Chapter One

Introduction
INTRODUCTION

The position of women is often considered as a test by which the civilisation of a country or age may be judged. The test is extraordinarily difficult to apply, because of the difficulty of determining what any age constitutes the position of women. The position of women is one thing in theory, another in legal position, yet another in everyday life.¹

The argument which we wish to put forward has two elements which can conveniently be expressed briefly at the outset. The first is that conventional classes at analyses are not defective because they fail to take account of gender differences, but rather their inability to adequately conceptualise the position of women is a sign which points to an inadequacy in conventional class analysis as such.² The second strand concerns the nature of this postulated inadequacy. We suggest that it is mistaken to identify the position


of persons in the social hierarchy solely with reference to...

their position in the occupational hierarchy, whether that is used as an index of their position in the technical division of labour, or in the social division of labour, or both. We wish to argue, rather, that position must be defined not only in terms of position in the occupational structure but also in terms of position in the labour market, and that these two types of positions closely related as they are, nonetheless distinct analytically.

The second point requires some fuller elaboration. There is in the literature a tendency to use the term 'Labour - market position' to refer to position in the occupational structure and to define segments of the market chiefly in terms of types of occupation and patterns of recruitment.

The essence of our argument is that position in the social hierarchy is determined, not merely by occupational position (or lack of it) but by market position (the typical probability of obtaining different types of employment). It is not being claimed that persons in the same or similar labour market positions constitute classes. It is being claimed that market position is an
enormously important determinant of the formation of collectivities on the basis of common position in the productive process, however defined, with their corresponding life styles and patterns of association, socio-political orientations and modes of action (Goldthorpe, 1983). Labour-market position does not define class, but it is a determinant of class formation. It follows that experience in the labour-market as well as experience of the labour process are vital determinants of worker attitudes and behaviour, both in the workplace and in social life more generally and that labour-market processes as well as processes occurring within the workplace are crucial determinants of worker biography, occupational mobility and hence of consciousness and action.

It only remains to link these two trades together: conventional class analysis, is failing to give a proper place to labour-market position and concentrating on position in the occupational hierarchy makes it impossible to comprehend adequately the position of women, since women's distinctive economic attributes is that they constitute a negatively privileged category within the labour-market. It is the inferiority of their labour-market position relative to men that is the immediate source of their relative disadvantage. The exploration of the causes
of that disadvantage requires an understanding of their location in the labour-markets in a different sense, that of their location is local social structure. The term 'local' is appropriate in that all labour-market are territorially based since the transformation of labour power into concrete labour normally requires the regular movement of labourers from their places of residence to their places of work. The term 'social structure' is meant the network of specific relationships between specific persons resulting from the existence of institutionalised type of social relation, of means of co-operation and co-ordination and of social practice carried out under a set of determinate material conditions, and the forms of consciousness (or if you prefer, systems of beliefs and values) which inform these practices when-so-ever they originate.

It is important to note in this regard that labour-market location is just as important a determinant of the labour-market position of men as it is of women. It must also be regarded as an important determinant of differences in labour-market position between members of the same gender category, and from the standpoint of class analysis labourers should be classified in terms of occupational and market positions but without reference to gender, race, age or whatever. In one sense this is correct. Any
theoretical specification of occupation or market no more requires reference to these other categories than specification of biological sexual differentiation requires reference to gender. However, any sociological study of sexual behaviour must take into account gender definitions since these definitions affect that behaviour crucially. Any sociological study of the operation of the labour-market must take into account those attributes which affect its operator, whether or not those attributes consciously structure the behaviour of the participants. Hence a sociological study of the labour-market seeks to understand labour-market phenomena by the identification of the participants in the social structure. It is in no way to deny the basic character of economic differentiation to assert that such differentiation does not exhaust what is meant by social structure and that non-economic attributes may affect the operation of basic processes vitally.

The recognition of the importance of non-economic attributes in conditioning processes which are economic by definition does not imply that all such attributes are equally important or affect a given process in the same way. For example, whereas chronological age is clearly of major importance as a determinant of labour-market position, it does not specify a specific
structural location. Gender, on the other hand is associated closely with position in the household and in the structure of the family, and it is a truism to assert that it is the differential location of the genders in the private sphere that conditions their participation in the politic world of employment. The model of the social structure of the labour-market which we have adopted is therefore of household, the participation of whose members in paid work is determined by their position within the household and the character of their local social networks which link households with one another and their members with different types of employment opportunity. We regard position within the structure of the networks with employment opportunities as major determinants of individuals labour - market positions, i.e. of their chances of obtaining different types of employment.

‘Women constitute half the world’s population, perform nearly two thirds of its work hours, receive one tenth of the world’s income and own less than one – hundredth of the world’s property’. ³

It is significant that it was not until 1980 that a United Nations report provided this quotation now widely accepted which has shifted from being dramatically challenging to being conventionally acceptable in a very short time. The UN Decade for Women (1976 – 1985) was significant as it heralded a new era for the emancipation of women throughout the world. More important contribution towards the cause of women was the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979, Bangladesh was one of the foremost countries to ratify the convention.4

Over the last two decades, Bangladesh has undergone a tremendous change in terms of women’s participation in national development. The major push came form two sources. One was the UN decade for creating a global awareness on the subordinate status of women and the other, the increasing poverty with increased pressure of population specially in the developing

nations. Both helped women in crossing the boundary of four walls and undertaking the responsibilities of their families on expanded economic role.  

Until the late twentieth century, the recorded history of western societies was overwhelmingly dominated by the exploits of men. With rare exceptions, information contained in traditional reference works, such as encyclopaedias and history books showed a definite bias toward the contributions of man while overlooking or downplaying those of women.

For instance, though many women scientists were recognised and respected in their day, later historians tended to discredit their contributions because women often did not publish their works under their own name failed to recognise their collaboration with their husbands. Women laid the groundwork for modern chemistry. Emilie du Chartelet, a Newtonian Scientist greatly influenced the work of her companion, Voltaire. What credit


history text has given to Catherine Greene for co-inventing the Cotton gin with Eli Whitney?

Women in fact, have not just kept the home fires burning and raised children for the past 5000 years. They have also advanced technology, discovered new lands, created innovative art, music and dance, led armies, added to the body of important world literature, became influential national leaders, and questioned and changed existing social beliefs and structures to improve the quality of life for all people. To do so, many had to overcome formidable obstacles. Barred from entering a university, mathematician Sophia German borrowed lecture notes, taught herself and formulated a prize-winning theory. Without any formal education at all, Madame C.J. Walker started her own company and became the first self-made woman millionaire in America.

In retrospect it is astonishing that until the early 1970’s most sociologists neglected any serious consideration of those who did most of the world’s work.7 During the 1970s the so-called

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The domestic labour debate flourished, and by 1979 more than fifty articles on housework had been published in the British and American Socialist Journals. The domestic labour debate lost its impetus by the end of the 1970s and the obsessive careers with housework and housewives gave way to a much broader analysis of the full range of women's economic and non-economic activities and the social relations in which they are embedded. Over the last decade interest has shifted away from the subordination of women in the segmented labour market.

Women across the world have consciously come together to examine their situation, and to press for an improvement in their status. Although exploitation of, and discrimination against women are global phenomenon, their consequences are particularly tragic in the Third world. Poverty, ignorance, deprivation of the basic necessities of life, and the new preserves of transition from tradition to modernity combine to aggravate the inequalities that women in the third world countries share with their counterparts in

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8 Ibid., p. 350.
the developed world to a point at which their existence is reduced to a continuous battle for survival.

The status of women in any society is determined by the interplay of various socio-economic factors. Some of these may be 'objective' in nature like education, employment, income, etc. or 'subjective' depending on the social values prevailing in the society. By status we refer to the value and meaning given to these activities by wider society, which in turn both reflect and influence the general rubric of gender relations. Barbara Rogers (1980) points out that the phrase 'status of women' often carries a rather 'pejorative tone' and suggests that 'judgements made by anthropologists and sociologists alike about the "status of women" in other societies may tell us more about those who are making these judgements than about their subjects. Rogers also argues that status is essentially a static concept and observes that the status of men is rarely, if ever, a subject for study. However, the term 'status' should be constructed as a dynamic concept with the implication of change over the time, and as far as possible to avoid ethnocentric value judgements.

The overall socio-economic revolution of Bangladesh is characterised by endemic poverty, slow economic growth, over population and poor health, sanitation and housing condition for the overwhelming majority of its people. Gender inequalities in relation to economic and social development are evident in the existing disparities in demographic, economic and social indicators for men and women.\(^\text{11}\)

It is evident that the existing socio – cultural norms and value systems, reinforced by age-old patriarchal domination limit, Women's access to many available opportunities and tend to keep them outside the power structure. Women's contribution to the economy has remained largely unrecognised and unaccounted for resulting in a denial of their rights and access to essential services which are necessary to overcome gender specific constraints to remunerative employment and better quality of life. The current trend indicates that the traditional roles of women in Bangladesh are changing fast due to increasing landlessness, impoverishment and male migration to urban areas. According to the IDA/UNDP 1989 report, women now comprise the largest proportion of those

living below the poverty line, who are some 51% of the rural and 56% of the urban population in Bangladesh.  

Defining The Term In The Present Study

In sociology the term ‘change’ is at once the most difficult and most fascinating problem. The change means structural change. MacIver says “A social structure is a nexus of present relationship. It lives only as it is maintained by the will of social beings. In every society numerous process of change are occurring simultaneously. 

After the war of liberation of 1971, the power has been transferred, almost without from the old traditional elite mostly connected with the traditional cases of the land control) to a new power elite whose sources of strength lay in new riches on newly required landed estates. If it is the picture of rural Bangladesh, in the semi-urban and urban areas as well.


In such a context how are we to get a picture of the social structure of Bangladesh? What is the character of the dynamism of this society? Therefore, in any study of Bangladesh it is at first necessary to delineate the character and role of the middle class, one must have some kind of educational and cultural attainment. A tradesman or a shopkeeper may belong to the middle income group, or even the upper-income group, yet he could not be taken as a member of the middle class, unless he has some kind of educational or cultural attainment. It is sometimes asserted that Bangladesh society is "led" by the middle class. It is often said that the politics of the country takes its shape largely from the leadership provided by this class.\footnote{A.K. Nazmul Karim. The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society. Nawroze Kitabistall, Dacca, Bangladesh, 1980. p. 234-35.}

In the above context I also used the term 'change' i.e. the present social structure of Bangladesh. In the same tune the term 'position' has been used to understand the social standing of women in Bangladesh. Here position is used to denote the role of women in general. A women is recognised in the family or in the society by which role she plays in the existing setting. A social role is the expected behaviour associated with a social position. A
position is simply the label or the means of identifying a particular social role, and often in the literature on the subject the two terms are used interchangeably. Thus the position of 'doctor' identifies a particular body of expected behaviour or the role of doctor. To define a social position is to state the essential or minimal features of the expected behaviour or role. Strictly speaking, however, to define or social position completely, i.e. sociologically as opposed to logically, is to indicate all its role prescription. In this sense the terms positions and role are only analytically separable. 15

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What is to be the indicator of 'position' of women in Bangladesh? The term 'position' here is also used with the term 'status' as well as the term 'role' which are very synonymous and conceptualised as a "multifaceted construct," where the term denotes not only "the conjunction of rights and duties," but also reflects the several roles of women, "her role in decision-making in family affairs and her self perceived status in the home and in the community." Status is perceived as "a position in a social system or sub-system which is distinguishable from and at the same time related to other positions through its designated rights and obligations."  

Ibid., G. Duncan, Mitchell (ed.), p. 159.

The term 'status' was first used in anthropology by Ralph, Linton (1936). Status indicates the position of an individual or a group, in terms of several values in society. Each status position is expressed in terms of role. Role denotes a set of expectations and obligations associated with a particular status position within a group. It is thus the sum total of various culturally attributed roles one has to play together with the rights and duties inherent in a social position. Linton (1945) clearly points out that, status is a collection of rights and duties and as such it is clearly distinct from the person who occupies it. Status denotes, a range of identified social categories as men and women acquire their identities through all the units and institutions. The notion of status involves comparison and grading. For example Status for one set of women may be in relation to what other women have, now or in the past, to what men have and, what attributes they think man would respect. In their contact, it must be remembered given point of time and to play a number of roles as those in the kinship system, family system and in a wider network of social system.

The concept of role has been used in two ways: (a) to represent the sum total of the expected behaviours, normatively
defined, for a given position, and (b) in the plural to indicate the several different behavioural demands of a position, each expected behaviour being a role.'

One’s role differs from one’s norms or personal preferences as shown by this example: it may be agreed that it is part of the wife’s role to prepare meals, but disagreements may occur as to what kind of meals should be prepared, how they are served, etc. In this case there is role agreement, but disparity comes either from behaviours that arise out of different sub-cultural norms or different personal preferences. In a sense the role represents a general set of norms within which are also found a cluster of more specific normative and personal elements.

‘Position or status is never divorced from role and the major problems of position differences come as one performs his role in terms of his perception of his position.’ If a husband feels his position has higher status, he usually transfers these feelings into his role performance. If he is the higher status figure, then he

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19 Ibid. p. 249.
often thinks he should make the final decisions, give the orders, demand favours etc.

Gender is social and cultural although masculine or feminine gender is usually associated with male or female sex. This is not an absolute correlation. In western society a child is conscious of the gender of its upbringing well before it can talk properly, and any attempts to change the gender of rearing because of ‘mistaken’ sex-labelling (biological characteristics of birth can often be ambiguous) frequently results in severe disturbance after the age of two. Many transsexuals are unambiguously of one sex, but identify themselves as of the opposite gender. A comprehensive survey by Ann, Oakley has helped to clarify the important distinction between biological sex and the enormous range of distinction made by western society in the name of gender – feminine and masculine.20

In Bangladesh the most obvious manifestation of gender expectations (in this context allied with religions injunctions) is “purdah”, or the seclusion or veiling of women. ‘Gender is the

term used to describe all the attributes that we, regardless of sex, acquire in the process of socialisation. Gender speaks to differing expectation, roles and values associated by society or by groups of men and women as appropriate behaviour or endeavour for women and men, and defines our expectations of ourselves.

**Definition of Woman**

What is to be a woman, how cultural understandings, of the category ‘woman’ vary through space and time, and how those understandings, relate to the position of women in different societies, contemporary anthropologists, who explore the position of women whether in their own or another society are inevitably drawn into the debate concerning the origins and universality of women’s subordination.²¹

According to Symbolic Interactionists, a group of Chicago scientists developed a revolutionary view of human beings as social products. Briefly stated, their theses asserted that people are socially created and that people can create new societies in which to live. Consequently they hold that it must be people who control

human action and behaviour, and the mechanism of control resides in socially constructed meanings.  

‘Women’ says John, Stuart, Mill. are declared to be better than men; an empty compliment which must provoke a bitter smile from every woman of spirit, since ‘there is not other situation in life in which it is the established order, and quite natural and suitable, that the better should obey the worse’.

‘Though women’, he observes, “do not complain of the power of husbands, each complains of her own husband, or of the husbands of her friends. It is the same in all other cases of servitude, at least in the commencement of the emancipatory movement”. With all other crusaders in that social movement, John Stuart Mill was demanding identifiable rights. Today, women have those rights. They have the vote, not only are they no longer their

husband's property, they are even in law entitled to possess their own.  

But Mary, Wollstonecroft's battle is still going on, because of her overtones of preoccupation with the imponderable thing, the inflexibility of the human mind towards, women within our state of civilisation that mysterious inflexibility still persists. There is a considerable residue of the mental cliché that identifies men as people, but women only as women.  

"...women could never become just a sign and nothing more, since even in a man's world she is still a person, and since in so far as she is defined as a sign she must be recognised as generator of signs." (Levi-Strauss: The Elementary Structure of Kinship)

Levi-Strauss presents this acknowledgement of the fact that women are human beings mastering a language and a symbolic system.


24 Ibid., p. ix.

For any kind of research methodology is the most important part, because methodology is the life of a research. The desired results can be achieved only when methodology has effectively been used in respective study.

For the field study I had to choose the survey method. The term 'survey' is used for the technique of investigation by a direct observer by a phenomena or systematic gathering of data from population by applying personal contact, and interviews when an adequate information about a certain problem is not available in records files, and other sources.

A.F. Wells defined social survey as a “Fact finding study dealing chiefly with working class, poverty and with the nature and problem of the community”.  

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C.A. Moser described social survey in following manner, "The Sociologist should look upon surveys as a way, and a supremely useful one, of exploring the field, of collecting data around as well as directly on the subject of study so that the problem is brought into focus and the points worth pursuing are suggested."\textsuperscript{27}

In the light of above definition survey method was appropriate to collect the data by me. To some extent case-study method was also conducted by me to get the in-depth investigation. According to P.V. Young "a comprehensive study of a social unit, be that unit a person, a group, a social institution a district, or a community, is called a case study,"\textsuperscript{28} To get some qualitative data I had to use case study of some persons, so that the findings would help me to know about the persons and to understand how they function as a unit of society.

I used interview schedule to collect my data, because the subject I had chosen needed very careful observation. The questionnaires were structured in both ways some portion of these

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p. 9

\textsuperscript{28} P.V. Young. \textit{Scientific Social Survey And Research}, Printice Hall, 1977, p. 247
were closed, and some were open ended, like self administered, where the respondents were to give their own answers. I also used Case-Study as mentioned earlier to get very inclusive interviews. Some of my respondents were very enthusiastic to express their own experiences, and they were very informal and spontaneous. So both of us could make a good rapport during our interview period. Some of my interviewees were also satisfied by giving this kind of interview to me, which in fact a lot to get different kinds of spices of their own lives.

Collection Of Data & Some Problems

Like each and every researcher I too had to face different kinds of situations in conducting the research during my field study. I had gone through a very tough time during field study. Firstly, I started my pilot survey to see the reaction of the target group. I got very bad responses because of my social identity. My target group was very confused about the purpose of my study. I was much known to them as a known Vocalist of mass media. So they were much more interested about my music life rather than my research area. I had to convince them that the required data
would be used only for my Ph.D. thesis because they are the
subject on whom I was going to do my research.

The study area of the research itself is problematic in the
sense that there are no studies on this subject except one or two
cases. So I had chosen the professional women to see their position
in a transition period. So I started my data collection which
continued from June, 1994 to November, 1994. I had gone to
Bangladesh for the second time to fill up some of the residues and
stayed over there from June 1996 to July 1996. Professionals like
Doctors, Engineers, University Teachers, Bankers, Researchers,
Office Executives, and a few other professionals like Lawyers,
Journalists Librarians and Computer Programmers formed the
subject of my study.

My first experience with my target group was shocking and
disappointing too. The very first day I reached out to some
respondents whom I knew earlier, but they did not co-operate with
me at all. So I had to change my goal and decided not waste my time
and started to rush towards my goal, so that I could finish my field
study within the fixed time frame.
Wherever I went I had to convince the target group that only their co-operation could make it possible for me to carry out my research. Keeping this in mind I chose my target group from amongst the people who were easily available and were to give the interviews. So I started my journey to reach the professional group, who I wanted to be the focal point of my research.

I had been searching and asking people where to go and how to get these professional groups. Some of my friends, senior teachers, well wishers suggested me the sources whom I could contact for the purpose of my study. Still it was very difficult for me to get to the proper target groups. Moreover I did not get any research assistant for collecting the data smoothly and this kind of empirical research needs a lot of funds. Because for field study I did not get any financial help from any organisation. I had financial constraints. My sister helped me a lot financially, besides sharing my ordeal to reach out to the target groups. My youngest sister, who is a school going girl and one of my ex-students helped me to process the first hand data.

Regarding the respondents it is important to mention that some of the respondents did not take this research seriously and a
portion of them were very afraid of losing their jobs or suffering any probable damage in their profession by giving me the interview. These kinds of fears created a lot of problem to get true information especially from the government office executives. Another group of the respondents who really gave me a lot of psychological pressure during the survey period, were the university teachers. They had promised me to give the interviews but ultimately they broke their promises. Dealing with these kind of professionals was not very pleasant all the times. Sometimes they changed their mind. Several times they cancelled their appointments thereby causing a lot of frustration on me. Not only that. Some of the respondents even insisted me permission from their higher authority for giving the interview. This made the whole exercise totally infructuous. I had to restart my efforts afresh for getting new interviews. This way I lost lot of time, and energy which ultimately delayed my field study. Moreover, some of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction over my research, asking me why they should have helped in giving all the information about their personnel family and professional background. Some of them answered the questions with discontent and jeopardised the entire schedule and wasted my valuable time.
But from my personal observation I saw that those respondents had enough time for chatting in the lounge, but had not time for giving interview.

There was another problem which I came across during my field study, e.g. engaging myself to conduct the interview in the day time and in the evening I had to insert in the data in the computer. It used to take long time because I never learnt computer. It was very tiring job for any new learner. These were the constraints which I as the researcher has to bear throughout the field study period.

Limitations Of The Study

The study area was limited but different from other studies, because the present study only concentrated on few professional women in Bangladesh. It was a micro - level studies, which inspired me to carry out this kind of study. During the last two decades Bangladesh had gone through a massive change and in the development process women had been playing a vital role. Specially these professional women had brought a new dimension i.e. qualitative change in their own family, society and a very slow change in national level.
Locale Of The Study

For getting the data of professional group Dhaka metropolitan area was chosen because the city is the right place for the professional group where they are mostly concentrated. Other fact is that it is possible to get different kinds of professionals from different backgrounds. So I had designed the interview schedule according to the chosen locale. The target groups were highly qualified and well placed in the society. Mostly I found in central Dhaka city that all these diversified groups were mostly concentrated in the localities like Motijheel Commercial Area, Shobhanbagh, Nilkhet, Shahbagh, Moghbazar, Khilgaon, Rampura, Dhanmondi Residential Area, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Adamjee Court, Segun Bagicha, Lalmatia, Baily Road, Abdul Ghani Road, Topkhana Road, Kakrail, Farmgate, Pallavi, Mirpur, Kawran Bazaar and Mahakhali Area. All these locales are full of professional women, who really have made a noticeable change during the last decade in the social, economic and political structure of the country.
Objective Of The Study

While carrying out this study I intend to explore the following issues.

(1) The typical position of women within the traditional structure of family and kinship.

(2) The dual role in private as well as public life, and the impact in family and in society.

(3) The status of the professional women in a transitional changing society.

(4) Whether their professions have enhanced their status in a male dominated society?

(5) Are these professionals enjoying their new position equally along with their male counterparts?

Importance and significance of the study:

The socio-economic development of a country is not possible without broader mass participation of women in the country where 49% of the total population belongs to women. The long term development of a country like Bangladesh cannot be fully realised if women, continue to enjoy a subordinate position to men and their talents remain unexplored. So the government of Bangladesh has placed a great emphasis on women’s
development. It opened up the scope for women's participation in economically gainful activities. The government established the Ministry for women's Affairs to create greater opportunities for women and to exclusively look after their interest.

Besides the regular government programmes, Non-Government Organisations both locally financed and externally aided have been activated for women's social mobilisation raising their social status, increasing their political consensus, and creating their educational and employment opportunities. It has been observed that both the government and the non-government programmes for women's welfare have been increased after the liberation of Bangladesh, specially since the middle of the seventies. Although programmes for women's activities have been progressively increased in both the public and private sectors, programmes for their upliftment are still constrained by social, political and economic backers.

The position of women in Bangladesh is a product of many years of cultural, social and religions traditions. The practice of 'Purdah' (seclusion) in the predominantly Muslim society with its condition of feudal dependence and gender segregation has
provided a strong historical basis for establishing women's roles, and attendant division of labour within the household. The system however, is being challenged as poverty is forcing women from traditional roles, and even in the urban middle class, economic pressures are pushing women into employment outside the home. Employment options are restricted by the slow pace of economic development and the critical absence of job skills.

Education for women is seen as a priority element in Bangladesh development strategy, Though the government of Bangladesh is allocating a maximum budget of its notional budget for education, still millions of women, whether veiled or not, live in a state of withdrawal from the world deprived of their very identity as women. Education is the only instrument of their emancipation and self fulfilment.

However over the past decade it is observed that trends of change in the position of women in Bangladesh, been impelled by a number of critical parametric shifts at the macro - level involving economic demographic and socio-demographic factors, These shifts constitute elements of an overall process of uneven capitalist development in which market forces to some extent
directed by the profit oriented logic of capital accumulation have attempted to make use of available female labour to its own end. In the process, structure of family and kinship, social institutions and production relationships have been subjected to specific kinds of economic compulsions (e.g. ensuring subsistence or making normal profit), requiring these to either adopt to the changed circumstances or disintegrate.

Marxist-Feminist scholars have explained women's oppression in terms of the benefit of the sexual division of labour for capital. Gender divisions, pre-dated capitalism, and these divisions were incorporated within the early industrial workforce. Yet this feudal division was not incorporated unchanged. The separation of work from the household, under capitalism, was ridden with contradictions for women.

She could not combine productive and reproductive work in such a situation as she had done when production centred around the household. Marxist-Feminists also believe that history as a system of relation between man (Patriarchy) and woman enables them to dominate women.
Review Of The Literature

However for reviewing of the materials for this study I had to go through several books, journals, reports etc. which were mostly written on the Status of Women in Bangladesh or on rural women who were not in professional position. Still for the study of the materials I had gone through some reference books, reports, journals and other printed material. These are mentioned as follows:

Rafiqul, H.C. and Nilufer, R.A. Females Status in Bangladesh, which attempts to describe the status of women in details, specially the subordination of women to men in present Bangladesh situation. In fact this book examines the overall status of women in social and cultural milieu of Bangladesh. Salma Khan’s The fifty Percent in Development and Policy in Bangladesh, reviews women under development policy in Bangladesh and reveals the existence of an undesirable but persistent pattern of exclusion of women from development activities. This book also attempts to focus on the potential too gender specific human resources, and their greater need for investment on women as in their participation in development activities to generate the much needed labour for the economy.
Alia, Ahmad. *Women and Fertility in Bangladesh* reveals the power and existing status of women in Bangladesh. In this book the author tries to depict the co-relation between the lower status and fertility of women in Bangladesh society. She also focuses upon the position of women in the family which influences their desire for children and their ability to control fertility, which in turn is mainly influenced by the economic security that women enjoy.

Besides the above mentioned books, there are other reference books such as follows:

i) Sheel, C. Nuna *Women and Development*

ii) Malavika, Karlekar. *Voices from Within.*

iii) Vina, Mazumdar. *Symbols of Power.*

iv) Bharti, Devi. *Middle Class Women of Calcutta.*

Each of these books helped a lot to get the clear idea about the existing position of women in a developing society. In addition to these books a number of reports like 1) M.A. Mannan’s, *Status of Women in Bangladesh: Equality of Rights Theory and Practice.* 2) Pratima Paul Mazumdar’s *Marriage, Employment and Marital Adjustment - A Case Study Of Educated Urban Women and*

Some journals and seminar papers also helped to construct the ideas such as South-East Asian Journal of Social Science, vol. 6 No.1-4, January–Dec. 1989, New Delhi India. The *Journal of Social Studies: special issue on problems of social transformation, Sociological Spectrum, vol. 13, July–Sept., 1993.* Among other papers e.g. *An Overview of Women's Roles and USAID Progress in Bangladesh*, by Boyd Wennergren and Mourris D. Wiltaker, Dept. of Economics, Utah State University, U.S.A. and some seminar papers on “Women in Panchayati Raj System of Andhra Pradesh”, India helped a lot to get the knowledge about the status of women in Panchayati System (which ensures planning and implementation of development programmes).

There are number of books, journals, research reports, paper clippings, women magazines, which were consulted regarding women's issues. It is not possible to mention all these books and relevant materials in some sentences. These are mentioned in Bibliography.
Section : B

Socio Economic Profile of Professional Women in Selected Field Study

A brief description of the Socio-economic profile of working professional women may be helpful to understand the present situation of professional women in Bangladesh. A simplified profile based on the field study is presented below.

Table : I .1 Distribution Of Professional Women By Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 25 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 35 years</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>30.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 45 years</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>54.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 &amp; above</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : Field study
Table 1 presents the age distribution of professional women and it is evident from the table that the majority of the working women belongs to the age group 36–45 years. It is also noticed that the number of both lowest and highest age-groups is negligible. Another fact noticeable from the table is that the highest number of professionals belongs to the age group 36–45 years and from there it is revealed that to master a profession it takes 10–15 years. So we can say that at middle age a women can claim to be a professional women in her own right.

**Table 1.2 Religious Distribution of the Professionals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>93.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Study
According to 1994 statistical yearbook of Bangladesh the percentage of Muslim population was 83.3 while that of Hindus, Buddhists and Christians these percentages were 10.5, 0.6 and 0.3 respectively (1994, Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh, p.xxiv P-XXIV).\textsuperscript{29}

Another school of religion i.e. Hanafi School believes that some 90\% of Bangladeshis\* are Muslims. The remaining 10\% are Hindus (of the Dayabhaga or Bengal School), Christians, and tribal population or various religions (Buddhists, animists, etc.)\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{29} 1994 Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh, p.xxiv.

\* The citizen of Bangladesh shall be known as 'Bangladeshi' because Article 6 was substituted for Article 8 by the proclamations (Amendment) under 1977 (Proclamation Order No. 1 of 1977). The constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh (Modified). Citizens of Bangladesh are referred to Bangladeshi.

Though 'the religion of the Republic is Islam, but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in the republic'.

Table 1, 2 shows that of 206 professionals 193 (93.7%) are Muslims, and only 13 (6.3%) are Hindus. I could not find the members of any other religions like Christians, Buddhists, Animists, etc. According to population census, 1994, the sample population is overwhelmingly Muslim and 10% higher than the census and Hindu ratio is 4% (approximately) less than total population.

Bangladesh abounds in a predominantly Muslim tradition in the indigenous Hindu and Buddhist setting. This mixed heritage provides for rational understanding of its socio-cultural and even economic situation it prevails today. Cultural vehicle of Bangladesh is Bangla, a language with

major literacy tradition attributed by both Muslims and Hindus.\textsuperscript{32} Bangla is the state language, substituted by Act XXX of 1988, 5.3, for "Bengali."\textsuperscript{33}

We find similar kind of study in case of households taken on the basis of religion in Dhaka Metropolitan city. (Majumder, Paul, Pratima and Mojumdar and Mahmud, Simeen, 1994).


\textsuperscript{33} Constitution of Bangladesh, 1988, op. cit., p. 5.
Table 1.3 Distribution of Sample Households by Religion and Area (Dhaka)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Modhubagh</th>
<th>Baruntak</th>
<th>Postagola</th>
<th>Mohakhali</th>
<th>Shymoli</th>
<th>Lalmatia</th>
<th>All Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: "Others" denote Less than 1 percent.

Source: Majumdar, P.P. and Mahmud, S. Barriers To Female Employment In URBAN Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, January, 1994, P-12.

Majumder and Mahmud, Barriers to Female Employment in Bangladesh, BIDS, January 1994, p.12.
The above tables indicate that the sample population is vastly Muslim. The distribution of households by religion (table 1:3) is generally undifferentiated by area, except for Postogola where Hindus constitute 29 percent of the households compared to the average of 4 percent for other areas combined.

*My sample size* shows that of the 206 professionals 49 are bankers who are employed both in nationalised, private and multinational banks in Dhaka city. This section is the highest, because in Bangladesh, particularly for women, banking job is very demanding and economically it is gainful. After teaching profession, banking profession is considered as a prestigious one. There are twelve doctors and twenty-seven engineers in the sample, though these members are not representative, but it is worthwhile to point out that Bangladesh is a tradition bound society and many of the women with the job outside the home are looked down upon. The very few pioneer women who took the maiden step to break the shackles of purdah had to proceed very cautiously. Economic pressures and social conditions made these women to take job outside the home and they are working in male dominated society with their dignity and honour. Though both
medical and engineering professions are overwhelmingly male dominated but some women are working side by side with their male counterparts. All the engineers are employed in govt. institutions like Bangladesh Television, Local Government Engineers Bureau, Biddut Unnayan Board (Electrical Development Board), Bangladesh Water Development Board. All the doctors are from Dhaka Post Graduate Hospitals and Dhaka Medical College. Here I would like to mention that my field visit all the doctors employed in govt. institutions where on strike for indefinite period led by the medical association.

Profession

When one talks of 'Modern' Bangladeshi women one usually refers to urban middle class women. The life of an urban middle class women is visibly different from that of a rural woman or a working class woman. Like all modern people in a traditional society, she lives in two worlds. While rural women are more blatantly oppressed or discriminated against, in the case of urban women, the oppression and discrimination are subtle.  

An analysis of professional distribution of the two hundred six women interviewed by me will reveal the numerical distribution of professional women in the sample in the following table.

Table : 1.4 Distribution of Respondents by Profession.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bankers</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>23.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government/Semi govt./</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous officials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>206</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : Field Study

Note : ‘Others’ denotes Lawyers, Journalists, Computer assistants and librarians. Out of 12 doctors, 5 doctors were taken from Bangladesh Diabetic Association, Dhaka and rest of the 7 were
from PG (Post Graduate) and Dhaka Medical College. Out of 206 only 38 respondents are government, semi-government officers, who are from Bangladesh Radio, National Museum, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, and some are from cadre service. In the sample our second largest group is that of researchers who are mostly involved in both scientific research as well as social research. Of 206, only twenty-two are teachers of whom 21 are university teachers from Dhaka University and only one is from private college in Dhaka. All over the world teaching profession is considered as most respected and ideal for women. In Bangladesh women are mostly engaged in primary or secondary schools. Because of purdah dominated society teaching in recognised schools and colleges for girls afforded them the opportunities work outside their home and at the same time they could contact with men. I have included lawyers, journalist, computer assistants, librarians under the broad Head i.e. ‘Others’. All these jobs are still male dominated but over the years, all kinds of pressures pushed women in urban areas to take up jobs outside the home. The freedom of movement earned by our women may not be comparable to western standards but they can move and mix with men within certain restrictions. The fact that these professional
women made the milestones to mark their public spheres as their male counterpart indicate that radical changes have taken place in the status and position of women at least in urban areas. And these untraditional jobs in a patriarchal society like Bangladesh have not created any undesirable effect on marriage and family life.

A few member of studies have been done on working women in Bangladesh. (1) Women At Work (Islam, Mahmuda, 1975), (2) Married Women in Urban Occupations of Bangladesh (Chaudhury, H. Rofiqul, 1976), (3) Women, Work And Home (Majumder, P. 1986).

Table 1.5 Distribution of Professional women in the Sample by Education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>27.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduates</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>62.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Phil’s</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.’s</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (holder)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Study

The present study is concerned with only educated women since education is considered to be the basic requirement in the
formal labour force market. Professional women are defined in this present study only as those who have a paid job outside the home and spend a certain amount of time in the workplace regularly.

Professional women are defined in this study as those having at least fourteen years of institutionalised education and who are considered to be the bread earners like their male counterpart. Five groups of professional women are identified. The first group includes those women who have a Bachelor's degree and this group is the second major group. Because to enter into job market for getting a Gazetted post one must have done at least graduation. Women having a Masters degree are included in the second group which is the dominant group in this study. Out of 206, 129 professionals belong to this group where the percentage is 62.6. The third and fourth groups belong to women having a M.Phil. and a Ph.D. Degree respectively while women having a diploma in computer science and library science are included in the fifth group. As the present study includes the women having a secondary school certificate or a higher secondary school certificate it is quite clear that the study covers middle to upper classes of women population in Bangladesh.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly Income (Tk.*)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 5000/-</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>36.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000/- - 8000/-</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>44.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8000/- and above</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Tk. – Equivalent to 1 Rupee (approx.)

Source: Field Study

Income table shows that out of 206 professionals we find three categories of income groups i.e. lower, middle and upper groups and middle class is the dominant group in the study. This group belongs to the income in between Tk. 5000/- 8000/-, and their percentage is 44.7. Lower income group reveals a close association between better jobs and levels of income, the higher the income the better the job. Those who have higher education are expected to have better entrance in the job market. High income group includes 39 women who have the highest monthly income.
and resources and a higher mobility in the society. Obviously it was found that their group was habitual resident of Dhaka who got best education and training to be professional. The parents also gave all the required facilities to their daughters. Thus this upper income group prepared itself from the beginning to be competent and skilled professionals.

Table : 1.7 Educational levels of Interviewees’ Father

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under graduate</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>37.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>36.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduates</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>21.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Answered</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>206</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Study.

The above table shows that 36.4 percent of the fathers are graduates while 21.8 percent of the fathers are post graduates. 37.9
percent of the fathers are Under-Graduates and only in case of 3.9 percent of the fathers, education level is not available. From this table it is sharply visible that progressive outlook of the families in favour of the girls education seems to have been motivated by the educated father and inspiration to the daughter must have come from this source. Most of the respondents also did respond that their father was the main driving force behind their higher education.

Table: 1.8 Educational Background Of Mothers' Of The Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to Primary</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>25.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Level</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>45.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduates</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Answered</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source Field Study
Regarding the mothers' educational background 19.9 percent respondents did not respond to mothers' education question. They were silent about this. I have come to the conclusion that the mothers of these professionals have not had any formal education. That is why they are unwilling to reveal this truth. Though the professionals achieve their attainments because of their higher education still they are not yet out of their inhibitions. Out of two hundred six, fifty-three mothers have primary education, while forty-five percent mothers have secondary school education. There is a very negligible number of mothers who have done their graduation and post graduation and the percentage is 5% and 3% respectively. Progressive outlook of the families in favour of education, of female children seems to have been fostered mainly by the educated father who is a positive contributing factor in the education of the women in Bangladesh.
Table 1.9 Educational Background of Husbands' of the Professionals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>25.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post graduate</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>44.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.'s</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Married</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field study

Analysis of the educational attainment of the husbands of the professional wives gives us insight into the family environment in which these women were married. It is very interesting to see that the professionals' husbands having education both up to Graduation and Post-Graduation level, are less in number than their women counterparts. We have seen that professional women's education level is (see table 1.9) better than their male counterpart, though there are thirteen unmarried professionals in the study area. Still we find fifty-six graduates and one hundred
twenty nine post graduates among women professionals. Even at higher level of studies women are in far better position than their male counterparts. We find sixteen Ph.D. degree holders and three M.Phil., degree holders whereas we get only seven Ph.D. degree holder husbands. From this analysis it is revealed that in Bangladesh their has been a trend of women folk out numbering their male counterparts in the attainment of higher education. But there is no problem in their familial life. Even their husbands are quite happy with their better educated wives. But I would like to express another experience from the field study. There was a good number of professionals who don’t give information about the education of their husbands. A clear picture is shown in this table that fifty-five professionals don’t intend to response. It is to be mentioned here that out of fifty-five professionals, thirteen are unmarried. So this table is not applicable to the unmarried professionals.
Section C

Some Selected Case Studies

A comprehensive study of a social unit be that unit a person, a group, a social institution, a district or a community- is called a case study. Case data may be gathered exhaustively of an entire life cycle of a social unit or a definite section of it. Whether a sector or the whole of a life is studied, the aim is to ascertain the national history, that is, an account of the generic development of a person or group, or whatever constitutes the social unit in a particular study, revealing the factors that mould the life of the unit within its cultural setting. Because of its aid in studying behaviour in specific, precise detail, Burgess termed the case study method "the social microscope".  

In my study I also used this method to get real and enlightened record of personal experience of my target group. Though each and every interview was rich and interesting and exciting, in my thesis I could not include these cases because of

limited scope. I only used few cases in my thesis which are given as follows.

**Case Study :-1**

Dr. Flora Majid, leader of the Spirulena Culture Team, Dhaka, Bangladesh, a committed national, who proves her capacity to produce a natural mossy plant of Lake Chad in Africa or Lake Texaco in Mexico, and produced it in Bangladesh.

Being a polio victim at the age of one and half, who started her journey as a brilliant student from her childhood. She secured first position in her B.Sc. (Hons.) and M.Sc. examinations in the early 60's. She was awarded her Ph.D. by Michigan State University in 1965. Dr. Flora relentless in her fight to her an independent career woman, became involved in a number of scientific research projects reflected in 57 research papers published in local/foreign journals and a book, Development and Utilisation of Aquatic Weeds. She also has two leased out processes and four patents to her credit.

She was awarded three Gold Medals for her original and outstanding work by various organisation:
1. Dr. Malika Medal for Best Women scientist.

2. Bangla Academy Gold Medal for Best Biologist.

3. Quazi Mahabullah and Begum Jebunnessa Gold Medal for Best Bio Project.

Her main field of research is plant and plant product with particular emphasis on aquatic weeds. Now she is holding responsible position in present organisation, Dhaka Bangladesh.

Case Study :- 2

Dr. Anwara Begum, who is 40 years old is a senior Scientific Researcher in one of the most famous government organisation in Dhaka Bangladesh. She is married with one daughter. She lost her mother at early stage and was brought up in an unfavourable home-atmosphere ruled by step mother. Her mother's death had made her determined to be a Doctor. But her father did not allow, saying that gentleman's daughter never goes to study in Medical College. Though he himself was a Deputy Inspector General of Police. After her Intermediate she was married to a person who was staying at Japan with his wife and children. Her husband took her to Japan to use her services as
household maid. She had been shattered and had been looking for escaping. At last after ten months she could manage to flee from Japan and she came back to Bangladesh.

She started her education and did her Ph.D. In meanwhile she remarried to her class mate. She says "My husband did not appreciate me although I made a lot of contribution to my husband's family. All my efforts went in vein. Now I am doing everything for my own family. I bought land from my own earnings. I have contributed 75% of cash in building my own separate flat in Dhaka. I have only one daughter who is in class VII, and I am by her side, so that she won't have bad experience like me".

"I am going for Post-Doctoral research in Australia with my husband and daughter. And if I do not get leave in job, I am ready to leave my job". When I was interviewing her she mean while was sanctioned the leave and getting ready for Australia.

Case Study:-3

Shamim Shikdar, a well-known sculptress in Bangladesh, who is by profession a teacher in the department of sculpture in the
Institute of Fine Arts and Crafts, Dhaka University, Bangladesh. She separated from her husband with one crippled son. She is known as 'SHAMIM Bhai' by shopkeepers of Dhaka New Market Hawkers Association. She had been always, very radical. So society didn't approve her style of living, but at the same time she was committed to her art.

She laments, in my school days, "I used to go by Bicycle and the fundamentalists used to throw stone on me to prevent me from my get going nature. The girls avoided talking to me as if I were an outcaste. A maverick like me could not be acceptable to the society about a decade earlier. I had to learn Judo and Karate to protect myself in the night".

"My mother was against female education because she is an orthodox lady and quotes the reason that Islam religion didn't allow women's education. But my father and my brother had supported me to carry on my higher education and to pursue my career. In my natal family women were degraded and men used to get more value like any other tradition bound and in a patriarchal society."
I made up my mind that I would be more famous than my own brother. Now my family is known by me. My status is higher than that of my brother.

"In my natal family my mother was dominant, because she was from family of landlords (Jotdar). In my childhood I used to draw the pictures of human beings, animals, nature, watch Jatra (village Theatre), enjoyed Circus and used to spend night at any place wherever I went. I was a very Bohemian since my childhood. So my mother used to serve my food separately in the kitchen.

"Once my parents had sent me off to my grand parents living in a village. There they didn't accept me. My husband is a male-chauvinist, who wanted me to use his title after my name, but I refused. Not only that he wanted to see me under his feet. But I didn't allow myself to be exploited by such a mean-minded, drunkard husband. For our matrimonial disharmony my only daughter went astray."

"I am the bread winner in my family. I took my polio-stricken son to China for good treatment. All the expenses and hotel charges and medical expenditure were borne by me".

My husband defamed me saying that I had gone there to
enjoy with man and not to treat my son. I brought the doctor and kept one month here.

"Now I don't care for my husband, society, because I know what I am. I made a house from my own income, I have good friends, students, well wishers and fans."

"I don't believe in Women's Movement. In Bangladesh the movement is failure 100%. She believes that the movement by sari wearing women cannot be successful. "It is not that I am wearing tight jeans and shirts that's why I am advocating for Jeans and Shirts. It is an attitudinal question".

"In my professional life my husband didn't help me. Even when he was Minister I used to do my cycling. Now I am free from my husband, I can take all the decisions of my own. I can help my friends whenever it is required".

"Now I am living with my son. I have constructed a house at UTTARA from my own income. my daughter is staying with my husband, she did not do her studies in proper way. At early stage she got married to a wrong person, now she is frustrated."
"I feel bad about my own daughter's fate, but what to do! She has chosen her life that way. As a mother I feel bad, my husband blames me for my daughter's failure."

This 'New Women' is serving and will lead her life independently, without her husband's support.

**Case Study :-4**

Ruksana Abid, a Radio producer, aged forty plus, who has reported that she gets importance in her own family as a working woman, because her earning is very important to run the expenditure of the family".

Her marriage was by choice. Initially it was full of romantic dreams. But now that romanticism is finished. Life has become boring. She does not enjoy her life any more.

In her parental family, she was raised as a male member. She reported that women themselves are responsible for their low status in the society. It is because women love to be ruled by the man. So it is women who can only change their status by asserting their rights.
She is from rural background, but now working in Radio Bangladesh and her main job is programme planning, and processing the proposals. For the last fifteen years, she has been working with male dominated work place. But she never felt, it is a male world, where she could be exploited by her male colleagues or male bosses.

She is happy with her official duties. She complained about the delay in her next promotion. She is not enjoying in familial life any more, because she feels that her husband does not share anything with her. He is of very outgoing nature and busy with his poet associates, and never spends time with her. So she feels very depressed, and lonely. Life seems to be very dull to her. There is no charm in her life but for her two sons she has to live for. She has responsibility towards family, sons and of course, she owes it to herself also.

**Case Study :-5**

Afsari Sultana, in the department of psychology, Dhaka University, Bangladesh, who describes about her life journey says, "I did not get equal share of inherited family property. My parents did not spend anything other than the barest minimum for my
She further states, "I am not equal to my brother or my father in my parents family. I am not equal to my own husband in our family."

She complained about the gender inequality in family. She told that her mother is less respected in her family, her father never gave respect to her mother, that is why use also treated her that way. Like her parental family father is the deceive mother and in her own family her husband is the prime decision mother. Like her mother she is only consulted but final decisions are taken by my husband. And if it is financial matter, then we are only verbally assured that our decisions will be honoured.

But in practice the male members take the decisions. She strongly asserted that the laws of inheritance, divorce, custody i.e. the family laws favour the male persons and as long as these laws will exist, women will continue to be 'second class citizens'. She further emphasised that laws have to be changed otherwise women will never be considered anything worth
investing in the economic benefits of investing in women just don’t exist.

She resented about the treatment meted out to her mother by her father and she is determined not to end up her role in the family like her mother. To her father mother has no worth except her service to the family members. She has no respect in the family, although everybody needs her in times of trouble and crises.

She complained about the society rules towards women. Women enjoy less freedom and independence in the society. But she has to take more responsibilities at home which in turn affects her inter psychological make up.

She told that by protesting through processions, leaflets, writings in the newspapers, some women have demanded that the lopsided family laws should be changed by directly approaching the Prime Minister.

Lastly she said, "I don’t have equal value in society because I am my husband’s wife rather than being known for my own achievements. My husband is rarely, if ever, referred to as my
husband he is always known for his own achievement, or as his father's son).

She further told, that as long as their is poverty, lack of education and unequal family laws are existent, women will be regarded as burden rather than as assets--and with this mentality the dowry system will keep on getting stronger.

**Organisation of the Study**

The Organisation of my study is given as follows:

**Chapter-I** deals with the objective, methodology, problem and significance of the study.

**Chapter-II** deals with the status of women in the context of existing social structure of Bangladesh. It also deals with problem of professionals, regarding the social norms and values towards womenfolk in Bangladesh. Some relative data is incorporated in this chapter.

**Chapter-III** considers the government policies in women development and strategies to change the overall position i.e. social, cultural, education, economic, legal, and political status of
women for the betterment of the whole society. So that, there could be a balance in men-women ratio in the professional field.

Chapter-IV constitutes a critical subject related to educational development of women relating to educational development of women. Education is the most important and effective means of removing the disparity of women vis-à-vis men. There are some field data also which deal the problems of the professionals during their higher educational period.

Chapter-V embodies a critical position of women in our economy, with the low rate of participation in formal and informal employment sectors in Bangladesh. There are some empirical data of the professionals about the economic contribution towards their own families, natal families and overall the positions in their families as well as in society.

Chapter-VI presents a comprehensive analysis of the legal status of women given by the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Some related data have also been incorporated in this chapter.
Chapter-VII is a constructive interpretation of the professionals status of women in Bangladesh. In this chapter all the data regarding the professional field are being discussed. How are professionals women coping up with the male dominated areas, what are their problems, how are they facing them at their working place? How are these women maintaining balance between their private and public life. Above all how are they raising their children, all these problems are discussed in detail in this chapter.