

Shifting Boundaries of Self, Religion and
Ethnicity:
A study of Bangladeshi Migrant Women in
Victoria

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Bangladeshi migrants in Australia

 Australia is home to immigrants of culturally diverse backgrounds

 Bangladeshi Immigrants in Australia*,

 5,076 in 1996

 17,289 in 2006

 27,808 in 2011

 Bangladeshi Immigrants in Victoria*,

 920 in 1996

 3,198 in 2006

 5,114 in 2011

*Australian Population Census

Background





🌀 In this study I will focus particularly on Bangladeshi migrant women who are Muslims.

🌀 Understanding the experience of women is important as they perform the main role of raising their children.




🌀 Labelling migrants as 'homogenous' is problematic and results in failure to understand the complexity of identity construction processes (Salih, 2000).

🌀 Need to understand the ways in which immigrants construct imagined, transnational and local communities (Salih, 2000).

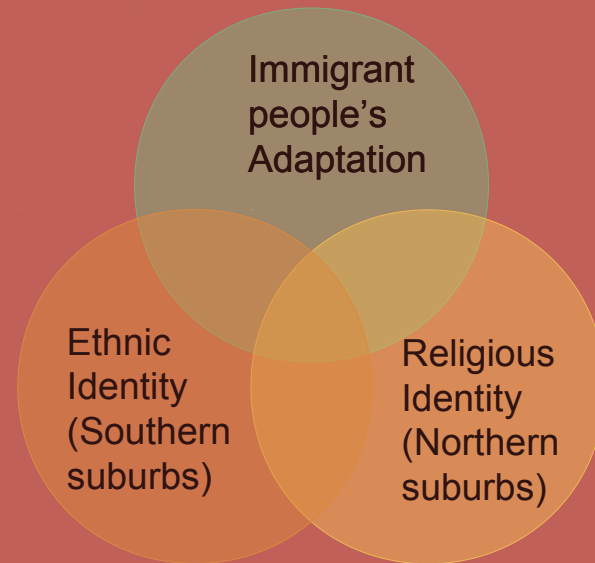
Background

-  Very little focus has been given in previous research on Bangladeshi women's experiences regarding cultural adaptation and raising children in a western setting.
-  Baluja (2003) did a study in the United States and found the ways gender roles among Bangladeshi immigrants are reshaped after migration.
-  Tessem (2008) explored in Canada first generation Muslim immigrant women's experiences and child raising strategies from religious, cultural and gender perspectives.
-  Ahmed (2005) focused in her study in the UK on Bangladeshi women's roles within their home and community and the impacts of religion on their roles and identity.

Background

-  Summerfield (1993) in her study between Bangladeshi and Somali migrant women in the UK found that Bangladeshi women are more submissive than Somali women.
-  UK based studies found passive participation and lack of decision-making roles of women and related that to the rural and uneducated background of Bangladeshi migrant women.
-  So, there is a scope to understand in this research how patriarchal cultural factors influence migrant Bangladeshi women in Australia, where most of them are educated and have a combination of both urban and rural backgrounds.

Negotiating Identity: Comparing two case groups (Ethnic vs. religious) in two suburban areas in Victoria



Conceptual Issues

📖 To analyse Bangladeshi identity, conceptualisation of ethnic identity is important.

📖 Stuart Hall (1988)

-ethnicity as a subjective identification process. The term 'identification' to understand Bangladeshi community.


-This term allows understanding of how and why Bangladeshi identities shift over time and other situations (Ahmed, 2005).

📖 Rachel Rinaldo (2010)

-Presumably, Bangladeshi migrants create some resistance to integrate in western culture and preserve their own culture.


- And, it creates submission to religious practices, which is well captured by binary of resistance versus submission (Rinaldo, 2010).


Research Aims and Objectives

 The aim of this research is to explore Bangladeshi migrant women's cultural adaptation process in Australia.




 Objectives:

 Find out how cultural heritage, and religious practices influence their strategies and guidelines about raising children (Tesseem, 2008)


 Understand how they create connectivity between their family, community relations, and religious and cultural practices


 Understand how their ethnic and religious backgrounds create challenges for choosing identity

Research Methods


-  **Research Methodology:** This research has adopted case study approach in two case groups among Bangladeshi migrants.
-  **Research Methods:** 30 migrant women who have children will be interviewed to obtain in-depth and detailed information. I have been applying Semi-structured Interviews.
-  As I am comparing between two groups, I am interviewing 15 women from southern suburbs and 15 women from northern suburbs.


Research Methods

 I have been applying 'Community member profile' method with 15 Bangladeshi women of Northern suburbs and 15 women from Southern suburbs to collect information and history about the community (Mulligan and Nadarajah, 2008).

 I have attended the cultural and religious festivals and taken notes as part of participant observation method. I have also taken notes of places and households during interviews of women, which can be considered as ethnographic method.


Ongoing Fieldwork





 I have collected information using 'Community member profile' of 15 Bangladeshi women until now. These women are from Northern suburbs.

 I have conducted In-depth interviews of 15 women from northern suburbs in the last month.






Research Findings

 I found few findings that they apply as strategies to maintain and transfer their cultural identity to their children while adapting in Australian culture.

-  Practising Bengali language, dress and cuisine.
-  Maintaining cultural identity through religious practices.
-  Following the religious guidelines, norms and values
-  Creating regular gathering and interaction within Bangladeshi Muslim community.



What contribution do I hope to make to knowledge in this area?

-  To examine socio-cultural experiences of Bangladeshi migrant women and their adjustment process in a different cultural setting.
-  To further contribution in the policy and services to Bangladeshi migrants in Australia
-  To further contribute in research on migrant communities in Australia

Questions.....

Suggestions.....

Thank you very much