator of adulthood is menstruation), the parents will be punished by god and burn in hell for the sin. Other cultural trends such as the belief that if girls are not married off early, there is a high risk of them falling in love, eloping with their boyfriends and bringing shame to the family and thus, girls need to be married off even before they start understanding concepts such as love, relationships, etc. Also the upbringing of young girls in rural Bangladesh also prepares them for marriage as their ultimate ambition in life. They aspire to marry well, settle down and start a family as soon as possible. So, while NGOs have been active in advocating notions of a changed future for young girls that do not see marriage as the ultimate success, traditional notions of marriage override the advocacy of NGOs in this respect.

Apart from family perspective, the community as a whole also drives for young girls to marry as early as possible; the elders, the neighbours, the matchmakers, parents of the boys bring proposals to the parents or suggest the girl upon hearing of a search for a bride with characteristics they think match the girl they know. These suggestions are made with the best of intentions and are seen as doing a favour. This often means that parents may feel uneasy about refusing too many proposals lest

people stop coming with them or not coming with equal enthusiasm or interest particularly for their daughters, especially if they have no other reliable network through which proposals may come. They fear the cost paid by their daughter may be too much both in terms of how a) she will be valued and loved now as compared to later because she will not be the preferred choice, and b) with the interest in her waning with age, families will be more interested in the dowry being offered.

The data also suggest that apart from cultural norms, poverty plays an important role in marrying girls off as early as possible. As mentioned in the data, for most poor families the time waited to marry their daughters off equals to the time needed to collect a dowry for the marriage of their daughters. For families who are little better-off, they can spend more time to negotiate an appropriate match within the marriage market as they have more resources. For wealthier families across the three regions, we found that the timing of marriage is determined by own choice and can be delayed, that allows girl to stay in school longer, being choosy over the proposals they receive, and finally deciding on an appropriate groom based on his occupational, educational background as well as family backgrounds.

Paper 8

Youths' Access to Mass Media in Bangladesh

Samir Ranjan Nath

INTRODUCTION

The UN General Assembly, in its first session in 1946, adopted a resolution on freedom of information describing it as a fundamental human right. Today, it is considered that information is important not only for an open and democratic society, but also for fighting against poverty. Amartya Sen makes a big deal on the importance of free media and access to information in getting the government to act against famine. In traditional societies where sensitive issues like HIV/AIDS, etc. are not permissible to discuss openly, information on this can be aired through mass media. Access to information helps challenging corruption and enhancing transparency.

Although often blamed as threatening to cultural identification and values, globalization of media brings opportunity to broaden young peoples' outlook and have equal access to information. Access to advanced technologies brings the promise of new skills and greater youth participation in the society. On the other hand, growing information divide both between and within countries is also a new phenomenon. One estimate shows that 39% of Bangladeshi youths has access to television of which only 5% has access to cable/satellite. These figures are 45% and 17% for India and 59% and 14% for Pakistan (InterMedia Survey 2002-4).

The Constitution of Bangladesh has guaranteed 'the right of every citizen to freedom of speech and expression and freedom of the press', but it did not say anything about citizens' right to information (Article 39.2a, b). The print media in Bangladesh is enjoying much freedom during last one and a half decade compared to any other time before. A number of private television channels are also operating alongside the State owned

TV channel. Many cable/satellite channels are also viewed from Bangladesh. However, we do not know much about the nature of people's access to mass media in the country. This chapter aims to explore what proportion of youths in Bangladesh has access to mass media and what are the socioeconomic correlates of such access. In doing so, we considered only radio, television and newspaper as mass media.

DATA AND METHOD

Three questions on access to mass media were asked to each of the respondents, who attended the literacy test under *Education Watch* 2002. The questions were as follows.

- Have you heard any radio programme at least once during the last one week?
- Have you watched any programme on television at least once during the last one week?
- Did you read newspaper at least once during the last one week?

The questions were asked to each of the respondents separately and separate answers were recorded for each question. A dichotomous response (having access or not) was considered for each. The reference period was the week prior to the interview of the respective respondent; not the same week for all. There was no question whether the respondents had their own radio, television or newspaper. They could avail these mass media from anywhere at their reach. The only condition was consciously/seriously using (listening, watching or reading) the respective media.

Following a four-stage sampling procedure separately in eight strata[1] 3,840 households from 268 neighbourhoods (villages/mahallahs) covering all 64 districts were brought under the survey. Number of youths aged 15-35 years in these households was 7,020; however, 6,427 could be brought under survey. The non-response rate was higher for the males than the females (12.4% vs. 5%). The fieldwork was done during October-November 2002. Details of the methodology and data collection procedure are available elsewhere (Ahmed *et al.* 2003).

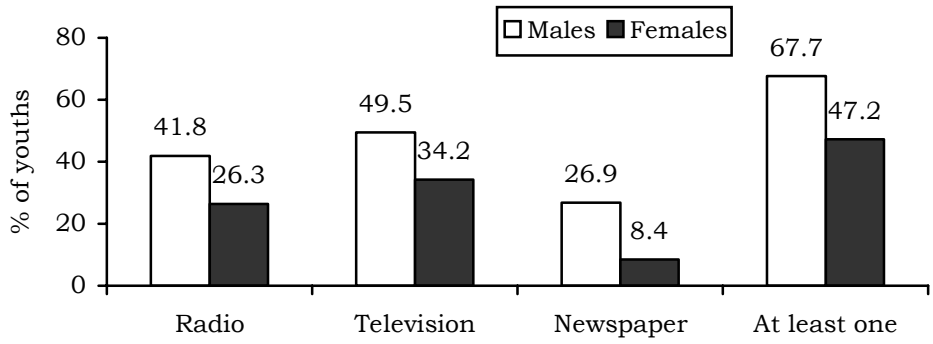
[1] The country was first divided into two broad areas - rural and urban. The rural areas were then divided into six according to administrative divisions and the urban areas into two – metropolitan cities and the municipalities. The four stages were upazila, union, village and household.

FINDINGS

Access to media: gender and residence

Among the youths (aged 15-35 years) of Bangladesh a third had access to radio, 41% had access to television, and 16.7% had access to newspaper. The females significantly lagged behind the males in access to all three mass media ($p<0.001$) (Fig. 1). Gender difference was the highest in the case of access to newspaper (18.5%); it was mostly similar for other two mass media (about 15%). Over 56% of the youths had access to at least one of these mass media. This rate was 67.7% for the males and 47.2% for the females – a difference of over 20 percentage points. This shows that more than half of the female youths had no access to any of the mass media. Among the youths under survey, 29.3% had access to only one of these mass media, 19.6% had access to any two, and 7.5% had access to all three mass media. While 3.4% of the female youths had access to all three mass media, it was 12.5% among the male youths.

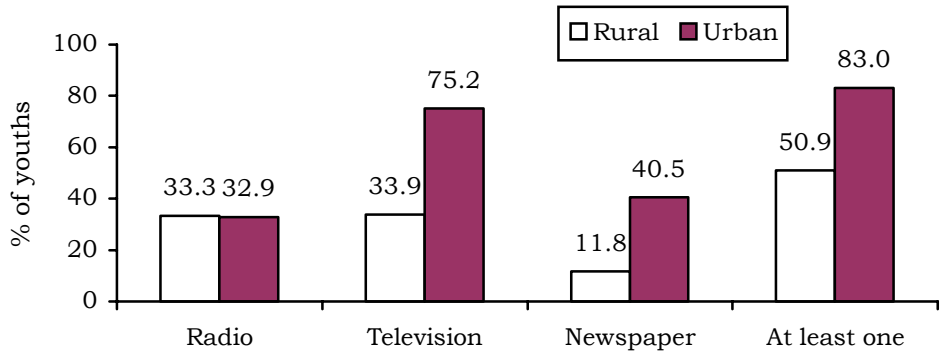
Figure 1. Proportion of youths (aged 15-35 years) having access to different mass media by sex



Although there was no difference between the youths of rural and urban areas regarding access to radio, the urban youths had much greater access to the other two mass media – television and newspaper compared to their rural counterparts (Fig. 2). In the case of urban youths, television was the most accessible mass media followed by newspaper and radio. In rural areas, an equal portion of the youths had access to radio and television followed by newspaper by a far distance. The chance of youths having access to radio or television in rural areas was three times higher

than that of the newspaper. Statistically significant gender difference disfavouring the females prevails in both the areas (Annex 1).

Figure 2. Proportion of youths (aged 15-35 years) having access to different mass media by residence



Urban-rural divide in access to television and newspaper was much more prominent compared to gender divide (Fig. 1 and 2). For instance, the rural youths were 41.3 percentage points behind the urban youths in having access to television, whereas gender gap in access to this media was 15.3 percentage points. Again, in the case of access to newspaper the rural-urban gap was 28.7 percentage points and the gender gap was 18.4 percentage points.

Eighty-three percent of the urban youths and nearly 51% of those in rural areas had access to at least one of these three mass media. This means that the rural youths were 32 percentage points behind their urban counterparts in having access to any mass media (Fig. 2). On the other hand, 15.9% of the urban and 5.7% of the rural youths had access to all three mass media.

Translating the proportional distribution of the sampled respondents into the 54 million youths[2] in the country it can be estimated that 23.5 million of Bangladesh youths had no access to any mass media, 15.8 million had access to only one media, 10.6 million had two and 4.1 million had all three. Again, two thirds of those having no access to mass media were females. About 20 million rural youths had no access to any mass media.

Stratum-wise analysis shows that youths of the metropolitan cities were at the top of the list regarding access to mass media followed by their

[2] Over 38% of the 140 million population of Bangladesh is youth (aged 15-35 years). Females share is 51.3% in the total youth population. Seventy percent of the youths live in rural areas (BBS 2003).

urban counterpart municipalities (Table 1). Over 88% of the youths of metropolitan cities and 78.4% of those living in municipalities had access to at least one mass media. No rural areas could catch up with them. Khulna division was at the top of the list in rural areas followed by Barisal division with a difference of 12.5 percentage points (68.5% vs. 56%). Mostly similar level of access was observed among the youths of rural Chittagong and Rajshahi divisions (around 52%). The youths of rural Sylhet division had the least access to mass media; 40.4% of them had access to any of the mass media. The position of rural Dhaka was just one step ahead of rural Sylhet division. The difference between the highest and the lowest stratum was 38 percentage points. The five rural divisions where the overall access to mass media was lower than the national average are: Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Barisal and Sylhet. Table 1 provides more on this. Followings are some of the key points from this table.

- Regarding access to radio rural Khulna, Barisal and Rajshahi divisions were ahead of the urban areas.
- The youths of the metropolitan cities were ahead of others regarding access to television and newspaper, but not radio.
- The situation of rural Dhaka was worse than rural Sylhet regarding youths' access to newspaper. Barisal topped in this regard among the rural divisions.
- Access to television was higher than other two media in all strata except two. These are rural Rajshahi and Barisal divisions

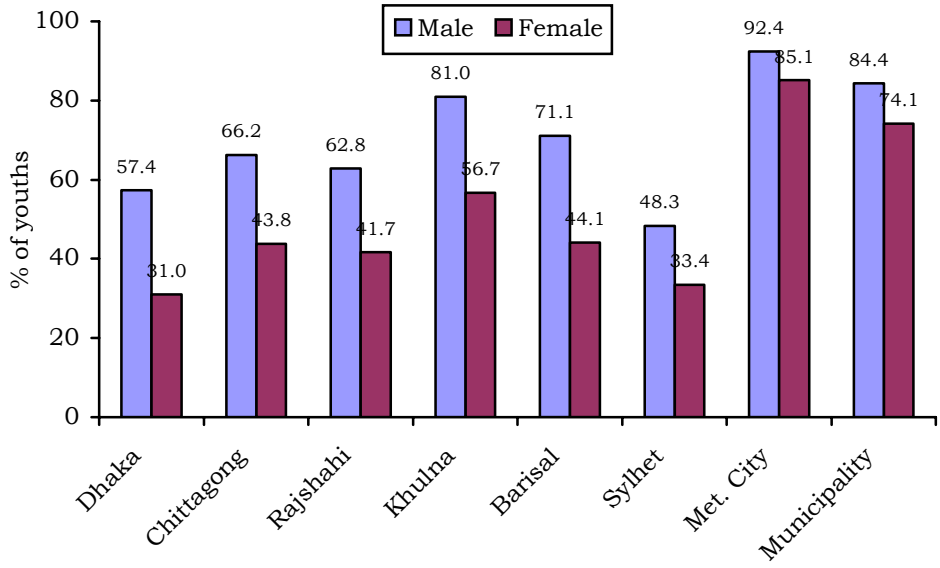
Table 1. Proportion of youths (aged 15-35 years) having access to media by strata

Strata	Media			
	Radio	Television	Newspaper	At least one
Rural Dhaka division	26.3	30.9	7.4	42.9
Rural Chittagong division	33.7	34.1	11.4	52.2
Rural Rajshahi division	37.6	29.3	14.7	51.9
Rural Khulna division	44.0	50.9	13.8	68.5
Rural Barisal division	37.8	37.2	16.2	56.0
Rural Sylhet division	22.5	30.0	10.9	40.4
Metropolitan cities	30.7	81.7	51.3	88.4
Municipalities	34.6	69.6	31.4	78.4
Significance	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001

Gender difference disfavouring the females was observed in all strata (Fig. 3 and Annex 2). The highest difference was accounted in rural Barisal division (27 percentage points), followed by rural Dhaka division (26.4 percentage points). The lowest gender difference was found in the metropolitan cities (7.3 percentage points). Females of some areas, for instance, rural Dhaka and Sylhet divisions, had very low level of access

to mass media. Over two-thirds of them had no access to any mass media. Interestingly, 92.4% of the males of the metropolitan cities had access to at least one mass media. Over 80% of the males of rural Khulna division, metropolitan cities, and municipalities; and the females of the metropolitan cities had access to at least one mass media.

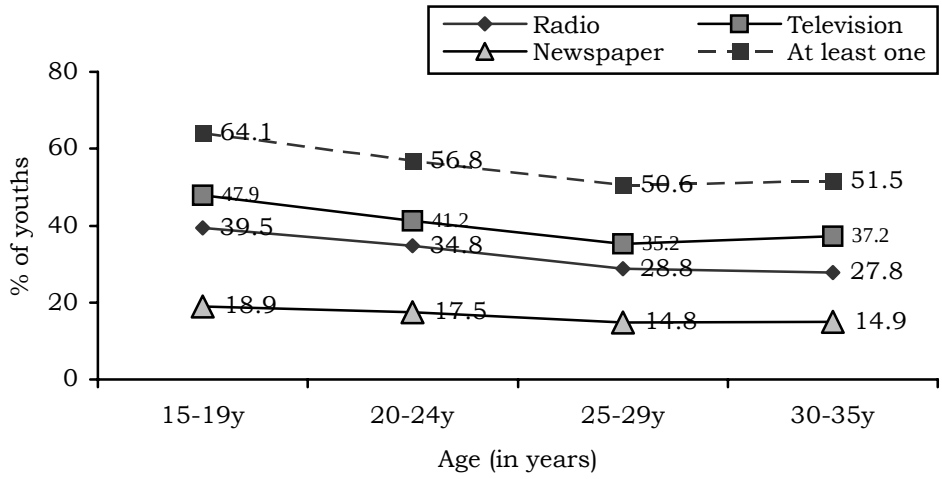
Figure 3. Proportion of youths (aged 15-35 years) having access to at least one media by strata and sex



Age and access to media

As the age of the youths increased they were less likely to have access to mass media (Fig. 4). For instance, 64.1% of the youths aged 15-19 years had access to at least one of the mass media, which was 56.8% among the youths aged 20-24 years and about 50% for those aged 25 years and above. Statistically significant age variation was also found when separate analysis was done for radio, television and newspaper. Access to television was at the top irrespective of age of the youths followed by radio and newspaper.

Figure 4. Proportion of youths (aged 15-35 years) having access to different mass media by age



When the above age specific analysis was done for the males and the females separately, mostly similar pattern were observed. Two added findings in this regard are, firstly, the increase of access to mass media among the 30-35 years old youths compared to their immediate past age group was due to the increase of access to television among the females of that particular age group. Secondly, no age variation was observed in men's access to newspaper (Fig. 5 and Annex 3).

Figure 5. Proportion of youths (aged 15-35 years) having access to newspaper by age and sex

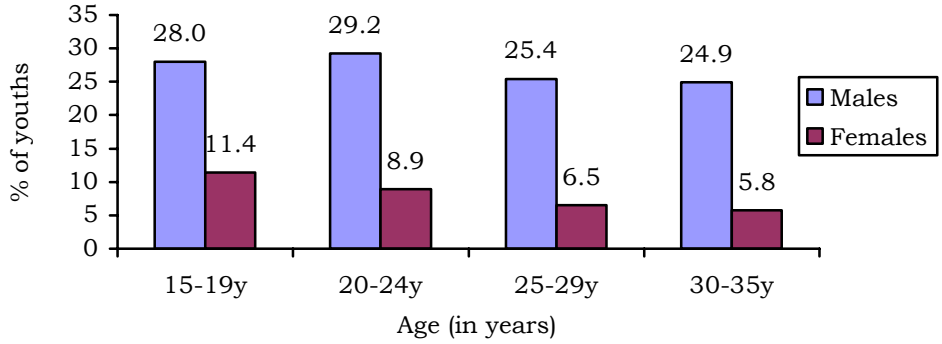
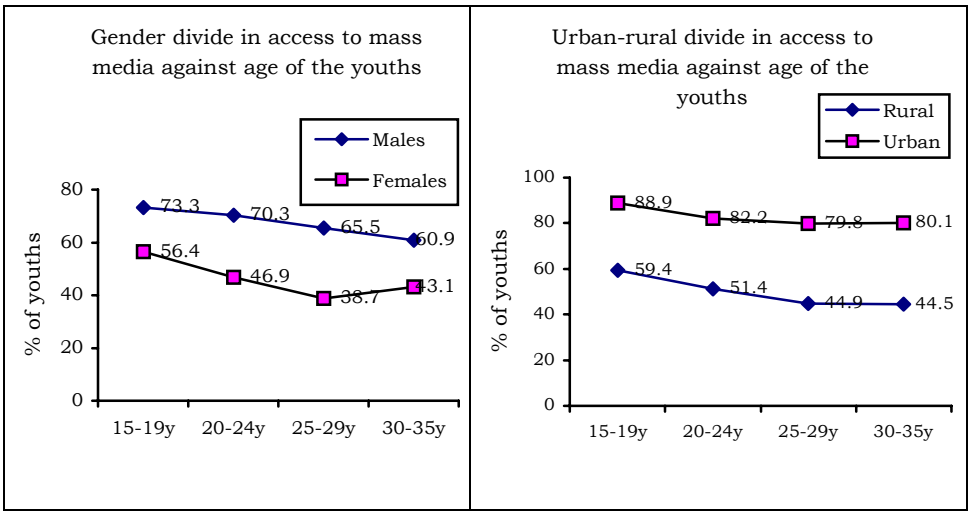


Figure 6 shows that the gender divide in access to mass media increased with the increase of age of the youths and then suddenly decreased at age 30 years. On the other hand, urban-rural divide was always kept

increasing with the increase of age of the youths. Moreover, urban-rural divide was prominent than the gender divide for all groups of youths.

Figure 6. Proportion of youths (aged 15-35 years) having access to at least one mass media by age, gender and residence



Education and access to media

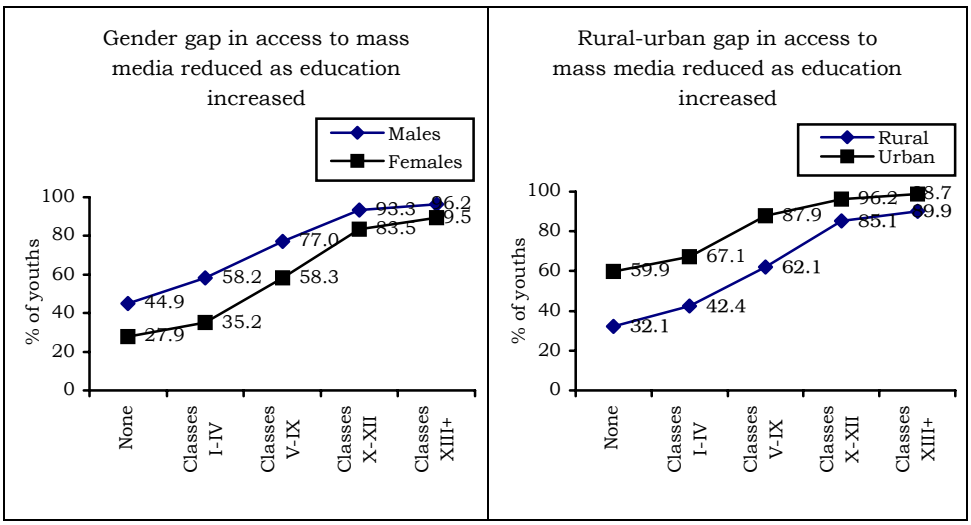
Youths' level of education had positive relationship with their access to various mass media (Table 2). For instance, nearly 35% of the never schooled youths had access to at least one of these mass media, which increased to 45.9% among primary incompletes, and to 94.1% among those having 12 years of schooling. Among the three types of mass media, increase of access to newspaper was much sharper than the other two. Among the youths with over 12 years of schooling, access to radio, television, and newspaper was respectively 50.8%, 76.3% and 86% of the youths. Similar findings were observed when access to mass media was cross-tabulated with literacy status of the youths (Annex 4).

Table 2. Proportion of youths (aged 15-35 years) having access to media by years of schooling completed

Years of schooling completed	Media			At least one
	Radio	Television	Newspaper	
Never schooled	22.0	20.0	0.3	34.9
Classes I – IV	25.0	32.9	1.8	45.9
Classes V – IX	39.9	49.9	17.6	66.2
Classes X – XII	49.7	72.6	59.2	89.1
Classes XIII+	50.8	76.3	86.0	94.1
Significance	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001

Gender as well as rural-urban gap in access to mass media reduced with the increase of education of the youths (Fig. 7). For instance, the gender gap was 17 percentage points among never schooled youths, which increased to 23 percentage points among the primary incompletes, and then gradually reduced with the increase of education level and reached at 6.7 percentage points among higher secondary completes. On the other hand, the rural-urban gap was 27.8 percentage points among the never schooled youths, which gradually decreased with the increase of every level of education and reached at 8.8 percentage points for those more than 12 years of schooling.

Figure 7. Proportion of youths (aged 15-35 years) having access to at least one mass media by years of schooling completed, gender and residence



Religion and access to mass media

The non-Muslim youths were more likely to have access to mass media compared to the Muslim youths (Table 3). Over 63% of the non-Muslim and 55.1% of the Muslim youths had access to at least one of the mass media ($p<0.001$). Media-wise analysis shows such difference in two cases – radio and television. No significant difference was observed in case of access to newspaper.

Table 3. Proportion of youths (aged 15-35 years) having access to media by religion

Religion	Media			At least one
	Radio	Television	Newspaper	
Muslim	32.0	40.4	16.7	55.1
Non-Muslim	40.5	44.4	17.0	63.6
Significance	p<0.001	p<0.001	ns	p<0.001

Statistically significant gender as well as rural-urban gap was found in both the religious groups. However, the gaps were more prominent among the Muslim youths than the non-Muslims. For instance, among the Muslim youths the gender gap in access to at least one media was 22.2 percentage points and the rural-urban gap was 33.2 percentage points. These rates were respectively 11.2 percentage points and 26.2 percentage points among the non-Muslim youths.

Multivariate analysis

Regression models

In order to predict the probability of youths' access to mass media, a multivariate analysis was felt needed beyond the bivariate analyses done above. It is important because it would help us to understand the influence of a particular variable on access to mass media by controlling the influences of others. Considering the dichotomous nature of the intended variables (having access or not) binary logistic regression analysis was thought to be suitable for this (Menard 1995, Hosmer and Lemeshow 1989). The model is as follows.

$$\text{In}\,[p\,/\,(1-p)] = a + \Sigma b_i x_i$$

Where, p is the probability of a youth having access to media; a is the constant; b_i values are estimated regression coefficients; and x_i are the background characteristics of the youths.

Careful selection of explanatory variables is important for any regression analysis. In our case we found that age and years of schooling of the youths were significantly correlated (inversely) to each other. Again, years of schooling completed by the youths had significant relationship with their sex, area of residence, and religion. Thus, to avoid multi-colinearity we had two choices – building the model with a set of four variables viz., sex, area of residence, age and religion or considering only years of schooling as predictor of access to mass media. The first choice is attractive due to more number of variables and the opportunity to show

various media divides. On the other hand, attraction to the second choice lays in significant policy implications.

Four separate models were built with each set of explanatory variables – one for each of the media and a combined one considering access to at least one media, totalling eight regression models. A stepwise approach was used and the models were selected by a combination of forward selection and backward elimination of the explanatory variables. In addition to the regression coefficients, odds ratios of the coefficients are provided as output of the analyses. Table 4 provides the results from first set of four models and Table 5 provides the same for second set of models.

Table 4. Logistic regression models predicting youths' (aged 15-35 years) access to various mass media considering sex, age, residence and religion as predictors

Explanatory variables	Radio		Television		Newspaper		At least one	
	Reg. coeff.	Odds ratio	Reg. coeff.	Odds ratio	Reg. coeff.	Odds ratio	Reg. coeff.	Odds ratio
Sex								
Females	0	1.00	0	1.00	0	1.00	0	1.00
Males	0.72*	2.04	0.74*	2.09	1.57*	4.81	0.94*	2.56
Residence								
Rural	na		0	1.00	0	1.00	0	1.00
Urban			1.88*	6.60	1.85*	6.34	1.68*	5.36
Age								
15–19y	0	1.00	0	1.00	0	1.00	0	1.00
20–24y	-0.19$^{\varphi}$	0.83	-0.32*	0.72	-0.11	0.90	-0.34*	0.71
25–29y	-0.50*	0.61	-0.62*	0.54	-0.35*	0.70	-0.64*	0.53
30–35y	-0.57*	0.56	-0.61*	0.54	-0.47*	0.62	-0.68*	0.51
Religion								
Muslim	0	1.00	0	1.00	na		0	1.00
Non-Muslim	0.40*	1.49	0.22$^{\varphi}$	1.25			0.42*	1.53
Constant	-0.82*		-0.71*		-2.75*		-0.07	
- 2 log likelihood	7724.06		7603.70		4770.17		7768.48	
Cox & Snell R^2	0.04		0.13		0.13		0.13	
Nagelkerke R^2	0.06		0.18		0.23		0.17	

Note: na = not appeared in the model; * = p<0.001, $^{\varphi}$ = p<0.01

Summary of findings from the first set of regression analyses are presented below.

- The model for 'access to at least one media' accepted all the four explanatory variables considered. It suggests that the males, urban residents, non-Muslims and relatively lower aged youths were more likely to have access to at least one mass media compared to their respective counterparts. The similar results were found in case of youths' access to television.
- Youths living in rural and urban areas had equal access to radio. However, the females, higher aged youths and the Muslims were less

likely to have access to radio compared to their respective counterparts.

- Religion had no influence on youths' access to newspaper. However, the males living in urban areas and relatively younger in age were more likely to have access to newspaper compared to their respective counterparts.

The second set of regression analyses show that youths' access to mass media significantly increased with the increase of their years of schooling. One exceptional case is that never schooled and primary incomplete youths had the same level of access to radio. Again, access to newspaper increased much faster than any other media with respect to increase of years of schooling.

Table 5. Logistic regression models predicting youths' (aged 15-35y) access to various mass media considering years of schooling as predictors

Explanatory variable	Radio		Television		Newspaper		At least one	
	Reg. coeff.	Odds ratio	Reg. coeff.	Odds ratio	Reg. coeff.	Odds ratio	Reg. coeff.	Odds ratio
Schooling								
None	0	1.00	0	1.00	0	1.00	0	1.00
Classes I – IV	0.17	1.18	0.67*	1.96	1.86*	6.42	0.46*	1.58
Classes V – IX	0.86*	2.36	1.38*	3.99	4.31*	74.70	1.29*	3.65
Classes X – XII	1.26*	3.51	2.36*	10.58	6.22*	504.75	2.72*	15.10
Classes XIII+	1.30*	3.67	2.55*	12.84	7.65*	2100.0	3.42*	30.47
Constant	-1.27*		-1.39*		-5.85*		-0.62*	
- 2 log likelihood	7674.25		7571.52		3592.26		7546.02	
Cox & Snell R^2	0.05		0.14		0.28		0.16	
Nagelkerke R^2	0.07		0.19		0.47		0.21	

na = not appeared in the model; * = p<0.001

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Although access to information is a basic human right internationally, the youths in Bangladesh do not enjoy much of that freedom. Our estimate shows that 43.6% of the Bangladeshi youths do not have access to radio, television or newspaper. This estimate is nearly 53% among the females.

Of the three media explored, television came out as the highest accessible media to the youths and newspaper the lowest. This variation is understandable. Access to newspaper requires certain level of reading ability; otherwise, television is a visual media and hence accessible to even illiterate persons. But surprisingly, 48% of the advanced level literates, 40% of those with 10-12 years of schooling, and 14% of those with 13 years or more schooling did not access newspaper during one week prior to interviewing them. Even then, a clear influence of education on access to mass media appeared from the analysis done. Less than 2% of those who did not complete their primary education had access to newspaper.

Various types of media divide came out from the analysis. For instance, proportionately more males had access to media than the females, urban youths were ahead of their rural counterparts, the Muslim youths lagged behind their non-Muslim neighbours and the seniors in the youth population were less likely to have access than their junior counterparts. It is important to understand these gaps further in order to address them.

We could not make education equally accessible to all children and adolescents in the country. Quality of education significantly varies from one group of population to another. And hence, the people in Bangladesh reach their youth age with differential educational background. Given the relatively recent rise in school enrolment, especially for girls, those who entered earlier in the youth cohort were less educated than those entered later. Thus, the gender and the rural-urban divides in access to mass media increased with the increase of age of the youths. Analyses of this chapter and an earlier chapter in this book have shown that level of education varied according to gender, religion, area of residence, and age of the youths. Such a variation might have created income inequity among the youths placed in job market, which has implications on the ability to have access to mass media at home, understanding the need of their importance, and interest to those as well. Less educated youths

might have engaged in low paid job, which impact their accessibility to mass media. On the other hand, access to education not only increased access to mass media, it also helped in reducing gender gap as well as urban-rural divide. Thus, the policy option here is to increase access to quality education for all, irrespective of sex, area of residence and religion as an entry point for increasing access to mass media and elimination of various divides that exists.

This study considered only three mass media. Future study can include more especially ICT. Again, this survey did not include some further questions such as for what purpose the youths use these media, use intensity, benefits, what types of programmes attracted them, comparative assessment of various media sources, etc. These are important to formulate policies and interventions to increase access and the usefulness of media for the youth.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Proportion of youths (aged 15-35 years) having access to media by residence and sex

Media	Rural			Urban		
	Males	Females	Significance	Males	Females	Significance
Radio	42.2	26.1	p<0.001	39.7	27.5	p<0.001
Television	43.7	25.9	p<0.001	77.7	73.2	p<0.05
Newspaper	20.5	4.6	p<0.001	58.0	26.7	p<0.001
At least one	63.6	40.5	p<0.001	88.2	78.9	p<0.001

Annex 2. Proportion of youths (aged 15-25 years) having access to at least one mass media by sex

Strata	Sex		Difference	Level of
	Males	Females	(Male-Female)	significance
Rural Dhaka division	57.4	31.0	26.4	p<0.001
Rural Chittagong division	66.2	43.8	22.4	p<0.001
Rural Rajshahi division	62.8	41.7	21.1	p<0.001
Rural Khulna division	81.0	56.7	24.3	p<0.001
Rural Barisal division	71.1	44.1	27.0	p<0.001
Rural Sylhet division	48.3	33.4	14.6	p<0.001
Metropolitan cities	92.4	85.1	7.3	p<0.001
Municipalities	84.4	74.1	10.3	p<0.001
Significance	p<0.001	p<0.001		

Annex 3. Proportion of youths (aged 15-35 years) having access to media by age and sex

Age	Radio		Television		Newspaper		Any	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
15 – 19y	45.6	34.4	55.7	41.5	28.0	11.4	73.3	56.4
20 – 24y	46.0	26.7	51.7	33.6	29.2	8.9	70.3	46.9
25 – 29y	38.6	21.1	46.1	26.6	25.4	6.5	65.5	38.7
30 – 35y	36.3	20.2	42.9	32.0	24.9	5.8	60.9	43.1
Sig.	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	ns	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001

Annex 4. Proportion of youths (aged 15-35 years) having access to media by various levels of literacy skills

Levels of literacy skills	Media			At least one
	Radio	Television	Newspaper	
Non-literate	22.4	22.1	0.2	36.4
Semi-literate	27.0	33.2	2.1	46.1
Literate-initial	37.1	49.2	15.0	64.7
Literate-advanced	50.4	68.4	52.0	86.4
Significance	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001