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Gender and Biculturalism: Ethnic Identity and Choice of Marital
Partner among Second Generation Bangladeshi Women in the
USA and Sweden

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore and learn how the Second Generation Women of Bangladeshi Origin relate themselves to the culture of their host society and the traditions of their parental country of origin. Predominantly, how they look for their choice of a future life partner. This study was carried out in Malmoe, Sweden and New York City, USA, and from both locations, there were total nineteen women who enthusiastically responded to this study. It was a Qualitative Study and the data were collected by Semi-Structured interviews. The data was analyzed by use of Analytical terminology in light of feminism. The results showed that the second generation of women in both cities tended to be bi-cultural. However, the young women had difficulties in handling the often divergent push and pulls of the host and home land cultures. A contributing factor was the way in which young women lacked a freedom of choice. Especially, parental control was imposed on choice of life partners for young women, while young men were given more freedom of choice. The shaping of bi-cultural identities was marked by gender inequality: the development of young women's identities was surrounded by more tensions and constraints. Stricter control of young women by parents and ethnic communities was not the only factor involved. The young women wanted to maintain ties with the traditions of their parental home land. These ties were not valued by host societies, and also, their particular problems of their identity formation remained unrecognized. The results of this study cannot be generalized, but largely, are consistent with those of other studies.

Keywords:

Biculturalism, Ethnic identity, marital partner, Second generation immigrant, Gender, Bangladesh, Sweden, USA

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1.0 Introduction

Banke (1999, pp.23) states “Life and drive in a foreign country must have changed all of us, either for the better or for the worse, whichever direction one decides to take. A change for the better entails a lot of tolerance, positive thinking, goodwill and giving, less on taking.”

Many immigrants have joined the world trend of human mobility across countries. However, most of the immigrants feel insecure in fostering their generation in a foreign society. In fact, the children of immigrant families are living in-between two cultures. In one hand they are obliged to follow guidance from their parents and on the other hand they are very much influenced by the culture of the host society they live in. They have an inherited culture from their parents and they acquire another culture from the host society. It brings conflicts among generations due to the reason, some want to belong to their parents’ tradition and culture while some like to adopt the new culture they find themselves in. Some, on the other hand, want to accept and embrace both the cultures. Often the situation makes them confused and perplexed. In the process they find opportunities, they face obstacles and restrictions, they feel exposed and confined and they are sometimes, lost in the wilderness. So, a new possibility appeared for them to integrate and to maintain equity between home and host cultures.

Especially Bangladeshi young women in a foreign country identify themselves of having an impact on their growth in the host society. Sometimes immigrant parents want to impose their culture on their daughters. The parents are willing to see that their daughters are preserving their traditions and customs.

In Europe and USA most of South Asian immigrants, particularly the Bangladeshis are first, second or third generation migrants and most of them have their own language and cultures. These immigrants possess and contain their root culture. The parents are particularly conscious and firmly strict in religious belief and practices. They want to see the same practices in to their children. However, it seems that the immigrants second generations are heavily influenced by the environment, economy and culture of host

country. It makes a cultural lag among the immigrant's daughters which influences and creates further conflicts with their parents to decide their personal issues particularly the marital partner. This study is focused on religious belief and practices, language, clothing, food habit, attraction towards culture of origin and conflict with adopted new culture, process of socialization of culture to analyze the choice of marital partner as core area of this study.

Bangladeshi Immigrant's unmarried daughters in USA and Sweden identify themselves of having an impact of above mentioned components of culture in the course of deciding their marital partners. The concern of the thesis is to analyse the Gender Role, Biculturalism, Ethnic Identity, situation of marital partner choosing among Sweden and USA of Bangladeshi Second Generation Women living in Malmoe and New York. In the following discussion, this paper will examine the findings and recommendation based on the research questions of this study.

1.1 Purpose and Research Questions

Main aim of the study is to focus on Gender and Biculturalism: Ethnic Identity and Choice of Marital Partner among Second Generation Bangladeshi Women in the USA and Sweden. Gender dimension of the life of Asian immigrants in western host societies, and in particular, Choice of marital partner among Bangladeshi Second generation women in Sweden and USA, the extent to which young women, belonging to the second generation of immigrants become bicultural. Foreign born women face lots of problems. The root cause for these problems seems to spring from the culture which includes ethnicity, language, clothing, and being discriminated on the basis of a predetermined religion. A point of departure for this investigation is my observation that most immigrant parents support gender differences, and that this may predict differences in ethnic identity among young generation men and women.

The reason for choosing this topic is firstly, the argument claiming that in women of Bangladeshi origin living in foreign, modern societies are still suffering different customs and traditional barriers. They do not have any freedom of choice in many areas. They

remain caught between the two cultures of their (grand) parental home land and the host society where they have been born and brought up. Some of the constraints are gender specific. For instance, young women are under stricter parental control than boys, and to a larger extent expected to preserve their parental traditions. Some of the women are force to preserve traditions and some of them choose to maintain their home land traditions.

In this thesis, author will limit the study to the question of young women and their choice of marital partner. Marriage is an indicator of integration, and this focus is helpful for highlighting the complexity of dual cultures among migrants. Here it will focus on the case of young women's living in Sweden and USA (more specifically in Malmo and New York) who belong to the second generation of immigrants from Bangladesh. The following research questions will be raised. The claim up brought in the analysis part is reflected upon the respondents that have participated in the thesis and no one else outside of this frame.

Research Questions

1. How the second generation women of Bangladeshi origin relate themselves to the home land traditions and host culture. What kind of restrictions they face.
2. How they look for their choice of a future marital partner. In particular, whether they prefer a husband with similar origin as their own. If that is the case then in what extent they are guided by their parents, or they are able to make their independent choices.

All these questions are unified as the Bangladeshi second generation women's life situation in a foreign country and is influenced by their parental traditional culture as well as the host countries of culture they born and raised.

2.0 Current Research

This section will focus of current research on identity and culture, Understanding biculturalism, change and challenges in biculturalism, women in gender role, choice of marital partner and socialization among bicultural women in host societies. To focus on

to the research topic, this section will review some journal articles on this issue which will aid the study to analyse the facts in an informative manner.

2.1 Identity and Culture

Bangladeshi second generation in different countries are mostly living with eastern and western identity confusion or in other words dilemma. They have to maintain their Bangladeshi cultural norms and at the same time they have to maintain host cultural values as well. As they belong within two different cultural sets which make them confused. However, with these identity and cultural dilemmas these Bangladeshi women always strive to integrate themselves in between these two cultures.

Skehon and Szmigin emphasis in their article ‘Conceptualizing Ethnicity and Acculturation of Second Generation Asian Indians in Britain’ that the role of identity is important in considering an individual’s ethnic cultural orientation. “It is essential to distinguish between two uses of identity. The first relates to the ways in which individuals are guided by cultural norms, perceive social entities and have their own place within a given society. A second use of the term is more emotive, involving a sense of identification or belonging.” (Skehon & Szmigin 2005: 4)

Immigrant’s Second generation growing up with host and home cultural values sometime comes in clash between two cultures. Some time they do not find the way in which culture they should belong themselves. Culture may be noticed as the symbolic construction of the vast pattern of social group’s life experience; Culture is the embodiment, the chronicle of a group’s life history. There have been some previous researches in this area, for example, according to Avtar Brah (1996) states that the issue of ‘cultural clash’ comes into picture when uncertainties of lifecycle transitions are explained primarily and attributing them to the effects of ‘inter-generations’ conflict (Brah 1996: 18-21). ‘Identity is a strategic competence that acknowledges a desire to affirm identities and to transcend them, and imagining the cultural other is the first step in building a civic identity’ (Lee & Hébert 2006:499).

On the other hand, Prema (2005) in her article 'Being young, Brown, and Hindu, The identity struggles of Second generation Indian Americans', tried to say, "The socio-cultural outcomes of the contemporary have been of special interest to sociologists. One reason for this interest is that identity; this is less a sign of continuing loyalty to the home country than a reaction hostile condition in American societies (Prema 2005: 435). However, the voices of Youth in this study reveal that, in practice, an innovation of ethno-cultural identities does not necessarily diminish association with the national identity in host society. However second generations youth express a strong attachment to their ethnic origins, which allow them to integrate into host identity while attempting to identify themselves as members of their own ethnic groups. They also reveal themselves as sensitive about differences in racial, linguistic, cultural, and immigrant status (Lee & Hébert 2006: 517).

These findings are intriguing and argue for more research into processes of transition across identity groups, for new migrants and younger people born in migrant families in foreign societies. For adolescents, acculturation may be understood as a process of adaptation to an adult world, as well as reconciling cultural differences in proximate social groups.

2.2 Understanding Biculturalism

Bangladeshi second generation immigrants women are living with native home land cultures and also with host cultures. The context of their belonging these two cultures makes them more bicultural. So some time these second generation women's are considered to maintain both cultures. Some of them enrich to being bicultural and some of them are confused to maintain their bicultural identities. To see the same situation in the case study that these previous research is very important on understanding biculturalism and see their blending bicultural identities. This situation is similar with the findings on second generation women in USA and Sweden. Therefore, author is interested to see their bicultural identity integration, feelings and behaviours.

Michel-Peres (2006) in his research state that a comprehensive definition for biculturalism is the blending of the values, attitudes and behaviours of two cultures. Biculturalism's developmental facet requires that; "A cohesive set of interrelated thoughts, feelings, and behaviours emerge to form a bicultural identity, one that can be contrasted to a mainstream or strongly ethnically identified" (Michel-Peres 2006: 19). Bicultural are individuals who identify strongly with both their primary ethnic culture and their secondary host culture. Within this category, there are individual differences in bicultural identity integration the degree to which ethnic and host-culture identities are blended versus separated. (Mok et al 2007: 629). Benet-Martínez and Jana Haritato, in their article 'Bicultural Identity Integration (BII): Components and Psychosocial Antecedents' has defined that now a days increasingly diverse and mobile world, growing numbers of individuals have internalised more than one culture and can be described as bicultural or multicultural.

"The prevalence and importance of multiculturalism or biculturalism has been recently acknowledged by some psychologists, for instance Hermans & Kempen, 1998; La Fromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993, but the phenomenon has rarely been investigated empirically. However, the study of multicultural identities has exciting implications for the field of psychology and for social and personality psychology in particular, as the issue of how individuals develop a sense of community around national, cultural, ethnic, and racial group membership becomes particularly meaningful in situations of cultural clashing, mixing, and Integration" (Benet-Martinez 2005:1016).

The social and individual significance of bicultural identity negotiation provides personality researchers with another window to study individual variations in self-concept dynamics. In fact, as eloquently stated by Phinney (1999), increasing numbers of people find that the conflicts are not between different groups but between different cultural values, attitudes, and expectations within themselves.

This highlights, how bi-cultural identity structure relates to the pattern of interactions with their host-culture friends.

“Among first-generation Chinese immigrants an integrated identity structure implied bringing the secondary, host-culture identity into their primary, ethnic identity. To the extent that bi-cultural immigrants accepted the host culture in their subjective identities, it would be mirrored in their inclusion of host-culture friends in their social network, in both number and density” (Mok et al 2007: 633, 34).

There are some researches going on this bi-cultural issue, Martinez & Haritatos in their qualitative research shown that second generation Indian’s American’s are a bit confused in bicultural situation. We can see the process of negotiating multiple cultural identities is complex and multifaceted. A careful review of the work on bicultural in the acculturation literature, such as Padilla, 1994; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997) and in ethnic and cultural studies such as; Durczak, 1997; O’Hearn, 1998 state that bicultural individuals often talk about their dual cultural heritage in complicated ways and in both positive and negative terms. Biculturalism can be associated with feelings of pride, uniqueness, and a rich sense of community and history, while also bringing to mind identity confusion, dual expectations, and value clashes. Bicultural often report dealing with the implications of multiple racial stereotypes and pressures from different communities for loyalties and behaviors. An important issue, then, is how individuals who have internalised more than one culture negotiate their different and often opposing, cultural orientations, as well as the role external and internal factors play in this process (Martinez, Haritatos2005:1017).

The concept of biculturalism has been well documented by Drury, 1991; Ghuman, 1995; Sodowsky, Kwan, and Pannu, Das and Kemp, 1997; Tse, 1999. Biculturalism entails the ability of a person to function effectively in more than one culture and also to switch roles back and forth as the situation changes.

Martineza and Haritatos identify that two distinct and little understood bicultural identity constructs: attitudes regarding the conceptual organization of dual cultures and feelings associated with the emotional process of navigating one’s position within and between each culture (cultural conflict), each with largely different personality and socio-cultural

antecedents. They hope the present work brings awareness to the issue that “biculturalism is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon; there is not just one way of being bicultural.” (Martinez, Haritatos2005: 1043).

On the other hand we can see the behaviours attributed to an individual who is bicultural were first noted in the sociological literature under the heading of dual culture personality. Therefore, it is appropriate to begin with a historical overview of the sociology of dual culture personality. It essentially addresses the question of whether dual cultural socialisation is positive or negative for the individual involved. The question of whether there are positive or negative consequences to growing up in two cultures is not new. “Robert Park was one of the first sociologists to study immigrants, children of immigrants, and mixed racial heritage individuals. His study led him to speculate on the negative consequences of dual culture exposure. In an early paper, Park (1928) put forth the idea of the "marginal" man to describe the person who found him or herself betwixt and between two cultures” (Padilla 2004: 16).

In Padillas’ (2004) article, Stonequist (1937) extended the idea of marginality in his classic work *The Marginal Man: A Study in Personality and Culture and Conflict*. The title of the book shows the focus that Stonequist gave to his sociological analysis of dual culture socialization. According to Stonequist, the conditions leading to marginality and the consequences of this status are the individual who through migration, education, marriage, or some other influence leaves one social group or culture without making a satisfactory adjustment to another finds himself on the margin of each but a member of neither. He is a ‘marginal’ man. The marginal personality is most clearly portrayed in those individuals who are unwittingly initiated into two or more historic traditions, languages, political loyalties, moral codes, or religions (Padilla 2004: 17). This Stonequist is primarily referring to situations which cause the individual to leave one cultural orientation for another and to do so "unwittingly". Further, if the person is unable to adjust to the new culture then the person finds him or herself on the margin of both cultures.

A new concept began to emerge in the literature when making reference to individuals who seem to manage two cultures successfully. Psychologists began to make reference to biculturalism in their description of individuals who by virtue of the socialization they received from their primary caretakers to be competent in two cultures (LaFromboise et al, 1993). So, it is possible to be a functioning member of two cultures without being in serious psychological conflict about either. Importantly in this bicultural perspective, the person does not favour one culture over the other and more often than not the dual transmission of cultural information from parents is quite deliberate and both cultures are presented positively. Hence, we can find that bicultural person as a member of two cultural communities who not only possesses competent skills for interacting effectively with members of the two cultural groups, but who also maintains favourable attitudes toward the customs, beliefs, and values fostered by each group. Here we see these elements that are critical in understanding biculturalism. (Padilla 2004:18).

So the understanding of bi-cultural process reveals that when people used to interact with more than one culture and try to maintain that then the concept of bi-cultural process comes into place. It is important to see how the young second generation immigration women adapt themselves with these bi-culture process.

2.3 Gender Role: Change and Challenges in Biculturalism

To analyze the key findings for Bangladeshi second generation on bicultural socialization, it is important to identify how they found themselves the changes and challenges in biculturalism on second generation women living in different countries. How the German-Indonesian second generation women adjust themselves with home land culture and host cultural environment, different researcher emphasis on this issues, where Wenzler-Cremer, H. (2004) showed in his article 'Chances and challenges of bicultural socialization - Interviews with young women from German-Indonesian families' showed that most of the case women try for adjustment with their home culture and the host culture as well. He found that in his research "Most of the young women strive for adjustment. They do not want to attract attention, but want to live in harmony

with the other members of the group. They are very flexible and have no problems in adjusting themselves to different environments” (Wenzler-Cermer, 2004).

“Some of them emphasize often that it is no problem for them to live in a bicultural family. They do not want to be victimized; for them it is normal to have influences from two cultures. Other researchers point out those women who have grown up in these bi-cultural societies found themselves neither keeping to their own culture nor the host culture” (Wenzler-Cermer 2004).

On the other hand, if we see the situation of South Asian immigrants women in gender role, Meenakshi (2004) emphasis in her research ‘Constructing the New ethnicity’s Media, Sexuality and Diaspora Identity in the Lives of South Asian Immigrants’ that the first generation parents were always trying to remain their children (especially girls) inside the house, whereas the second generation do not want to maintain this culture. Although youth generally have more autonomy and freedom of choice in activities than children, their choices may be constrained by gender norms and sanctions. For instance, gender intensification theory suggests that adolescent’s experience increased pressure to conform to traditional gender roles. Pressure from parents, peers, and other social forces may limit their participation to gender-stereotypical activities regardless of how well those activities fit with their characteristics or contribute to their identities.

Males are often given more freedom to date and socialise outside of the home environment than females. Females are expected to assume gender specific chores and duties (including cleaning, disciplining younger siblings and cooking) and engage in minimal socialization outside of the home; whereas male offspring are not obliged to participate in the family and household responsibilities (Sodhi 2003:3). This naturally causes resentment towards the parents but also to male siblings. Equality between the sexes should be implemented in the household in order to avoid unnecessary sibling resentment. What may be the common premise of these converging factors is a lack of intergenerational communication. Effective communication between the two generations is imperative for positive bicultural identity formation. That is, parents should encourage

their offspring to discuss cultural and none cultural related topics in the household. Second generation individuals should feel safe in disclosing their concerns about their culture with their parents as well as ask culturally related questions. Young British Sikh women argued that the “between two cultures” approach implies that young people are simply caught up in a vacuum, in some sort of no-man’s cultural desert. Also complained that the portrayal of second generation British Asians in academic literature and also the British media, as young people who lead “between and betwixt lifestyles, who can do little but suffer their parents imposition upon them of alien cultural values,” is not necessarily accurate” (Sekhon & Szmigin 2005:4).

Sekhon & Szmigin (2005) in their research suggests that women are not simply pressured by parents and tradition. But from the study on USA, Chowdhury asserted that, although Bengali immigrants have resisted assimilation into the American culture, there are certain aspects of their lives in which acculturation has occurred. One of the main examples can be described through the changes in the role of women. There have been numerous changes in the responsibilities of women and a great increase in their status and freedom (Chowdhury 2005:3). Although the gender roles of the host countries of Sweden and USA have some differences from those of Bangladesh, gender in Bangladesh is key factor in defining social roles, responsibilities, and power relationships within the family. Men are the main wage earners and decision makers. Most of the women are taking care of children and household. But it is also depend on their family background, education and working status (Khan Etl. 2002). However, in Europe and USA, the situation according to another research, “But undoubtedly ideology is changing, and gender patterns of domestic behaviour are also changing, albeit very slowly and with men changing less quickly and to a lesser extent than women.” (Scott Jacqueline 2006: 16).

From above discussion we see the second generation women in foreign are pressured by two different sets of cultural values and practices, namely the “home” and the “host” country. ‘The women become targets of conflicting pressure values and expectations. However, it must be made clear that women in themselves are not homogeneous. They are divided by caste, class and religion in addition to rural-urban division, which makes

them more or less vulnerable depending on which category they belong to (Perez 2002:12). This study finds that the most of the immigrants in Malmoe City are working class and the immigrants are in New York City from different class and background. These categories depend on their bicultural life in host societies. To keep the similarity with this review, it will try to evaluate the data on Bangladeshi second generation women in New York and Malmoe.

Thus, we can see the most of Bangladeshi young generation shared a mutual sense of difference with white people, having grown up in ethnically segregated areas, involving separate housing, workplace and social activities. Therefore, most of them had not sustained any inter-ethnic childhood friendships (Mac an Ghail & Haywood 2005: 32). Actually some of Bengali parents in New York strive to practice endogamy; their second-generation children may not share the same values. This is evident in the large numbers of individuals dating non-Bengalis. However the second-generation Bengalis defy the rules of endogamy, parents of males will be more supportive than parents of females, which is an example of gender inequality (Chowdhury 2005: 17).

If a young woman wants to go out on a date with a western boy that would certainly be a multicultural initiative. 'In contrast, the attempt by her guardians to stop her from doing this is hardly a multicultural move, since it seeks to keep the cultures sequestered. Still it is the parents' prohibition. It seems to get most of the vocal and loud defence from alleged multiculturalists. And the ground of importance of honoring traditional cultural, as if the cultural freedom of the young women were of no relevance whatever, and as if the distinct cultures must some how remain in secluded boxes'' (Sen 2006: 157).

The children living in a foreign society is really a complex phenomenon. The process of globalization accelerates the high rate migration towards developed countries, which in turn changes, the societies in the developed countries into multicultural societies. In the recent past, globalization has reached also South Asia with a liberal pressure on the economies and vast high-tech presence in the West influencing what is taking place (Chapman, 2000). The members of the Bangladeshi immigrant communities are aware of

it. As an immigrant community in abroad, it is not be totally absorbed by the mainstream at the cost of own identity. In fact, some of the Bengali values, moralities and beliefs are far better than those of in other societies.

For instance, family values and family ties, kinship, sexuality should be pointed out in this context. Besides our language, cultural inheritance, war for liberation and so forth are also our assets. So, this is a prime responsibility of the Bangladeshi immigrant community to give proper exposure to the young generation about these. For this, communication channel between parents and children must be improved by reducing the generation gap prudently. Socialization among the families of the Bangladeshi community will open a door for the children to know Bengali culture and heritage. It is a disturbing fact for these children, as they remain forever confused as to which culture they should belong to.

This puts them in a difficult situation while choosing their life partners in between two cultures. The above discussion shows that women's role in bi-cultural situation is unequal to men's. Sometime they don't have their own choice, have parental restrictions, and are not very well integrated in the host culture. So, from these research findings, I will show that there are similarities with those discussions on gender inequality in my data analyzing section.

2.4 Choice of Marital Partner

According to Bangladeshi traditional values life partner selection happened by parental choice. However, it is changing day by day. Some of children's choose their partner by themselves by love marriage, but most of the marriage happened by family support. Very often children can marry without family support. The same situation carries on the Bangladeshi immigrant's family living abroad. The question comes when immigrant's children become bicultural. When they have to maintain native cultural values and also host cultural values at the same time. It comes in conflict when the Bangladeshi immigrant children's choose their life partner some one from different cultures and a non Muslims white western guy. But most of the Bangladeshi parents may support to choose

their marital partner in their own communities. Very few immigrant parents give priority to their children's free choice of love. Especially women second generation women's under strict traditional roles in their free choice of love. But some Bangladeshi immigrant's family living in a liberal country like Sweden and USA, there is clash between parental choice and their daughter's choice, actually it is happening not only for parental control, but also being bicultural which makes it difficult to choose for them a marital partner in host countries. In author's point of view, the Bangladeshi second generation women are living in bicultural identity formation have two sided values. They are in clash between the homeland culture and host culture. In one hand they like to have freedom on their marital partner choice, even if they choose a white western guy, on the other hand they have think about families traditional values.

So, this section will discuss on previous research of different countries second generation women's choice of marital partner and also Bangladeshi second generations choice of marital partner, mixed marriage in USA and Sweden, clash and negotiation with native and host culture by living in bicultural context, which differ the same situation with the findings in Sweden and USA.

There is a clash between parents and their daughter when they are going to choose their life partner. Parents give priority to their own choice to select a groom for their daughters. Islam Aminul (2008) found in his study of acculturation preferences among Bangladeshi immigrants in London and Malmoe that most of the first generation Bangladeshi immigrants like marriage within their community whereas second generation preferred any community instead of choosing only their own community.

Alternatively, the situation of marital partner choice which is differ on mixed marriage on USA for second generation Bangladeshi showed that on Chowdhury's research (2005), there were sixty-four percent of females and forty-three percent of males who dated other Bengalis. There were also eighty-six percent of females and seventy-one percent of males who dated non-Bengalis. This is significant because more individuals have dated non-Bengalis then Bengalis (Chowdhury 2005:16). The second-generation Bengalis have

developed a lifestyle where they have integrated aspects of the Bengali and American cultures. They have shown assimilation by dating non-Bengali individuals. However, it can be inferred that they will preserve traditional marriage customs by having semi-arranged marriages with Bengali partners. They have integrated the values and practices of both the Bengali society and the American society (Chowdhury 2005: 17). Although Bengalis may devoutly practice their religion, when dealing with their children's marriages, they are more willing to approach it according to cultural values rather than religious values.

Whereas, Varghese in his research found that European American parents generally use inductive reasoning with their children, allow choices for their children, and encourage children to be active explorers of their environment. Furthermore, they may emphasize values in their children that encourage them to "think for themselves" or "become their own person". Therefore, it is common for persons socialized within this cultural context to experiment individually with choices such as romantic relationships that are suitable for them (Varghese 2007:6, 7).

For the first time ever the 2000 census gave Americans the option of identifying themselves as belonging to more than one race. Nearly 7 million people, or 2.4 percent of the nation, described themselves as multiracial. The new choice was a hit in places where people of different races have long intermarried. The steady growth of mixed marriages is evidence that racial and ethnic barriers are softening. Texas, New York and Florida are home to about a quarter of U.S. mixed marriages" (Padilla, 2004).

We can see in Sweden to consider the trends in the rates of marriage between Swedish and other nationalities as some crude indicator of the progress of one from of societal integration and perhaps assimilation in contemporary Sweden. It is recognized that a good deal of interaction between potential spouses occurs prior to marriage in most societies. This is especially true today with large numbers of people in many western industrialized nations delaying marriage, and cohabiting outside of marriage (Cretser,

1999). In Sweden, Approximately 11% of Swedish women and men who married in the early 1990s were marrying someone of another nationality (Cretser: 1999: 378).

Now we can see the Asian Indian culture, parents usually have a strong influence in choices such as the career their child pursues, and more importantly—the person they will marry. Choose and selection of a marriage partner is rarely done separately, but rather through familial and even community involvement. Earlier generations where a potential bride or groom had little say in the final marriage decision, “modern” arranged marriages allow the prospective bride or groom to have considerable autonomy in the final marriage choice (Varghese 2007:7,9).

Even if we look upon the Asian Indian women residing in the US are not only living within the constrains of their culture of origin, but also receive message rooted in white American culture, thus in examining their experiences living in bicultural society, it becomes relevant to explore the process of acculturation. Asian Indians have a tendency to hold on to cultural values related to family relationships, marriage, religion, dating, sex role prospect and to behavioural aspects related to these values (Inman et al in Sandhu 1999: 31).

Here we can look also Murthy’s (1997) study which compared two groups of first-generation Asian Indians who immigrated in the 1960’s and 1990s and one group of second generation Indians born in the US, revealed that the first generation held a negative view of American marriages compared to second generation who admitted to having incorporated some of the western values into their beliefs such as love essential to marriage, personal freedom in choose and gender equality in marriage (ibid). Cultural values affected individuals’ socialization by influencing their psychological as well as social functioning, individuals living within a bicultural context typically have to contend with and negotiate two cultural value sets.

In Asian Indian women living within a bicultural context have to integrated and balance potentially disparate cultural values and behavioural expectations. Asian Indian women

are likely to struggle in their attempt to maintain their cultural identity while absorbing aspects of the new culture. These women may potentially experience a challenge in their choices to retain or change their own cultural paradigms. They need to maintain allegiance to their own culture and being entrenched within the traditional values has implications for Asian Indian women who are making transition into a western society (Inman et al in Sandhu 1999: 32). The family ties are still strong but the second generation are crossing certain 'taboo' boundaries and are living on their own or with their spouse, finding their own partners while still retaining many traditional native values. Integrating western and eastern values and negotiating their identities had become a part of their day-to-day lives. (Sekhon & Szmigin 2005:15).

So, finally the above discussions on different research that Bangladeshi women living within a bicultural context, particularly on their marital partner choice have to negotiate with native and host cultural values, although they prefer to give priority their own choice then their parental choice. But sometime they have pressure from parental side on their own choice of marital partner, which may not so much for men when they choose their partner. In this situation, sometime women may balance with both native and host cultures. Study has also found the same experiences shared by Bangladeshi second generation women living in Sweden and USA, which will be discussed in the data analysis section.

2.5 Socialisation among Bicultural Women

This section will discuss on Bangladeshi second generation women's life style aspects of bicultural identity which will explore their clothing, language, religious belief and how they relate and socialized themselves in between two cultures based on literature review.

Bicultural socialization may occur simultaneously as in the case of a child who is socialized to one culture by one parent and to another culture from the other parent or socialisation to one cultural perspective from parents and another from grandparents and other family members. Another way dual socialisation occurs early in a child's life is when parents adhere

to the life style of one culture at home and when teachers and other childcare takers practice another culture at school” (Padilla 2004: 4).

In other words, the focus of culture is the family, and the Bangladeshi family tends to take the prime responsibility for maintaining its culture. So far Bangladeshis have maintained their cultural identity by speaking Bangla (Bengali) at home, teaching their children to read Holy Scriptures, giving exposure to Bengali culture, socializing with other Bangladeshi families, marrying within the community, or bringing their spouses from Bangladesh.

But, however practical all these activities may be, the family has its limitation in diffusing Bangladeshi culture among the second generation. If we understand culture as a code of communication, culture must be presented by one generation to the succeeding generation in a dynamic form. Community members and leaders are aware of the acculturation process in Canada; for example, a typical Bangladeshi family is bilingual and bicultural. Nevertheless, a split is taking place between parents born in Bangladesh and their children born or raised in Canada. Children are becoming acculturated at an increasingly accelerated pace, and can hardly speak Bangla. (Rahim, 1991) They are hopelessly out of touch with Bangladesh, and the images of Bangladesh they glean from the mass media are one dimensional.

Undoubtedly, this non traditional upbringing has created dissent within the traditional family structure. Parents are accused of unfairness toward their children, particularly to the girls, who are kept under tight constraints. One of the nagging issues in the traditional family circle is arranged marriages. Bangladeshi girls are rebelling against this tradition (Rahim 1991:9).

We can see that most parents are often reluctant to see their children marrying someone outside their own language group, because they believe often it becomes a problem to communicate with someone from a different language and culture. As Bengali is still spoken by most of immigrants from Bangladesh, this question becomes an important

factor as well. This problem adds again due to the fact that parents who migrated to the West tried their best to raise their children with traditional Bangladeshi values. Although the second generation adopted a mixed culture, their parent's language and sentiments are nevertheless a big issue. Some time situation is different for immigrant in different countries.

We can see many Bangladeshi immigrants community has successfully settled in the UK. Nevertheless, the young are coping with conflicting values and traditions. At the same time, it is very hard to balance traditional expectations with their lifestyles. Bangladeshi young women describe the hardships they face due to the differing social values. It is hard to live with two conflicting cultures and be a respectable Muslim at the same time” (Ullah 2007).

The character ‘Roshni’ in Kobiers’ (2004) article “The confused ‘product of Diaspora” may be seen as a typical case of many South Asian girls living in the UK. When she is out in the English society she tries to act and dress like a typical Western teen. But when she returns to her neighbourhood and home/family, she has to regress to the customs, culture and ways of acting, behaving, speaking and dressing that her Bangladeshi traditional culture demands. She can not be out alone late or often, even though she is living in western societies, because her parents do not accept it. This is common among the children of Bangladeshi immigrants who have grown up in western society, so they do not feel this Bangladeshi tradition belongs to them. They feel confused and split between two cultures. Thus, Second generation Bangladeshis living abroad are used to a dual way of life - one with the family and the other with friends at school and people at work. The parents of these children are trying to get them to dress like proper Bangladeshis, and even if they are able to persuade them to dress like this in social gatherings, the children have no real feel for the significance of the history of their parent’s homeland, which is understandable, due to cultural confusion.

In the literature review, it has been indicated that unmarried immigrant’s daughters in UK are passing through the experiences short of experience from their parents to marry

someone from the same religion and maintain the traditional values on their dress up, religious belief so on.

It is also a fact that the families who have migrated in the UK from Bangladesh are mostly from a particular district namely Sylhet. Sylhet considered as a most religiously conservative district in Bangladesh. For that reason the parents came from Sylhet are willing to choose their marital partner of their daughter within the same religion. There are published material, research and literature on these issues relating the Bangladeshi immigrants in the UK. Moreover, there are very recent media news, videos, and movie clips publishing recently on the situation and victimization of Bangladeshi immigrant's daughter in the UK. However, in USA the immigrants Bengali are not from a particular district rather they have come in USA main district of Bangladesh. The same situation may exist in Sweden.

For the reason that the factors that relate to hierarchical structure of immigrants and they are rooted to own belief and culture. They do not want to lose their Bangladeshi identity as their elders feel that it will lead to their becoming a rootless community. Consequently they want their deep-rooted belief to be transmitted to succeeding generations. So they impose a cultural boundary on their child. Culture of the parents seems foreign to the children, as they did not know it properly. Some time they balanced with both of the culture of her family and their growing up in a multi-cultural society.

The above phenomenon with young generation and their bicultural way of life has been presented as breaking out of social customs and values. In a broader sense, the young generation has rebelled against the social and cultural settings and is to be excluded from contemporary society and their multi cultural globalise world. Pressure to conform to the home culture of the parents is often more severe on immigrant and second generation females than on males.

This is even more difficult for female adolescents who come from traditional cultures, such as Muslims and Hindus, who adhere to much stricter gender roles than other

immigrant groups such as those from Asia or Latin America (Padilla 2004: 30). For some ethnic females when the two cultures clash as they often do around issues of gender roles and normal teenage behaviours such as dating (American culture), girls are often caught in a double bind and forced to conform with the possible consequence that they may have behavioural competence in the culture of the parents, but feel a certain degree of resentment against their parents who immigrated to the United States. These adolescents often complain that their parents want them to be “frozen in time” and in a culture that they only know from their parents. As native born Americans they are exposed to many of the social forces that ensure their enculturation as Americans. However, many are pulled back toward the culture of their parents and grandparents who expect their children to demonstrate loyalty to their cultural roots. How parents, grandparents, and other extended family members socialize children in bicultural contexts will determine the child's eventual level of biculturalism. (Padilla 2004: 31).

In these situations a clash between the traditional norms and values of the homeland society and the modern western cultures of the host societies may occur. The research has also found that the same experiences common by Bangladeshi second generation women, which will be discussed in the data analysis section.

3.0 Analytical Terminology

This section will analyze the data based on feminism and gender which is similar with my research findings.

3.1 Feminism and Gender

Feminism as the art of crafting inclusive and democratic practices that work towards increasing the self-determination of women as part of global project of rethinking and transforming hierarchies. It requires a critical analysis based on local feminist praxis which connects to broader, i.e. global, relations of domination and subordination that are inclusive of social divisions such as ‘race’ class and sexuality as well as gender (Peake and Alissa trotz: 335). Feminist analysis address the question of difference is one with the question of identity. (Bologh1984:388). Actually the aim of feminist analysis is to

understand the nature of inequality and focuses on gender discrimination, power relations and impose on culture. At the same time as generally providing a critique of social relations, many scholars of feminism also focus on analyzing gender inequality and the promotion of women's rights, interests, and issues. The arguments explored in feminism include discrimination, stereotyping, objectification, as well as patriarchy (the center point). More over, the feminist research insists on value of subjectivity and personal experience (Black 1989:75). Feminist scholarship emphasis that on the tensions created within specific communities between women's status as 'boundary-markers' of national, ethnic and religious identities and their status as citizens (Irene 2007: 90). According to the feminist analysis in any discourse needs to put the social construction of gender at the centre of one's inquiry and the goal of the research is to correct both the invisibility and distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social position (Cited in Parker I, 1999: 73).

If some one wants to define social roles, responsibilities, and power relationships within the family, gender could be one of the important factor to define that. Therefore gender roles are "socially and culturally defined prescriptions and beliefs about the behaviour and emotions of men and women" (Anselmi and Law 1998: 195). Thus, feminist scholarship included the analysis of 'what is to be women, how cultural understandings of the category "women" vary through space and time, and how those understandings relate to the position of women in different societies. Ganga in her research shows that especially in a migratory environment, it seems that older immigrants' attachment to cultural practices and beliefs of the origin can increase the generation gap between parents and child, through an emphasis of the cultural difference between them. This difference is usually even more pronounced in the case of the female members of the family (Ganga 2007:42). To maintain the traditional value women are considered as the custodians of culturally specific ethnic values and family customs (Baldassar 1999, Pedraza 1991). Therefore, in Bangladesh perspective, custom and traditional structure has been deeply rooted in socio-cultural history and put women far behind the men in social and cultural independence. Nonetheless, it is slowly changing among the people by different perceptions.

To use this analytical terminology, the research findings will be evaluated on second generation Bangladeshi women in living Malmoe and New York about their choice of marital partner and see the situation that how they relate themselves with home tradition and host culture.

4.0 Methodology

To investigate the research question a qualitative method will be used to discover the answers. Qualitative research opens the door for in-depth studies in opposition to quantitative research which the main purpose is to generalize the massive data collected (Yin: 2003).

A case study has been chosen approach in this thesis. According to Yin (2003), “Case study method allows researcher to get meaningful characteristic of real life events- such as individual life cycles” (Yin 2003:2). The case study method will allow me to see how the Second generation Bangladeshi women’s relate themselves with home tradition and host culture in two separate locations (Malmo and New York).

These two locations have been used because both cities contain large number of immigrants and their number is on the increase. However, this study is not a comparative study.

4.1 Methods and Number of Respondents

To get the answer of my research question, a semi structure interviews conducted in both Malmo and New York using snowball sampling. These sampling methods are used because this allows getting the best suited people to collect data (Patton 1990). Questionnaire is never given to them, but semi structure questions were memories in order to maintain the momentum of the conversation.

4.2 Access and Selection of Respondents

The primary data have been used in this thesis through qualitative field work. As the goal the main concern of the thesis is to analyze the situation of life partner choosing and their integration in bicultural societies of Bangladeshi second generation women living in New York and Malmo, therefore the sample was made up of second generation women who born and raised in Malmo and New York.

Using Malmo as a case it was easier to access data collection as Author live in Lund (close to Malmoe city) and known lot of Bangladeshi community peoples and joined community's different occasions in Malmo city. Consequently, some Bangladeshi friends were initially contacted and through them other interviewees were contacted.

As the research case is very sensitive (Choose of life partner in Bicultural society for second generation women) and consistent with Bangladeshi perspective it was very hard to meet the Bangladeshi second generation women's out of their family. Because some of the Bangladeshi immigrant families living in Malmo are very conservative, they do not like either to ask question about this issues. They think that if this issue is discussed with their daughter, it can have an impact on their daughter. First, an attempt was made to speak to one of the girl through her family, but her father does not like his daughter to discuss about this issue. So the interviewer had to hide when she took the interview with his daughter. The girl (a Bangladeshi second generation) she helps me to take her interview out side of home in a coffee shop. Thus, it was really difficult to meet with some interviewees, but at the same time it was easy to contact with some girls those who are from liberal family's background.

January 2008, the field work was carried out in Malmoe City and different part in Malmoe. The interview was conducted with 6 second generation women, 2 second generation boys, 2 of their parents in Malmo. Finally, six interviews with six respondents were carried out. All respondents are by birth Swedish. The age group of the second generation is 14 to 23. Three of them are daughter of restaurant owner, both mother and father is from Bangladesh and they are student in high school level and living with their

parents. Another respondent studying in gymnasium (high school level), her father is from Sweden, Mother is Bangladeshi (she is a teacher). Another one of respondents came here to visit her uncle in Malmo for couple of weeks during her vacation; she is living in Stockholm and studying in Stockholm University. She lives alone in her own flat. She is a friend of interviewer. Another Respondent is airhostess living in Malmo, her Father is Bangladeshi and Mother is Swedish women.

The reason of choosing the field study in New York was because luckily Najmun Nahar (Author) had a chance to visit the USA during the vacation. Hence, it is very difficult to get USA visa for Bangladeshi student, where research Co-coordinator and Supervisor wrote recommendation letter for the USA Visa purposes and eventually Najmun obtained the USA visa. It was planned to carry out the research and study some second generation Bangladeshi women who are living in New York (USA). It was exciting to meet with Bangladeshi second generation women in New York, because it is a diversity and lot of Bangladeshi immigrant families are living in USA, most of them are living in New York City. The total number of individuals interviewed was 9 Bangladeshi second generation women. The interview period was from April to May 2008 and carried out in different parts of New York City.

A second generation women relative (author lived in their house) who supported Najmun Nahar to contact with other six respondents of her Bengali American women's. It was easy to contact with most of them, because five respondents' house were closed to the relatives house in Brooklyn. All of them are student at University level. Their parents are doing business, service in different companies. Three other respondents were contacted via cousin sister of author living in Ozone Park. The respondents are cousin's friends. They are working in different company and highly educated. The age group of second generation in New York was 18 to 24. Their parents are doctor, pharmacist, and engineer in profession. Also two other respondents who are living with their parents in Brooklyn were interviewed.

The questions were open-ended and the interview format was informal. The focus of the interviews was on choosing of life partner (as matter of marriage), the situation of maintaining home traditions (in between parental control) and host cultures and also about

their parental thinking about their future life partner and maintaining their own native culture and the culture they born and raised.

4.3 Biases, Validity, Ethical Consideration and Limitations:

Most of the respondents in Malmo were daughter of restaurant owner where as in New York respondents were found from different background. So, they have different background and further, the access to the respondents was easier in Malmo than New York. This selected interviewees may affected the outcome of the interviews and validity of the study. As far as ethical aspect has been considered, the respondent's names have been left out of the thesis. So hopefully the ethical aspects have accordingly been covered (Bhattacharya 2007).

This study should not be generalized since the participant number of the study are small and selected in such a way i.e. snowball sampling that they do not allow for generalization.

5.0 Background of Immigrant's in Sweden and USA

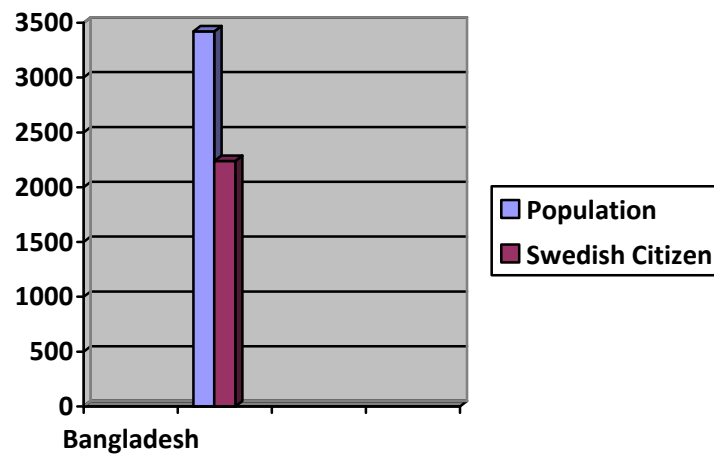
This section will discuss on immigrant history and foreign born population living in Sweden (Malmoe) and USA (New York) and it will also discuss on differences between two communities.

5.1 Immigrant's History and Foreign Born in Sweden (Malmoe)

In Europe, during the 1960s Third World migrant workers were encouraged to come to the Scandinavian countries by open-door governmental policies aided by active labour recruitment by private employers. Many workers came from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, with Pakistanis now forming the largest group about 7,500 (Switland:1985) Thus, Immigration to Sweden from countries in the Third World is a relatively new phenomenon. While the over whelming majority of Third World immigrants have been asylum seekers or relatives to asylum seekers, not all persons who have entered Sweden for such reasons have origins outside Europe Foreign born population in Sweden. (Gustafsson & Zheng 2006: 82). According to the Swedish Migration Board, a total of

50,779 persons were granted citizenship in Sweden in 2006 and 23,317 are Asian origin (including Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi and other South Asian). The net migration rate in 2006 in Sweden was 1.66 migrant(s)/1,000 populations. (Source: Swedish Migration Board, March, 2007). According to the 2005 Swedish Statistical Year Book, the number of the Bangladesh population was 3421, among them 2240 were citizen. (Source: Statistical Yearbook of Sweden, 2005).The Bangladeshi immigrant sources in Malmoe report that most of the Bangladeshis currently living in Malmoe entered as asylum seekers (Islam, 2008) and roughly there are 6,000 Bangladeshi immigrants are living in Sweden the source from Bangladesh embassy in Stockholm.

Chart 1 Bangladeshi Immigrant's in Sweden



Source: Statistical Yearbook of Sweden, 2005

According to the Swedish Statistical Year Book 2005, the number of the Bangladeshi population was 3421, among them 2240 were citizen.

Although, the beginning of the century and up to World War II, very few immigrants lived in Sweden. Since then, many waves of immigrants have reached the country. While the proportion of foreign-born in the population amounted to 1.8 per cent in 1950, ten years later it had grown to 4.0 per cent and to 6.7 per cent in 1970. Further influxes brought the proportion of foreign-born up to 7.5 per cent in 1980 and 9.2 per cent in

1990. When the proportion of foreign-born reached 11.3 per cent in 2000, it meant that for the first time the foreign-born population was larger than 1 million people. The most recent numbers are for December 2005, which show a foreign-born population of 12.4 per cent. As a consequence of the large recent immigration flow of young adults, the foreign-born population of Sweden is considerably younger than the native-born. The foreign-born people reside in all parts of Sweden. (Gustafsson & Zheng 2006: 82). The ban on Third World immigration and the arrival of wives and children changed the situation. The unaccompanied male worker who, it was assumed, would eventually return home when no longer needed, had become a family man apparently there to stay. This is not only affected the structural situation in the Scandinavian countries, but also attitudes towards immigrants (Switland: 1985).

5.2 Immigrant's History and Foreign Born in USA (New York)

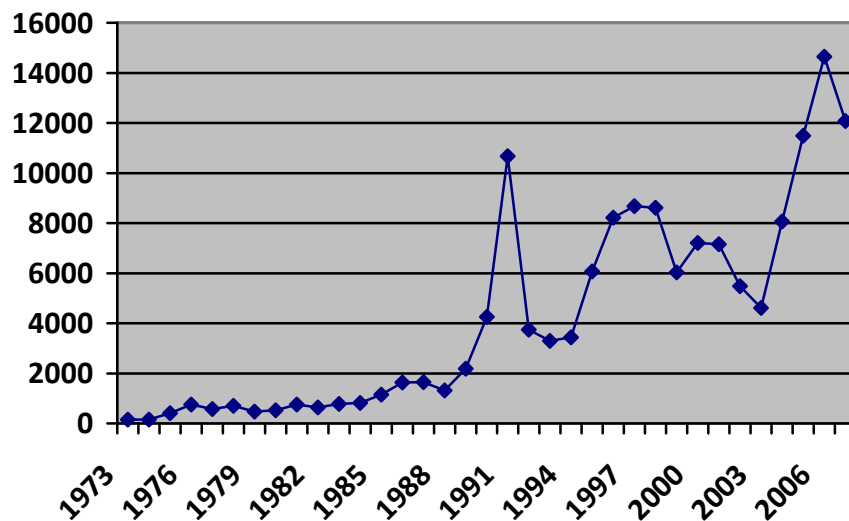
New York is the other great immigrant metropolis. It has nearly as many immigrants as Los Angeles (3.1 million), this population is growing faster (up about 40% in the last decade), and it has immigrants with more diverse origins. While New York is second to Los Angeles Asian immigrants, it nearly makes up the difference as the nations. Not surprisingly it is far fewer Mexicans than is common in the Southwest. Instead it has a distinctive mix of Dominicans, Central Americans, and South Americans, groups who generally live in or near New York's large Puerto Rican neighbourhoods. In addition, it has over 700,000 Asians. Together with Newark and the surrounding suburbs in New York and Northern New Jersey, Greater New York accounts for 16% of America's immigrants (Padilla 2004: 11, 12).

Between 1990 and 2000, the foreign-born population increased by 57 percent, from 19.8 million to 31.1 million, compared with an increase of 9.3 percent for the native population and 13 percent for the total U.S. population. The foreign born who were naturalized citizens of the United States increased by 56 percent (from 8.0 million to 12.5 million), compared with an increase of 58 percent for those who were not U.S. citizens (from 11.8 million to 18.6 million). In 2000, 40.3 percent of the foreign born were naturalized U.S. citizens, down slightly from 40.5 percent in 1990. The percentage naturalized varied by period of entry: while 82 percent of the foreign born who entered the United States prior to 1970 were naturalized U.S. citizens in 2000, only 13 percent of

those who entered in 1990. The foreign born from Asia and Europe accounted for 26 percent (8.2 million) and 16 percent (4.9 million) of the total foreign-born population, respectively (Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, and 2000 Brief). The foreign-born population in New York City is most concentrated in its two most populous boroughs: 36.2 percent of the cities live foreign-born live in Queens and 31.4 percent in Brooklyn, compared with 14.7 percent in Manhattan, 14.4 percent in the Bronx and 3.3 percent on Staten Island. In Manhattan, the only concentrations of immigrants are in Lower Manhattan. (Source: New York Times city room).

If we turn over the Bangladeshi immigrants in U.S.A, Most of the Bengali immigrants have settled in major U.S. cities, with a vast majority of its population located in New York City. We can see the data present by the Personal obtaining legal permanent resident status by country of birth the number of Bangladeshi immigrants in the U.S. from 1973 to present.

Chart 2 Bangladeshi Immigrants in U.S.: Fiscal Years 1973 to 2007.



Source: (Source: U. S. Department of Homeland security).

The numbers of Bangladeshi immigrants come to the United States start living from when Bangladesh became an independent (1971) country. (Source: U. S. Department of

Homeland security). However, for the number of Bangladeshi immigrants in New York City, there are some issues with the quality of this data. There is complete statistics from Immigration forms and for some reason, the response to city and state of residence is missing on a high number of forms. The percentage of missing values for the State of Residence is over 60 percent. (Source: U. S. Department of Homeland security). The Bangladeshi immigrants are established themselves in the business, commerce and political communities. They have their own financial, social and cultural organizations. Though U.S. citizens, at the same time they wish to retain their Bangladeshi identity, to please elders afraid of that they will lose touch with their cultural roots and family values. Still there is a constant effort necessary by the young Bangladeshi second generation, to avoid confusion in this constant struggle of whether to assimilate with the “foreign” culture they live in or retain their roots, as their parents wish.

5.3 Bengali Life in Malmoe and New York City

To conduct the research in Malmoe and New York City, it is very rewarding to see the Bangladeshis’ lifestyle in both locations. Although the case studies were not comparative study, but Bangladeshi communities in Malmoe and New York have some differences.

5.3.1 Bengali Community in Malmoe City

Bangladeshi immigrants’ community is very small in Malmoe city; approximately sixty Bangladeshi families are living. From the findings to explore that the Bangladeshi communities in Malmoe are a little bit conservative, because most of the Bangladeshi immigrants are from same background, where most of them are restaurant owners and working class, they are doing very well, established their own restaurant business. They always like to hold their tradition and they are always reveal themselves by their own communities. Most of the Bangladeshi living in Malmoe have been moved in early 1980s. Most of them were asylum seekers. Most of the Bangladeshi immigrants’ women in Malmoe are trying to adjust with this society. Most of them can speak Swedish language. They are working in different organizations; such as day care centre, nursing and restaurant business. Some of them are housewives and take care of the family and children.

Bangladeshi community in Malmoe city has their own activities. They through dinner party every holiday and take their children with them to keep relationship with the Bangladeshi community and with Bengali culture. They celebrate Bengali New Year, Iftar party, Eid party and wear the Bangladeshi traditional dress. They like to introduce their children with their Bangladeshi culture and heritage through to join these kinds of native cultural parties and celebrations. Children also like to celebrate the Bengali cultural parties. Even Immigrants families like to hold their religious belief and most of them prefer to give marry their children within their own communities.

Most of the second generations Bangladeshi in Malmoe having friendship within their own communities and very few have their friendship with white people. Most of them are bounded in parental and communities boundaries. They have to wear the traditional clothes when they go to Bengali parties. Children have to go parties with their parents and very often they can go outside parties with their white Swedish, But they have many Swedish friends in school they cannot free mix like other white Swedish girls. Bangladeshi second generation living in Malmo can speak more then two languages.

5.3.2 Bengali community in New York City

New York Bengali community is big community and little bit liberal then Malmoe community. However, it is also depend on their background. Some immigrants are educated and working in high class job and some of them are uneducated working class. Actually there are many kinds of Bangladeshi immigrant's people are living from different background. In New York, most of the respondent's family background was different types and parents are highly educated. The Bangladeshi communities in New York in different areas are different type of people are living. They move in NYC from 1971 and settled down themselves.

As Bengalis immigrate to the United States, they initially live in close proximity to other Bengali immigrants. This is evident in cities such as New York, where many ethnic communities are created. This community setting helps Bengalis produce an ethnic

subculture and a situation where Bengalis can demonstrate accommodation, rather than assimilation. This community creates a comfortable atmosphere in which immigrants can preserve their Bengali traditions and values in the U.S. (Chowdhury 2005: 1). A major distinguishing characteristic of Bengalis, as well as other Asians in the U.S., are their high levels of education. Prior to leaving Bangladesh, most immigrants had already obtained college and professional degrees. As Bengalis came to the U.S. in search of employment opportunities, it became evident that these new immigrants were among the most well educated people in the U.S. The professional jobs they were obtaining provided financial and prestigious benefits for many new immigrants. Although many Bengalis are financially established enough to physically leave the Bengali community in the cities and move into the suburbs, their emotional attachment to the community is manifested in other ways. Bengalis maintain close contact and communication to other Bengalis. There are also numerous organisations, institutions, and events to build solidarity among the immigrants. These social affairs range from the simple informal dinner parties to cultural shows and even religious services. Among the organisations that are created are cultural organisations, organisations for Bengali performing arts, Bengali professional organisations, and religious organisations. These organisations also create institutions such as Bengali schools, religious schools, and community centres. All of these organisations, institutions, and events provide organic means of solidarity. Their function is to increase solidarity among Bengali immigrants. (Chodhury 2005:2).

6.0 Respondent's Views and Results

The main purpose of the study is to see the gender discrimination, choice of marital partner and the situation of second generation women's biculturalism, and the difficulties and the success they experience is being bicultural. Here the study will examine the women's life style in home tradition and host tradition within different cultural elements for second generation women's living in Sweden and USA.

As mentioned before that the main aim of this thesis is to focus on Gender and Biculturalism: Ethnic Identity and Choice of Marital Partner among Second Generation Bangladeshi Women in the USA and Sweden. Gender dimension of the life of Asian

immigrants in western host societies, and in particular, Choice of marital partner among Bangladeshi Second generation women in Sweden and USA, the extent to which young women, belonging to the second generation of immigrants become bicultural. Foreign born women face lots of problems. The root cause for these problems seems to spring from the culture which includes ethnicity, language, clothing, and being discriminated on the basis of a predetermined religion. A point of departure for this investigation is the observation that most immigrant parents support gender differences, and that this may predict differences in ethnic identity among young generation men and women.

Thus, the study will be limited to the question of young women and their choice of marital partner. Marriage is an indicator of integration, and this focus is helpful for highlighting the complexity of dual cultures among migrants. To investigate the degree of the women's biculturalism, and the difficulties and successes they experience in being bicultural. The study will focus on the case of young women's living in Sweden and USA (more especially in Malmo and New York) who belong to the second generation of immigrants from Bangladesh.

6.1 Women's Life Style in Home Tradition and Host Culture

Within the context of home tradition and host culture, a general picture of second generation women's lifestyles in a foreign country plays a very important role, when they grow up in two different cultural values (bicultural way). In family life, most of the respondents have to maintain Bangladeshi traditional lifestyle, such as they have to speak Bengali, sometime wear Bangladeshi traditional dress, food habit, practicing religion, respect their elders, join in Bangladeshi community parties, celebrate Eid (A religious festival) and they have to maintain family and communities bonding and so on. For example, most of the respondents suppose to stay with their parents before marrying. It is very prestigious issues for Bangladeshi parents and if they live together with a boy without marriage. Thus, most of the respondent's women have strong parental control. They are not allowed to get drunk and come back home at late night after party. At the same time to growing up with western social life context where they have to maintain the

host culture as well. They have to socialize with western communities, language, food culture, western dress up, friendship and maintain relationship with multicultural people.

Drawing on data collected from fifteen second-generation young women and two young boys and two parents, the study explores a number of key areas including language, religious practices, dress up, and socialisation with host culture and feelings of being bicultural. Some of the respondents are living in Malmo and New York cities and leading their lives in both cities. They have described how they juggle themselves with traditional and host cultural lives including some of the key areas described as follows.

6.1.1 Language

Language is very important key factor for second generation bicultural children. The important observation of the fieldwork of Bangladeshi second generation women is having a great impact on their bicultural lives in foreign countries by speaking different languages at the same time. Most of the respondents feel, it is all right to maintain both their mother tongue and the host language where they live in, but some exception was also found from few of the respondents, three respondents in New York said that sometimes they feel confused communicating in both languages. One of second generation woman respondent in Malmo stated that, “She likes to speak both languages Bengali and Swedish. At home, she likes to speak Bengali and with friends and public places she likes to speak Swedish. She says that she feels proud when she speaks more than one language. But her mother argued when she speaks Swedish with her brothers and sister at home, she does not like it. Her Mum always wants her to speak Bengali at home.” (Malmo, 10th January 2008).

In general, most of the respondents in Malmoe has said that they enjoy speaking more than one languages. They informed that they learn Bengali language as their Mums speak in Bengali; they speak Swedish because they brought up in Sweden. In school they have to learn more than one languages. Some of the respondents can speak Spanish, some of them can speak France; some of them can speak Italian as well. All of the respondents are able to speak more than two languages. Most of the Bangladeshi second generation

women respondents have said that they like to speak Bengali at home and with Bangladeshi community members. However, they also like to speak Swedish with people who are Bangladeshi Swedish like them and in public places. The second generation Bangladeshi women respondents communicate with various people in this manner because they are living in a multicultural society.

In New York, another respondent stated her confused situation while she speaks both Bengali and English languages:

“I feel confused when I speak both languages. At home I used to speak Bengali and at school with friends and teachers I like to speak English. But some time it is confusing when I have to speak Bengali to maintain Bengali culture, respecting elders [i.e. Apa (sister), Bhaiya (Brother), Chacha-Chachi (Uncle-Aunty)] and in school with friend’s and teachers I have to speak English and call them by their first names. Actually my Mum does not like if I call someone elder by their names.” (New York, 22nd April’2008).

It has been discovered that most of the second generation respondents felt that it is all right to maintain mother tongue and the host country language which they learn at school but some exception found which has been discussed above.

Finally second generation women may adopt the host language, which could conflict with ideals and beliefs held by their parents on their family values, while their parents actively maintain their mother tongues (Bengali language). Although these clashing views may cause challenges when only women have to speak by honouring the homeland language, but finally these women are successful navigating in both languages.

6.1.2 Religious practices

The respondents of this study are second generation women whose previous generation came from Bangladesh with a deep religious belief and practices. Mostly the previous generation tries their best to pass their religious beliefs and practices among their next generation. However the second generation also experienced with the new religious dilemma and practices in a new set-up. It is a well established fact that none of the

respondents have changed their religion either but their mind set towards religion have changed. They have expressed their views in terms of religion that they found as a daily practices and even feasible in religion, but not as firm and strong belief.

On the other hand, if we look upon the religious practices of host country in Sweden, we can see their religious make-up is different than those who live in Bangladesh. Sweden is often thought of as a country with relatively little diversity in terms of ethnicity, religion and even social class (Cretser: 1999: 378). Most of the people in these countries do not follow or much care about what religious scriptures prescribed. For example, a large percentage of population of these countries publicly declare that they are atheist or antagonistic. Very few go to churches or believe what Christianity says. Whereas, the Swedish people they celebrate Christmas programme and other religious occasions. Even in USA, most people they do not practice their religion, but they usually celebrate religious programme. However, most of the Bangladeshi second generation women are Muslim in those places. Modood's et al study (1997) found that 74% Muslims says that the religion is very important the way they lived their lives. Majority of Asians stated that religion is the main basis for their ethnic identity (Anwar, 1998).

From author's observation, some of the respondents are eager to practice the religious value; some of them are different mentality those who are from liberal family background they do not care about religion. Three respondents in New York and two respondents in Malmo informed that their parents always try to teach them Islamic religious values and culture. Beside this, some second generation women are pressured to maintain the religious values. Their parents are very anxious about their religious identity. Where Szokolczai (2001), stated in his study "Identities are both individual and collective. It is extremely rare that an aspect of personal identity is formed which is not also forming the identity of other human beings" (Szokolczai 2001:5). One second generation Bangladeshi women living in New York said that,

"My Mum taught me how to read the Quran and say Namaz while I was 8 years old. She told me that it was my responsibility to teach you, but it is your choice that you will practice it or not in the future. So I can read the Quran and say Namaz. But I do not

practice it often. However I do fast sometimes and join our community Iftar parties and we celebrate Eid together’’ (New York 22nd April’ 2008).

Another second generation women living in Malmo stated that,

“I honour Islamic religious values and culture. At the same time I go to church in some occasions with Swedish friends. I celebrate the Christmas party, because I was born here and most of my friends are Swedish, so I enjoy the Christmas party with them.’’ (Malmo, January 28th 2008).

From the findings of this research is that the respondents of second generation women are like to maintain Islamic religious values at the same time they like to celebrate other religious programmes. All respondents of my study are Muslim. The parents of second generation teach their children all the rituals and beliefs of Islam (i.e. Namaz, fast, Quran etc). Some of second generation women have to wear hijab for parental control, although now a day it is not admired to wear hijab young generation in Bangladesh. But some of immigrant women are very restricted and they like to maintain their Islamic individuality to wear hijab and also instruct there children Islamic values and custom.

One Respondents living in New York said that,

“My parents they are very religious person. My mom wear hijab, she told me I have to do also. To respect my mom and family values I wear hijab when I go to outside the house. But I feel guilty while one of my American friend told me that if I wear hijab I can not make friendship with him. This type of situation makes me very confused and that’s why sometime I don’t want to wear hijab. But my parents get angry if I don’t wear hijab, and my mom never gets angry if my brother doesn’t practice Namaz and fasting’’ (New York, 2nd April’2008).

According to the research, in this situation I noticed that some of the respondents have to maintain Islamic culture according to their families rules, on the other hand some of them like to maintain own religious culture, beside they like to join in others religious festival and occasions. Within this complex, gender, being a very significant dimension of ethnic

identity, plays a very important role in the complex choice of individuals living in most socio cultural settings (Ganga 2007: 42).

In terms of practising the religion, some interesting differences have been identified between Parents and the children of those parents. They practice Islam by their heart and they want to see their children do the same, but in some cases girls they face difficulties to maintain the religious values in host countries. Children they are growing up with people who believe in different religion, so to maintain the relationship with host countries friends and acquaintances they have to join other religious festivals. Some of the respondents inform that they believe their Islamic religion, but some time they like going to the church during Christmas, they celebrate Christmas with their Swedish friends. The way of attending the churches and celebrating Christmas and few of them also interpret to see how the religious celebration is like. So, second generation women's they may have a greater degree of social contacts then their first generation parents.

As a result, those daughters of parent's are try to keep their religious identity and want to see their daughters are maintaining the same. It is because; those parents are strictly grounded with their religious belief and culture. They are anxious about their daughter's western life and daughters may start following western culture and values. They sometime forget that they are not treating their children equally. They are very much concerned about their daughters practising Islamic values but they are not interested in with their sons. This is really discriminating atmosphere.

However, it is worth mentioning that the young generation are comfortable with the daily life and religious practices, as they have not changed their religion yet. Nevertheless they have just accommodated and co-opted with the new environment. A little confusion and contradiction lie in to the parents mind what they sometime share with their next generation.

This ongoing dilemma works in the family atmosphere what does not make any massive impact in their socio-cultural economic life. It is also found from that the study the respondents are attracted by the way of religious practices and culture.

6.1.3 Choice between Traditional and Western Dress-up

In Malmo, four respondents and in New York six respondents have said that their parents do not like them to wear whatever dress they want. They have parental control on their dress up. Only two respondents in Malmo and three respondents in New York inform that they have freedom to choose their own dress up. Two of the respondents living in Malmo think that dress up is a matter of personal choice on perspective of situation. They told me when they go to visit Bangladesh or community's party they like to wear Bangladeshi traditional dress (i.e 'Saree', 'Shalwar- Kamiz'), when stay here they like to wear jeans, t-shirt whatever. But most of the respondents in Malmo and New York have mentioned that they have parental restriction to wearing revealing cloths. In summer, they can not wear shorts, bikini, and miniskirt and too open cut dress like other western girls wear. They have said that as young women they are not allowed to wear this type of dress against of their family honour. One second generation seventeen years respondent living in New York informed that.

"I like to wear 'Shalwar- Kamiz' (Traditional Bangladeshi dress) only when I go to Bangladeshi community's party, I also like to wear jeans, t-shirt when I go to party with my friends. But I have parental restriction in my own choice of dress up. My Mum doesn't like to see me wear western dress (denim miniskirt). It is very confusing and embracing situation for me when I go to party I have to hide my western party dress in a bag. Then I have to change it at my friends place to prepare and go to party" (New York 25th April 2008).

About wearing 'open cut dress' another respondents living in Malmo have said that

"My mom never allows me to buy and wear 'bikini' too open dress. So my Swedish friends sometime they criticise me that if you don't wear bikini we will not take you to the beach with us, I feel confused sometimes if I buy bikini and wear it against of my mother choose, may be my mother can get angry with me. But I have seen sometime my brother wear shorts in summer, he can wear

whatever he like, On his case my parents do not argue to maintain the Bangladeshi tradition with my brother'' (Malmoe, 11 January' 2008).

From this particular respondents view suggests that it is an unfair attitude in between boys and girls. It seems that, the respondents' family control over daughters is stronger term in relation to the sons. Especially mother they are overly controlling towards on their daughter's personal likings. They do not like that their daughter to wear revealing dress like 'bikini' not even the too open cut western dress. They consider this to be an over exposed of their body as they are Muslim people and they have community bonding in these societies. So if their daughter's do it, parents became unhappy because of communities peoples can say something bad behind their daughter. They think it is against of their Bangladeshi cultures. So that tells that the daughters are in a state of confusion of which culture or tradition to follow.

They are not proper Bangladeshi, not proper Swedish and American. They are blended within bicultural life and they will be identified as Swedish Bangladeshi or American Bangladeshi. But their parents want to wear them proper dress, because parents like to maintain their Bangladeshi culture and religious values.

As a result, gender effects showed the negative relationship between origin of home land culture and adopted host cultures, where a tension involves in a favour to maintain the traditional factors. In fact, Women are considered as the custodians of culturally specific ethnic values and family customs (Baldassar 1999).

Thus it is a restricted pattern towards the women, perhaps because of traditional role as keepers of ethnic culture. This implies that the first generation is more exposed to adaptation problems and they are quit different from their second generation daughters thinking of views. Second generations are more familiar with western culture rather than their first generation parents.

6.1.4 Socializing in the Host Society

Most of the respondents have said that they want to be related with the host culture but sometimes they feel restricted by their family because they are women. Some respondents in Malmo and New York have said that to maintain the relationship with friends, they like visiting their friend's place, going out and party. They informed that sometimes they have to go to parties with friends and they like to stay late at night, but they are not allowed to do so. They have to be back within 11 O'clock. If they are late they need to explain that why they are late. They told that their parents do not sleep till they come back home.

One respondent claimed that,

"I like to go clubbing sometime. I lie with my friends that I have to return back home earlier. I can not say my friends that I don't have permission from my parents when I am over 18. I know if I don't listen to my parents, being drunk, back at home late night, stay over night with boyfriend, it is shame for my parent within own communities people and with Bengali tradition" (New York, 15 May 2008).

At the same time, a second generation boy informed that he is free to go outside. If he wants he can go to night clubs, just he has to inform his parents that he will be late to come back home. Where the girls case is different, the fact remain that the Bangladeshi young girl are not allowed to spend much time unsupervised. Many of them spend their time at their home or at the homes of family friends or relatives. It is link with their culture of origin. According to the tradition, girls of Bangladeshi origin could not go out without being chaperoned by another member of the family. Which is reality is a role of conciliation between parents' culture and that of their Place of settlement. Nevertheless, the second generation women's are bending the parental rules which were no longer suitable to the new cultural circumstances and changed social environment.

Here one respondent claimed that,

"I don't live with my parents now, I am living alone. Because most of the time my parents are not happy when I come back home at late. So if I go to party I have to lie to my parents. It is not only for the party, it can be late for my study group discussion, late to back form my lab work. But always it is

mental stress when I back home late; I am tired to explain all the situation everyday. So I decided to stay alone in another flat. But my parents are not quite happy me living alone as a girl” (Malmoe, 18 January 2008).

According to the view of this respondent it showed, she felt that due to the rules she was subjected to, where she had to lie to her parents. She still unable to express her views and to fight for what she believes is right. Here parents are not quite happy because on the way of traditional view most of Bangladeshi girls are living with their parents’ house before marrying. Here the research observation showed that when children of immigrant are attending the school, through schooling they engage with classmates and different multicultural friends. In this situation they have to be familiar with different patterns of behaviour and rules. They have to contact with other world the member of the mainstream society. So Bangladeshi second generation have to maintain the double burden where Ganga’s study shown the same situation “within some migrant communities, young women could be at the receiving end of a double standard upbringing, which privileges the independences of the male counter part within the family and outside the world.

The double standard affecting the female offspring of people of immigrant origin as members of their own family and mainstream society are often perceived as unjust and can be difficult do reconcile” (Ganga 2007: 42).

As a result, most of the respondents informed as they are women they may manage this difficulties over parental control. So Bangladeshi second generation women may endure the double bindings over parental control by living in bicultural situation, where the men’s case is different. However, it may be true that by imposing patriarchate role, the parent’s of second generation women’s is trying to give them a better life.

6.1.5 Bicultural Identity

The question about feelings of being bicultural four respondent’s second generation women living in Malmoe said that they feel sometime they are caught between two cultures. When they go to visit Bangladesh, they feel at that time they are Swedish, when

they staying in Sweden sometime they feel they are Bangladeshi (Malmoe, 25th January' 2008). But one respondent in New York said that,

"I rather enjoy differences between two cultures; in fact the contrast between two cultures is pleasant. But being bicultural makes me feel special and confused. Special because it's add to my Bengali identity, and confused because my cultures have been different views on women's choice, more specially dating and marriage. I feel like I have to choose one which is similar with my home land culture, or I have to choose another one which is similar with host culture. It's left me in difficult situation" (New York 3rd May'2008).

In ethnic and cultural studies (Durczak, 1997 & He, 1998) reveals that bicultural individuals often talk about dual cultural heritage in complicated ways and in both positive and negative terms. Biculturalism can be associated with feelings of pride, uniqueness, and a rich sense of community and history, while also bringing to mind identity confusion, dual expectations, and value clashes (Haritatos & Benet-Martínez, 2003). "Bicultural perceive their mainstream and ethnic cultural identities as compatible and integrated versus oppositional and difficult to integrate" (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002: 9).

As a result, the research shows that most of second generation women respondents informed that they feel fortunate to be integrated in two different cultures. However, they feel complexity when they have to maintain traditions against their will and they feel guilty when they can not relate themselves properly with host cultures. When the second generation women try to critic the two cultures, they often attribute the western cultures as they live as rational and liberal. At the same time the Bangladeshi culture as emotional and humorous.

Actually, they are very flexible and able to behave correctly in different contexts. They may appreciate the western culture as the mainstream of social life. At the same time the Bangladeshi culture for the family life. The mind likes western and the heart beats for Bangladesh. This research found that they are used to relate themselves with two different cultural settings very quickly. They can also tolerate ambiguous situations in between this bicultural life. However, it may loose their personal identity; still they may

be able to find opportunities to being the best one from two different cultures. This integration can make them rather seamless and enrich.

6.2 Choices of Marital Partner

This section will draw upon to analyse the data in Malmoe and New York City on second generation Bangladeshi women's future choice of marital partner according to gender discrimination. The findings will observe on the choice of marital partner and see the situation to give priority of own choice, priority of parental choice, partner from native origin or from same community or partner from host county. The concept of bicultural choice is the freedom to choose according to one's preferences for the second generation women.

6.2.1 Look upon Future Martial Partner: Barrier and Challenges

Most of the respondents living in Malmo and New York informed that in Bangladeshi perspective to selection a future life partner by own choice or parental choice, sometime it is a conflicting phenomenon. According to love marriage and arranged marriage most of the respondents have stated that life partner choices are happened by arrange marriage and few respondents inform that they can marry by their own choice. It is a traditional phenomenon that parents choose their daughter's partner. They said that their parents think they can choose the perfect groom for their daughters. The second generation women think it is difficult in different situation to maintain the origin of traditional value. They born and bought up in multicultural societies where most of them like to choose their partner from these societies. However, their parents' think that as a Muslim girl they are not allowed to live together before marriage. They can not marry out of their religion. So they can not marry whom they want but situation is changing. Some of the respondents in Malmo, they are against their parental control, they do not listen their parents when they select their partner. In that case they have to face different obstacles. A friendly discussion with a respondent about her own experiences to choosing a life partner in bicultural societies, she said that,

“For me, my parents are separated, because I am in love with a Swedish guy who is not a Muslim and Bangladeshi. My mother supported me while I meet with that guy. That’s why my father divorces my Mum and they fight each other always. My father wanted me to marry one of the Bangladeshi guys who was my father’s friend of son. But it was very difficult to choose a guy from Bangladesh as my life partner. My father always argue that he can not show his face in Bangladeshi community if I marry a Swedish guy. But I have nothing to do. I love him so I am decided to marry that guy” (Malmö, 17 January’ 2008).

Nevertheless, some of the daughters have over controlling from family and parental side. So they are confused when they are going to select their life partner. If they love some one from host country, parents do not approve it. On the other hand, some of the respondents have said that they like to marry in their own community; here they inform that they agree with their parental views. One respondent said that,

“I want to marry some one who is half Bangladeshi, Half American Like me. It would be easier to share my life with someone who is bicultural like me. My parents thinking is same, some one within the community” (New York, 13 May 2008).

Another Bangladeshi second generation women said that,

“I have not chosen for my life partner yet. My parents like a Muslim guy from Bangladesh. They think the Bangladeshi guys are stay whole life together, they are family oriented more than other countries guys. So I am confused if I can adjust some one from Bangladesh. To think about family values and culture I have to give prioritise my parental choice. Otherwise my parents can get hurt because of me” (Malmö, 26 January’ 2008).

Few respondents claimed that they have freedom of their life partner choice. Their parents are liberal. But it is rare. A second generation girl whose mother is finish and father is from Bangladesh told me about her freedom of choosing life partner,

“My future life partner would be from anywhere in the world, from any religion, it doesn’t matter for me when I will fall in love with someone. I am from a very liberal family, my parents they never impose their choice on me, they told me it is your life; you have full freedom to select your life partner” (Malmö, 24 January’2008).

On the other hand, living bicultural societies and select a future life partner from a bicultural society, second generation women's face a gender discriminative attitude where they do not have any choice to select their life partner and even while they choose they have to face lot of problems within their own community people even. A second women respondent inform about her experiences while she choose a Swedish partner,

“I was threatened while I am living together with my Swedish boy friend, One day I was walking on the street on the way of my home, One Bangladeshi guy came in front of me and he asked me that are you living together with a Swedish guy? Are you from Bangladesh? I saw you many days you are with that guy. I was so nervous in that time and I hide my identity that I am not from Bangladesh. He threat me if I see you anymore with that guy I will kill you, the reason he told me you are a bitch, you are living together with a Swedish guy before marrying, If my daughter know, tomorrow she will go to stay outside of my home with another guy, Its bad effect on our Bengali generation.....so on. But I could never imagine myself threatened because of this reason while living in a western society like Sweden”. (Malmoe, 13th May).

They think in these western societies like Sweden and USA it is a normal matter to choose life partner by them. As they born and raised in these societies and growing up in liberal societies some of them they argue that why they can not choose their life partner by themselves. Between this complex situations it seems that gender discrimination attitude happened not only to maintain the native norms and values, it is happened with a foreign born Bangladeshi women choose their life partner with belonging bicultural societies. One respondent said that,

“It is very difficult to choose a life partner while I am growing up with bicultural way. My parents like pure Bangladeshi Muslim guy for me and I like someone grow up with this societies. It is a matter of adjustment with everything. I have seen my other friends, their parents choose their life partner from Bangladesh while they visiting Bangladesh in different occasion, marrying after few month most of them get divorce, they argue that they can not adjust to someone who is new comer from Bangladesh” (Malmoe 13 January 2008).

When life partner choosing for a boy, situation is different from a girl. A second generation boy said about his freedom of choice for life partner,

“I am going to marry a Swedish girl. I manage my parents; they were bit angry first time. But I don’t care at all, it’s my life, I have to give priority on my own choose, my parents wanted me to marry a Bangladeshi origin from Bangladesh, but I think if would marry a Bangladeshi girl both have to suffer a cultural gap when we will stay together, because I grow up in this society, I am more integrated with this society, I have different view for my life, we always like to share everything, but in the way of Bangladeshi tradition it is not the same ” (Malmoe, 27 January’ 2008).

In overall, most of the women respondents have said that they are being imposed by their parents views and they feel that it might have been otherwise when it comes to their brother. Discussing the matter of daughters’ life partner choice with two second generation women’s parents living in Malmo and One in New York have said about their daughters’ future life partner, they like to bring groom for their daughter a Bangladeshi origin Muslim from here or from Bangladesh, but they are very anxious that if their daughter like some one non Muslim from another origin, it would be very painful for them. A Bangladeshi immigrant father said that,

“My daughter is 22 years old. I offer her to marry a guy from Bangladesh, educated and gentle, but she don’t want to listen to me. Here I could not find any one in my own community who is matching my daughter. So I have to think some one from Bangladesh. But my daughter doesn’t think the same. I can not impose my choice, but I told her you can choose your partner any origin from here, but he must be a Muslim” (Malmoe, 29 January’ 2008).

From this study it is perceived that the second generation women are encouraged to practice their Bangladeshi traditional values and cultures. Women are always considered to maintain their norms and values where they have limited freedoms to choose their own life partner or expressing their opinion. From different showed that, “In Asian Indian culture, parents usually have a strong influence in choices such as the career their child pursues, and more importantly the person they will marry” (Varghese 2007: 8). Choose and selection of a marriage partner is rarely done separately, but rather through familial and even community involvement. These women may potentially experience a challenge

in their choices to retain or change their own cultural paradigms (Inman et al in Sandhu 1999: 31). These situations of my respondents remember that the gender reality are strict not only in Bangladeshi society, they are bound to maintain their own traditional values by living in western societies as well. But in western culture individuals are supposed to consider themselves unique in contrast with others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

In Bangladeshi perspective life partner selection happened by arranged marriage, where most of the parents choose their daughters life partner by their own choice. It is belonging with Bangladeshi traditional norms. They believe they can select their daughter's life partner which is perfect for them. They impose their choice because they lack confidence when their daughters choose life partner by themselves. When daughters choose a non Muslim guy from this host society immigrant parents they may loose their religious identity. As Bangladesh is a Muslim country, most of the immigrant's parents are Muslim. They want to hold it by their next generation. Even, Bangladeshi parents are living in a strong communities bonding. They do not want to loose their family honour within the community and like to maintain good relationship with people within community. Bangladeshi people are very family oriented. They like to hold their family relationship within any challenges. So parents like to see their daughters' happiness by marrying with a guy from same origin. Even if sometime daughter's select their life partner from same origin half born like them, some parents they argue those who want to bring their daughters partner from Bangladesh, they think that some second generation boys are more familiar with western culture, so it may be a problem for their daughter's life. On the other hand, social reality is different in Bangladeshi society rather than western society. An unmarried girl who has a child does not dare to go to Bangladesh with her child and without a husband. Second generation young women living in western societies are suspected to follow western norms concerning sexuality, which are not accepted in Bangladesh. This means having a partnership before marriage is supposed to be normal for western girls. These young women are afraid of being perceived as cheap girls by Bangladeshi boys. Here Gongas' (2007) study showed that by referring to their own parents' strict traditional values and norms imported from the place of origin, however, adapted them to the new social situation of the place of residence, so ensuring it

is not always painless process of adaptation to the new environment in the continuity with the past (Ganga 2007:50). The second generation women like their partner from host societies, because they born and brought up within these liberal values. This society is very liberal to choosing a life partner by themselves. It is normal for European and American societies. People they can choose their partner whom they like they want. There is no barrier for them. Nevertheless, Bangladeshi young women have been confronted with two value systems during their socialisation; they have to decide which one is valid for them in special situations. They do not want to be victimized. For second generation women it is normal to have influences from two cultures. Second generation women decide to follow the norms of the surrounding culture, but in fact they are exposed to a double pressure to adapt. They should may observe the rules of both cultures although, even when they are contradictory.

As a result, the argument claims that it is a contradiction between parents' choice and daughter's choice. Asian parents generally disapprove of dating particularly when their daughters are involved (Robinson, 2005). However, Bangladeshi second generation women living between two kind of situation this liberal societies and also with parental controlling bonding situation, it is a confusing phenomenon where the second generation boys are enjoying their liberal life. It may show no restriction for boys to choose their life partner in bicultural societies. Here the study is similar with Meenakshis' (2004) study where she showed in her study, all of the girls noted that their parents had prohibition on dating and interactions with boys, parents they have control on choosing their women's life partner. (Meenakshi 2004: 149). Parents only think about their culture, religion, family norms and values, communities bonding when their daughter's select their life partner, but they are not thinking more about their son's life partners choose by maintaining their family honour. This attitude seems to me an inequality between men and women.

7.0 Discussion

This thesis aims to give more insight into migration and gender, and the dual cultural life situation of young women living in Malmoe and New York, whose parents migrated from

Bangladesh. As this has been discussed above, and also have been shown by earlier studies, the young, second generation women face many problems as they grow up and have to adapt to two different and often conflicting sets of customs and values, and more so than young men. For instance, in the case of the Indo-Guyanese minority Clement, Sing and Sophie (2006) showed that women are always eager to maintain traditional cultures whereas men have a different attitude. Parents expect their daughters to maintain what they consider to be a traditional home land way of life while they do not insist that their sons conform to this life style. They are more reluctant to let young women adapt to the lifestyles and the value systems of the host cultures, which usually are significantly different from what they were accustomed to in their home country (Mikler Ramisetty: 1991). They are pressured by two different sets of cultural values and practices, namely the 'home' and the 'host' country. The conflict is transferred to the young, second generation women who become the targets of conflicting pressures of values and expectations (Maria Perez 2002:12). The young women become the victims in this situation, and as I have shown, they feel that they do not have a freedom of choice in many different areas, such as language, religion, dress up; and especially, in the case of choosing their life partner. In the study, the total number of fifteen women respondents in Malmoe and New York (5 in Malmoe and 7 in New York) stated that their parents controlled the choice of their life partner. Most respondents said that they cannot wear a too open, short western dress, at home they have to speak Bengali in order to honour their elders, they are not allowed to stay out side at night as long as they want, before marrying they can not live together with someone, and they are not allowed to marry outside of their own religion and language. If they attempt to do so, their guardians try to stop them from doing so. Otherwise, they are faced with many challenges from their families and communities. For instance, one of the respondents was challenged by a man from her community for living together with a Swedish man.

Gender discrimination contributes to the heavier constraints imposed on the bi-cultural identity processes of young women. For instance, two young, second generation men (one in Malmoe and one in New York) told me that their parents cannot influence their choice of life partner. They will choose their life partner by themselves, and will prefer

one from the society where they have been born and raised. They stated that their girl friends differed from themselves by belonging to other countries of parental origin and religions. Also, they claimed their freedom of choice, and considered themselves to be able to assert this freedom when faced with their parents' anger and interference.

Another significant finding is the way in which young, second generation women in my study want to maintain certain cultural values associated with their parental country of origin. Similar observations have been made in other studies. For instance, Ramisetty-Mikler Suhasini (1993) found that the second generation of Indian migrants in America felt that those outside their community did not understand the significance of arranged marriages, and that this could lead to religious and racial stereotypes. Most of them had positive views about future marriages, and did not reduce it to a choice between loves versus arranged marriage. Rather, they stressed their opposition to forced marriages. At the same time, they had a diverse range of views about sexual relationships, emotional support and the meaning of marriage. My respondent expressed similar view points. In the study, two female respondents stood out as exceptional, as they did not live in conformity with the expected gender role. They came from very liberal families, and had chosen their life partner themselves, and their parents had accepted their choice. Padilla reported similar cases in her study of development processes related to intergenerational transmission of culture in bi-cultural environments (2004). Although most of my respondents said that they were restricted by their parents, they wanted to get married with someone they liked, but their parents had a different idea about whom they should marry. In his recent study Islam (2008) found that most of the first generation of Bangladeshi migrants in Malmoe and London wanted to see their children married with someone within their community, whereas the second generation wanted to marry according to their own choice. "When the two cultures clash as they often do around issues of gender roles and normal teenage behaviours such as dating (American culture), girls are often caught in a double bind and forced to conform to the possible consequence that they may have behavioural competence in the culture of the parents, but they feel a certain degree of resentment against their parents" (Amado M. 2004: 31). But many are pulled back toward the culture of their parents who expect their children to demonstrate loyalty to their cultural roots. Young women who lead between and betwixt lifestyles, who can

do little but suffer their parents' imposition upon them of alien cultural values," is not necessarily accurate (Sekhon and Szmigin 2005:4). In the findings situation was similar. Parents felt insecure when their daughter stayed outside with boy friends. They did not like that their daughters stayed out too long. At the same time, women tend to be flexible and have little problem in adjusting to different social environments (Wenzler-Cermer, 2004).

There is a clash between parent and their daughters when they are going to choose their marital partner. Parents give priority to their own choice rather than that of their daughters, and often they impose their wish by arranging a forced marriage. Some of the respondents have said that the most of their parents were reluctant to see their children marrying someone non Bengali speaker and the reason given was that it often becomes a problem to communicate with someone from a different language and culture. The situation was similar in Malmoe and New York. As it has been shown, young women belonging to the second generation of migrants are bi-cultural, and the shaping of this bi-cultural identity is takes place under considerable pressure, and is surrounded by heavy constraints. Understanding these particular problems and concerns may be helpful for finding ways of facilitating bi-cultural life for young women belonging to the second generation of migrants. They seem to have assimilated the Western culture more than their homeland culture.

8.0 Conclusion

In this study, the question of choice of marital partner has been used in order to offer a gender perspective on the complexity of living with dual cultures for young women who belong to the second generation of migrants to Europe and the US. It does not allow for generalisations, but the findings are supported by those of other studies. These young women are bi-cultural and want to be bi-cultural. Their identity formation takes place under considerable pressures and constraints. Partly, this is due to restrictions imposed by parents who wish to maintain their own traditional cultural values when living in a foreign environment. The young women like to relate themselves to the home land traditions of their parents. However, they also want to adapt to the culture of the host society where they have been born and raised. They want to speak both languages and maintain values from both cultures, and they want more freedom of choice, and argue

over parental control when it comes to choosing a marital partner. They want to marry someone who shares their experience of being the second generation of migrants: someone “half born”, and whom they like, but their parents do not agree. So they are suffering different crises in their bi-cultural lives. In one hand, they cannot reject their homeland tradition because of disagreeing with too much parental control. On the other hand, they like to belong to the country where they have been born and raised. They are confused, living in between and betwixt, and with limited personal choice. However, the fact remains the same, young immigrant women are trying to handle the many difficulties which they are facing in the adopted society where they live. Sometime they are confused, but they are dreaming of a way to overcome their confusion. They want to cope with the situation, and change their life according to the new culture and society where they are living. Nevertheless, they also want to keep their links with the culture which they inherited from their parents.

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Appendix 1

Interview Guide

Name:

Age:

From:

-How old are you?

-What is your occupation?

-How long have you been living in Malmoe and New York?

-Do you feel any challenges by living in bicultural societies?

-Do you feel any difficulties to speak Bengali beside your host (Swedish and English) languages?

-Do you like to wear Bangladeshi dress? Do you have any restriction for western dress?

-Do you have any parental control on your dress? Do the same for you're your brother?

-Do you have freedom to choose your dress by yourself? Can you wear whatever you like?

-Do you practice your religion (e.g. Namaz, Rozza, and Quran)?

-Do you celebrate your religious festivals or other religious festivals?

-Do you feel any barrier from your own community?

-Do you organized or join community based social activities?

-Do you like to practice your own cultural tradition both in side or out side your home?

-Do you stay outside till late night? Do you have restriction for this? How long you can stay?

-Do you have restriction to live together before marry from your family and community side?

-Do you feel any look upon your future marriage life partner?

-Do you like to get married inside your community or outside your community the country you born and raised?

-Do have any freedom to choose your future life partner?

-Do you like to marry by your own choice or your parental choice?

Do your parents agree if you marry some one from outside your family?

Do you face any difficulties when you choose your like partner?

-Do you feel that you are loosing your native culture when your daughter's choose her life Partner from host society?

--Do you think it is needed to be valued to maintain religious identity and tradition of your cultures?

-Do feel any challenges from family side (as a boy) when you choose your future of life partner?

- Do you feel any restriction like your sister feel?