

**Experience of Bangladeshi Academics on Return from
Study Abroad**

Rumana Hossain

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds

School of Education

May 2021

Intellectual Property Statements

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

© 2021 The University of Leeds and Rumana Hossain

The right of Rumana Hossain to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Acknowledgements

My deepest gratitude goes to my star supervisors, Dr Martin Lamb, Dr Gary Chambers and Dr Martin Wedell. Their constant guidance, encouragement and extraordinary support and care has provided me with the strength to carry on with my research throughout these years. Their challenging queries and comments have enabled me to think critically and reflect further to make a wider contribution through my study. Dear Martin, Gary and Martin, I consider myself truly blessed to have you as my supervisors.

Saying thank you seems to be an understatement for the people who have been part of this struggle-full yet amazing journey of mine. Nevertheless, I will do this, but with a bit of a prelude. Did I ever contemplate myself as a Dr? I did not. At least not when I finished my first MA and declared this is it! No more studies! আর পড়াশুনা করবো না! ! My Dad smiled, 'Dr Rumana Hossain ... one day!' And the rest is history.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the participants and all my friends and colleagues who helped me in my research journey in some way or other. I have gained invaluable insights from these participants and without their contribution this study would not have materialized. The next in line is my School of Education, CLER, my PGR Tutor Dr Aisha Walker, Louise Greaves our 'mother hen', and Fiona - I would not have been able to do this without your support and encouragement. My ever-helpful officemates, the LG15ers, Faiza, Tracey, Yan and Farid; some dear colleagues at the school, Taguhi, Zuraidah, Liza, Uma, Dung, and Fereshteh, I will always cherish our times spent together dearly and the intellectual endeavours that we indulged in. Also, a huge round of applause for my larger family, WIASN - you are stars.

How can I not include my family in the acknowledgements? My loving husband Mustafizur Rahman Nilu, for being my aspiration to fly high. My dear, what you have done for your wife, I do not think many people do. My dearest sons Abrar and Asrar who grew up to be big boys in these years bearing all the neglect of their mother and sacrificing the elaborate lifestyle they enjoyed in Bangladesh. Abbu and Ammu, who remained ever worried on my behalf and kept me in their prayers always. My affectionate sisters-in-law whom I lost in the last few years, Boro Apa and Choto Apa, who would have been extremely proud of this achievement. I would also like to say a huge thanks to my baby sister Riffat who turned out to be a savior and 'my home outside home', Shwagota. অসংখ্য ধন্যবাদ সবাইকে.

Abstract

This research examines the post-study abroad experience of Bangladeshi academics who returned to their home country after studying in various Western countries for their MA or PhD degrees. A multitude of studies exist on the study abroad experience of learners in higher education but post-study abroad experience, especially after years of returning, remains an under-researched area. The goal of this phenomenological study was to explore the common experience of academics who had returned from study abroad. Their motives for taking up the challenge of studying overseas, the challenges faced on their return, their contribution, the obligations they felt, the difference in re-entry experience between male and female academics, and stakeholders' perceptions of the returnee academics were also examined.

Data was gathered from two sets of participants: 35 male and female academics working in different private and public universities in Bangladesh and the stakeholders, i.e. members of University Grants Commission, Vice Chancellors and Heads of Departments, the British Council and the American Centre.

Phenomenological interviews were used to collect data for the first set of participants and semi-structured interviews for the second. Phenomenological analysis was carried out on the data gathered and data was interpreted in the light of social theories, notably Neoliberalism, Neoliberal Feminism and Social Role Theory. Findings showed that the common experience of Bangladeshi academics returning from study abroad ranges along a continuum from elation to despair. Academic reintegration of the participant academics was affected by, inter alia, resistance to change from colleagues and administration, a politicised higher education system and unhelpful policy while social reintegration revolved mainly around adjustment of family and children. The stakeholders interviewed showed awareness of some of the challenges associated with reintegration but had mixed feelings when asked about fulfilled and unfulfilled expectations from returnees. The study also showed that the experience of reintegration of male and female academics varied considerably, starting from their decision to study abroad to their personal and professional reintegration. The study draws out implications for policy and practice in Higher Education for both Bangladesh and UK.

Table of Content

Intellectual Property Statements.....	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Content.....	iv
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures.....	x
Glossary of Abbreviations	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1. Background and rationale.....	1
1.2. Aims of the study	4
1.3. Overview of the thesis	5
Chapter 2: The Bangladeshi Context	8
2.1. Bangladesh: An overview	8
2.2. Higher education in Bangladesh.....	10
2.2.1. Problems of primary and secondary education.....	12
2.2.2. Role of University Grants Commission (UGC) and higher education policy	14
2.3. Study abroad and returnee academics	17
2.4. Women in Bangladeshi academia	20
2.4.1. Religion.....	23
2.5. Chapter summary.....	25
Chapter 3: Literature Review.....	27
3.1. Experience of returnee academics.....	28
3.1.1. Motivation for studying abroad in retrospect	28
3.1.2. Benefits of study abroad.....	30
3.1.3. Social aspects of reintegration	33
3.1.4. Academic aspects of reintegration	36
3.1.5. Re-entry training programmes	40
3.2. Returnee women in academia	44
3.2.1. Social role theory	49
3.2.2. Glass ceiling.....	50
3.3. The sender's perspective	52
3.3.1. The funding organizations	56

3.3.2. Difference between expectations of the stakeholders and reality of the returnees	58
3.4. Neoliberalism and its impact on higher education.....	61
3.4.1. Brief history of neoliberalism	61
3.4.2 Neoliberalism and study abroad (globalisation, internationalisation and marketisation of education).....	65
3.4.3. Neoliberalism and higher education in Bangladesh.....	71
3.4.3.1. Public-private university debate	74
3.4.4. Neoliberal feminism	77
3.5 Implications for research.....	83
Chapter 4: Methodology and Research Design	86
4.1. Introduction.....	86
4.2. Research design	86
4.2.1. Ontological and epistemological stance	91
4.2.2. My position as researcher	93
4.2.3. Practice interview with friends and colleagues.....	95
4.3. Participants.....	96
4.3.1. Sampling.....	96
4.3.2. Recruitment of participants	97
4.3.2.1. Returnee academics.....	97
4.3.2.2. Stakeholders.....	103
4.3.3. Ethical considerations	104
4.4. Data generation procedure	105
4.4.1. Interviews.....	106
4.4.1.1. Interviews with returnees.....	108
4.4.1.2. Interviews with stakeholders	109
4.4.1.3. Transcription and translation.....	111
4.5. Data analysis.....	111
4.6. Trustworthiness	118
4.7. Chapter summary.....	119
Chapter 5: Findings from Returnee Academics' Interviews	121
5.1. Motivation for studying abroad	121
5.2. Benefits of academic mobility.....	124
5.2.1. Formation of a new identity.....	125
5.3. Academic reintegration	128
5.3.1. Remaining motivated central to contribution	129
5.3.2. Tension between academics with local and international qualification.....	132

5.3.3. Dissatisfaction with the current higher education system	135
5.3.3.1. Systemic and accountability issues	136
5.3.3.2. Lack of research funding	139
5.3.3.3. Perceptions of falling standards	142
5.3.3.4. Political influences in HE.....	143
5.3.3.5. Complaints about the higher education policy	146
5.3.3.6. Dissatisfaction with the difference in policy and practice in public and private universities.....	151
5.4. Societal reintegration: Torn between roles of parent and academic.....	155
5.5. Gendered re-entry experience.....	155
5.5.1. Effect of prevalent discourses on female academics' return experience	158
5.5.1.1. Effect of existing social stigma	160
5.6 Chapter summary.....	169
Chapter 6: Vignettes of participant academics	170
6.1. Sophia.....	171
6.2. Hamza.....	175
6.3. Mofiz.....	181
6.4. Maria.....	185
Chapter 7: Stakeholders' Views of Returnees and Higher Education	191
7.1. Stakeholders hold positive views towards studying abroad.....	191
7.1.1. Returnees' productivity depends on favourable working environment	193
7.2. Expectations from the returnee academics	195
7.3. Reasons behind unmet expectations: Stakeholders blame the academics on several grounds	197
7.3.1. Power struggle and moral deviance on return	199
7.3.2. Prevalent social discourses affect academics' choice and utilization of study-abroad experience.....	200
7.3.3. Raised expectations of money and facilities among returnee academics	201
7.3.3.1. Teaching in private universities	202
7.3.4. Returnees' attitude towards research.....	204
7.4. Negativity towards current system of higher education	207
7.4.1. Dysfunctional government policy owing to corruption.....	208
7.4.2. Contrasting views regarding women's empowerment and brain drain	209
7.5. Notes of optimism among the negativity	211
7.5.1. Stakeholders speaking of future directions	213

7.6. Chapter summary.....	215
Chapter 8: Discussion.....	216
8.1. What are the prevalent experiences of returnee academics teaching in higher education institutions of Bangladesh in the years following international study abroad?.....	216
8.1.1. What prompted these Bangladeshi academics to study in Western countries?	217
8.1.2. Do they believe they have changed because of their international experience? In what ways?	219
8.1.3. How do they feel about their reintegration process?.....	220
8.1.4. Is there any difference in experience between male and female academics?	225
8.1.5. Were the returnees aware of any stated expectations from the stakeholders? What are their felt obligations?.....	229
8.2. What impact did the returnee academics have on their organisation?.....	230
8.3. What are the stakeholders' expectations for returnee academics of Higher Education Institutions?	231
8.3.1. Do they feel these expectations have been met?	232
8.4. Evidence of neoliberalism in Bangladeshi HE	235
8.4.1. Neoliberal effects on Bangladeshi feminism and women returnees.....	242
Chapter 9: Conclusion	246
9.1. Thesis summary.....	246
9.2. Contributions of this study.....	247
9.2.1. Theoretical contributions.....	247
9.2.2. Contributions to practice	248
9.3. Implications	249
9.3.1. Recommendation for policy and practice for Bangladeshi academia ...	249
9.4. Limitations of this study.....	257
9.5. Directions for further research	258
9.6. Final reflections.....	259
References	261
Appendix A: Project Information Sheet for Participants	290
Appendix B: Background information Sheet for Participants (Academics)	292
Appendix C: Sample Consent Form	293
Appendix D: Ethical Approval.....	294
Appendix E: Sample Interview Schedule for Academics.....	296
Appendix F: Sample Interview Schedule for Stakeholders (UGC and VC).....	298
Appendix G: Sample Interview Schedule for Stakeholders (Head of Department).....	299

Appendix H: Sample Interview Schedule for Stakeholders (British Council/ American Centre).....	300
Appendix I: Sample translated interview	301
Appendix J: Coding samples.....	307
Appendix K: My research journey	317

List of Tables

Table 1: Number of academics by gender and type of universities in 2009 and 2019.	12
Table 2: Number of female academics and type of universities in the years 2004, 2009, 2015 and 2019	21
Table 3: Change in internal governance of universities.....	74
Table 4: Details of participating academics.....	101
Table 5: Main research questions and data source.....	112
Table 6: Examples of themes and quotes from Findings chapters.....	116
Table 7: Evidence of neoliberal impact on HE from the participants	237

List of Figures

Figure 1: My Primary Mind Map	89
Figure 2: An example of primary codes created in NVIVO 10.....	115
Figure 3: Motives for study abroad mentioned by participants.....	123

Glossary of Abbreviations

HE	Higher Education
SA	Study Abroad
UGC	University Grants Commission
VC	Vice Chancellor
HoD	Head of the Department
BC	British Council
AC	American Centre
MOE	Ministry of Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
BdREN	Bangladesh Research and Education Network
SPHE	Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Bangladesh
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
GII	Gender Inequality Index
EFA	Education for All
FSP	Female Stipend Programme
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAid	Australian Aid
DFID	Department for International Development
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
BBA	Bachelor of Business Administration
MBA	Master of Business Administration
EEE	Electronics and Electrical Engineering
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
HSC	Higher Secondary Certificate
HEQEP	Higher Education Enhancement Project
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
WTO	World Trade Organisation

GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
SAF	Structural Adjustment Facilities
ESAF	Extended Structural Adjustment Facilities
IDA	International Development Association
HEQEP	Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background and rationale

My research investigates the experience of academics returning from study abroad and currently working in higher education institutions in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a developing country in South Asia from where a considerable number of academics go to study abroad, mainly to Anglophone countries like UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and more recently to Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong and China. The British Council and American Centre Dhaka websites are full of promising pictures and rhetoric about the various advantages of study abroad. Despite the opportunity being highly sought after and widely promoted by sponsors, we get to hear very little of the return experience of the students, let alone the academics. In the next few paragraphs I provide the personal, professional and academic rationale that led to this research.

The idea of this research comes from my personal observation as an MA TESOL student at the University of Leeds, UK. Formerly, I had graduated in English literature and also took an MA in English Language Teaching. However, professionally I started teaching English Language in a private university which led me to realize that being a language teacher, I had no basic knowledge of the theoretical or pedagogical aspects of language and language teaching. In 2007 I was selected to join the public university I had studied in as a member of staff. After teaching for a few years, I decided to further my learning about language teaching and update myself by going abroad to study.

I was highly impressed during my MA days in Leeds by the interactive nature of the classes, the involvement of the students in different activities, the scope of self-development, the abundance of resources and the academic writing style. I began to wonder whether I would be able to share my acquired knowledge and experience with my colleagues and students when I returned home. I also started thinking about my predecessors. Why had I not managed to learn much from their experience before coming? Had they been able to disseminate their knowledge on

their return or had they been sucked into the existing system? To answer these questions, initially I conducted a small-scale research project for my MA dissertation where I investigated case studies of four English Language teachers at university level. It turned out to be quite an interesting study (Hossain, 2017): academics spoke of the differences between the teaching methodology at home and abroad, the barriers to employing modern teaching techniques in Bangladeshi classrooms, and ways to overcome them. This served as a baseline for my proposed research as I found more and more colleagues who had studied abroad to be interested in sharing their experience on return.

To enlighten myself I looked into a report by the University Grants Commission, which looks after the enhancement of HE in Bangladesh. The 40th Annual Report (UGC, 2013) states that in order to survive as a self-respecting developed nation it is imperative to build a strong skilled and trained workforce (p. 236). According to the report, the objective of university education should be to build an educated nation rich in research and innovation and ensuring ample scope to implement innovations. The report also states that to meet the challenges of the 21st century and build a skilled workforce, it is important to have skilled university teachers with higher degrees from home and abroad (ibid.). Along these lines, prospective teachers/educators have been going through a competitive selection process to win scholarships to study abroad. These scholarships have been funded by donor agencies ADB, World Bank, British Council, Commonwealth, Fullbright and AusAid, which sponsor professionals from developing countries to study abroad in order to contribute to their respective countries' development. On reading the report, these questions arose in my mind: with the methodical intervention of the government and donors in sending the teachers abroad, was it possible for the teachers who went abroad to contribute towards the sustainable intellectual development of the country on their return? Where do the overseas trained educators fit into the plan for educational development? Were there any stated expectation(s) for these returnee teachers? If yes, were these expectations met? Why/why not?

I further observed that the country's higher education policy (1973 Act) had undergone a partial amendment. However, by the looks of it, more revisions might

be needed for the policy to be approved over the years from 2006 till date. The post-independence policy seemed outdated and inadequate to cater to the enhancement of higher education and also fulfil the needs of the faculty members in an era of globalisation. The UGC Report (2013) also emphasized amendments to the old Act and recommended that more facilities and incentives like higher payscales be provided to stop brain-drain. Providing better facilities would in turn encourage the teachers studying abroad to return to Bangladesh on completion of their studies. At present, the service rules of the public universities state that teachers going to study abroad, irrespective of receiving scholarships, are entitled to full paid study leave. They need to sign bonds to serve the institution for the year(s) they spend abroad studying. On speaking to my colleagues from countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, China and Chile I came to know that the majority of them needed to sign similar bonds that they would come back and serve the institution for at least two years. The majority of academics from the aforementioned countries are unsure about what is expected of them on return. This opacity about what to expect on return seems to be a global phenomenon that gives my research an international dimension and makes it potentially of wider interest. For my part, this turned out to be 'a research into my own future' through the lenses of my predecessors.

During the last six years of my PhD, my learning process involved not only enhancing my academic writing and research skills but also developing improved communication, heightened intercultural awareness, strong organisation and time management skills. I realised that there was ample scope for personal development and transformation for an ardent learner. My work in a number of capacities inside the university, e.g. being an academic representative for three years (which earned me Best Academic Rep of the Year 2018), conference organizer, international intern, teaching assistant and personal tutor and pre-sessional lecturer at the Language Centre all contributed to my transformation. Moreover, my collaboration with other researchers during one of the many workshops and conferences that I attended and presented at in UK and USA, earned me a joint publication. The process continued as I produced three more published articles and an accepted book chapter from my thesis during my tenure as a PhD researcher. However, all

these experiences made me conscious that I have been transformed into a newer person than the person who initially came to pursue an MA. These questions once again struck me: would I be able to disseminate the knowledge gathered from all these wonderful experiences with my community at home? Again, how have my predecessors shared and utilized their learning and skills?

1.2. Aims of the study

As mentioned earlier, the aim of this study is to learn about the returnee academics' lived experience through carrying out a phenomenological investigation at a particular point of their career, within 2-7 years of return from study abroad. Experience, as defined by Williams (1983), is 'knowledge gathered from past events, whether by conscious observation or by consideration and reflection' and also 'a particular kind of consciousness, which can in some contexts be distinguished from reason or knowledge' (p.,126). Lauretis (1984) elaborates on Williams' definition of experience, describing it as the process through which social beings construct subjectivity. I have also found the belief of Scott (1992) well matched to my research, namely that if experience is taken as the origin of knowledge, the vision of the person who went through the experience becomes the rightful evidence upon which explanation is built:

The evidence of experience then becomes evidence for the fact of difference, rather than a way of exploring how difference is established, how it operates, how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world (ibid., p. 25)

Thus interviewing the returnee academics seemed to be a realistic plan for learning about their lived experience. Additionally, interviewing some of the stakeholders, e.g. policymakers, vice chancellors, head of departments and people from the British Council and the American Centre (who are responsible for the overall handling of international mobility) would also enable me to learn their perceptions of and plans for the returnees in whom they have invested time and money.

Research shows that study abroad benefits an academic/learner both personally and professionally in a multitude of ways (e.g. Karakaş, 2020; Ghimire and Maharjan, 2014; Robinson-Pant, 2008; Christofi and Thompson, 2007). However, participants in Hossain's (2014) study in the context of Bangladesh reported that there are sociocultural issues which need to be addressed before attempting to introduce any changes. Also, the barriers the teachers face to implementing modern teaching techniques such as poor infrastructure, lack of resources and management issues needed to be recognised. Unfortunately, the stakeholders do not seem to acknowledge this dilemma as there seems to be no mention of the issues in the UGC reports. Thus there seems to be a gap between what is stated, i.e. academic staff need to be equipped with higher degrees from abroad, and the situation they face on return, which has not been addressed at all.

The studies that have been conducted, as the literature review (Chapter 3) will illustrate, were based on the cultural adaptation of the participants on their return. However, the socioeconomic forces working behind the scenes, e.g. neoliberalism, which might have contributed to the return experience significantly, have been ignored by these studies. So, to answer the research questions, a phenomenological investigation of the experience of the returnees seemed to be the most appropriate method. Manen (1990) states that phenomenology turns the description of an individual experience into a description of universal essence. Understanding these 'common or shared experiences' of a universal nature might contribute to developing practices and policies or aid in developing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question (Creswell, 2013). Moreover, the Methodology chapter shows that very few phenomenological studies have been carried out on the phenomenon of return experience. Therefore, to accomplish a composite description of this phenomenon, the main research questions might include the return experience of the participant academics, their impact on their respective organisations, and the stakeholders' perceptions of the returnees.

1.3. Overview of the thesis

To present this investigation of the return experience of Bangladeshi academics from study abroad, I have divided my thesis into nine chapters. Here in Chapter 1 I have imparted how my personal circumstances and observation led to this investigation. I also pointed out the gap in return experience literature and highlighted the importance of researching the phenomenon.

Chapter 2 describes the Bangladeshi context, starting with a brief history of Bangladesh and Bangladeshi higher education, followed by a discussion of the trend of study abroad and the current state of women in Bangladeshi academia.

Chapter 3 situates the study in the context of relevant literature associated with return experience from study abroad. The chapter examines the motivation of the returnee academics, the earned benefits of study abroad, return experiences of study abroad candidates from various contexts, the sender's perspective on study abroad and returnees, women academic's experience on return, social role theory and finally neoliberalism, the main theoretical background of the study. Neoliberal feminism, a theory that has been utilized to explain the women's experience, also occupies a section. The chapter closes with the research questions.

Chapter 4 discusses the research design and methodology. It explains the ontological and epistemological stance and justifies the rationale for the qualitative study that draws from phenomenological insights. The chapter specifies the recruitment of the participants, the data collection tools employed, the data generation process and data analysis techniques. It also addresses the ethical considerations and measures taken to ensure trustworthiness of the study.

Chapters 5 and 7 present the findings emerging from the analysis of the interview data, while Chapter 6 contains four carefully selected individual stories (from two male and two female participants) of experience on return. The findings from the analysis of the participant academics' interviews and the stakeholders are presented in two separate chapters to distinguish the two different perspectives while the vignettes serve to present the experiences of individual academics in a more holistic way.

Chapter 8 discusses the main findings of the study identified from the academics' return experience and the stakeholders' views, situating the two perspectives in the existing literature. The chapter begins by answering the research questions and then moves beyond them by discussing significant findings in light of the theory.

Chapter 9 is a concluding chapter that summarises the key findings of the thesis, highlights the contributions, suggests implications for policy and practice for Bangladeshi as well as UK higher education. It then puts forward recommendations for further research, identifies the limitations of the study and lastly lays out final reflections.

Chapter 2: The Bangladeshi Context

In order to gain a close understanding of the return experience of Bangladeshi academics, I first provide as a background a brief history of Bangladesh and Bangladeshi education. The second section then introduces higher education in Bangladesh, including the knock-on effect of the other levels of education on higher education and study abroad, the role of the University Grants Commission, and higher education policy. The third section highlights the circumstances under which Bangladeshi academics go to study abroad and a brief comment on what they have accomplished on return. The last section addresses the position of women in Bangladeshi academia and factors surrounding their experience.

2.1. Bangladesh: An overview



Bangladesh, with an area of 56,977 sq. miles or 1,47,570 sq. km, is a tropical country and small delta in South Asia. With a dense population of 163,046.16

million (The World Bank, 2019), Bangladesh still stands as a country of natural beauty and rich historical and cultural heritage. The majority of the population are Muslims, though there are Hindus, Christians and Buddhists living peacefully as ethnic minorities. According to Khan (2007), the cultural and social norms, values, customs, and belief system in Bangladesh are ingrained within pluralism and diversity. The country, a former British colony, became a nation state in 1971 when it achieved independence from Pakistan after fighting a nine-month liberation war. Before liberation, Bangladesh was known as East Pakistan and was part of undivided India and Pakistan which divided in 1947 when British rule ended.

The education system operating in the country is general education, Madrassa education (mainly Muslim religion-centric, i.e. subjects and curriculum are related to Islam) and English medium education. The general and Madrassa education systems have separate curricula and examination systems prescribed by the government, while the English medium education, mainly private, follows the British curriculum and examination system (Rahman, 2018). There are four levels of education: primary (from grades 1 to 8), secondary (from grades 9 to 10), higher secondary (from grades 11 to 12) and tertiary (diploma programme in polytechnic, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in universities and tertiary colleges). The medium of instruction in mainstream education up to HSC (A levels) is Bengali, though an English version of the curriculum is now offered in selected schools and colleges and in private English-medium schools. At present, English holds an interim position between second language and foreign language and is a compulsory subject at all levels of education. Studies have linked the emphasis on the study of English to a colonial legacy inherited from the British education system (Kabir, 2010, p. 1). Hence proficiency in English is considered a matter of prestige and elitism, as in many other developing countries.

Though Bangladesh has made remarkable progress by steady growth in GDP and reached lower-middle income country status in 2015, 39 million people still live below the poverty line. Public expenditure on education is not more than 14.2% of the total budget (United Nations Development Programme, 2009), which is only 1.3% of the GDP (The World Bank, 2019). In 2015, only 20% of total education

expenditure went to the tertiary education sector (World Bank, 2019). The gross enrolment rate (GER) at the tertiary level, though rapidly increasing, is still low at 17% compared to neighbouring countries India (27%) and Sri Lanka (19%) (World Bank, 2019). Enrolment of women at the tertiary level of education stands at 38%, with 62% male as the majority (ibid). Access to tertiary education is dominated by the richest segment in society, with women and children from poor families at a disadvantage (World Bank, 2019).

2.2. Higher education in Bangladesh

The first university in the country was established in 1921 when the region was under British colonial rule. From independence in 1971 until 1985, Bangladesh had four general and two specialised universities, whose main goal was to contribute to the development of the newly-born nation state (Kabir, 2010). The first Education Commission of the country was formed in 1974, which aimed at decolonising the education system from the grip of English (Chowdhury and Kabir, 2014). Consequently Bengali, the native language, was made the primary medium of communication, while English, the language of international correspondence, remained a top priority.

There are 49 public and 105 private universities, excluding the engineering university, medical and technical colleges (UGC, 2019). The public universities attract the top-level teachers and researchers because of the facilities for seminars, conferences, workshops, debates, visiting professors, the wider scope of national and international exposure and the low-cost residential facilities for promising intellectuals, i.e. members of staff (Monem and Baniamin, 2010). Moreover, public university teachers have long been politically conscious and ideologically involved in the shaping of Bangladesh. Along with the students they played a great role, from the Language Movement in 1952 to sacrificing their lives during Liberation War in 1971, to the restoration of democracy in the 1990s. Thus, these teachers are held in high regard in society for their significant contribution towards national development (UGC, 2013), and are considered to be cultural *elites* (Islam, 2014).

The public universities are fully autonomous academically and administratively and are governed by the provisions of their own service rules and the 1973 Act. The private universities are also autonomous entities and are subject to provisions of the Private University Act 2010 (World Bank, 2019). University admissions are highly competitive and only the academically most qualified students gain entry to the prestigious institutions. Admissions to tertiary colleges are open to average performers. However, students' readiness for higher education has been deemed inadequate due to weak foundational knowledge in English and Maths (ibid.). Though private universities have some provisions to support underprepared students, this is largely missing in the public universities. Strong concerns reported by employers in finding high-skilled candidates also indicates 'a growing and alarming disconnect between what students are studying and the skills demanded by employers and job market' (World Bank, 2019, p. 33). The same has been reported by the Global Education Dialogues South Asia Series (2014): outdated and inadequate courses, lack of practical orientation and apprenticeship and disconnection from industry contribute to only 15-25% of graduates being employable in Bangladesh.

Among the 15,524 teachers of 49 public universities (excluding the technical and madrassas), only 8728 (56%) hold a higher degree, with a total of 5,347 PhD holders among them (UGC Report, 2019). 2,252 teachers were on study leave in 2018, the majority of whom were studying abroad. Among the 16,042 private university academics there are in total 3,209 PhD degree holders; this is only 20% of the total academics, compared to public university academics who comprise 56%. The teacher student ratio in public and private universities are 1:53 and 1:22 respectively (UGC Report, 2019). There has been a sharp rise in the number of both private and public institutions in the last 20 years because of the increased number of students passing the college exam (HSC/A level) each year. To accommodate these students, massification of education was initiated. However, massification gave rise to a possibility that higher education might have been devalued in the process and made the system lax, compromising quality education. This means that in place of raising the quality of education, there arose a tendency to inflate grades to conceal the weakness of the students as well as the system. Criticism from

various sectors as well as local newspapers on the lowering standard of education in the country stands as evidence for this claim (e.g. Bhattacharya, 2018; Haider, 2014; Pandey, 2009).

The male-female ratio of academics working in public and private universities points to the wide gender gap in Bangladeshi academia. The following table shows the growth in the number of male and female academics working in public and private institutions in the ten years from 2009 to 2019. Though the ratio of male/female academics has remained static in private universities, there has been a rise in the number of female academics from 18% to 26% between the years 2009 and 2019.

Table 1: Number of academics by gender and type of universities in 2009 and 2019

Year	Education/ Management	Total number of academics	Number of male academics	Percent Approx.	Number of female academics	Percent Approx.
2009	Public	9241	7,564	82%	1677	18%
	Private	5710	4009	70%	1701	30%
	Total	14,873	10,516		3,357	
2019	Public	15,524	11,467	74%	4,057	26%
	Private	16,042	11,172	70%	4,870	30%
	Total	31,566	22,639		8,927	

(Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2016, 2017 and UGC Report, 2019)

2.2.1. Problems of primary and secondary education

This section discusses how the shift in educational processes at the primary and secondary level has impacted on learning at the higher education level and beyond. Anwaruddin (2014) demonstrates that most newly independent countries, like Bangladesh, retained colonial patterns of schooling and only a few slightly modified their curricula because:

Not only did these new countries have limited capacities to revitalize their education systems, but their elite groups, who received Western education during the colonial period and many of whom were not familiar enough with their own indigenous language and culture, were also inclined to continue with the colonial education systems. Thus, the colonial education that ignored the needs and cultural traditions of the local societies remained in the colonies even after the formal decolonisation. (p. 145)

This statement implies that stakeholders might continue to ignore local needs, like teacher training and learner preparation. The learning process emphasises theory rather than application and continues with top-down instruction for the education system. This idea is reinforced by Azad (2016) in his article, published in local daily *The Independent*, regarding the introduction of a creative curriculum in the primary and secondary sectors back in 2009 when the need of proper guidelines and adequate training was felt by both teachers and students. Furthermore, as the education system is exam-based, learners became more inclined towards securing a particular grade (A+), a requirement for admission to major public universities. In this way, the focus of education shifted from knowledge gain to merely getting good grades (Azad, 2016).

Now, when these learners study abroad, they face problems of adjustment and learning. Their lack of proficiency in English and lopsided local context-based education has not equipped them to account for the educational and social differences they experience abroad. As Ballard (1996) observes:

So long as learners remain in their own educational systems, differences in intellectual approach between school and university, between one degree and another, between one discipline and another are relatively easy to accommodate. (p. 154)

For these learners transferring their knowledge straight from repetition memorization, spoon-feeding of the teachers to self-study, critical judgment and adjusting to constant updates becomes a giant leap. So, if learners (including the

academics) are to benefit properly from the experience of study abroad, they need to go through a developmental process of knowledge transformation. They also need to learn aspects of standard academic procedure, i.e. providing critical judgment, referencing from sources, and plagiarism, which will benefit them in the long run. The shock they face initially because of the difference in academic culture can be fairly negotiated by making the learning process transformative. Otherwise there remains a possibility of investing the majority of the time abroad developing their language and expected academic style.

2.2.2. Role of University Grants Commission (UGC) and higher education policy

The University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh was established in 1973 to supervise, maintain, promote and coordinate university education. According to the UGC website, it is responsible for maintaining standards and quality in all the public and private universities, assesses the needs of the public universities in terms of funding, and advises the government on various issues related to higher education (University Grants Commission website, 2018). Some of the recent positive steps taken by the UGC include a dedicated high connectivity network in the university sector, BdREN (Bangladesh Research and Education Network), and UGC Digital Library, which provides good access to journals and books (World Bank, 2019).

The then Chair of UGC stated (Banikbarta Online edition, 31 July, 2016) that the Grant Commission was created so that the universities do not need to ask the government for any financial support. However, UGC was given the power only to recommend and not to implement any decision as the power lay centralised with the Education Ministry, i.e. the government. To look after the financial affairs of the universities, the government enacted different laws that later came to be known as the '73 University Ordinances, commonly known as the 1973 Act. These laws were initially created for four universities - Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Jahangirnagar University - who were provided with academic autonomy. Though a separate private university act was introduced in 1992, to date the only policy

guideline available for the public universities from the UGC is the 1973 Act and its partial amendment in 1978 (University Grants Commission of Bangladesh Website, 2014). The need for an updated HE policy has been emphasised time and again (Chowdhury and Kabir, 2014; Hossain, 2017; Kabir, 2010), even by the UGC Chair. It could be that the outdated HE policy has also acted a barrier in implementing changes, as indicated by the studies above. This might also have affected the returnee academics.

Again, the 1973 Act seems to provide inadequate detail regarding teachers and teaching at this level. The 40th Annual Report of UGC (2013) reports that the Act lacks any proper directives towards assigning time for teacher-student interaction, taking classes and engaging in research. It is alleged that some teachers take advantage of this lack to abstain from their responsibilities as an educator. The report further acknowledges that the Education Ministry has drafted the Public Universities Ordinance 2007, which is yet to be finalised and implemented. This updated ordinance was part of one of the reform policies, Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Bangladesh: 2006-2026 (SPHE), with the World Bank's technical and financial support. This strategic plan, though strongly connected with market-driven economic forces (Kabir, 2010), was created to contribute to overcoming the limitations of the 1973 Act (University Grant Commission, 2006). However, critics argue that the government had the scope to interfere in university affairs owing to the limitations of the 1973 Act. As a result, the strategies laid out in the SPHE are no better as they are said to be 'aimed more at controlling public universities and their academic and intellectual freedom' (Kabir, 2010, p. 622).

The SPHE proposed an Umbrella Act for governing public universities owing to lack of cohesion and uniformity prevailing in the service rules (University Grant Commission, 2006, p. 21). This proposal has been criticized on various grounds because, as SPHE points out, external intervention and involvement in politics hampers the performance of the teachers at the universities. What it does not say is that all the top officials, like the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor and Treasurer positions, are assigned directly by the intervention of a political government. So for these positions the ruling party could choose anyone with their own political

affiliation without any control. Moreover, though SPHE is said to be formulated with greater participation from all spheres of society, the selected members are affiliated with allies of the ruling political party and there seems to be no student or community representation in the committee, despite being at the heart of HE (Kabir, 2010). Eleven years down the line, the Umbrella Act could not overcome the bureaucratic hurdles or handle the change in the government during the past 10 years.

The Global Education Dialogues South Asia Series (2014) speaks of a recent World Bank report that states ‘the governance arrangements in four of the largest Bangladeshi public universities and many higher education colleges fuel politicisation of academic decision making and operations’ (ibid., p. 39). Weak governance has implications for quality across the board, and ultimately for the quality of graduates entering the labour force. As observed by a policymaker in Bangladesh, ‘because of political interference the top people at universities tend to be very weak’, and ‘vice chancellors have a tendency to promote individuals who may not be academically sound’ (ibid., p. 39). A similar view has been expressed by Chowdhury and Kabir (2014), who argue that education policy in Bangladesh has always been shrouded in vested political interest since its emergence after independence. Moreover, elite groups with close ties to the government have dominated research and education.

Staff recruitment and the incentive system at the public universities deserve more attention as they do not seem conducive to attracting and retaining top talent (The World Bank, 2019). The report blames lack of transparency and weak accountability mechanisms for irregularities in major areas, including teacher recruitment, student enrolment and student assessment. Bhattacharya’s (2018) comments on the recently drafted university teachers’ recruitment rules in *Prothom Alo*, a daily newspaper, presses the same charges against policymakers. To enhance the quality of education, the returnee academics with their newly-developed expertise could have been utilized as trailblazers to guide teaching, research and assessment techniques. This idea is yet to be initiated. However, despite the issues, the enrolment rate in Bangladeshi higher education has

increased and commensurate with this, faculty in the universities has also expanded (Monem and Baniamin, 2011). The teacher-student ratio in these years has not varied much and the faculty members in the universities are said to have better academic qualifications than before. There has also been expansion in publications, at least in terms of quantity (ibid.).

In the next section I explain how globalisation has further promoted the trend of studying abroad that was already in motion.

2.3. Study abroad and returnee academics

Academics going to study abroad in quest of knowledge was a common phenomenon even in pre-independent Bangladesh (e.g. Dr Kamal Hossain, who wrote the constitution of independent Bangladesh, is an Oxford graduate from undergraduate to PhD). According to Altbach (1989), many of the Asian nations, including Bangladesh, have had major encounters with Western education as many of the academics teaching in higher-ranking public universities were educated in the developed Western countries. Many of these academics have been involved in teaching and research while studying abroad on scholarships, and they maintain their ties with metropolitan academic systems and tend to influence local universities on return. There are also expatriate professors, though small in number, teaching in the higher-ranking private universities in Bangladesh. These academics returning and working successfully also influence prospective academics to take up the challenge of study abroad.

However, in recent years, science and technological education has been given the priority of sustaining the development of Bangladesh in an era of technological advancement (40th UGC Annual Report, 2013). The report further states to that meet the challenges of the 21st century and build a skilled workforce, it is important to have skilled university teachers with higher degrees from home and abroad (ibid). In this connection, Altbach (1989), though writing thirty years ago, indicates that ‘the impact of foreign training is often considerable, forging continuing links, networks of colleagues and orientations to scholarship’, and thus

foreign training remains a particularly important factor in education (p. 21). Attesting to Altbach's view, the UGC, in cooperation with various foreign and international agencies, has been providing scholarships to university lecturers for training and higher studies abroad for the last 50 years. Among the scholarships provided are Commonwealth Scholarship, SAARC Scholarship, UGC Awards and Post-Doctoral Fellowships (UGC Report, 2019, p. xxii).

Turning from the rationale for increased academic mobility, one of the few studies on returnees, Rahman (2013), reports on the academic diaspora that shows returnee professionals to be contributing significantly to developing certain standards of education in the private universities they work in. He cites the example of a Professor and Vice-Chancellor of a leading private university in Dhaka who, after studying and working at Harvard University, have been contributing to the development of that institution. Rahman's (2018) study also observes that Bangladeshi returnees are making a considerable contribution in terms of research by collaborating with their development partners who were their former colleagues in their country of study. They are also using the skills developed abroad to bring about changes in teaching methods by using classroom debates, teamwork, and introducing technology (for example, involving PowerPoint and documentary videos/films).

Rahman (2018) also reports on the pull factors in his study and claims that the opportunity to work in private universities, their good remuneration packages and the 'politics-free workplace' they offer have contributed to academics opting for SA as well as encouraging them to return on the completion of their studies (p. 272). Wadood (2006) and later Chowdhury and Kabir (2014) also confirmed that expatriates considered returning home because of suitable academic positions and the scope of part-time teaching in private universities. This return seems to be encouraging as Bangladesh benefits from the intellectual assets of the returnees. Thus private universities have become a deciding factor for studying abroad and returning on completion.

However, the claim of Rahman (2018) regarding the conditions of private universities is subject to question. Studies like Hussain and Osswald (2016) and Neazy (2018) report that conditions in private universities are not as functional as they seem from outside (see Chapter 3). The Task Force on Higher Education and Society by The World Bank (2000) also reports that ‘student selection, faculty appointments and promotions, curriculum design, and similar matters’ are being made on political grounds rather than on merit in the Bangladeshi higher education sector (World Bank, 2000, p. 63). Furthermore, Lim (2001) observes that academic promotion in developing countries is not transparent; rather than being based on academic merit, the process is often shady and politically contrived. As the World Bank reports (2000):

Favoritism and patronage contribute to academic inbreeding that denies universities the benefit of intellectual cross-fertilization. (p. 24)

So there seems to be a gap between these claims and the reality of the returnees which might be worthy of investigation. The returnee participants to be interviewed in this study might be forthcoming in this regard.

Furthermore, a 2019 World Bank Report on Bangladeshi tertiary education reports that, despite the presence of a large pool of Bangladeshi academics with PhDs from abroad, their contributions to research have been relatively low. One reason for this could be that allocation of research funding has always been negligible; for example, only BDT 2.4 million (USD 30,000) in 2015-16 in Bangladesh. The country has always depended on foreign government and institutes as major sources of research funding. As a result, 60% of publications authored by Bangladeshi researchers were produced through international collaboration in 2015 (Scimago, 2016). The contributing academics are mainly based in the established public universities. This is an indication that the research potential of the returnees might have remained underutilized as the public university lecturers are the ones who have better prospects for scholarships and research funding. The majority of private universities are teaching-based and do not promote research as such.

Therefore, on looking at all the setbacks, there seems to be a vacuum between the decision to return and making a worthwhile contribution: how has the academics' experience been on return? Studies (see Rahman 2013, 2018) do not report on the social aspect of reintegration, nor do they speak of the challenge(s) the returnees might have been through while adjusting to their professional and personal lives on return. For example, mismatch of ideas between returnee academics and home-based academics might have served as a point of distress for returnees while trying to initiate change (Celik, 2012; Namgung, 2008). Again, whether they had any issues to address with their friends and family on return that might have impacted on their contribution has also been ignored.

I believe these questions need to be addressed to complete the picture of return experience in Bangladesh and make the ongoing positive changes sustainable. This study, therefore, attempts to bring the lived return experience of the participant academics to the surface and to come up with implications for both policy and practice in light of their experience.

2.4. Women in Bangladeshi academia

This section provides an overview of the existing conditions of and for women in Bangladeshi academia, providing a backdrop for how various social factors might have impacted on the experience of returnee women academics.

Bangladesh has made considerable progress in the advancement of women (Asian Development Bank, 2010). However, the cause of gender equality in Asian countries cannot be compared to the progress made in Western countries according to the Gender Inequality Index (GII) created by the United Nations Development Programme in 2015 (Sharif, 2015). The society being patriarchal, men are left to enjoy a lot of power at home, in politics and at the workplace. The conservative culture, religious prejudices and pre-defined gender roles have put women at a disadvantage in comparison to women in developed countries (Morley and Crossouard, 2015).

The societal structure tends to idealize Bengali women as cherished and protected daughters, wives, and mothers, whereas men are entrusted with safeguarding family honour through their control over female members (Kalam, 2014). Islam, which is the religion of the majority of the population, is only partially implicated here. Because Bangladesh is so heavily influenced by patriarchal societal structure, religious practices are adopted and modified in relation to patriarchal control and subordination of the female population (Hossain and Kusakabe, 2005). Roles assigned to males in society, then, tend to be hierarchical in status and authority, which further marginalizes the position of women. Domestic work, which comes with a branding of lower status, lowers the value of women’s work in comparison to male labour. Men have thus enjoyed this power advantage in family life, making important decisions and mitigating conflicts while wives are left to decide on more internal affairs like groceries, cooking and giving birth (Eagley, 1987, p. 23). Control is exercised through complex social arrangements which ensure the protection and dependence of women (Khan, 2007). Therefore, Bengali society portrays women as being self-sacrificing, with the primary role of carrying out the duties of wife and mother (p. 15).

Post-independence, Bangladesh’s primary aim for female education was to train students into enlightened motherhood (Chanana, 1994). However, this policy was later reoriented as Education for All (EFA) and the Female Stipend Programme (FSP) in 1982, two arguably successful programmes (Ahmed and Hyndman-Rizk, 2018).

Table 2: Number of female academics and type of universities in the years 2004, 2009, 2015 and 2019

Year	Education/ Management	Total number of academics	Total number of female academics	% of female academics
2004	Public	6462	975	15.08
	Private	4815	798	16.57
	Total	11, 277	1773	15.72
2009	Public	9163	1656	18.07
	Private	5710	1701	29.79
	Total	14,873	3,357	22.57

2015	Public	12414	2721	21.91
	Private	13905	3983	28.64
	Total	26,319	6704	25.47
2019	Public	15,524	4,057	26.13
	Private	16,042	4,870	30.29
	Total	31,566	8,927	28.28

(Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2016, 2017 and UGC Report, 2019)

Table 2 shows the number of female academics working in public and private institutions in 2004, 2009, 2015 and 2019. The total percentage of female academics from private and public organisations does show a moderate rise from 2004 to 2009 from 15.72 to 22.57 percent, but there seems to be no significant rise from 2009 to 2015 - only 22.57 to 25.47 percent. Having said that, there is a notable increase of 15.72% to 28.28% within the 15-year span of 2004-2019. The slowing rise or at times decreasing percentage might be an indication that women in academia are facing more hidden challenges than are recorded in government reports and other reports on women's progress.

Morley and Crossouard (2015) also report that prescribed women's roles and patriarchal social structure and cultural practices have contributed to limiting women's role in academia in Asian countries like India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. They find women to be uninterested in senior administrative positions as women might perceive them to be an unworthy career option, taking into consideration the amount of time and dedication required for the posts. One of the participants in their study, a female Pro-Vice Chancellor from Bangladesh, explains the limited role of women to be 'patriarchy-dictated gender-appropriate behaviour' (p. 57). She observes:

You know a woman if she's networking and lobbying then immediately she's branded as being very ambitious and very pushy. (Morley and Crossouard, 2015, p. 57)

This quote provides a glimpse of the prejudices existing in Bangladesh where an aspiring woman academic might easily be labelled 'over-ambitious' when she

decides to study abroad. Then again, on return, when she attempts to go ahead with her development plans of knowledge dissemination, she might face the same issues if she does not have strong family support.

Ahad and Gunter (2017), in their study of women leaders in higher education in Bangladesh, suggest reasons why there are fewer women and women leaders in academia. They find that as Bangladeshi universities, both public and private, are heavily influenced by politics, a woman not only has to be a scholar but also has to prove herself by navigating these politics. This poses further difficulty for them regarding access to leadership roles. This statement seems to be borne out in that there are only two women vice-chancellors at the university level: one at a women's private university and the other more recently appointed the first woman vice-chancellor of a public university (bdnews24.com, 2014). It is true that the head of state Sheikh Hasina, and the leader of the main opposition party Begum Khaleda Zia, are women. However, Yasmeen (1991, p. 110) explains, 'prompted by a desire to retain power, these women operate within the parameters defined by society and resist questioning the traditional role models'. This conformist attitude of leaders ends up reinforcing the traditional image of women in society. In this connection, Ireland (1993, p. 12) adds that it is hard for women to become the 'best of both worlds'. The wife/mother image of women has been made so powerful by the patriarchal society that it has become ingrained in their minds. Thus, it becomes hard for women to become anything other than a full-time mother and wife (Anwar, 2015, p. 11).

2.4.1. Religion

Religious orthodoxy, which dictates that women should not be in authoritative positions over men, places significant constraints on women's career choices in Bangladeshi academia. There are two major sects among Muslims: Shi'a and Sunni. The majority of Muslims in Bangladesh are followers of Sunni Islam. Since the Qur'an is the guiding principle in Islam, the 'shari'ah' is God-given and immutable. There are 'alim' or 'ulama' (Muslim legislators) who bring their interpretations of the Shari'ah. But they are in no way priests, nor sacred persons. In this way, any person, man or woman can become an authority or an 'alim' in a community, which

points to the flexibility of the prevailing social belief that women cannot take a leading role in Islam (Badawi, 1994, p. 105). The trouble is that on many occasions Muslim law is identified with local cultural traditions wrongly, as in the case of women's leadership. Badawi adds:

Many Muslim women are denied education, their legal inheritance and their entitlement to economic independence because they and their families are ignorant of the law and assume that conservative local tradition is identical with Muslim law when in reality such traditions are inversions of the law. Muslim religious law is not the same as social conservatism. (ibid., p. 110)

Ahmed and Hyndman-Rizk (2018) investigate the experience of female students studying at a public women's college in Northern Bangladesh. They explain through the experience of the participants that the prevailing social norms emanate from religious tradition, be it Islam or Hinduism. Though Islam protects women's rights by imposing similar rules emphasising 'men's equal responsibility and submissive role' (Ahmed and Hyndman-Rizk, 2018, p. 12), Badawi (1994) shows that religious misinterpretations lead to gender discrimination. The participants of the study further suggest that the highly pluralistic and kinship-based family tradition in Bangladesh makes a married woman more vulnerable as she has to follow several family codes. Moreover, possessive treatment of women becomes more acute after marriage as in-laws are often more critical than parents when it comes to study and career choice.

It is because of the same religious orthodoxy in Bangladeshi society that divorce is frowned upon. An article in a daily newspaper associates the rise in separation and divorce with women's empowerment, women's economic independence, their realization of their own rights combined with societal acceptance of divorce, among many other reasons (The Daily Star, 3 Sept. 2018). The rate of divorce varies according to social strata and is more on the rise in urban than in rural areas. However, the article is an indication that women are largely held responsible for broken relationships.

This section has attempted to provide insights into the social control of, i.e. the impact of religion, culture and tradition on, women's lives and professional decision-making. Studies of academic women in Bangladeshi academia have been found to be quite limited, let alone study of the experience of returnee women academics. Though societies across the globe are benefitting from a much higher involvement of women in HE and providing them with opportunities to study abroad to enhance their knowledge, has Bangladesh managed to utilise the knowledge and expertise developed abroad by female returnees?

Table 1 (see 2.2) shows that there is a wide gender gap in terms of numbers in Bangladeshi academia. In Rahman's (2013, 2018) studies, the respondents are largely married males aged 35-55. The question arises: how has the return experience of the women academics been? Was there any difference between the experience of male and female returnees, married and unmarried returnees, returnees with family (children) and single returnees? If such are the conditions of and for women in a country, how have women academics taken their decision to study abroad? What motivated them? If they faced resistance to their decisions to going abroad and overcame it, what might their return experience look like? These questions call for investigation.

2.5. Chapter summary

In Chapter 1 I explained my personal views, beliefs and circumstances which led me to this research topic. In this chapter I have provided the significant contextual cues to determining meaningful experience for Bangladeshi academics on their return from SA. I have also included the professional context of returnee academics, namely Bangladesh and the higher education sector, and the socioeconomic and sociocultural setting in which they worked and to which they returned on completion of their overseas degrees. The questions arising (see 2.3 and 2.4.1) would require an extensive literature review, for example on the contribution of the returnee academics, the impact of various constraints (if any) on the experience of the returnee academics in general and women academics in particular, and also the stakeholders' views. In the next chapter, Chapter 3, I

present a critical review of the background literature on which I have based my research on.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

In this chapter, I review literature on the experience of returnees from study overseas, the benefits of study abroad, motives for study abroad, and the experience of women returnees to provide a cogent background to my study. I have divided this chapter into four sections starting with the experience on return, and motivation to study abroad in retrospect. It is expected that the review of the experience of readjustment, both general and gendered, will provide a better understanding of the repatriation experience and help me build solid ground to base my study on. A separate section discusses the stakeholder and sender perspective on study abroad and returnees. The chapter concludes by presenting neoliberalism as the main theoretical perspective and dominant ideology pertaining to the experience of the returnees in general, and neoliberal feminism for women in particular. There is also a sub-section on the transformation of higher education in Bangladesh under neoliberal influence, which triggers the public and private university education debate. The concluding remark in the final section (Section 3.5) paves the way for my study's research questions.

Based on thorough searches of academic databases - Google Scholar, Scopus and JSTOR - it seems there are limited studies of academics' experience of returning from study abroad. The extant studies are broadly within the context of China, Saudi Arabia and Turkey and are based on students' experience of study abroad and cultural adaptation on return. My study, however, deals with the sociocultural aspect of the experience of returnee academics. I want to learn from the academics not only what they have been through on return (lived experience) but also what they consciously deemed significant in their reintegration process. Moreover, none of the studies found on reintegration/re-entry and discussed in this review have taken into account how neoliberalism has contributed to the personal, cultural or situational factors shaping the lived experience of the returnees. This study therefore aims to contribute to the under-researched field of Bangladeshi returnees and work towards fulfilling the gaps in the re-entry literature.

3.1. Experience of returnee academics

As mentioned earlier, many of the studies reviewed do not have academics as respondents in particular but rather highlight the experience of student returnees. However, they do shed light on the motivation and benefits of study abroad and discuss the contributions and challenges of returnees that might be relevant for this study.

According to Arthur (2003), re-entry is not merely a spatial relocation, but also a social and psychological process of adjustment. For Butcher (2002), re-entry transition is a process where returnees mourn the loss of personal relationships, novel experiences, and a newly established way of life. Many of the difficulties experienced at re-entry are similar to those of initial overseas adjustment, including discomfort and anxiety resulting from the loss of familiar cues, the need to integrate into a seemingly 'different' cultural system, and the immediate pressures of cultural learning and unlearning (Martin, 1984).

3.1.1. Motivation for studying abroad in retrospect

In this section I address how individual motivation impacts on the decision to study abroad. As I intend to learn about the academics' lived experience on return, knowing their motivation to study abroad might provide significant insight into how they perceived their return experience.

To begin with, the push-pull model of international migration has been used to explain the motivation of international students and their choice of study abroad destination (e.g. Martin, 1993; Richmond, 1993). Poor educational quality in the home country, employer preference for overseas qualifications, political issues and unavailability of subjects of choice have been mentioned as common push factors (Wilkins et al, 2011, Altbach, 1991). Common pull factors include reputation of destination country's education, academic ranking of institutions, better employment prospects, better English skills, intercultural competence and a safer environment (ibid.). However, push-pull factors in themselves seem to be

insufficient in accounting for individual preferences and aspirations for studying abroad.

Research (e.g. Barnawi and Phan, 2015; Karakas, 2013) shows that overseas scholars largely return home in the hope of possessing different sorts of capital and privileges that they think would not be granted to those holding locally-obtained qualifications. In Ghimire and Maharjan's (2014) study carried out on returnee professionals in the context of Nepal, most of the participants saw their work 'as motivated by a personal desire to use their knowledge and skills to do something new and useful' for themselves and not in terms of broader national development (p. 9). Using in-depth qualitative and narrative interviews, Gill's (2010) study on eight Chinese postgraduate students explores their overall experience of homecoming, what motivated them to return, their readjustment to their lives in China and their perceptions of what impact study abroad had on their lives and careers and their change in identity. Though this study has striking commonalities with my study, all the participants in this research point to the common determining factor that they had a desire 'to play a part' in the transformation of modern China (p. 359) and the perception that there would be more opportunities for professional development and relevant work in their subject areas there.

While motivating factors will vary from person to person, Hossain (2014), in her study of four returnee university teachers in Bangladesh, sheds some light on their motivation for going to study abroad. All four participants' motivations were extrinsic: related to money, promotion and professional achievement. Most of the participants were dissatisfied with their curriculum at home and felt the urge to update their knowledge since they had chosen teaching as their profession. Another factor for them was recognition of their achievements: two participants had postgraduate diplomas, but diplomas are not recognized as professional degrees in Bangladesh. Moreover, studying in an Anglophone country is considered to be a matter of prestige. As a result, these professionals with Western education receive higher salaries by working part-time in various private universities.

3.1.2. Benefits of study abroad

This section outlines the ways in which studying abroad helps learners to make permanent positive changes in their personal and professional lives.

In his study on Turkish returnees, Karakaş (2020) found that the returnees became more open to novel ideas, appreciating individual differences in religious views, racial and cultural backgrounds. The majority of the respondents reported developing an international outlook and awareness which is consistent with the results of other studies (e.g. Barnawi and Phan, 2015; Gu and Schweisfurth, 2015; Guo and Lei, 2019; Karakas, 2013). Returnees demonstrated heightened awareness of how their personal and professional development was shaped by their overseas education and how others perceived their new competences in their home-country environment (Karakaş, 2020, p. 260). Some returnees also added that overseas experiences increased their network building for their future studies and personal relations. Studies like Aslan and Jacobs (2014) and Guo and Lei (2019) also show that overseas education culminates in changes in returnees' personality, perceptions, competences, worldviews and identity formation.

Robinson-Pant's (2008) study explores whether PhD students who studied in UK made use of the research and academic practice they developed while they were in the host country. Their findings show that participants were keen on becoming changemakers and were actively working towards transforming themselves and their practices, as in the studies conducted in Nepalese and Chinese contexts (Ghimire and Maharjan, 2014; Guo, 1998). Her analysis reports that as educational research practices are changing because of international student mobility, host countries like UK could respond positively to the differing research practices in home countries. Taking indigenous writing practices into account, she suggests 'intercultural discussion' in the form of interaction in supervision meetings and seminars to be initiated 'to develop new approaches for conducting and writing educational research in both host and home countries' (ibid., p. 427). This suggestion might carry valuable implications for Bangladeshi higher education as only limited studies (Rahman, 2013, 2018) depict any positive contributions of

returnees, and those are in the private sector. Thus Bangladeshi academia seems to be ripe for transformation.

In Christofi and Thompson's (2007) study, the participants came to study in US and UK from Russia and other European countries. They returned to their home country on completion of their studies for a while and then, dissatisfied, went back to their sojourn countries. Nearly all the participants described the changes in themselves on return from study abroad in positive ways. Ghimire and Maharjan (2014, p. 9) in their qualitative study on the contribution of 58 Nepalese returnee students of different professions to whom they refer as *return migrants*, affirm the same: the returnee professionals 'found that their expertise in the English language, familiarity with technology and life skills make them more qualified and valuable in their current jobs' (ibid., p. 9).

Similarly, in their study of Singaporean returnees who have studied in Australian universities, Robertson, Hoare and Harwood (2011) emphasise English language skills and ability to learn and think critically in the work context. In another study of US higher education study-abroad participants, Paige et al. (2009) reveal that the study-abroad programme had a substantial influence on the participants' active involvement in the community; it heightened their political awareness of issues around the globe and also their global engagement, which ultimately had a profound effect on their lives and career. This finding is also consistent with the findings of the Saudi researchers Alandejani (2013) and Almutairi (2017), whose participants also studied at US universities.

Chinese postgraduate returnees in Gill's (2010) study experienced enhanced cultural awareness, and deepened understanding of the differences in how learning is perceived between China and in the West. All participants agreed that English language competence and the capacity for critical and reflective thinking were two core academic competences they gained during their study abroad and could use in both their workplaces and everyday lives. However, Yi's study (2011) finds clear distinctions between the experience of returnees working in the disciplines of social science and humanities and sciences and economics. While returnee

academics from social science and humanities faced material constraints, difficulty in publishing and shortage of funding, the returnees from sciences and economics were quite satisfied with their professional attainment and current and even future conditions. In addition to the findings reported in the studies mentioned above, returnees expressed their dissatisfaction at the political intervention which barred them from engaging in independent research. From the studies conducted in China, it is evident that it could be an exceptional case as they may have opportunities for work, unlike Nepal, Turkey or Nigeria, where not only material constraints but also sociocultural factors act as barriers to achieving professional goals. Bangladesh, with only a history of fifty years, might be more in tune with the material, sociocultural and political constraints of the countries discussed above. Finding out whether the same factors apply to the Bangladeshi returnees, or identifying the Bangladesh-specific factors, would be beneficial in fine-tuning steps to overcome the challenges.

Even short-stay study-abroad programmes like Fullbright-Hays Group Project Abroad to Botswana, benefit the participants and prepare them to be more culturally competent and sensitive to global perspectives, according to Biraimah and Jotia (2012). They report that ‘exposure to different languages, nationalities, and cultures, as well as varied group dynamics, contributes positively to participants’ cross-cultural awareness and appreciation of cultural differences through first-hand experience’ (p. 450). They further added that the cultural diffusion within academic institutions in this era of globalisation also makes it imperative to produce educators who are adequately exposed ‘to the functions of a global educational system’ (ibid., p. 451).

In this regard, Canagarajah, in his interview with Hossain (2017), puts forward some practical suggestions as recent advancements in digital technology have made travel and mobility easier. In his opinion returnees need to develop negotiation strategies for adopting a balanced approach to situating the local within the international. Returnees need to learn to relate knowledge of one geographical location to another, say England/UK to another geographical location like Bangladesh or China or India. He adds: ‘So developing knowledge today is kind

of multi-sited and it draws from multiple sources, whereas in the past the enlightenment tradition looked like knowledge belonged to one community' (p. 10).

Having discussed the benefits associated with study abroad, it looks like returnees do recognize its value for personal and professional development. Thus it can be concluded that the experience of being an international student has transformative potential and can be rewarding in the sense that it offers an opportunity for greater personal freedom, self-discovery, independence, confidence, and cultural awareness (Brown and Brown, 2009). Whether the same has been experienced by Bangladeshi returnees is a matter of investigation for this research.

In the next two sections, I turn to various studies that report on the personal and professional challenges of students'/scholars' re-entry experience. There are quite a number of articles and research studies carried out in the context of China (e.g. Gill, 2010; Li, 2006; Guo, 1998). There are studies on repatriation in the context of Turkey (Karakas, 2020; Celik, 2012), Ghana and Iraq (Boafo-Arthur et al. ,2020 and Sengupta and Kapur, 2020), PhD studies conducted in the context of China (Wang, 2016) and Saudi Arabia (Almuarik, 2019; Almutairi, 2018; Alandejani, 2013), where the participants returned after studying in Western countries. There are also studies of returnees from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia who have studied in New Zealand (Butcher, 2002, 2003, 2011; McGrath, Stock and Butcher, 2007; McGrath, 1998). Although these contexts bear little similarity to the educational scenario in Bangladesh, the social and academic aspects of reintegration carry insightful implications to base my study on.

3.1.3. Social aspects of reintegration

The mental adjustment of returnees – for example, re-adjustment to social and cultural expectations, lack of support, identity conflicts, social withdrawal, depression, and anxiety - have been the focal point of investigation in several studies (Adler, 1981; Christofi and Thompson, 2007; Butcher, 2002, 2003, 2011). The participants also experience culture shock - that is, the feeling of anxiety,

confusion and disorientation one feels when exposed to a different society and culture than their own (McGrath, 1998) - and reverse culture shock on return. I discuss the female-specific experience of culture shock and reverse culture shock in Section 3.2 below. Many of the problems listed in studies of re-entry are paralleled in literature relating to culture shock. Alongside mental adjustment, Rohrlich and Martin (1991) add cultural adjustment, intercultural communication and cross-cultural adaptation (Pitts, 2016 and Almuarik, 2019) as crucial factors in the professionals' reentry adjustment. What is missing in these studies is the sociopolitical and economic agenda working in the respective higher education settings that caused the distress on repatriation. I intend to address this gap in my research.

Turning to details of these studies, Turkish returnees in Karakas's (2020) study report that overseas experiences, especially studying in the host countries' education systems, caused returnee scholars to experience personal, perceptual, competence and identity-related changes and to enjoy certain privileges, such as better job opportunities and higher social class. The returnees had developed 'a strong sense of (internal) double-consciousness, feeling themselves privileged compared to those without overseas education' (ibid., p. 256). This finding is consistent with the studies of Barnawi and Phan (2015), Karakaş (2013), and Gu and Schweisfurth (2015) where returnees formed great expectations about 'some forms of capital and privileges based on their transnational capital marked by new competences, skills and transnationalized identity' (Karakaş, 2020, p. 256).

However, one issue with Karakaş (2020) is that the findings are based on data collected through a survey on social media (Facebook) and face-to-face and online semi-structured interviews (Skype/FaceTime). Therefore a detailed investigation into the return experience with more qualitative tools, such as field observations and participants' CVs and official documents (on expectations from the returnees) gathered from the host institutions' websites might present a fuller picture of reintegration. Also, the interviews were conducted in English rather than participants' native language, which might not have produced the desired outcome of the investigation.

In Sussman's studies (1986, 2002), repatriates 'often return home holding different attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and behaviours than they held at their departure' (Sussman, 1986, p. 244). They often face transformations (psychological, social, and work related) during re-entry that involve many changes in perspectives and attitudes (Oddu, Osland, and Blakeney, 2008; Sussman, 2000). Furthermore, returnees often find that the lives of their family and friends have also changed, though they had a freeze-frame image of everything as before in their minds (Brabant et al., 1990; Gaw, 2000; Sussman, 1986; 2002; Oddu et al., 2008). It is likely that during the time abroad, both the sojourner and the home environment underwent some changes. It is only through the re-entry experience that the returnee is likely to become aware of the amount and significance of personal change and changes to the home environment (Pitts, 2016; Martin, 1984).

Bramlin et al. (1990) also share their experience that at times study-abroad students start to believe that their home country is an underdeveloped one. A few years of staying and studying in the US makes them forget about the reality at home. On return they seem to notice all the discrepancies which exist and start judging the home environment through comparative lenses. Alsulami's (2020) recent study on Saudi returnee scholars also reports on the factors affecting re-entry and indicates that the longer an individual stays abroad, the greater the challenges experienced on returning home. Returnees may struggle to resolve internal conflict created from the dissonance between old and new identities, and between being uprooted from a culture they have grown to appreciate and returned to a culture about which they may now hold new negative and critical feelings (Walling et al., 2006). This finding also seems to be consistent with the findings of Sengupta and Kapur's (2020) work on Kurdish returnees, reviewed later in this section.

Butcher's (2002) qualitative study was conducted with 50 graduates from New Zealand on return to their home countries, and reports on the difficulty students faced on their re-entry. He addresses re-entry as a grieving process, a 'disenfranchised grief' that can be defined as a person experiencing a loss 'that is

not or cannot be openly acknowledged, publicly mourned, or socially supported' (p. 357). This grief is caused by disillusionment in the personal and professional surroundings which intensifies the normal emotions of anger, sadness, depression and loneliness among the participants. Butcher (2003) later held responsible the underpreparedness of the students in terms of lifestyle expectations, changing cultural landscape and readjustment to the work environment which he finds integral for a smooth transition (re-entry).

A recent study in the context of Iraq reports similar findings. Sengupta and Kapur's (2020) work with 25 Kurdish students reports that students experience psychological challenges like stress, depression and confusion on their return. These problems and challenges stemmed from unmet expectations, identifying the gap between reality and expectations that resulted in their disillusionment. According to them, despite the students' suffering, they are both winners and losers at the same time. They have gained knowledge in the form of a 'life-changing, identity-altering' study-abroad experience and lost the enhanced research and learning environment in their host countries. Unlike Butcher (2002, p. 357), who calls the re-entry experience a 'disenfranchised grief', Sengupta and Kapur (2020, p. 221) describe a process of win and loss and the students as winners and losers. It would be interesting to find out whether the returnee participants consider their re-entry a loss or gain and/or a tale of elation or despair.

In the following section I will discuss the academic or professional side of reintegration experience.

3.1.4. Academic aspects of reintegration

Studies like Adler (1986), Cannon, (2000) and Oddou et al. (2008) report that returnees return to their organisations with a wealth of newly gained knowledge and experience that they intend to share. However, upon re-entry, returnees seldom land in an appropriate environment for helping them share or transfer their knowledge (Crowne, 2009; Oddou et al., 2008). A study of Chinese returnees (Chen, 2011 as cited in Wang, 2016) reported that half of the participant returnees

were not satisfied with the organisational environment, feeling they had been 'parachuted' into an academic system that was essentially formed and reinforced by Chinese-educated academics. Within this organisational environment, they often found themselves alienated which prevented them from utilising their talents and cultural capital fully.

This finding is consistent with the findings of Karakaş's (2020) study in which participant returnees express their sadness at the work conditions where they cannot successfully employ their competences and skills. Dissatisfaction with their institutions, programs and colleagues were also evident in the survey, in which some participants expressed their disappointment that their 'professional and career development does not seem possible under current conditions and their competences and their skills developed in Western universities would fade away soon' (Karakaş, 2020, p. 265). The reason for this repatriation distress could be that neither the returnees nor their social network anticipated re-entry difficulties for which they were unprepared (Pitts, 2016).

Another recent study, by Boafo-Arthur et al. (2020), reports on the cognitive, affective and behavioural expression of reverse culture shock of three Ghanaians who studied in the UK, US and South Africa and returned to their home country. Their return experience reflects the struggle a third-world country student faces on return after spending an extended period of time in a developed country. Boafo-Arthur's et al (2020) work reiterates some of the findings of other studies (Sengupta and Kapur, 2020; Pitts, 2016; Sussman, 1986). They report on issues like the discrepancy in participants' expectations when returning home and the reality they face on return, identity alteration among returnees, and the longer the time spent abroad the greater the adjustment. The participants' shift in cultural identity, lifestyle change, psychological distress and navigating through different social and geographical challenges may result in affective stress (p. 249). They also suggest that the returnees have to readjust their expectations of 'seamlessly fitting back' into their social and professional spaces and be prepared for that. Boafo-Arthur et al. (2020) state the returnee participants' feelings here:

The fast-paced fluidity of workplace procedures and processes in the advanced nations they had sojourned was in sharp contrast to some of the rudimentary, archaic, and anachronistic processes in their countries of origin. What they were contending with was their experiences with technological advancement in their countries of sojourn contrasted with the seeming lack of progress in their home countries. (p. 249)

The recommendations that Boafo-Arthur et al. (2020) provide are well matched with Sussman's (1986) suggestions on preparing for re-entry and getting the necessary support. According to them, in order to utilise the international learning experience of the returnees, home countries need to be 'well versed in the lives of the returnees and help facilitate their transition and readjustment to the local terrain' (p. 251). They also suggest forming associations with returnees and mentorship support throughout the transition period, and emphasize the right kind of support that might turn the loss into growth. When two separate studies (Boafo-Arthur et al. ,2020 and Sengupta and Kapur, 2020) conducted in two separate contexts (Ghana and Iraq) draw similar findings, there remains a close possibility that my study on Bangladeshi returnee academics might generate similar results.

The main barrier repatriates face, according to Alandejani (2013), is miscommunication with their colleagues, as it can be difficult for colleagues who have not had the experience to fully comprehend or relate to the knowledge that was acquired overseas (Crowne, 2009; Lazarova and Tarique, 2005; Oddou et al., 2008). These repercussions can also cause repatriates to grow increasingly hesitant to share their knowledge (Lazarova and Tarique, 2005) as the new ideas are not recognized, valued, or harvested (Antal, 2001; Cannon, 2000; Oddou et al., 2008). Zhang (2011) also reports that returnees in China enjoy a special status and privilege that can create a communication barrier and misunderstanding between foreign-educated returnees and their colleagues, widening the gap between the foreign-trained returnees and the locally qualified general public. The study (ibid.) further adds that social stratification and inequality can lead to tensions between newly-appointed foreign-educated returnees and China-educated faculty and 'old' returnees, because the latter only earn a fraction of the income of the former.

Studies like Alandejani (2013), Antal (2001), Cannon (2000) and Oddou et al. (2008) report that owing to the lack of a shared mindset and varied backgrounds between colleagues at home and the returnees, misunderstandings and ‘undecoded’ messages surface in the workplaces. More recently, Karakaş (2020), in his study of Turkish returnees, reports that the returnees’ new selves and transformed identity, as well as cosmopolitan competences and skills, might not synchronise well with the pre-existing networks as the institution’s work environment is based on nepotism, and at times favouritism and seniority (Karakaş, 2020, p. 266).

Returnees also find organisational politics to hinder the flow of the newly-gained knowledge (Antal, 2001; Cannon, 2000). Power struggles between young and senior returnees, and locally trained and well-established senior scholars, can sometimes become fierce and even violent (Cao, 2008). In her study of Saudi returnees, Antal (2001) reports that individuals in higher positions fear they will lose power by showing they do not know something which repatriates are sharing. Also, some repatriates are concerned that their knowledge could potentially serve their co-workers’ careers more than their own careers and interests. Without an appropriate sharing atmosphere, returnees willingly choose not to share their newly-gained knowledge, further hindering knowledge transfer (Antal, 2001; Cannon, 2000; Lazarova and Tarique, 2005).

However, the effects of re-adjustment and re-adaptation differ from one individual to another (Brabant, 1990; Gaw, 2000; Wolfe, 2005). According to Parson (2007):

When we acknowledge that different people legitimately can view the same situation differently and different situations can be used concurrently, we begin to see that the situation may contain more complexity and opportunity than we expected. (p. 408)

Therefore, the change and distress that one returnee may face on re-entering might not be at the same level as that another repatriate faces (Gaw, 2000; Sussman,

2002). Moreover, the returnees are rarely debriefed upon their return (Butcher, 2003; Antal, 2001; Crowne, 2009). Organisations also lack social networks where repatriates can share with colleagues what they have learned and thereby effectively transfer their knowledge in informal settings (Cannon, 2000; Crowne, 2009). Brabant et al. (1990), in their study using a questionnaire survey on international alumni students in US, state that frequent visits to the home country or maintaining a close liaison can help in reducing family problems and facilitate re-entry. Their findings further show that returnees from different parts of the world do not return to the same set of circumstances. Culture, nationality and religious affiliation impacts heavily on how a returnee faces family obligations and develops a coping and 'readaptation mechanism' (ibid., p. 393). Did the Bangladeshi academics have the necessary mental preparation or were they provided with any support on return? From this review, providing an answer to this question would be of potential interest for this study.

3.1.5. Re-entry training programmes

In the literature reviewed above, mention of preparation for re-entry and support on return in the form of training and workshops has appeared in a number of studies (Martin, 1986; Sussman, 1986, 2002; Brabant et al., 1990; Pitts, 2009, 2016; Alandajani, 2013; Almutairi, 2018). According to Goodwin and Nacht (1986), because of 'the widespread expressions of concern about intellectual and professional decay', a brief one-time educational period abroad should not be the 'prescription' to ensure sustainable developments. Rather, the 'aftercare', i.e. support on return through continuing attention, would be more desirable (ibid., p. 1). This is particularly applicable to third-world countries as they need to thoroughly explore and better understand the development of human capital with aid from the first-world countries.

Pre-departure briefings/workshops/orientations are run in many other countries, like New Zealand (McGrath, Stock and Butcher, 2007), and are also run in Bangladesh by sending agencies like the American Centre. However, there is often a

dearth of similar preparation for returnees when they are exiting and going back home (Pitts, 2016). Pitts (2016) further adds:

The research, however, makes us know that there are cognitive, behavioural, and affective issues that arise organically from the returnee experience and which may hinder re-entry and re-adaptation. Given that re-entry is a critical part of international education, it would be worthwhile to review the areas of need that exist within the domain of the re-entry process. (p. 441)

Thus, to reap maximum benefits from the returnees' international experiences, it is imperative to help them find meaningful ways to 'enact their emergent intercultural identities and to integrate their cultural experiences' (ibid.) into their lives at home and society in general (Pritchard, 2011). According to Arthur (2003), enhancing students' preparedness for return to the home country by equipping them with anticipatory coping strategies, e.g. encouraging them to be mindful of personal changes and paying particular attention to re-entry issues, would help in ensuring long-term benefits for returnees. Students could be introduced to the concept of re-entry shock and shown ways to activate their adaptive personality traits. Re-entry shock could be normalised for them by being marked as an accepted, anticipated and transformative part of the overseas experience. Students could also be reminded that by navigating their way through a cross-cultural experience, they have already developed a 'skills repertoire for successful adaptation' (Pitts, 2016, p. 441).

Sussman (1986, 2002), in her studies of re-entry research and training and cultural transition in international sojourns, provides some very useful directions for reducing re-entry distress. Her suggestions include psychological preparation of returnees for their return, creating awareness for the changes to appear on return, accepting that family and friends will not be able to understand their experience abroad fully, finding other sojourners who might have experienced study abroad and re-entry issues, and finally appreciating that re-entry distress is temporary and lessens gradually over time (Sussman, 2002, pp. 7-8). Sussman further

recommends that post-return workshops or programmes should be made part of the overall study abroad package alongside the pre-departure programmes that take place in countries like the USA (Sussman, 2002, 1986).

Although Sussman's (1986, 2002) suggestions for re-entry workshops were developed decades ago, they still seem to be valuable in arranging re-entry programmes today. Her recommendation is based on some very practical assumptions/hypotheses suggested by various authors:

Hypothesis 1: Re-entry stress and shock is more severe than initial entry shock.

Hypothesis 2A: Individuals who adapt most successfully overseas have a more severe re-entry problem than those individuals who do not adapt overseas.

Hypothesis 2B appears to directly contradict hypothesis 2A and states that: Individuals who have adapted well overseas have a smoother re-entry than those who did not adapt abroad.

Hypothesis 3: Individuals' home cultures play a role in influencing their responses to re-entry transition and in influencing compatriots' responses to repatriates. (Sussman, 1986, p. 241-242)

Sussman (2002) seems to be fully aware of the fact that not all returnees experience repatriation distress in the same way, as 'their home country values and encourages or demands fitting in and cultural harmony' (p. 8). Some returnees are already aware that they need to behave and think like their fellows once back home. Moreover, some returnees do not even see themselves as having re-entry problems and might not view re-entry support as personally relevant (Brabant, Palmer, and Gramling, 1990). Sussman's (1986) suggestions thus indicates that workshops need to be tailored according to the specific participants' needs. The content areas adapted from Sussman's (1986, p. 246) list should include:

1. Awareness of change. Changes in individual's knowledge of host culture, thinking and behaving, home culture, their expectations and their home culture's expectations of them as returnees.
2. Understanding of the cultural adaptation process. Create understanding of adaptation models, culture shock and reverse culture shock and general coping strategies.
3. Ability to make personal adjustments to home/work environments. Should concentrate on planning for the individual's adjustment to social and work settings. Alongside, points to be noted when designing a re-entry programme are the *Who*, *When and Where* factors.

Sussman (1986) also mentions the works of Westwood (1984), who designed a handbook that provided suggestions for implementing a re-entry workshop and a videotape that depicted a re-entry workshop in progress. These were designed for leaders of re-entry programs for students in US. Sussman's (1986) final suggestion for re-entry training for foreign students is a more comprehensive course-length seminar. A course and accompanying text were designed by Behrens and Bennett (1981) for departing international students at Texas Technical University. As these courses typically included films and papers in addition to exercises and lectures and could be of varying length from several sessions to several weeks, an option could be to offer the courses on zero or minimal credit (Sussman, 1986).

Parveen (2013) suggests mentorship and a buddy system be incorporated into re-entry programmes, like Boafo-Arthur et al. (2020). As the educational system in the home country might be very different from that of the host country, discussions with mentors or buddies might help the new returnees to identify the environment of the institution by its social construct and thus avoid some distress. This recommendation is also consistent with Pitts' (2016, p. 433) findings that returnees found solidarity and relief by seeking out and sharing their experiences with others who had similar experiences during re-entry programmes. Earlier, Pitts (2009) found that normal everyday types of talk among returnees facilitated their overseas adjustment by acting as a stress buffer and offered a means of collectively managing and aligning cultural expectations. In line with Sussman's (1986, 2002)

suggestion of customising re-entry training, Jung et al. (2013, p. 168) add that universities in home countries or professional organisations can develop mentoring programs for re-entry professionals. These mentoring programs can provide support to normalize reintegration stress, especially for female professionals, considering their double workload in the house and at work. Female returnees could also be directed to act as resource person in countries with lack of resources.

Brubaker (2017, p. 110) traces the significant change in study abroad experience over the past few years. Students nowadays rely on multiple forms of technology to remain connected to friends and family at home even when they are studying abroad. This is consistent with Pitts' (2009, 2016) finding that contemporary returnees make significant use of social networking to develop and maintain supportive communication networks for different phases of their adjustment, as well as for work and research purposes (e.g. Karakaş, 2020). Social networking might therefore prolong the effect of being abroad as returnees could easily 'maintain a connection with co-sojourners and members of their host country for years' (Pitts, 2016, p. 439). Forming alumni networks or being part of an alumni organisation proved to be beneficial for the returnee participants in Ireland and Gao's (2001) study. The participants who studied at universities in New Zealand have formed alumni organisations in their respective countries and are playing vital roles in the transformation of society.

3.2. Returnee women in academia

This section highlights some of the significant research studies that have reported how the experience of women academics has differed substantially from that of their male colleagues. To unpack the meaning of the women participants' experience, the concepts of social role theory and glass ceiling have been utilized. Both concepts seem to accentuate the complex situation (balancing career development and family) and contextualized factors that influence what the women academics have witnessed on return.

There has been a lack of substantive scholarship on the topic of women in academia in the Asian region. There are a couple of studies conducted on women in higher education where Bangladesh was only part of a larger comparative study (Jayweera, 1997a, b; Morley and Crossouard, 2014). There are studies like Cox (2004) where men and women have been found to experience re-entry quite differently. Empirical studies of international students who underwent education in countries like the USA and New Zealand and returned to their countries report that in general women experience more difficulties upon re-entry, particularly those with children (Brabant, et al., 1990; Aiston and Jung, 2015). Both these studies contend that cultural distance might be among the reasons for such findings. Other studies (Brown and Brown, 2009; Jung et al., 2013) report that females who develop a new gender role abroad find the return to be more challenging as their new identity becomes incompatible with the traditional gender role expectations of their society, i.e. returning from an individualist to a collectivist culture.

Brabant et al.'s (1990) mixed-method study of cross-cultural re-entry conducted on alumni of various nationalities who had studied in US, reported similar findings to recent studies (e.g. Aiston and Jung, 2015). They found that female returnees were more likely than males to report problems with both family and daily life. They further reported to have found changes in their friends as they themselves might have changed within that time. The women participants changed their values and feelings regarding interpersonal relationships and sexuality and became more liberal during their tenure abroad. Because of this, they experienced problems readjusting to their families' more conservative values and lifestyle on return. Brabant et al. (1990) reported that the notes the women participants added to the survey questionnaire suggested that they indeed underwent changes. However, the 'response of significant others to these changes' were actually the main reason for concern, rather than the change itself (ibid., p. 397). One of the participants wrote:

When I returned home to my country I felt like crying because life was uncomfortable . . . Most of my friends cut me off not because my education was a crime but because they feel inferior to associate with a been-to. My

children gave me problems, all round problems. They still mention US in every discussion. (Brabant et al., 1990, p. 397)

This corresponds to the findings of an early study by Gama and Pedersen (1976, p. 13), who report in their study of Brazilian students that women returnees 'find it harder to cope with family expectations' and experience more 'value conflict' with their families.

Aiston and Jung's (2015) aim was to explore common experiences of academic women in terms of their research productivity. Based on a gendered analysis of an international survey (CAP - Changing Academic Professions), they found that family was a significant influence on women's research productivity as they constantly juggle career development and family responsibilities. Academic women struggle and sacrifice more than men 'with respect to parenting and housework and negotiate the contradictory discourse of successful academic and good mother' (p. 210). Aiston and Jung (2015) further report though women academics from Japan and Hong Kong were found to suffer more but the challenges with respect to research productivity might be wider than Asia-specific. They put forward some practical suggestions for changes in workplaces to reduce the gender struggle and increase academic women's research productivity, for example with fair allocation of workload taking parenting and housework into consideration. I would like to explore whether the Bangladeshi women academic participants share the same struggle when they return from abroad on gaining further research and academic expertise, as the concept of 'being a good mother and wife' applies equally to their context.

In their study of returnee Korean counselling professionals, Jung et al.'s (2013) female participants reported that the hiring process in the country was discriminatory, which contributed to making their return experience difficult. The struggle was further aggravated by the 'readjustment to the more traditional gender role expectation from the Korean society, which includes demanding responsibilities for childcare and maintaining households' (ibid., p. 166). They further reported that this re-entry struggle was not specific to the female Korean

counselling professionals; it applied to all professional women across cultures and societies who 'continue to take on more responsibility for taking care of children and family than their male colleagues' (Jung et al., 2013, p. 168). This I believe applies equally to the Bangladeshi women academics in this investigation (as indicated in Chapter 2.4 earlier).

Three more recent PhD theses in the context of Saudi Arabia report on women academics' experience on return from study abroad. Alandejani (2013) depicts how Saudi female scholars re-adapt, re-adjust, and transfer their knowledge on return from study abroad in the US. Using culture shock, reverse culture shock, re-entry barriers, and transformational learning theory, they showed that all the participants went through reverse culture shock. At the same time, participants also said focusing on work was the cure for reverse culture shock. The parent participants expressed their sorrow and concern for their children as they struggled to help their children adjust on return. Although the participants did not give suggestions or explanations for how they got over the challenges and obstacles, they said that they put in large amounts of time, money, and effort to help their children. All the participants also underwent transformation into a newer identity and developed workplace strategies at their own time and pace. However, the re-adjustment process required time, patience, and a positive attitude to reach aims and goals and to get new ideas across.

Almuarik's (2019) longitudinal study of Saudi PhD returnees' readjustment experience was conducted over twelve months. The participants seemed to face more challenges in the early phase of return. The major challenge for the female participants was to meet the social norms, specifically the gender expectations, of the home country upon return, as the Saudi culture holds very separate expectations of men and women. Female participants also speak of logistical issues like transportation and economic constraints like children's school fees. In the final phase (four years after return) participants had more or less settled down both personally and professionally. The general deduction was that their re-entry experience was influenced by the personal and professional transformation resulting from studying abroad. Some of the challenges they faced included trying

to resume family responsibilities upon their return and readjustment to the somewhat restricted life in Saudi Arabia. This is consistent with other studies in the literature (e.g. Brabant et al., 1990) who found that Muslim female students had difficulty adjusting to family and personal life upon return, especially when returning to countries that have prescribed gender roles (Ward, et al., 2001).

The social norm aspect is also highlighted in Alsulami's (2020) work on returnee Saudi international students, in which he showed that female Saudi returnees experienced greater challenges than males owing to gender imbalances in the culture in Saudi Arabia. Almutairi's (2018) PhD thesis on the re-entry experience of Saudi scholars in a Saudi Arabian university and how their administrators perceive the re-entry, also speaks of similar adjustment issues. Out of sixteen participants, all five women returnees felt they were not given the same opportunities as men in their departments and also touched on the issue of transportation, as women in Saudi Arabia were not permitted to drive at that time.

In South Asian countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, political leaders tend to exploit religion for political purposes. They play with people's religious sentiments and the conservative culture leads to the labelling of feminists as rebels of religion. Women's rights and equality issues thus continuously pass through processes of progression and regression and fail to gain stability or momentum (ibid., 1991). In the same way, the dominant gender norm that women should not be in authoritative positions over men places significant constraints on women's choice of career, pointing to the fact that socio-economic backgrounds and sociocultural belief systems have a huge impact on women in higher education (Morley and Crossouard, 2014).

Regarding the issue of re-entry, Sussman (2001) found no relationship between gender and repatriation distress, calling for more exploration of this issue. However, Sussman's participants were American corporate people. There is a wide sociocultural gap between the contexts of the US and Bangladesh.

To unpack what gender role means in South Asian countries, I explore the concepts of social role theory and glass ceiling in the following sections.

3.2.1. Social role theory

In her analysis of social role theory, Eagley (1987) explains that members of certain social groups acquire common values and beliefs because of the pressure of socialization they are exposed to during their childhood. Men's and women's roles in society have been segregated and are subject to different expectations. Labelling of women as homemakers and men as breadwinners has created a clear distinction between the private and public spheres of life: women will work inside the house and men will be responsible for connecting the outside world to the internal family life. This type of social prejudice, like placing an inappropriate share of domestic activities on women and leaving the outside work for men, is found in most traditional societies around the world.

This stereotyping of gender roles by the social system contributes to assigning specific behavioural expectations to men and women. Eagley adds that women's tendency to be more amenable with others 'may be a product of the female role's demand ... to manifest communal qualities', whereas 'the male role's demand is to manifest agentic qualities (p. 98). The fact that women perform most of the childcare was held to result in girls identifying themselves with mothers and developing typically feminine styles of relating to people. In contrast boys learn that they should be different from their mothers, from whom they then separate psychologically. become more involved in events outside of the home, and develop a typically masculine style of dealing with people. As a result, the typical gender roles carry forward to the younger generation as they assume that they need to adopt these roles to become respected members of their community. The impact of gender roles on society has been maintained in this way (ibid., pp. 20-21).

At the same time, the roles assigned to males in society tend to be hierarchical in status and authority, which further marginalizes the position of women. Domestic work, which is branded lower status, lowers the value of women's labour in

comparison to men's labour. Men have thus been enjoying this power advantage in family life: taking important decisions and mitigating conflicts while wives are left to decide on internal affairs. The expectation that men would be authoritative and dominant and women would be compliant and compatible stemmed from this belief (Eagley, 1987).

In this connection Morley and Crossouard (2014) report that in Asian countries, women have these pre-defined social roles in which they are expected to carry out the dual responsibility of working outside and maintaining family life. The dominant gender roles backed by religious orthodoxy, which states that women should not be in authoritative positions over men, places significant constraints on women's choices of career. Kiaye and Singh's (2013) study of South African women and Ahmad, Fakhr and Ahmed's (2011) study of Pakistani women also affirm that social role and dual responsibility of women in those societies acts as a career barrier. However, the experience of women is dependent on the requirements of the position they are working in and varies from sector to sector. As such, the sociocultural belief systems in which women grow up also have a huge impact on women working in higher education (Morley and Crossouard, 2014).

3.2.2. Glass ceiling

Glass ceiling is a term introduced in the 1970s to identify invisible barriers within organisations that block women from reaching senior level positions in the corporate world (Jackson, 2001; Wirth, 2001). In more recent years this term has been used more generally to refer to the invisible barriers that women encounter in their career progression (Bombuwela and De Alwis, 2013; Sharma and Sehrawat, 2014). David and Woodward (1998) explain the glass ceiling as 'blocking their aspirations, allowing them to see where they might go, but stopping them from arriving there' (p. 15). These barriers might be walls of traditions and cultural stereotypes which prevent women from reaching their desired or deserved positions. According to Wesarat and Matthew (2017), 'the severity of the glass ceiling phenomenon can be defined as the degree to which the glass ceiling has an impact on one's life' (p. 22). As such, they believe the effects of the glass ceiling are

not only limited to women but also apply to all at organisational and national levels.

Smith, Caputi and Crittenden (2012) state that women's glass ceiling beliefs have a negative impact on their subjective career success (e.g. job satisfaction, psychological wellbeing and happiness). Sustaining women's subjective career success is important for increasing organisational performance. This is because happy employees are more productive than those who are unhappy (Hosie and Sevastos, 2009; Wesarat, Sharif and Abdul Majid, 2015). Hence reducing women's glass ceiling beliefs may allow them to perceive subjective career success, which in turn would affect organisational success. Wesarat and Matthew (2017) also suggest that in order to promote women's leadership, all educational institutions should find the means to solve glass ceiling problems and support academic women's career advancement. They further add that ensuring gender equality is crucial for enhancing women's career success, and that 'promoting career advancement to all workers regardless of gender can help the organisation improve its performance' (p. 27). However, Powell and Butterfield (2015), in their study on the glass ceiling 20 years ago, report that the nature of glass ceilings has remained essentially stable over a 20-year period as implications for organisational effectiveness have been widely ignored.

Now academia is a place in the upper echelons of society which is based on meritocracy, and it is not possible to exclude women from entering an area which is supposedly based on academic ability and achievement. In this connection, David and Woodward (1998) point to the respondents of the book *Negotiating the Glass Ceiling*. They report on sixteen eminent women participants working in higher education across the world who were raised in traditional families. They grew up with the idea that a smooth transition from childhood to womanhood leading to marriage and motherhood was the accepted path for women, and the glass ceiling does not come as a surprise. As reported in the context (see Chapter 2.4), similar social constructs exist in Bangladesh, where women grow up with the idea that no matter what they become, eventually they are to get married and raise their family. Getting into teaching or academia might then be the most convenient profession as

it is a respectable job that permits some degree of flexibility. But to sustain the position, a woman must have determination, strength of character and courage alongside the support of friends and family to move forward (Ahad and Gunter, 2017). Morley and Crossouard's (2014) report also suggests that support from family is a prime factor in women's advancement in Asian countries. As caregiving is expected from women, this could be described as a constraint for women thinking of higher education abroad or of building a career in higher education (ibid.). This 'family support' might be a determining factor in whether a woman returnee's reintegration is a smooth or rough one.

3.3. The sender's perspective

The third section deals with the perspective of the senders: the stakeholders and the funding organisation and what their stated objectives are for sending people to study abroad. In order to gain insights into this, I reviewed policy documents of various countries' stakeholders, sending agencies and international donor agencies. I will also report on research that identifies a gap between the expectations of the senders and the sent/returnees. I am interested to discover whether the gaps identified exist in the context of Bangladesh and Bangladeshi returnee academics.

The rationale of the stakeholders of developing countries for sending their professionals for higher studies overseas, according to Maliyamkono, Ishumi and Wells (1982), is to build a highly trained and skilled labour force to materialize the technologizing and industrializing plans of the nation. Though there seem to be no written expectations, it is probably a general expectation that these lucky professionals who got the chance to study abroad would be well-informed and contribute to creating a well-developed nation. Thirty plus years on, this is still true in Bangladesh, as Anwaruddin (2014) reports:

In most developing countries, funds for research are very limited. Educational researchers from these countries, therefore, look for commissions or contracts from various overseas organisations. (p.1)

Developing countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria and even China, Turkey, Indonesia and Malaysia have thus been sending their professionals to developed countries for higher education under different scholarship schemes (Celik, 2012; UGC Annual Report, 2013).

In his study on Turkish returnees, Celik (2012) adds reasons like intercultural communication skills and the spread of English as a global lingua franca for sending professionals and teacher educators of these countries to the top universities in English-speaking countries. Goodwin and Nacht (1986) provided a summary of the rationale for this flow of intellectuals across borders and cultures over the past decades:

The rationale presented to date has roughly three parts. First, scholars from one country, both junior and senior, should study in another country to gain breadth of comprehension, perspective on their own condition, and appreciation for others. Second, the rich nations have an obligation to open their doors to students from less fortunate nations, with the expectation that these students will return home after graduation to put their newfound skills to good use in the development process. Third, international exchange fosters certain forms of research and scholarly inquiry that cannot be conducted as well, or at all, in one nation alone. (p. ix)

Goodwin and Nacht (1986) also speak of a fourth rationale, which is to 'develop close, constructive links with their counterparts in the global community' (p. ix).

Crossman and Clarke 's (2009) qualitative study was conducted in an Australian university to investigate the stakeholders' perspective on international experience. The findings suggest that stakeholders view 'experiential learning' to be the key objective of international experience (p. 607). This learning should be 'primarily characterised by references to the application of theory to practice in authentic, real life or practical ways so that individuals would be able to learn first-hand' (ibid.).

To learn further, I examined various higher education policy documents from other developing countries, like Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, Nigeria and China, to learn about the objectives of sending academics abroad. Though each country's objectives for sending professionals for higher education in Western countries were quite different and may be distinct from Bangladesh, they are mostly developing countries at similar stages of social and economic development. Thus their policy documents might carry valuable implications for my context.

I began by looking at the Global Education Dialogues: The Asia Series (2014, p. 2), where economically-developed country China discusses the importance of transforming HEIs to serve the changing needs of their modern economy. It asserts that China needs cooperation with the educational organisations of countries that have been through a similar transformation process. Next I turned to Indonesia's higher education system, which has recently undergone major developments in the form of funding for both professionals and students (Wicansono and Friawan, 2008). The BAN-PT (Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi), the National Education Board on Higher Education in 2002, evaluated different academic programs in Indonesia. According to the report, the quality of HEIs was very poor,

caused by the fact that the HEIs system has grown much faster than the improvement of qualification levels of academic staff and staff commitment to do teaching and research activities. Limited fund for education development, as reflected in the poor remuneration of academic staff, has affected to poor working conditions and academic life [sic]. (Wicansono and Friawan 2008, p. 16)

The recent government initiative to develop human resources generated an increased number of PhD and MA degree-holding academic staff. Previously, academic staff were not qualified to teach beyond undergraduate level. HEIs need more and more qualified academics, both in-country and overseas MAs and PhDs, to ensure high quality education, and thus the government has increased funding for both public and private HEIs to send their academics abroad for higher studies. As a result, the number of MAs and PhDs among academic staff increased in the

country from 32 percent to 40 percent in the years 1996-2000. The rise in percentage confirms the rationale for Indonesia to increase the quality of HE staff to improve the quality of education in Indonesian universities.

The Internationalisation Policy for Higher Education Malaysia (2011) is a compilation of input, ideas and practices from fourteen public and nine private HEIs. It states that in HEIs research and development, leadership, teaching and learning need to be of international standard to receive an increased number of international students, staff and researchers. For this reason academic staff need to have international exposure, which assists in profiling the HEIs as quality establishments of higher education and increases their branding globally.

'Malaysia, aspiring to be a renowned education hub in the region, is in great need for the assimilation of scientific knowledge, world trends and expertise, especially at the centers of research advanced industrialized nations abroad' (pp. 50-51). For this, international staff mobility is required. This is an additional aspiration on the part of Malaysian HEIs, which was not stated for Indonesia. This would also increase staff's international sensitivity in terms of skills and experience in cross-cultural communication, language skills, personal experience of living abroad, and personal experience of study abroad and networking. This exposure will eventually lead to continuous personal and professional development. Through internationalisation students and staff of HEIs are expected to benefit by networking, understanding global issues, cultural diversity in the workplace and international relationships. The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2014 also emphasizes improving quality of education through staff development by exposing them to international education.

As the number of Egyptian students studying abroad is very low in comparison to other countries in the world, the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) prepared a report for the government of Egypt to offer advice on its future educational enhancement. This reform report (Higher Education in Egypt, 2010) emphasizes ten points, including raising input quality and embedding quality assurance as an institutional responsibility, strengthening university research capacity and its links to innovation, and building

a number of leading exemplars to ensure quality learning in HEIs. Thus the rationale for Egypt to send their academic staff to study abroad is to better prepare graduates for both national and international employability and also to make the staff aware of international qualifications frameworks.

Similarly, the National Policy on Education of Nigeria, 4th edition (2004) addresses the role of universities in training future academics, technical workers and managers, and upgrading their knowledge when necessary. This means the academics need to update themselves with the most recent advances in fundamental and technical knowledge, which they can pursue through teaching, research and community service. For this, faculty members in HEIs need international exposure (Mbachu and Ekeke, 2013).

The main message from the policy reviews of Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt and Nigeria emphasise the need for a greater percentage of the population to study in HE to develop 'human resources' to compete in a globalizing world. Many developing countries like these do not have enough well qualified staff members to teach/research to achieve this aim; they therefore aim to send their staff for postgraduate degrees and exposure overseas to deepen their knowledge and gain qualifications, and to build a network. However, the policy document of Bangladesh does not include such recommendations, as discussed earlier in Chapter 2. On the other hand, the reports from the University Grants Commission do not include similar reasoning about why studying abroad is important (see Chapter 2.2.2 above). It would be interesting to learn about the expectations of the stakeholders and the sending agencies for sending Bangladeshi academics to study abroad and any plans they might hold for the returnees.

3.3.1. The funding organizations

The next consideration is the rationale of the funding bodies like ADB, World Bank, British Council, Commonwealth, Fullbright, AusAid, which sponsor professionals from developing countries to study abroad. Since these organisations have their

own policy documents, I decided to review some of them to learn about their objectives.

DFID supports 750 to 800 Commonwealth students per year with scholarships to pursue their academic or professional development with UK universities and other institutions working across government with multilaterals, civil society and the private sector. Its Education position paper, *Improving Learning, Expanding Opportunities* (2013), states that the objective for higher education through global programmes is to establish partnerships between HEIs to improve the quality of teaching and learning and research outputs; to enhance the ability of Southern institutions to influence policy; to support development research programmes that build Southern universities' capacity for research and research uptake, including in science and technology; and to build capacity of individuals through scholarships and professional training similar to the rhetoric of the senders.

In order to ensure the UK government's collective work on international education that lifts young people in developing countries out of poverty into work and contributing to their countries' economic growth, DFID is working with the Departments for Education and for Business, Innovation and Skills. Their aim is to expand and strengthen support for educational research and innovation, evaluate innovation and explore how technology can improve learning. DFID's higher education work is channeled through global programmes that establish partnerships between HEIs to meet the objectives above.

In the case of Australia, the government's website reports a new development policy, namely Australian Aid: Promoting Prosperity, Reducing poverty, Enhancing Stability. This policy finds tertiary education to be an important component of any investment in education. Hence the Australia Awards provide scholarships to build people-to-people linkages at the individual, institutional and country levels and develop capacity and leadership skills so that individuals can contribute to development in their home country.

In short, the sending countries' and donor agencies' rhetoric suggests that both see international education as having strong ties with the improvement of national higher education systems. At the same time, the donor agencies want the receivers of scholarships to take part in development activities in their home countries on return. It is important to discover whether academic returnees in Bangladesh are realizing the intentions of donor agencies there.

3.3.2. Difference between expectations of the stakeholders and reality of the returnees

On looking at these policies of the donor agencies, it seems their only intention in providing foreign aid is to contribute towards development at different levels. However, I review here some critiques of the foreign aid policy, which indicate that not only is it flawed in theory, according to some commentators, but also that it is failing in practice.

Anwaruddin (2014) critiques the intention of such donor agencies:

International monetary organisations such as the World Bank give loan money to the developing countries for educational development. Through this loan money, they promote Western-style education, which is expected to produce an educated elite group with Western values and entrepreneurial attitudes who would lead their states on the path to modernity. (pp. 145-146)

His criticism of the donor agencies is two-fold: promoting elitism and giving priority to areas/subjects that the agencies deem important for funding without taking local needs into consideration. Anwaruddin (2014) further argues that these donor agencies exert their domination by active persuasion and not by direct force. They persuasively invite the developing countries to accept loans to develop their education system according to the 'lender's prescription' (p. 146). The funding agencies like World Bank then take advantage of this situation and often 'specify the issues to be studied and the approaches deemed appropriate' (Samoff, 2012, p.

150) in funding educational researchers. Anwaruddin (2014) points out that the World Bank

creates and disseminates a particular kind of knowledge that justifies its intervention on the educational policies and priorities in the developing countries. The World Bank's intervention is based on the principle of inequality. It divides intelligence into two: a superior and an inferior intelligence. By imposing a one-size-fits-all approach to educational development, using particular kinds of knowledge, and attaching various types of conditionality to loan-money, the Bank assumes the role of the Master who knows all about educational problems and how to solve them. (p. 159)

Anwaruddin's (2014) argument refutes the rhetoric of international scholarship of building human capacity, extending help in everybody's interest and idealistic rephrased reasons. He finds hidden agenda related to selfish human nature behind the rhetoric of extending help. A similar view can be found in Hamid's (2009) study on Bangladesh, where education policy and reform have largely been dictated by international funding rather than expert opinion.

Again, from the examples of Ghimire and Maharjan's (2014) study on Nepal and Celik's (2012) work on Turkey, and the more recent work of Almutairi (2018) on Saudi Arabia, the motivation of the returnees and expectations of the stakeholders seem inconsistent, as the system is not ready to accommodate changes or reform to the current system. Altbach (1991) and Namgung (2008) state that these returnees are forced to make readjustments to their hopes and expectations because of the 'bureaucratic hurdles, internal politics, poor salaries and excessive workloads' (Celik 2012, p. 59) which at times works against their motivation. Celik (2012) also reports that in Turkey there is a huge gap in the stated purpose of the sponsorship programme and the reality faced by the returning students. Therefore the bureaucratic hurdles that have negatively affected the returnees in Celik's (2012) and Namgung's (2008) studies might apply in the case of Bangladeshi returnees as well.

This gap is consistent with the findings of Gudykunst et al. (1996) that differing expectations and perceptions by participants can lead to conflict. For returnees, universities and local communities, different understandings of one another can lead to returnees having a range of different re-entry experiences. Apart from the issues of poor resources, moral support and inconsistent professional standards, they are subject to strict regulations which restrict attempts to reform current educational practice. The participant scholars and administrators in Almutairi's (2018) study also held differing expectations of each other. While the re-entry scholars experienced a general lack of support from administration and considerable problems concerning bureaucratic processes, the administrators blame them for not doing their assigned jobs properly. Concern was also expressed by the administrators over limited interaction with returnees.

Goodwin and Nacht (1984) made the distinct point that Brazilian scholars who went to study in US at both masters and doctoral level found it hard to make use of the knowledge they had acquired. The training they had received in business or technical fields embodied new professional competence and an exciting revolution in a style fit for Western contexts but redundant in the context of Brazil. They came across 'enormous barriers' on their return to Brazil while trying to implement their knowledge (ibid., p. 46). This gave rise to frustration among this community of scholars. However, Maliyamkono, Ishumi and Wells (1982) put forward a different view regarding demotivating factors for the foreign-trained people who are the 'carriers of well-formed values and traditions from an alien culture'. These elites have at times been 'viewed as the successors to their colonial predecessors, equally insensitive to the traditions of their mother nation' and have been regarded as a drag on distinctive national development (p. 132). Though the study is almost 40 years old, it has implications for my current research as Bangladesh is very slowly realizing that Western concepts do not fit in their context without proper contextualization. Whether both senders and donors endorse this fact or have just been ignoring this issue would be ripe for empirical investigation in this study, as it has the potential to uncover some interesting findings.

A positive note in all these negative situations is the case of Sri Lanka. The Global

Education Dialogues South Asia Series *South Asia And Higher Education: Revolution and Realities in The New Economic Order* (2014) speaks of Sri Lanka's developed incentives to support returnees in setting up new enterprises and reintegrating into the economy. This 'brain circulation' works by enabling returnees to contribute to skills development 'through investment and the reintegration of valuable human capital into the economy' at home (ibid., p. 19). It would be worthwhile to research whether these concepts could be used to signpost the returnees towards better dissemination of their newly (overseas) gained knowledge and skills.

3.4. Neoliberalism and its impact on higher education

In this fourth and final section I turn to the main theoretical perspective of this study, neoliberalism, and how it has affected higher education in both home and host countries. As discussed, in the context of Bangladesh, very little is known about the ramifications of neoliberalism on re-entry. Despite being the main socio-economic doctrine, the neoliberal effect on returnees' experience has never been theorized nor empirical evidence provided. Theorization of the neoliberal effect on Bangladeshi higher education and returnee academics would contribute to a better understanding of re-entry experience that extends beyond personal and professional encounters. The spread of globalisation, internationalisation and marketisation of education, the ways through which neoliberalism propagates study abroad and concepts that are directly attributed to the consequences of neoliberalism have also been included in the literature. How neoliberal ideologies have had an overarching impact on feminism and returnee women in academia has been added as a subsection.

3.4.1. Brief history of neoliberalism

Neoliberalism, according to Olssen and Peters (2005, p. 314) is 'a specific economic discourse or philosophy which has become dominant and effective in world economic relations as a consequence of super-power sponsorship'. Since neoliberalism is said to be an embodiment of the 'hegemonic discourse of western

nation states', the western nations too find it to be a politically-imposed discourse (ibid., p. 314). Larner (2000) finds neoliberalism to be 'both a political discourse about the nature of rule and a set of practices that facilitate the governing of individuals from a distance' (p. 6). Foucault (2002) referred to neoliberalism as 'governmentality', where the role of the state was dramatically transformed from a laissez-faire or capitalist or socialist state to a more managerial state whose purpose is to assess and monitor how economic and social goals are met and how public money is being spent.

Flores (2013) explains neoliberalism as happening at two levels: the institutional level and the individual level. At the institutional level, neoliberalism is 'a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private-property rights, free markets and free trades' (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). At an individual level, neoliberalism entails the 'corporatization of the individual subject' (Flores, 2013, p. 503). Foucault (2008) addresses this corporatized subject as the 'enterprising self' (p. 45), meaning that the ideal subject in a neoliberal world would be autonomous, flexible and innovative, ready to adapt to the rapidly changing socio-historical context. Flores (2013) further adds that the corporate culture of neoliberalism demands autonomous and flexible workers who can 'make informed decisions that are in the best interests of corporate profits' (p. 504). The best way to produce such an enterprising self is through education.

In critique of the neoliberal ethos, Giroux (2015) asserts that:

the vocabulary of neoliberalism posits a false notion of freedom, which it wraps in the mantle of individualism and choice, and in doing so reduces all problems to private issues, suggesting that whatever problems bear down on people, the only way to understand them is through the restrictive lens of individual responsibility, character and self-resilience. (pp. 449-450)

Likewise, Hall (2011) notes that 'neoliberalism is grounded in the idea of the free, possessive individual and state is [regarded as] tyrannical and oppressive' (p. 706). According to Olssen and Peters (2015), neoliberals 'show a distinct distrust of governmental power and seek to limit state power within a negative conception, limiting its role to the protection of individual rights' (pp. 314-315).

Neoliberalism has been embedded in globalisation since its introduction in the 1950s and spread its wings in the 1980s through the propositions of free market and free trade widely propagated by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. Since then neoliberalism, under the guise of globalisation, has become the dominant ideology around the world, deeply influencing the political, economic and cultural systems of the countries that embraced it (Zheng, 2010). According to Kubota (2016):

Today's higher education has a neoliberal orientation, as seen in privatisation, marketisation and branding as well as an emphasis on human capital development and lifelong learning, all of which aim to increase a competitive edge nationally, institutionally and personally in the capitalist knowledge economy. (p. 348)

What started as an economic doctrine of the resuscitation of nineteenth-century laissez-faire capitalism, which assumes individual competition fostered through an unregulated market works better for all quarters, ultimately moved centre-stage becoming the official policy of many Western governments (Block, Gray and Holborow, 2012). By the 1990s and early 2000, the reforms of higher education advocated by IMF, World Bank, OECD and others became a central feature of neoliberal reform efforts in many nations around the world like Australia, New Zealand, and the countries of Europe (Ward, 2012). Public services were tendered out to private providers and everything started to look market-directed. Ward (2012) points out some of the major changes resulting from privatisation and the adoption of new managerialism in HEIs. For instance, private universities value students' choice and satisfaction most and these are put forward as the key principles of the university. As such, universities come up with eye-catching

strategies and techniques of advertisement and promotional materials and build 'sophisticated websites filled with air brushed photos of happy students, proud parents and distinguished faculty' (Ward, 2012, p. 54).

Neoliberalists see knowledge specifically produced in scientific and technological fields to create a progressive society where increased innovation, production and economic wellbeing would be the central markers of societal development. Likewise, the donor agencies like World Bank want educational aid directed towards investment designed to produce better workers with similar knowledge and skills to enable them to serve multinational corporations. Funding for international scholarships is thus increasingly linked to producing 'scholars' who will return to their home countries and further propagate neoliberal ideas. However, Flores (2013, p. 504) argues that a neoliberal subject (individual/scholars) could be produced 'without an explicit acceptance of neoliberalism', as people might act and speak in a neoliberal way without acknowledging the ideology.

In the same way, Collini (2012) provides an extensive list of the changes taking place in a globalised world, most of which are connected to neoliberal ideas. For instance:

higher education [is] increasingly viewed as a private good, growing international adoption and convergence of higher education practices and models, higher education as an extension of globalisation, government as adversary with the higher education community, declining government subsidisation, changing pedagogy - growing technological adoption, global knowledge sharing and communication. (p. 15)

These changes have also taken place in Bangladesh since 1990 through the introduction of market-driven economic policy, i.e. neoliberal economic policy.

Brabazon (2020) writes about how the role of the public sphere has been diminished in neoliberal thought. The university, enquiry, debate, expert inquiry all

belonging to the public sphere regardless of their outcome or impact has been devalued in the prevailing school of neoliberalism. Likewise, instead of placing research, an essential component for understanding the human experience, the world we live in, and the nature of our existence within that world, at the heart, its main purpose has been downsized. The policy taken up has been one in which faculty members emerge in the role of competitors, urged to maintain a constant level of productivity and to sell ideas to potential investors in the form of external funding bodies/agencies.

The main objective of university education in neoliberal discourse has been described as a means to build an educated nation rich in research and innovation with students as a strong skilled and trained workforce or 'work ready' to join the neoliberal labour market (Brabazon, 2020). The public universities based on traditional liberal values, and private universities based on entrepreneurial business-like neoliberal values, have put both academics and stakeholders in a position where they are forced to juggle between the two sets of values. Moreover, faculty members have been encouraged to strip away transformative education, in which students develop and practice self-awareness, empathy, social consciousness, critical thought and collective agency, and have been reduced to mere deliverers of courses (ibid.). Is the same transformation happening all over the world, including Bangladesh, where neoliberalism prevails? Has the adoption of neoliberal values in higher education had an impact on the return experience of Bangladeshi academics as well? These are questions that require addressing and this study will attempt to find answers.

In the next section, I am going to focus on the impact of neoliberalism on study abroad and look at how the concepts of globalisation, internationalisation and marketisation of education informs the study abroad literature.

3.4.2 Neoliberalism and study abroad (globalisation, internationalisation and marketisation of education)

Kinginger (2009, 2015) defines study abroad as 'a temporary sojourn of pre-

defined duration, undertaken for educational purposes' (2015, p. 11). Despite not being a new phenomenon, it could be said that study abroad or international student mobility has gained momentum owing to globalisation and current neoliberal ideology dominating higher education worldwide. Keeley (2007) explains globalisation as a complex and controversial phenomenon that takes in a wide range of social, political, cultural and economic trends, increasingly plugs national economies into each other and places them in the world economy. As a result, many universities around the world today are actively promoting study abroad to raise their international profiles. Canagarajah, in an interview with Hossain (2017), expresses his view on international student mobility in a neoliberal era. According to him, in the neoliberal disposition

we should be flexible to move anywhere, to move to other countries, other places for jobs. I guess the logic is that whatever the market dictates, whatever is profitable or marketable, we should do that. We should be able to leave a country, go to a new place, because that is where your production would be cheaper or marketing would be more profitable. So, flexibility is treated as an important phenomenon in neoliberalism and therefore mobility, crossing borders for work, education, for products, for ideas is considered more profitable. (p. 98)

In line with student mobility, Rizvi and Lingard (2010) introduce the concept of a 'social imaginary' that is best suited to the propaganda of study abroad in a neoliberal era. The 'social imaginary' (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010) represents a 'prevalent way of thinking shared by a group of people that guides everyday practice' (Kubota, 2016, p. 348). Kubota (2016) finds the current trend of education to be reliant on a 'neoliberal social imaginary' that is found in much online rhetoric. This rhetoric describes the imagined benefits of study abroad, like developing language skills, intercultural competence, facilitating personal development and expanding new career prospects. Study abroad or student mobility thus becomes part of the global trend tied to neoliberal ideology which serves as a means to 'develop communication skills, a global mindset, intercultural competence and a competitive edge in the global labour marketplaces' (Kubota, 2016, p. 347). This

'social imaginary' has also become embedded in ideologies, theories and public policies (Kubota, 2016).

Organisations like General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), World Trade Organisation (WTO) and General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) have had a profound effect on international student mobility because they advocate the removal of borders and promote the 'liberalization' of international trade. As Zheng (2010) argues:

As institutional mechanisms, GATT, WTO and GATS play a key role in making the impact of neoliberal globalisation on higher education possible, and the marketisation of education has been put on the agenda. (p. 222)

The influence of GATS is said to be so 'pervasive and profound that national governments have to confront international pressures' in fields like education to open their doors to internationalisation in the hopes of gaining economic benefits (ibid.). The major host countries of international student mobility thus actively market and internationalize their higher education institutions to enhance international student mobility. In doing so, many HEIs in the West introduced separate international student fees and adopted an open policy towards work permits and immigration applications. Moreover, since the 'market' was perceived as 'global' and 'the dominance of English as lingua franca is asserted and maintained' by the more powerful native-speaking countries, particularly the UK and the USA, English language has been exported to the periphery or the non-native speaker countries as a representation of corporate consumerism (Chowdhury and Ha, 2014). Eventually the less powerful developing countries discerned that proficiency in English would give them a strong position in the market.

The formation of the global international student market and the higher education export service industry certify that this marketisation creates certain opportunities for international students to study abroad. However, Zheng (2010), being critical of the changes taking place owing to the adoption of neoliberal values and

international agenda, claims that the apparent differences between the education of 'developed countries' and 'developing countries' have been made more prominent by 'neoliberal globalisation'; for instance, developed countries with their advanced technology, modernisation and funds dominate the scientific, engineering and medical fields (p. 220). Alongside creating inequality in higher education, the pressure on universities for internationalisation has led to treating students as human capital. Zheng (2010) further states:

This vision of human capital undoubtedly stimulates international student migration from developing countries to developed countries for a better education so that the students can strengthen their skills for participation in the competitive labor market. In addition, the agenda of neoliberal globalisation, promoted by multilateral or bilateral agencies, has impacted higher education and ISM [international student mobility]. (p. 221)

Altbach (2004) also argues that 'the world of globalised higher education is highly unequal' because of the ramifications of globalisation for developing countries and their smaller education systems (p. 3). In support of this claim, Stromquist (2002) states that education systems these days have been developed to better synchronize with the labour market. Because of recent advancements in technology, communication and transportation systems, new policies and innovative ideas have been introduced to the labour market. OECD (2002) states that many countries have started introducing policies which attract skilled migrants from abroad to meet the increased demand for skilled labour. The assumption behind this is that young individuals with a high level of education can cope with the enormous changes that are constantly taking place.

In order to meet the growing expectations of the job market and to prove themselves as highly skilled individuals or 'work ready' (Brabazon, 2020), people tend to travel to developed countries to get education degrees that will better prepare them for the competition of the global trade and free market economy (Amiri, 2016). They need to travel to developed countries to develop interpersonal communication and intercultural sensitivity, 'establish connections with

international institutions and broaden their world perspective', and acquire necessary skills that they might not develop in their 'national context' (Amiri, 2016, p. 5). This idea strongly resonates with the concept of the 'social imaginary' (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Kubota, 2016) as explained earlier in this section. However, Amiri (2016) adds a downside, indicating that the commodification of education might result in the loss of the actual and intrinsic value of education:

The only reason some youth pursue education is because of its instrumental value. The instrumental values have caused youth to seek education only to have the technical skills through which they could get high-paying jobs. (p. 5)

People from various sectors thus brave the challenges surrounding study abroad (preparing for language proficiency tests, arranging finances, family and carer responsibilities) and 'facing drastic changes in their lives, become good candidates for the neoliberal labor market' (Amiri, 2016, p. 5). Considering the current economy, society and culture, it seems that globalisation exerts a profound neoliberal effect in shaping the lives of people and their decisions about education. However, the idea of an individual's commodified skills and cultural and social attributes as portrayed in the social imaginary (a prevalent way of thinking shared by a group of people that guides everyday practice, e.g. positioning people as commodities in competition with each other) acknowledges that some people will inevitably be left behind because of market competition (Brabazon, 2018; Kubota, 2016; Flores, 2013).

On the other hand, universities too, judging the competition, prepare their programmes based on the need of the market and its required qualifications:

This leads to an increasing demand for privatisation. The labor market pushes educational institutions to adopt curricula or programs to meet the needs of the labor market by turning education into a commodity. (Amiri, 2016, p. 4)

Moreover, ranking systems such as Times Higher Education World University Rankings set various criteria to judge the international outlook of staff, students and research in a university. According to Altbach (2013), the ranking system reinforces 'institutional marketisation' and branding, which are essential to 'attract competent students who are also seeking to increase their competitive edge in the global marketplace' (Kubota, 2016, p. 347). Kubota (2016) adds:

This trend also echoes neoliberal ideology and practice, which leave economic activities to unregulated market forces, quality assurance to open competition, and the responsibility of institutional success to individual institutions. (p. 347)

In this connection, Holliday and MacDonald (2020) also cite the example of Collin's (2018) study where a particular university commodifies the concept of intercultural communication to make its programmes attractive to the international students and raise its image in the market as a 'provider of student employability in a globalised world' (Holliday and MacDonald, 2020, p. 625).

However, Cribb and Gewirtz (2013) provide a flip side of international education. According to them, universities in UK have been 'hollowed' in the past 30 years as it is increasingly becoming a domain

in which the organising principle derives from surface considerations rather than considerations of academic substance, with potentially devastating consequences both for the intrinsic value of academic work and for the civic function of universities. (p.339)

Taking this view into account, Holliday and MacDonald (2020) hold neoliberal ideology responsible for the commodification of quantitative and qualitative research methods in social sciences, especially in intercultural communication studies. In their words, neoliberalism has turned a HE institution into a 'hollow university with a worrying notion of a hollow research methodology' (p. 632). Though mixed method research is said to be popular for providing better

assurance of validity and reliability, Holliday and MacDonald (2020) argue that this popularity is due to its suitedness to the neoliberal ideology. The Neoliberal view tends to prefer methods of research that are 'amenable to objectivist criteria of verifiability' (p. 631), ignoring the preferred or suited method of the research and the researcher. In addition, it provides an edge to the researcher to claim they have 'an impressive postpositivist mix of methods in their research portfolio' (ibid, p. 626).

There is another stance highly critical of neoliberalism which views such international exchanges as directed towards the economic benefit of certain nations. To many education providers, internationalisation of education has become a means to generate income from international students who are treated as customers. Chowdhury and Ha's (2014) point to some of the paradoxes related to spreading neoliberal ideologies. Their study reports on the grievances of a group of students who chose to study abroad in an Australian university. The promised multicultural environment and high rankings of the universities stated on the websites and in the marketing agencies turned out to be fictitious for them. Apparently, learners being offered free choices have instead been guided into choosing particular countries, institutions or subjects. In the same way, it might be worth looking at the considerations Bangladeshi academics made while deciding on the host country/institution or subject to study.

In the following section, I outline how neoliberalism was introduced in the socio-economic setting of Bangladesh, followed by its impact on the higher education (public-private debate) sector.

3.4.3. Neoliberalism and higher education in Bangladesh

Although Bangladesh started with a parliamentary democratic system post-independence with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation and the first president, it reached political stability in 1991 when democracy was restored from previous military invasions (Kabir, 2013). Reformation in Bangladesh has been very fast-paced since then compared to many other South Asian countries

(Nuruzzaman, 2004). The International Financial Institutions (IFI) like World Bank and IMF played a crucial role in introducing various socio-economic policies in developing nations. The main tenet of these reforms was that 'human welfare is best served by the withdrawal of the state from welfare policies' (Kabir, 2010, p. 620). Bangladesh was among the first few countries to receive Structural Adjustment Facilities (SAF) and Extended Structural Adjustment Facilities (ESAF) from the IMF in 1986 and 1989 respectively. The World Bank also disbursed billions of dollars in Bangladesh from 1988- 1989 and 1995-1996 as part of its adjustment lending (Rahman, 2003). But it was during the 1990s that neoliberal policies were initiated in various sectors in Bangladesh, particularly in commerce, finance, industry and agriculture (see 3.3.1 for the history of neoliberalism).

According to Chowdhury and Kabir (2014), the neoliberal orientation in Bangladeshi academia manifested through the privatisation and marketisation of education. The introduction of the Private University Act 1992 by the democratic government prompted the rapid growth of private universities. The first private university, North South University, was established in early 1993. According to the Private University Act, any well-wishers of education, associations, charity organisations or institutions can set up a private university with the permission of the government. The private university can be based anywhere but they must situate their premises on their own land. However, many of these private universities were set up without their own infrastructure and offered a limited number of business- and technology-related subjects. Basic subjects were ignored in the process and money became the only factor in receiving education from these institutions. Thus the introduction of a neoliberal economy in the higher education sector had far-reaching socio-economic consequences in Bangladesh (Kabir, 2010).

As the demand of the market shapes the role of higher education, the market started determining the higher education system by increasing tuition fees and putting emphasis on market-oriented subjects like BBA, MBA, computing, textiles and electrical engineering. In the public universities, the government started reducing funds and instructions were handed out to these universities to adopt

various strategies to generate income, like fee-earning evening and weekend courses. The current Chair of the UGC emphasises the same:

I believe that University Grants Commission of Bangladesh has been trying to contribute positively to the monitoring of the quality of higher education in our country with special emphasis on ICT and other significant industrial sectors. (University Grants Commission Website, 2018)

The statement of the then Chair reinforced statements in the 40th Annual Report (UGC, 2013) prioritizing science and technological education and building a skilled workforce with the guidance of skilled university teachers with higher degrees from home and abroad. The whole objective seems to be in support of the neoliberal concept of globalisation that propagates 'greater interaction between people from different cultures and backgrounds' (Keeley, 2007, p. 61). Study abroad thus fits neatly into the neoliberal construct and has made space for itself in the educational policy of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has since been and is still receiving substantial economic support from the World Bank in promoting neoliberal values in Bangladesh. The 20-year strategic plan of SPHE mentioned above (see section 2.2) was formulated to marry education with current market-driven economic forces (University Grants Commission, 2006; Kabir, 2010). An indicator that education is the key target of neoliberal forces is the size of the market, as global spending on education is more than US\$1 trillion (Ross and Gibson, 2007). Earlier in 2004, the World Bank paid a visit to different private and public universities to witness the condition of the institutions. The review report and analysis identified seven major crises in the education sector and produced recommendations with conditions for providing it with financial and technical support to develop the sector. In 2009, the World Bank approved a US\$ 91.5 million International Development Association (IDA) credit to enhance the quality and relevance of teaching and research in HEIs, following which the government launched a five-year Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) for academic innovation (Kabir, 2013). However, criticism surrounds the intention of the donor agencies and the rhetoric of international

scholarship of building human capacity, as mentioned in 3.3.2 above (Anwar, 2014; Hamid, 2009).

3.4.3.1. Public-private university debate

As mentioned in the previous section, the neoliberalisation of the economy in Bangladesh resulted in a shift towards adoption of neoliberalist ideas. This led to the introduction of the private university system in 1990 (privatisation) and enactment of the Private University Act of 1992 (Kabir, 2010). With the neoliberalisation of economic policies, a new form of regulation or governmentality was introduced, with presuppositions such as self-interested individuals who can rationally choose their own trajectory and best judge their interests and needs. The introduction of the Private University Act of 1992 and other legislation thus brought ‘state control’ over the private universities, in contrast to the semi-autonomous working of the public university (Kabir and Webb, 2018, p. 281).

The following table, adapted from Olssen and Peters (2005, p. 329), is an illustration of the change in internal governance of universities from traditional to neoliberal and how it has resulted in chaos and confusion for the universities and academics.

Table 3: Change in internal governance of universities

	Neoliberal	Lit	Traditional	Lit
Mode of operation	Private		Public	
Management function	Managers, line management, cost centre	Current private university management system	Leaders, community of scholars, professions, faculty	Public university autonomous institutions and still judged as production house for leaders and scholars, owing to contribution of university teachers’ role during independence war of 1971
Goals	Maximise outputs, financial	Privatisation in the 1980s	Knowledge, research, inquiry,	

	profit, efficiency, massification, privatisation		truth, reason, elitist, not for profit	1973 Act
Work relations	Competitive, hierarchical, workload indexed to market, corporate loyalty, no adverse criticism of university		Trust, virtue ethics, professional norms, freedom of expression and criticism, role of public intellectual	
Accountability	Audit, monitoring, consumer-managerial		Soft managerialism, professional-bureaucratic, peer-review and facilitation, rule-based	
Pedagogy/ teaching	Semesterisation, slenderisation of courses, modularisation, distance learning		Full year courses, traditional academic methods and course assessment methods, knowledge for its own sake	
Research	Externally funded, contestable, separate from teaching, controlled by government or external agency		Integrally linked to teaching, controlled from within the university, initiated and undertaken by individual academics	

Warnings have been raised by a number of studies regarding the privatisation of higher education in Bangladesh. Quddus and Rashid (2000), in their study of the worldwide movement of private universities, report that in non-Western countries like Bangladesh, establishment of private universities is important as they contribute to forming capital to ensure economic prosperity. However, they also warn that private universities are ‘vulnerable to abuse such as fraud, greed, and profiteering, just as in the public sector it is open to corruption, inefficiency, declining productivity and stagnation’ (p. 508). They recommend assigning appropriate organisations to oversee the quality and integrity of such institutions. The warning of Quddus and Rashid (2000) seems to be valid, as Goswami and

Mumit (2018) report that grade inflation for ensuring good teaching evaluations has become a normal practice. Their study investigated whether the use of teaching evaluations has been a contributing factor towards grade inflation by analysing the data for 98,362 student evaluations at a private university in Bangladesh.

Husain and Osswald (2016) are critical of this neoliberal transformation (neoliberal values and induced deregulation and privatisation) of higher education in Bangladesh. Their qualitative study of private university education involved 32 interviews with students, faculty members, civil society and business community representatives and 100 hours of ethnographic observation. In the findings they indicate that the current education provided by private universities produces 'zombie graduates' who are devoid of any critical thoughts and suffer from 'philosophical poverty' (p. 1020). They argue:

This can lead to deterritorializing an individual from agency, cultural roots and values while making him or her submerged in a culture filled with corporate commodities. (p. 1030)

Moreover, these private university students are taught by part-time faculty members: 'rickshaw faculty' (Matthews, 2016) who teach in multiple universities and remain indifferent toward intellectual interaction with students 'or to monitor disciplinary misconducts, such as plagiarism' (Husain and Osswald, p. 1022). The participants informed the researchers that they do this commuting from one university to the other for money. As full-time positions are not offered, or if offered are contractual, these mobile academics continue this for a couple of years. They then invest their income in doing an MA or PhD from a Western country to raise their value in the market. The whole scenario points towards neoliberalism in action where students are treated as consumers, recruiters treat part-time faculty members as employees, and the 'teachers treat embedded social relations with students as secondary' (Husain and Osswald, 2016, p. 1027). The worry expressed by Cribb and Gewirtz (2013) and Holliday and MacDonald (2020) that universities and research processes are being hollowed seem to be working in Bangladeshi HE as well.

In a recent article in Times Higher Education, Neazy (2018) discusses various policy issues that are detrimental to the welfare of faculty members working in private universities in Bangladesh. In most of the private universities teachers do not receive the benefit package of health insurance, pension schemes, holiday pay and research and scholarship funds. Moreover, the lack of job security leaves the teachers more vulnerable. Again, most of the private universities, except for the top-ranking ones, do not have proper statutes and rules about staff terms and conditions. This in a way serves the interest of the university management as they can keep the recruitment, promotion and dismissal rules under cover and exploit when needed. Some universities are even negligent in complying with the basic governance requirements mentioned in the Private University Act of 2010.

In the same line, the university authority recruits freshly-graduated students at entry level on one-year contracts. Neazy (2018) states:

The influx of these lecturers undermines the job security and conditions of existing staff, projecting a message that anyone who objects to low pay and poor facilities will be replaced by one of these newcomers. (ibid.)

Moreover, there is a trend of recruiting celebrity professors from public universities in place of promoting the dedicated academics within the institution. This is another blow to the career growth of academics who are serious about their work. The private university academics thus work under conditions of undue threat, for example of losing their job. Neazy (2018) feels that job security remains a vital issue because lack of security demoralises teachers and affects the quality of their teaching. There are no academic unions for private university teachers, which is another issue that deserves attention.

3.4.4. Neoliberal feminism

The pervading neoliberal ethos has an overarching impact on women's experience in higher education as well. Before getting into this discussion, I provide a brief

history of neoliberal feminism that will inform the gendered aspect of experience in my study.

The third-wave feminism that tended to exclude unsuccessful weaker women to encompass only aspirational women, blended well with the existing neoliberal ideology and coined a variety of names from feminist scholars. Squires and Kantola (2012) refer to it as 'market feminism', Eisenstein (2009) as 'free market feminism', 'hegemonic feminism', 'imperial', and 'managerial feminism'. Roberts (2012) calls it 'transnational business feminism (TBF)', Halley (2006) writes about 'governance feminism', Elias (2013) about 'post-feminism', and McRobbie (2009) condemns it as 'faux-feminism' (Prügl, 2015, p. 615).

In the early 1970s when the feminist movement was in full swing, 'the call for self-transformation or self-empowerment was accompanied by some form of critique of systemic male domination and/or structural discrimination' (Rottenberg, 2014, p. 431). However, neoliberal feminism emerged from the false belief that women are equal to men in every way and they are free to choose any course of action just as men do (Sebastian, 2015). This relies on the stance that gender equality has been achieved and putting further effort into feminist movements is no longer necessary (Sascwr.org, 2018). The second wave of feminism emerged in the historical period of 'state-organised capitalism' and offered an economic, cultural, and political critique of such capitalism (Fraser, 2009). However, Fraser (2012) further suggests that 'second-wave feminism, by forfeiting the demand for economic redistribution, ended up serving as a key enabler for "the new spirit of neoliberalism"' (p. 220). Feminism in the third wave thus encountered 'neoliberal initiatives of deregulation, privatisation, and marketisation as a social force' and found itself 'discursively co-opted' (Prügl, 2015, p. 617). The turn to a 'politics of recognition', women assuming leadership roles and replacing men, emphasis on self-reliance, self-determination over state protection, and 'disproportionate attention to the international struggle on violence against women at the expense of fighting poverty' are all third-wave ideals which resonated well with neoliberalism (ibid., p. 618).

At the international level, neoliberal feminism took the form of ‘the business case for gender equality’, first promoted by the World Bank’s gender action plan (Prügl, 2015, p. 618). The reasons behind adopting this stance was that gender equality would help in reaching economic goals, foster development initiatives, reduce hunger, ensure increased profit by banking on a better customer- provider-management relationship and thus increase financial stability. Prügl (2015, p. 619) further adds ‘critics have interpreted these propositions as an ideological co-optation of feminist ideas’. The neoliberalisation of feminism thus took at least three forms: ‘the integration of women and notions of gender equality into economic restructuring, the integration of feminism into neoliberal ideology, and the associated change in rationalities and technologies of governance’ (ibid, p. 620). Neoliberal feminism metamorphosed all ideas into personal and individualized terms and shook hands with the values ‘portraying people as atomised individuals allows social problems to be framed as individual failures’ (Brabazon, 2020)

Interestingly, the majority of modern and educated women find this agenda to be reasonable and logical (Rottenberg, 2014). Neoliberal feminism also supports progressive policies initiated by the government to reinforce social equality, equal pay, separate laws for crime against women, childcare and other related issues. Thus the idea of creating a congenial work atmosphere for both men and women, and making a collective effort to achieve that, is lost in the process. This suggests that women should take the full responsibility of maintaining a successful family life and career on themselves by being calculative and self-resilient (Rottenberg, 2014). The same idea is posited in Slaughter’s (2012) article *Why Women Still Can’t Have It All* and Sandberg’s (2013) book *Lean In*, which make their argument using the language of equality. They present women as an individuated self-strengthening person conforming to the prevailing neoliberal values. According to Rottenberg (2014b), both Slaughter and Sandberg include a new register: the concept of the *feminist subject* who accepts full responsibility for her wellbeing and maintenance of a balanced work-family life.

For Rottenberg (2014, p. 420), the ‘feminist subject’ is distinctly aware of current inequalities between men and women. This same subject is, however,

simultaneously neoliberal, not only because she disavows the social, cultural and economic forces producing this inequality, but also because she accepts full responsibility for her own wellbeing and self-care. This responsibility is increasingly predicated on crafting a felicitous work–family balance based on a cost-benefit analysis. The neoliberal feminist subject is thus mobilized to convert continuing gender inequality from a structural problem into an individual affair. Criticising this stance, Rottenberg (2014, p. 431) argues that by putting ‘the onus of responsibility on each female subject’, the propagated values have turned that subject even more ‘intensively inward’. However, Ireland (1993, p. 12) suggests that the powerful image of transmuted into a successful wife-mother has been ingrained so strongly in women’s minds by the patriarchal society that it becomes hard for women to break this shell of becoming a full-time mother and wife and pursue a career.

In *Lean In*, Sandberg (2013, p. 10) suggests that rather than confronting or trying to ease social pressure, ‘women can change themselves,’ by confronting their ‘internal obstacles’. The shift in emphasis from social pressure to self-regulation is probably the juncture where ‘liberal feminism is rendered hollow and transmuted into a mode of neoliberal governmentality’ (Rottenberg 2014, p. 424). Sandberg (2013) further suggests that owing to lack of self-confidence, women often pull back from desired positions. She maintains that her key feminist objective is to close the ‘leadership ambition gap’: when more and more women join high-level positions and raise their strong and powerful voices to address their needs and concerns, it will serve to improve the condition of all women (ibid., p. 7). A point regarding this debate that Rottenberg (2014) notes is that these educated women supporting neoliberal feminism might not have been exposed to gender discrimination themselves directly or they believe they may not have been discriminated against. It could also be that some women academics did not judge balancing work and childcare as relevant to the university. They rather would see them as their individual responsibility. This finding arose in Monroe et al.’s (2008) qualitative study of the experiences of female academics in a US research-intensive university. Whether the same goes for Bangladeshi women in academia who have had

international experience, or whether they are struggling under the neoliberal influence on feminism, is a matter worth exploring for this study.

Slaughter's (2012) and Sandberg's (2013) work has often been criticised for advocating two different positions: one which asks women to prioritise their commitment to family, and another asks women to look within themselves to find the inner spark to reaffirm their commitment to work. However, Rottenberg (2014) argues that the objective is the same for both types of feminist, namely that women need to find their strength to create a balanced work-family life. According to her:

Sandberg cloaks her feminist manifesto in the liberal language of equality, and like Sandberg, Slaughter also effectively disarticulates liberal feminism and transmutes it into a neoliberal variant. Both women – in slightly divergent ways – conjure up an intensely individuated subject; the differences are, in the end, merely a matter of emphasis. (Rottenberg, 2014, p. 430)

Baker (2010), in her qualitative study of the influence of modernity and neoliberalism on young Australian women's lives, states that feminism has labelled women vulnerable victims which reduces their personal responsibility and makes them reliant on counselling. However, currently, the notions of widespread opportunity, establishing equal rights, and salaries for women have been said to ease the marginalization of women as victims. An individual woman is made to believe that she is an enterprising subject who has the ability to choose her 'self-reflexive biography in the pursuit of self-actualization' (p. 187). In this way, if a woman falls victim to social or institutional injustice, it is for her to raise her voice and deal with the circumstances if she wishes to prove herself strong against socially-imposed challenges. According to Giddens (1991), '[w]e are, not what we are, but what we make of ourselves' (p. 68).

Baker (2010) further adds '[t]he influential and pervasive ideology of neoliberalism intensifies the fascination with an individuated self-hood' (p. 187) that creates a

belief that being an autonomous self-reflexive individual with self-interest and a sound rationale will be adequate to conceive the existing social and economic world. What Baker meant was that neoliberalism offers the flawed view that a person's economic progress and social position depends upon that person's capacity to look after his/her own individual needs and development. Brown (2003) agrees with the view that the ethos of neoliberalism has had a widespread effect not only as a political construct, but also has engulfed social and economic policy, where all aspects of human life can be interpreted in entrepreneurial terms.

Rose's (1990) argument stands in contrast to Brown's (2003). According to Rose, the effect of neoliberal subjectivity on individuals in a society is such that regardless of situations or constraints the individual has to lead her life as if they were free to choose their own trajectory and to be transformative and self-surveillant in any situation. The government conforms to this ideology by encouraging agencies like schools, colleges, NGOs and healthcare and welfare to operate and create a new form of selfhood that urges people to envisage themselves as individuals responsible for their own wellbeing (Larner, 2000). In this way 'the collective forms of action or wellbeing are eroded and a new regime of morality comes into being, one that links moral probity even more intimately to self-reliance and efficiency, as well as to the individual's capacity to exercise his/her own autonomous choices' (Rottenberg, 2014a, p. 421).

In this connection, Lipton's (2018) study, which takes inspiration from Hélène Cixous' (1976) *l'écriture féminine* and Sara Ahmed's (2014) concept of *willfulness*, calls for a reimagining of women's academic selves. She reports that increased participation of women in academia does not necessarily indicate 'broader structural changes to the gendered power relations' inside the university (Lipton, 2018, p. 129). The neoliberal surveillance of monitoring and individualisation of academic labour poses further difficulty for women as they are held responsible for their own success or failure. Hence, the difficult decision of going to study abroad for enhancement of knowledge or career development and making the transition as easy as possible on return might impose added pressure on academic women.

Ahmed (2017), in her significant feminist work on coloured women in academia, suggests that women are constantly subject to patriarchal domination politically, economically, socially and psychologically. Women are generally well aware of the prevailing hierarchical status of their male partners/colleagues and they do seem to respect the imposed social discourse. She questions this status quo by posing a question: 'how to dismantle a world that is built to accommodate only some bodies?' (Ahmed, 2017, p. 14). Consequently, when women join their professional lives in academia they feel like a 'space invader', trying to make room in a space not intended for them. Even these so-called 'empowered' women often start viewing their gender 'as a restriction of possibility' (p. 7) as they start navigating the restrictions imposed by society. However, Ahmed (2017) also observes that some women academics who claim to be feminists act in un-feminist ways by favouring male students over female. According to her, to act a feminist way, it is required of women to be active in promoting and upholding women's achievements and have an ongoing commitment to living a feminist way of life.

Having discussed the ongoing work on neoliberal feminism, which is intended to explain the gendered experience of women participants, I should acknowledge that I could not find any work on neoliberal feminism that connects women to study abroad or women returnees from study abroad. Hence my attempt to bring their experience to the surface might benefit not only the women in academia but may also enlighten and inform stakeholders and policy decisions as well. It will also contribute to the growing literature on neoliberal feminism. This section is followed by the implications for research section that establishes the connections between the gaps in the literature and the research questions that I developed.

3.5 Implications for research

As articulated earlier, this study opens up the unexplored territory of Bangladeshi academics on return from study abroad. As mentioned earlier in section 3.1.2, only two studies exist on the return experience of Bangladeshi academics that based on private universities. The review of the literature highlights unaddressed gaps in the experience of returnee academics as the majority of the studies reviewed are in-depth investigations of culture shock and reverse culture shock. Whereas for this

study I draw on insights from phenomenology with a greater number of participants in order to learn not only what the academics' have been through on return (lived experience) but also what they consciously deemed significant in their reintegration process. Moreover, with the exception of only one study in the Saudi Arabian context none of the studies on reentry include the stakeholders' perspective on the returnees and this signifies another gap in reintegration knowledge. Neither do these studies take into account the ramifications of neoliberalism on the return experience despite it being the dominant socio-economic doctrine in Bangladesh - how neoliberalism has contributed to the personal, cultural or situational factors shaping the lived experience of the returnees has remained unexplored. Similarly, how neoliberal feminism impacted on the return experience of women academics remains *terra incognita*.

On building the foundation with the guiding literature and identifying the gaps (chapter 3) and within the understanding of the study's context in Chapter 2, I introduce the research questions for this investigation. The questions are exploratory in nature (Marshall and Rossman, 2006) as they aim to explore the under-researched topic of the return experiences of Bangladeshi academics. There are several recent studies (e.g. Almuarik, 2019; Baofu- Arthur, 2020) that examine the phenomenon, as mentioned in the earlier sections (see 3.1.3 and 3.1.4) of this chapter. However, I developed the research questions based on the earlier available literature as well as on my perceptions of real world problems (that academics may not be able to utilise their newfound knowledge and skills on return) have included three central questions (one for the academics and two for the stakeholders) and six sub-questions, with the first question to address the major concerns and perplexities of the participant academics' stories (Stake, 1995). These sub-questions are meant to facilitate the procedural steps of the research and address the gaps.

1. What are the prevalent experiences of returnee academics teaching in HEIs of Bangladesh in the years following international study abroad?

- 1.1. What prompted these Bangladeshi academics to study in Western countries?

- 1.2. Do they believe they have changed because of their international experience? In what ways?
 - 1.3. How do they feel about their reintegration process?
 - 1.4. Is there any difference in experience between male and female academics?
 - 1.5. Were there any stated expectations from the stakeholders for them?
What are their felt obligations?
2. What impact did the returnee academics have on their organisation?
 3. What are the stakeholders' expectations for returnee academics of HEIs?
 - 3.1. Do they feel these expectations have been met?

To summarise the chapter, I looked into the various components of study abroad (motivation, benefits) that contribute to permanent changes in learners' personal and professional lives in the first section. Alongside discussion of the reintegration process, I suggested ways of reducing re-entry distress. In the second section, the discussion moved to the gendered return experience and the theoretical concepts underpinning the phenomenon. The third section offered the stakeholders' views of academics who went to study overseas as well as the difference between their expectations of the returnees and the constraints existing in reality. The last section engaged with the main theoretical construct of neoliberalism, its history, and how the social constructs surrounding higher education around the world and in the Bangladeshi context have been shaped under neoliberal influence. The section also highlights how the return experience of women academics might be affected by neoliberal feminism.

Chapter 4 presents the methodological decisions and procedures taken in the quest to answer the above research questions.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Research Design

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the research design and methodology as well as the reasoning behind the various steps undertaken in carrying out this research. In introducing my research design, first I will explain the rationale for adopting a qualitative study that draws on insights from phenomenology, followed by the ontological and epistemological position underpinning this research. My learning from the practice interview that I conducted before the actual data collection process and my stance as a researcher is also covered in this section. In the following section, I explain my sampling decisions and recruitment process and briefly introduce the participant academics and stakeholders, followed by the ethical considerations I had to make. The next two sections, data collection process and data analysis, include details of the tools I employed to collect the data and then analyse them. Finally, the concluding sections illustrate the measures I have taken to ensure trustworthiness and offer a brief summary of the chapter.

4.2. Research design

The purpose of this study is to explore the return experience of the academics who have studied abroad and are back in their posts at a Bangladeshi public/private university. In this research, the return experience has been interchangeably defined as re-entry/return/reintegration. Given that so many academics have studied abroad in developed nations for so long now, why is there so little sign of improvement in the system? Have they been able to make a contribution to improving the system? If not, why not? As mentioned in the earlier chapters, I searched for literature that depicts the contribution of the returnees, but there were limited studies in the context of Bangladesh (see Rahman 2013, 2018). However, there were re-entry studies based on various other contexts like China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia that intrigued me further.

I believe this underexplored phenomenon deserves ‘a complex, detailed understanding’ (Creswell, 2013, p. 48) that can only be established by talking to the returnees directly, going to their homes or workplaces and providing them with open spaces to tell their stories without any expectation of the findings. As qualitative research aims to understand the meaning of human action in a particular context (Schwandt, 2001), this directly corresponds to my aim as a researcher to understand the academics’ return experience in the specific social context of Bangladesh. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 19), qualitative research methods are suited to examining phenomena ‘about which little is yet known’. My feelings resonated with Mason (2002, p. 26), who says ‘[q]ualitative researchers should be intrigued by the world they are investigating; they should be fascinated, puzzled and enquiring about it’. This investigation thus became like an intellectual puzzle to me, which Mason (2002) describes as:

those questions about the social world that you are curious about, that fascinate or drive you, that are important or timely, or that seem – for a range of reasons – to need exploring or explaining. (p. 26)

Being an ardent researcher and also having personal preference for words over numbers, my understanding for an investigation like this was that words would carry more value and deeper understanding of the dynamic processes involved in transitions. Hence I opted for a qualitative study and adopted a ‘research strategy that usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data’ (Bryman, 2008, p. 366). I do appreciate that a degree of quantifying might contribute towards a better understanding of the experience. Therefore, I would be including some numbers to highlight relevance and commonality of experiences of the participants.

Qualitative research also aims to ‘investigate participants’ identities, experiences, beliefs, attitudes and orientations towards a range of phenomena’ (Talmy, 2010, p. 25). The objective of my research is ‘to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples’ experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations’ (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 1). Again, in

qualitative research, the researcher concentrates on the meaning-making of the participants and not on the meaning researchers bring to the study or that previous literature has to offer (ibid.). According to Gerson and Horowitz (2002), qualitative approaches seek to discover and develop new concepts rather than proving preconceived ideas about the people and events under investigation.

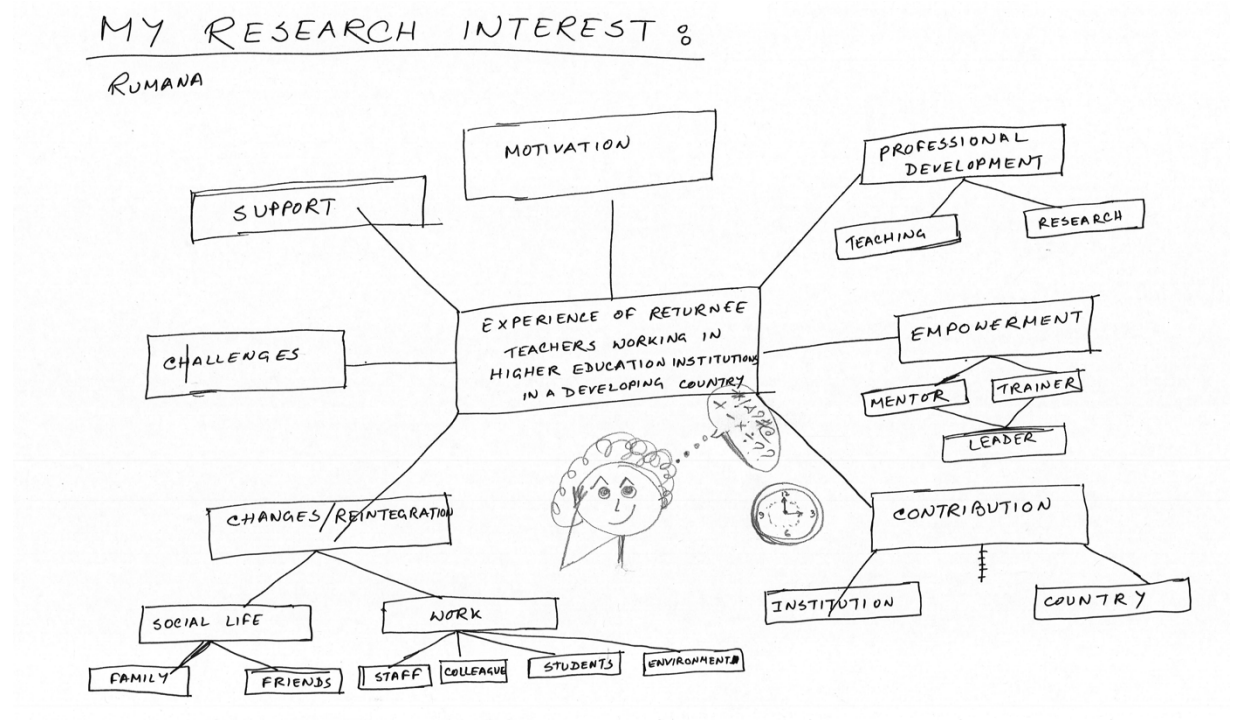
In this connection, Holliday and MacDonald (2020) emphasise the engagement with intersubjectivity in a research. They find that data 'artificially separated from the intersubjective totality of the research project' as mentioned earlier (see section 3.4.2) lack validity. In their opinion, instead of taking participants statements at 'face value', researchers need to dig deep into why the participants choose to 'project a particular discourse at a particular point' while analysing data (p. 632). Though this has been said in connection to intercultural communication studies, I find this equally applicable to education or other social science research. 'Researchers therefore constantly need to work hard to interrogate how they themselves are influenced by discourses and narratives that might lead them into being seduced by superficial data' (ibid).

As part of my intellectual puzzle, I am not only interested in the reintegration process of the academics but also in thinking about what the stakeholders had to say about these returnees, as many of them were sponsored (scholarship holders). Therefore my study involves direct encounters with a group of selected people and how they construct, interpret and give meaning to a certain event or experience, such as return experience. By adopting a qualitative approach, I delve into the individual experiences of the returnees and provide a mechanism through which to examine the complexity of the real world from different angles.

Figure 1 below shows a mind-mapping exercise that I undertook in my first year during a one-day workshop on how to incorporate drawing into research. In this image, I attempted to create a graphic structure for a diverse audience with my research topic in the centre and different strings and substrings attached to it. The centre also holds a picture of myself, puzzled about where to begin, while time is ticking at the back. This image has since been included in a supplement sketchbook

of a joint publication (Hurdley et al., 2017). Some of these themes ultimately mapped onto my sub-research questions and my interview schedule.

Figure 1: My primary mind map



While I contemplated my research design, I problematised my preferred approach by considering both quantitative and qualitative approaches before I embarked on my journey as a qualitative researcher. Would a survey on causal relationships be able to provide sufficient information about the lived experiences of the academics? I am not doing any comparative analysis. Nor am I inclined towards precise measurements, establishing causal relations between variables and making wider generalizations. I have chosen an area of subjective reality for my study that is inextricably intertwined with life and education (Dewey, 1961). To learn about the academics' experience post-study abroad I need to look into their lives after return, their thoughts, feelings, personal beliefs and perceptions. Harding (2013) states that a qualitative approach is based on the naturalistic principles that multiple realities, like different perspectives on one situation or issue, could be socially constructed through collective or individual human behaviour. Robson (2011) echoes that a subjective reality and an interpretive worldview sees reality as socially constructed, where the focus is on 'individual rather than group and is

concerned with how individuals construct and make sense of their world' (p. 24). The story of each individual of this study will be different, but they are all situated within the larger phenomenon of return experience. Based on these understandings, I chose the interpretive research paradigm with individual interviews for my methodology, which accommodates both the subjective reality that the participants' construct of their own worlds and my subjective influence in interpreting the data generated.

I was aware that I needed to be careful as qualitative research depends on the identification of patterns 'located in the subjective interpretation of data' (Levitt, 2015, p. 456). Thus I needed, as Coleman (2013, p. 29) says, to 'focus on individuals and their trajectories, identifying patterns but not adopting a determinist perspective'; in other words, accept the data as situational and not absolute. Moreover, the issue of how interviewees respond to the inquiry remains open as the information they provide during the interview may not necessarily reflect the underlying memory. Rather, they might reflect '*voices* adopted by research participants in response to the researchers' prompts and questions' (Block 2000, p. 759). There remains a possibility that the participants might choose to say something that they would choose to say differently in another context or on another occasion. Similarly, Deutscher et al. (1993) believe that a person's choice to say something may not always represent what they actually do in real life; in other words, that memory can be faulty. However, I had to remind myself that whatever the participants decide to share with me is 'authentic rather than true' and is of equal importance, as it contributes to an understanding of their experience (Nunkoosing, 2005, p. 701).

Opting for a challenging route divided 'by divergent theoretical, methodological and value assumptions: about the nature of the phenomenon being investigated and about how they can and should be researched' (Hammersley, 2007, p. 6), calls for careful consideration of conceptual framework and choosing one that is suitable for the complex phenomenon of return experience. Maxwell (2005) defines the conceptual framework as 'the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that supports and informs your research' (p. 33). The

philosophical assumptions, i.e. the ontological and epistemological positions, that this research is based on and how this conceptualises the reality and images of the world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) is discussed in the next section.

4.2.1. Ontological and epistemological stance

As I expected my participants to reflect on and talk about their lived experience over a limited span (2-7 years) of time and the stakeholders to share their thoughts and plans (if any) regarding these returnee academics, the philosophical stance underpinning this research is of a constructionist nature. Constructionism focuses on 'the collective generation [and transmission] of meaning' which is provided to us by the culture and sub-culture surrounding us and giving shape to our thoughts and behaviour (Crotty, 1998, p.58). Both the naturalist approach and the constructionist approach are predominantly concerned with individuals' everyday lives and experiences. However, a naturalistic approach is based on the idea that the social world is somehow 'out there' waiting to be observed by the researcher, whereas a constructionist approach understands that the social world is relentlessly in the process of being made and the emphasis is on understanding its production (Elliot, 2005, p. 18). Constructionists seek to understand the richness of a world that is socially determined by surrounding culture and sub-culture (Crotty, 1998); that is, the lived experience from the point of view of those who live it and as it is consciously expressed by them in the social setting they returned to (Dukes, 1984). So, what I have is a phenomenon (the return experience) to explore and a philosophical orientation (how the returnee academics make meaning of this experience/view the experience) (Creswell, 2013). The constructionist position thus fully corresponds to the nature and aim of my study. Thus this study will produce a research report that

Gives an accurate, clear and articulate description of an experience. The reader of a report should come away with the feeling that 'I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that'. (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 46)

The chosen approach of this study, a phenomenological approach according to Creswell (2013), is suited to the type of research problem where a number of individuals undergo a common or shared experience of a phenomenon. Manen (1990) finds that phenomenology turns the description of an individual experience into a description of universal essence. Understanding these 'common or shared experiences' of universal nature might then contribute to developing plans for practical action and policy initiatives or aid in developing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question (Creswell, 2013). So a study of return experience based on phenomenological insights will entail generating data with the participants (returnee academics) who have experienced the phenomenon of re-entry, and developing a synthesized description of 'what' they experienced and 'how' they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). The interviews of the other set of participants (the stakeholders) in this regard would provide a supplementary perspective in order to complete the picture of return experience.

For this study, the theoretical perspectives exploited are neoliberal and feminist perspectives. It should be mentioned here that this study is not a feminist study in its entirety; rather, the wide gender difference in return experience called for a feminist perspective to be employed. According to Warren (2001):

Although situational, these perspectives shape the flow of the interview and, in its qualitative version, are taken into account by the interviewer in understanding the meaning-making process. (Warren, 2001, p. 84)

'Perspective', according to Luff (1999, p. 701), refers to the 'fractured subjectivities' that I expect the participants of this study to share with me. Campbell (1998) describes perspective as including 'the structured and historically grounded roles and hierarchies of their society, particularly those of gender, race and class' (Warren, 2001, p. 84). As meaning-making was centre-stage in this research, the necessity of using the two theoretical perspectives stemmed from the analysis of the interviews. Unlike grounded theory research, I was not inclined towards developing my own theory; rather, I inductively developed what was required to explain the generated patterns (Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Creswell, 2013).

Neoliberalism helped to explain what impacted the return experience of the academics, how their experience was shaped by the neoliberal effect, and the ways in which the stakeholders are acting along neoliberal lines. Alongside this, neoliberal feminism was potentially a way of explaining why the returnee women academics 'struggled with their social devaluation and powerlessness in their families' (Stewart, 1994; Creswell, 2013, p. 30), as indicated in Chapter 2.

So, within this paradigm, my basic understanding was formed by interpreting what people said they encountered, and how they viewed their realities (e.g. returning home). On this occasion, I reminded myself that as a researcher I needed to be aware of the necessity of not imposing my own expectations on interviewees or allowing my own expectations to influence what I hear and see. To achieve this impartiality, I tracked my biases and tried to be as reflexive as possible to reduce their impact on the research. This issue is further discussed in the next section (4.2.2).

4.2.2. My position as researcher

As I considered my positioning as a researcher in this study, I found Rubin and Rubin's (1995) note valuable:

At a basic level, people like to talk about themselves: they enjoy the sociability of a long discussion and are pleased that somebody is interested in them ... you come along and say, yes, what you know is valuable, it should not be lost, teach me, and through me, teach others. (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p. 103)

As I was engaged in a constructionist enquiry, I found it a necessity to establish a reciprocal relationship with my participants that would put them at ease and help establish rapport and trust (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 10). Rubin and Rubin (2012) share the belief that trust increases when we share a common background, a mutual friend or a relevant experience with our participants. Also, researcher involvement can help the respondents to feel comfortable in sharing information

and minimize the hierarchical gap between researcher and participants (Ellis and Berger, 2003). One facilitating factor in this research was that I as the interviewer and researcher, and the interviewees (returnee academics), share common backgrounds in terms of social identity (occupation, nationality and study-abroad experience). Moreover, holding similar positions in terms of social status and power diminished the issues relating to hierarchy between me and the respondents. However, I had to maintain caution in interviewing the second set of participants, the stakeholders (see sections 3.3.2 and 3.4.1.2 for stakeholders and their interview details), who happen to be elites whose 'privileges and responsibilities are often not tangible or transparent, making their world difficult to penetrate' (Odendahl and Shaw, 2001, p. 299).

Thus I became an insider researcher who was already familiar with the Bangladeshi system and culture. Yet, despite being close to the community of my participants, I was yet to be one of them as they had already returned from study abroad. I was mid-study and in a sense researching my own future, which 'bracketed' me from the participants (Moustakas, 1994; Marshall and Rossman, 2010). The concept of *epoche* or bracketing has been described by Moustakas (1994) as setting oneself aside from the phenomenon in question as much as possible in order to perceive everything afresh. However, my insider status minimised the need to establish shared basic knowledge or common ground with participants. In this connection, Gillham (2000) argues that the only way to perceive the complexities and informal reality of a phenomenon is by being inside. Thus, being part of a shared broad professional culture, the perspective of this research is like an 'insider perspective' (Holligan and Wilson 2015, p. 454) where an academic was investigating the experience of other fellow academics for her doctoral research, describing and interpreting their motivation, achievement, personal and professional growth, their aspirations and challenges post-return. This proved, throughout the interviews, to have a positive effect on openness, trust and willingness to participate, as respondents were confident that I would understand their views.

4.2.3. Practice interview with friends and colleagues

In August 2015, I went to Bangladesh to determine the number of participants I might recruit for this study. As the methodology was yet to be decided, the number and range of available participants would determine whether I could conduct a broader study built on phenomenological insights or settle for an in-depth study with a few carefully selected participants. In Bangladesh, public university academics are culturally regarded as elites (Islam, 2014). Getting hold of them and deciding on a suitable time and venue for an interview might pose a challenge. Initially, I conducted a practice interview with an interested returnee colleague who was easy to connect with and also matched my criteria (returned within 2-7 years). This trial interview enabled me to test the research applicability, determine any difficulties that might arise during the actual data collection phase, and make any modifications if needed to the research plan and interview schedule (Sampson, 2004; Yin, 2009).

The practice interview turned to be quite an illuminating experience as the participant enthusiastically shared her story of her return and responded to my prompts for details. The interview was conducted face to face at the interviewee's home, and lasted for an hour and thirty minutes. However, for my part, although I had an interview schedule that acted as a prompt, I missed opportunities to ask supplementary questions as this was my first attempt at an 'active interview' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997). I needed to be careful not to ask long questions that put words into the participant's mouth. I also needed to provide the participants with space to narrate their experience without inundating them with structured questions.

As a novice researcher, I was caught off guard by the participant saying different things 'on and off the record' at the end of the interview (Warren, 2001, p. 92). Warren (ibid.) provides reasons why this 'on and off the record' occurs that might apply to this situation: either the respondent 'wants to talk about her own concerns rather than the interviewer's concern', or 'does not want to talk on the record' about issues that might be dangerous or personally damaging. At the same time, I believe this change in opinion is not indicative of her untruthfulness; rather, this

might indicate that nobody has ever asked her about her experience before (Prior, 2010). This was a lesson for me that the incident might get repeated, and I carefully maintained a research journal throughout the whole data collection process to record any missing details, changes of mind or opinion or any other interesting turns during conversation, and to use the details during data analysis. As Warren (2001) says, 'it is a hallmark of qualitative interviewing that 'unrecorded data' of this kind are as important as those derived from tape recordings (p. 92).

4.3. Participants

For this study that draws upon phenomenological insights, I have chosen two sets of participants:

1. returnee academics
2. stakeholders

The returnee academics in this study share their re-entry experience and associated motives, challenges and achievements. The stakeholder perspective, on the other hand, brings to the study what authorities believed was the point of study abroad and whether their views coincided with the views and experiences of the academics who underwent the phenomenon. In the next few sections, I provide details of the sampling technique adopted and the recruitment details of the participants.

4.3.1. Sampling

Given that the main goal of sampling in a study based on phenomenological insights is to locate participants 'who all experienced the phenomenon being explored and can articulate their lived experiences' (Creswell, 2013, p. 150), I employed the purposive sampling method and snowball strategies to recruit the participant academics. The logic of purposive sampling implies that as a researcher I can select individuals and sites who can 'purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study' (ibid., p. 156). Snowball sampling, as defined by Warren (2001), is essentially useful when a respondent, selected through purposive sampling, introduces the researcher in order to locate

other participants who match the same criteria through his or her social networks. Initially I carefully selected participants and their contact information from the published annual report of one of the public universities. The rest of the recruitment was done through the selected participants contacting and referring me to their friends and colleagues using the snowball technique.

I should add here that a convenience strategy (Miles and Huberman, 1994) has also been applied in sampling to some extent in the sense that the participants were broadly chosen from the capital city of Dhaka. Again, Dhaka, being the hub of the HE system, was more practical and convenient as recruiting participants and selecting venues in which to conduct interviews could be arranged within a much shorter span of time without compromising information and credibility (ibid.). In this connection, the focus was on the returnees and whether they were working in a public or private university, rather than on the number of universities. Thus the respondents came from four public and three private universities within Dhaka city.

While the sampling is clearly suited to the study, the main disadvantage of this type of sampling is subjectivity. I minimised this by identifying clear criteria for participants' selection, as outlined in the next section.

4.3.2. Recruitment of participants

In the following two sections I provide a description of the selection criteria and how the participants (returnee academics and stakeholders) were contacted to take part in this study.

4.3.2.1. Returnee academics

The first and foremost criteria I determined for recruitment of participants was that they are Bangladeshi academics who have completed either an MA and/or a PhD from abroad and who have experienced the phenomenon of re-entry from study abroad in the last 2-7 years of conducting this study. This criterion of 2-7 years was based on the belief that it takes a while for the initial euphoria of

homecoming to wear off and the reality of the home environment to become clear. Thus academics with more than 7 years of experience post-study abroad have been excluded from this study as their experience is more distant and therefore less salient.

Next, considering the social and educational developments in the country, I aimed for a heterogeneous sample: returnee academics from various disciplines who taught in a public or private university in Bangladesh. Recruiting participants from various subject areas would enable me to gain insights into returnees' experiences, beliefs and perceptions from various angles and capture a wide range of perspectives. As service rules, teaching and research practices vary widely between public and private universities, involving returnees from both sectors might provide interesting insights and help me to capture a broader picture of the situation.

Again, according to Kuper, Lingard and Levinson (2008, p. 687), 'the sample should be broad enough to capture the many facets of a phenomenon, and limitations to the sample should be clearly justified'. According to Mason (2010) the qualitative sample should be large enough to ensure that the capturing of important perceptions is maximised. At the same time, the sample should not be so large that it becomes 'repetitive and, eventually, superfluous' (ibid., p. 2). There are different suggestions regarding sample size for phenomenological studies ranging from 1 (Dukes, 1984) to 325 (Polkinghorne, 1989) (Creswell, 2013, p. 157). However, Green and Thorogood (2009, p. 120) add that in most qualitative studies 'little new comes out of the transcripts' after interviewing 20 or more people. Therefore the challenge for me was to identify the saturation point at which 'it becomes counter-productive and that the new that is discovered does not necessarily add anything to the overall story, model, theory or framework' (Mason, 2010, p. 3). Taking the overall debates into consideration, I initially contacted twenty-five carefully selected participants through email.

However, this number of participants later became thirty-five as I started the primary analysis at the same time as conducting the interviews. While analysing

the data, I found recurring themes, such as faulty policy and funding issues, arising in the interviews. Moreover, the gender of the academics, which did not matter much in the initial planning of the research, was found to be crucial. It was seen during the data collection and analysis phases that the experience of male and female participants differed significantly on return. Warren (2001) speaks of this adjustment in sample size in order to minimize or maximise the difference among respondents. This adjustment is especially applicable to qualitative interviews, the purpose of which is to 'discern meaningful patterns within thick description' (ibid., p. 87). He adds:

In general, with one-time interviews, the more comparisons to be made between sets of patterns, the more respondents are likely to be interviewed. (Warren, 2001, p. 87)

While I was doing the primary analysis of my interview with participant 24, new patterns of experience were still coming up. When I recruited more participants and reached the number of 35, I realised that new ideas/patterns had stopped emerging. The sample size for this one-time qualitative face-to-face interview study ultimately consolidated into 35 respondents with 23 male and 12 female returnee academics in order to ensure the samples were 'saturated' (Kuper, Lingard and Levinson, 2008, p. 687). Therefore, although this sample size is obviously not representative of all, I believe it is large enough to capture most of the issues which arise for most returnees.

To contact the participants, in the first instance an introductory email was sent to twenty potential participants (both male and female) from the annual report of my university to check whether they would be interested in taking part in the study (purposive sampling). I also requested their phone numbers if they were willing, so I could follow up with a phone call. I received replies from fifteen participants who expressed their interest, and three did not respond. Two were unable to take part owing to being busy for the next three months or so. On receiving positive responses from primary contacts, I responded by sharing three documents with my participants: my Project Information Sheet (see Appendix A), a Background

Information Sheet for the basic and contact details of participants such as age, subject, length of study abroad and years on return (see Appendix B), and a consent form which they could complete, sign and email or hand over to me prior to the interviews (see Appendix C). This sharing of information was to ensure that participants were well informed of the scope of the project and what they signed up for. I also provided them with hard copies of the same documents when I conducted the interview (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

I also provided the participants with copies of the documents to share with prospective participants from other HEIs. This technique worked very well as the participants were able to introduce me to their friends, colleagues and students who were interested in participating. The initial number of prospective participants thus became 25, which I thought was sufficient at that point. In January 2015, on passing my transfer viva and receiving ethical approval for my project from the University, I planned a three-week data collection period. However, before I finalised my plan and flew to Dhaka from Leeds, I contacted all the participants, this time over the phone, to share my data collection plans and set a tentative date for the interview. In the following table, I have included the details of all 35 participants and dates and times of the interviews. The ethical considerations for this project are presented in Section 4.3.3.

Table 4: Details of participating academics

#	Pseudonym	Gender	Marital status	Discipline	Public/Private	MA/PhD	Years abroad	Returned	Country studied	Interviewed on/ at Year 2015
1	Mohit	M	Single	Arts	pub	MA + PhD	5	4	Japan + Aus	30/1 @12.30 pm
2	Haniya	F	Married with children	Social sciences	pub	MA + PhD	3	2	India + Aus	14/2 @ 4 pm
3	Asif	M	Single	Arts	pub	MA	2	2	France	31/1 @1pm
4	Samad	M	Married with children	Arts	pub	MA + PhD	7	7	USA + UK	2/2 @3pm
5	Nusaiba	F	Married with children	Social sciences	pub	MA	1	6	UK	2/2 @12pm
6	Hamza	M	Married with children	STEM	pub	MA + PhD	7	2	UK	30/1 @2 pm
7	Munia	F	Married with children	Arts	pub	PhD	4	2	UK	06/2 @ 6.30 pm
8	Rashna	F	Married with children	STEM	pub	PhD	6.5	4	USA	31/1 @ 10 am
9	Maria	F	Single	Business	pri	MA	1.5	7	UK	08/2 @ 3 pm
10	Shaikat	M	Married with children	STEM	pub	MA + PhD	4	4	UK	2/2 @ 12 pm
11	Saba	F	Married with children	STEM	pub	PhD	4.5	2	Aus	30/1 @11.30 am
12	Nisar	M	Married with children	Social sciences	pub	MA + PhD	6	2.5	Canada + UK	2/2 @ 10 am
13	Mofiz	M	Married with children	STEM	pub	PhD	4	2.5	UK	7/2 @ 1 pm
14	Shobuj	M	Single	Social sciences	pub	PhD	4	2	UK	11/2 @10.30 am
15	Namira	F	Single	Arts	pri	MA	1.5	5	USA	03/2 @ 11.45pm
16	Sakif	M	Married with children	Social sciences	pri	MA	1	3	UK	03/2 @ 1pm

17	Sophia	F	Married with children	Arts	pub	Dip + MA + PhD	6	2	Aus + UK + Aus	10/2 @2.30pm
18	Sifat	M	Single	Arts	pri	MA	2	4	Germany	03/2 @ 3 pm
19	Rahat	M	Single	STEM	pri	MA	2	2	UK	04/2 @ 11 am
20	Neema	F	Married with children	STEM	pri	PhD	4	2	UK	04/2 @ 11.45 am
21	Mobin	M	Married	Business	pub	PhD	3.5	4	Japan	04/2 @ 4 pm
22	Tarif	M	Married	Business	pub	MA + PhD	8.5	2	Japan + Aus	04/2 @ 1.30 pm
23	Tomal	M	Married	STEM	pub	PhD	3	2	Japan	07/2 @ 3pm
24	Karim	M	Married with children	STEM	pub	PhD	4	4	Japan	07/2 @ 3pm
25	Miraj	M	Married with children	Social sciences	pub	PhD	3.5	4	UK	07/2 @ 3 pm
26	Shihab	M	Married	STEM	pub	MA	1	5	UK	08/2 @ 11 am
27	Reshad	M	Married with children	Business	pub	MA	2	3	USA	08/2 @ 12 pm
28	Arib	M	Married with children	Arts	pub	MA	1	3	UK	09/2 @ 4pm
29	Sabena	F	Single	Arts	pri	MA	1	6	Aus	09/2 @ 2pm
30	Ashab	M	Married with children	Arts	pub	PhD	4	7	UK	09/2 @ 9.30 am
31	Sama	F	Married with children	Social sciences	pub	MA	2	5	USA	09/2 @ 10.30 am
32	Maisha	F	Married	Social sciences	pub	MA, MPhil + Incom	1	8	UK	11/2 @ 11.30 am
33	Kamal	M	Married	Arts	pub	MA	2	2	Norway	10/2 @1.30pm
34	Rafsan	M	Single	Social sciences	pri	MA	1.5	6	UK	14/2 @11 am
35	Rabet	M	Single	Social sciences	pri	MA	2	3+	USA	14/2 @11.45 am

4.3.2.2. Stakeholders

The stakeholders involved in this study are a UGC Grants Commission Official, three Vice-Chancellors of two public universities and a private university, two Heads of Department (each from a public and private university) and representatives of the British Council and the American Centre. The reason for this selection of stakeholders is, firstly, that high officials from the University Grants Commission are involved in recommendations regarding educational change, policy, and the professional development of the teachers in HEIs. The Heads of Department and Vice-Chancellors from selected universities were interviewed as universities are autonomous organisations in Bangladesh and have their own service rules. The British Council and the American Centre are organisations that facilitate the education process of prospective learners aspiring to study in UK and US respectively. Interviewing these stakeholders would be a greater challenge, as 'identifying and gaining access to elite subjects calls for the incorporation of strategies that include a mixture of ingenuity, social skills, contacts, careful negotiation, and circumstance' (Odendahl and Shaw, 2001, p. 305). According to Odendahl and Shaw, 'the term *elite* is closely linked with the abstract notions of power and privilege, generally in connection with certain identifiable individuals or groups of individuals' (p. 301). One reason I chose to interview them was that *elites* are able to report on an organisation's policies, past histories and future plans from a particular perspective (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). Moreover, the stakeholders' interviews would provide another perspective and prevent me from developing a one-sided view of the phenomenon in question.

I found information on the stakeholders from the websites of the respective offices. However, I took help from my friends and colleagues in contacting them, as stakeholders are very busy people and might make you wait weeks before setting an appointment. While the majority of the stakeholders were contacted over the phone to confirm the time and venue, formal emails along with the information package were sent to the British Council and the American Centre to arrange the interview. As I am a Bangladeshi public university academic myself and had provided the relevant project information beforehand, my colleagues did not find it onerous to make an appointment with the relevant policymakers for the interview.

I contacted the Heads of Department myself. For the appointments with the British Council and American Centre representation, I used my personal contacts: my teacher trainer status with the British Council English Team and my US alumna status as recipient of an E-teacher scholarship from the University of Oregon. These liaisons helped me to gain access to these organisations for my research. The pseudonyms I used for the stakeholders in this study are as follows:

- VC of the largest public university: VC1
- VC of the other public university: VC2
- Pro-VC of private university: VC3
- UGC official
- Head of Department (public university): Pub HoD
- Head of Department (private university): Pri HoD
- American Centre: AC
- British Council: BC

4.3.3. Ethical considerations

As qualitative research deals with people's experiences and how they feel about it, it can be more intrusive than quantitative research (Dörnyei, 2007). Therefore, it is crucial to consider ethical issues in order to protect the rights of the participants while carrying out research (Patton, 1990; Silverman, 2013). First, ethical approval to conduct the study was obtained following the code of ethical practice for research in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Leeds, from the Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Ethics reference AREA 15-039) (see Appendix D). Secondly, informed consent was obtained from the respondents before conducting the interviews, in which the research aims that were included in the project information sheet were re-explained to the participants so that they could make informed decisions. The impetus for using this informed consent was to inform participants about any possible concerns regarding their wellbeing. Further information included explaining to the interviewees that they may withdraw from the study at any time. They were also informed about the duration of the interviews and that the interviews would be recorded for analysis purposes.

An issue regarding interviews that Bryman (2016) indicates is recording, which might make interviewees uncomfortable. However, except during the practice interview, none of the participants seemed to be over-conscious regarding the recording. Only once during an actual interview did a participant wish to say things 'off the record' (Warren, 2001), and rechecked whether the information provided would be used elsewhere. Another ethical dilemma surrounding this kind of research is 'the ongoing negotiation of informed consent' (McLeod and Thomson, 2009, p. 74). The nature and amount of personal information to be shared by the participants is an unpredictable process as no one knows in advance what will 'come out' of a conversation (Gadamer, 2004, p. 385); therefore there is less control over the dataset (Nunkoosing, 2005).

Therefore, on top of providing all the details in the project information sheet, participants were reassured that their personal information and the data they provided were secure and confidential, and would only be used for the purposes of this study. They were also reassured that their identities would remain *incognito* as pseudonyms would be assigned to protect the identity and privacy of all participants (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Creswell, 2013). As some of my participants are members of a community where they could easily be identified because of their overseas experience, I was extra careful regarding anonymity, and disguised all information that might reveal their identity (Gavey and Braun, 1997; Williams and Robson, 2004). To safeguard the study, all materials, including hard copies of collected data, were stored in a locked filing cabinet and soft copies secured in a password-protected computer only accessible to myself.

4.4. Data generation procedure

In this section, I discuss the data generation method, namely qualitative interviews, that I employed with the two sets of participants to study the phenomenon of return experience. First, I talk about why I chose semi-structured interviews, followed by the interview techniques adopted for the returnee academics and then the stakeholders. Lastly, I address issues related to transcription and translation of the recorded interviews.

4.4.1. Interviews

Today we are used to living in an 'interview society', a term coined by Silverman (1993), as media, human service providers and researchers are increasingly generating reports and facts through extensive usage of interviews. Interviews are one of the main types of data collection in qualitative research and give an opportunity to obtain detailed information from participants (Creswell, 2012a; Richards, 2003; Turner, 2010). Therefore interviews that are most appropriate for experience-type research questions fitted neatly into my research design (Braun and Clarke, 2013). In this connection, Novick (2008) has regarded face to face interviews as the ideal means of generation interview data, which is also my preferred means of data generation. Richards (2003) argues that an interview is a special type of conversation with an aim to elicit 'the richest and fullest account possible' (p. 50). Rubin and Rubin (1995) note that

qualitative interviews use three types of questions: main questions that begin and guide the conversation, probes to clarify answers or request further examples, and follow up questions that pursue the implications of answers to main questions. (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, pp. 145-146)

Kvale (2007) defines interviewing as a professional conversation that enables a participant to talk about experiences and perspectives in relation to the topic to be explored. Merriam (2009) adds that in qualitative research the interview is commonly used to gain insights into people's beliefs, attitudes and lived experiences. It is also regarded as a tool for collecting information from interviewees and, through analysing and presenting them, giving a voice to the participants (Moustakas, 1994).

My idea of interviews also matched Holstein and Gubrium's (1997) concept of the 'active interview', where the interviewer and interviewee make meaning, co-construct knowledge and participate in social practices through a socially situated 'speech event' (i.e. interview) (Mishler, 1986). According to Holstein and Gubrium (1997), '[t]he image of the active interview transforms the subject behind the respondent from a repository of opinions and reasons or a wellspring of emotions

into a productive source of knowledge' (p. 121). I hoped that having this 'active interview' with my participants would provide me with facts and details of their return experience. In the process of responding to my queries, the respondents would constructively add, delete and transform information in building up their narrative versions of the social world (Talmy, 2010; Miller and Glassner, 1997).

Semi-structured interviews are a verifiable tool for allowing participants to share their thoughts and opinions related to the research topic (Yin, 2009). For phenomenological interviews, semi-structured interviews are perhaps the dominant form (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Creswell, 2013), involving preparation of an interview guide or themes rather than fixed questions. Unlike structured interviews they allowed me to be flexible and follow emerging topics and directions elaborated by the interviewees (Dörnyei, 2007; Kvale, 2007; Mason, 2002; Mears, 2009). It was because of this flexibility and openness that the co-creation of knowledge with the interviewees in this study was possible. In addition, this allowed the interviews to be more situated and contextualised.

One important thing to note here is that I decided on a one-time interview with the returnee academics because I needed more participants to explain the phenomenon of return experience than is required for an in-depth longitudinal study. Bearing this in mind, I developed an interview schedule of open-ended questions along with prompts that spelt out the type of further detail required of the returnees (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009) (Appendix E). The interview began by asking a broad general question for the returnees: 'What happened on return from study abroad?' (Moustakas, 1994). This broad question aimed to

[f]ocus attention on gathering data that will lead to a textual and structural description of the experiences, and ultimately provide an understanding of the common experiences of the participants. (Creswell, 2013, p. 81)

For the stakeholders (UGC official, VC, HoD, AC and BC) a semi-structured topic-centred questionnaire was designed (see Appendices F, G and H). The interviews with the academics and stakeholders were planned in two phases: the first in

January 2015 and the second in August 2015. Sequencing mattered in this study as in the months following the first phase, I got to learn about the challenges the returnees faced owing to unhelpful policy while preparing the interview transcripts. Thus when I went for the second phase of data collection with the stakeholders, I was already aware of one perspective related to the constraints of higher education in Bangladesh.

Although some of the participants had sufficient knowledge of the English language owing to their experience abroad, the plan was to conduct the interviews in Bengali. I believed that using their native language would put the interviewees at ease and that they would therefore be more comfortable expressing their feelings and sharing information more openly. While there was total agreement by the participants with this decision, some were inclined to use English during the conversation, which led to a large amount of interesting code-switching between researcher and participants owing to their familiarity with both languages. This issue is discussed and exemplified in Chapter 5 (sec 5.2.1).

4.4.1.1. Interviews with returnees

For the first phase of my data collection, I had planned three weeks in total to travel to and be in Bangladesh. So basically, I had 15-16 days to interview approximately 35 purposively selected participants (Creswell, 2013). I managed this onerous task of conducting 35 interviews by planning strategically and making appointments with at least two academics of a particular university in one day. For instance, I started the interviews in the early morning before office hours to avoid the heavy traffic of Dhaka city. I engaged my time at the venue before and between interviews in listening to the recordings and preparing the transcripts.

In line with Creswell's (2013) recommendations, the face-to-face interviews took place in safe and mutually agreed-upon locations. All interviews, with the exception of two, were conducted at the participants' universities, usually in their offices. The interviews with Hania and Munia took place in their homes. Building rapport with the interviewees here was equally important as it made them comfortable and competent during interviews (Miller and Glassner, 1997). At the start of the

interview, I reviewed the consent form with the interviewee, discussed expectations, and answered any questions the interviewee had. I also assured them of confidentiality. In an attempt to help the interviewees feel more comfortable and reduce the possibility of receiving answers they might think I wanted to hear, I emphasised that I was genuinely interested in their beliefs and experiences and listened intently (Creswell, 2012b; Kvale, 2007). I used a digital recorder (which I checked prior to the interview to avoid technical issues) to record the interviews, which I reiterated to the participants prior to the official start of the interview.

I let the interviewee decide whether they wanted to talk about reintegration on a professional or personal level. The interview schedule contained follow up questions/prompts which were used only when the participants had not touched on the points themselves. It was expected that the data I obtained from the interviews would provide further information about their motives to study abroad, beliefs, attitudes, achievements and challenges. I can attest that a well-conducted qualitative interview can generate rich, detailed data and often 'unanticipated accounts' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 80). In the course of conducting interviews, I had to make a spontaneous decision to conduct an interview of three very eligible and interested participants together as they happened to be in the same place at the time of the interview. The interview turned out to be quite an interesting one as the participants, being friends, contributed to each other's stories.

4.4.1.2. Interviews with stakeholders

For the second phase of my data collection, I went back to Dhaka in August 2015. Managing these interviews within a stipulated time of six weeks was challenging. However, these barriers were overcome with the help of friends and colleagues. Three different interview schedules were prepared for the different sets of stakeholders: UGC official and the VCs of three public and private universities who take decisions regarding implementation of any action, policy and future plans (see Appendix F); Head of the British Council Dhaka and the American Centre, who promote studies in UK and US respectively (see Appendix G); and Heads of Department of a public and a private university to learn about the impact returnee teachers have had on their respective departments (see Appendix H).

The chosen method to interview these *elites* were elite interviews. Elite interviews, according to Marshall and Rossman (1995), are specialized cases of interviewing that focus on influential, prominent and well-informed high officials or people in an organisation or community. In order to prepare for these interviews I needed to be knowledgeable in the topic concerned, master the technical language, be familiar with the social situation and be sensitive to the biography of the interviewee (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Therefore I prepared myself adequately for these elite interviews by learning from their profiles and searching the published records or instructions for the returnee academics (e.g. UGC Report 2013) before the interviews.

All the interviews took place in the stakeholders' offices as it was more time-saving and convenient for them to squeeze half an hour or so out of office hours. Similar to the interviews with the returnees, I handed them hard copies of all three documents: Project Information Sheet, Background Information Sheet and consent form (Appendices A, B and C). Written consent and permission to record the interview was taken and confidentiality issues reiterated at the beginning of all the interviews. With reference to the prepared semi-structured interview schedules, I started with the general question of how the stakeholders perceived the returnee academics (Moustakas, 1994). While some stakeholders were very supportive and were inclined to entrust more information than asked for, others were quite reserved about their statements and wished to remain incognito.

The interviews of the respondents from the universities, the VCs and HoDs, lasted from 20 minutes to 90 minutes approximately. The interviews with the participants from the UGC and American Centre lasted for an hour. Fortunately, I managed seven stakeholder interviews within a month without any major disruptions. However, the office of the British Council was officially closed to reinforce their security following a terrorist attack in the city. No face-to-face interview was therefore possible, but they were quite responsive to emails and sent a written version of the answers to the interview questions.

4.4.1.3. Transcription and translation

All the interviews conducted during the data collection phases were recorded and transcribed right after the interview. A transcript, according to Green et al. (1997) is 'a text that "re"- presents an event; it is not the event itself'. Following this logic, what is re-presented is data constructed by a researcher (me) for a particular purpose, not just 'talk written down' (p. 172). For this purpose, I found verbatim or orthographic transcription (Braun and Clarke, 2013) to be preferable and beneficial given the theoretical underpinning of this research and the necessity of remaining close to the data (Halcomb and Davidson, 2006).

As the interviews were carried out in Bengali, the participants' mother tongue, translating relevant sections of the transcripts was vital. This could potentially have been a complex process, involving a focus on the interpretation of words, as well as the provision of an intelligible translation in the light of contextual meaning (Esposito, 2001). Moreover, Pavlenko (2007) raises serious objections regarding use of translated transcriptions for data analysis as the translated version might transmute the subjective reality attained through the narratives of the participants. I too felt there was a slim possibility of misinterpretation of the true voice of the returnees, which might be lost in translation of the interviews from Bengali to English. Therefore, to minimise potential threats to the validity of the translation, I decided to translate according to a 'meaning-based, rather than word-for-word interpretation', an approach highlighted by Esposito (2001, p. 572). To ensure clarity and avoid this pitfall, alongside keeping the translation as close as possible, three anonymised translated interviews (two returnees and one stakeholder) were chosen at random to be checked by a bilingual translator to ensure accuracy of the transcripts (see Appendix I). On receiving positive feedback from them about the accuracy of translation, I translated into English the relevant sections of the remaining thirty-two interviews with returnees and six with stakeholders. The interview data from the American Centre and the British Council were already written in English.

4.5. Data analysis

In order to thoroughly explore the returnees’ experiences, an inductive approach was utilized. Inductive analysis is a process of coding the data ‘*without* trying to let it fit into a pre-existing coding frame’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 83) which exactly fits the description of this study. For this purpose, I employed a phenomenological analysis of the data to analyse and report themes and patterns (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1989). The stages of a phenomenological analysis are quite structured, as advanced by Moustakas (1994), and later adopted by Creswell (2013). For this study I adopted the stages listed by Moustakas (1994) as my objective was to get to the meaning without any pre-conceived notion. The structure thus helped me in interpreting my data (*ibid.*) and focusing on the ‘lessons learned’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this connection, Braun and Clarke (2006) stress that researchers often do not provide sufficient detail on the process of analysis, which might bring the quality of research into question. To avoid this and ensure the transparency of the analysis process, I have provided a coding sample (see Appendix J) and have explicitly explained the procedures and choices I made with regard to the analytical tools.

The following table explains the data source and method of analysis for my research questions:

Table 5: Main research questions and data source

Research questions	Data source and amount of data generated
1. What are the prevalent experiences of returnee academics teaching at higher education institutions of Bangladesh in the years following international study abroad?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returnee academics’ interviews • Details of return experience from 35 interviews with 12 female and 23 male participants
2. What impact did the returnee academics have on their organisations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set 1: Returnee academics’ interviews • Set 2: Stakeholders’ interviews (UGC, VC, HoD, AC, BC) Single set of interviews

3. What are the stakeholders' expectations for returnee academics of higher education Institutions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders' interviews (UGC, VC, HoD, AC, BC) Single set of interviews
---	---

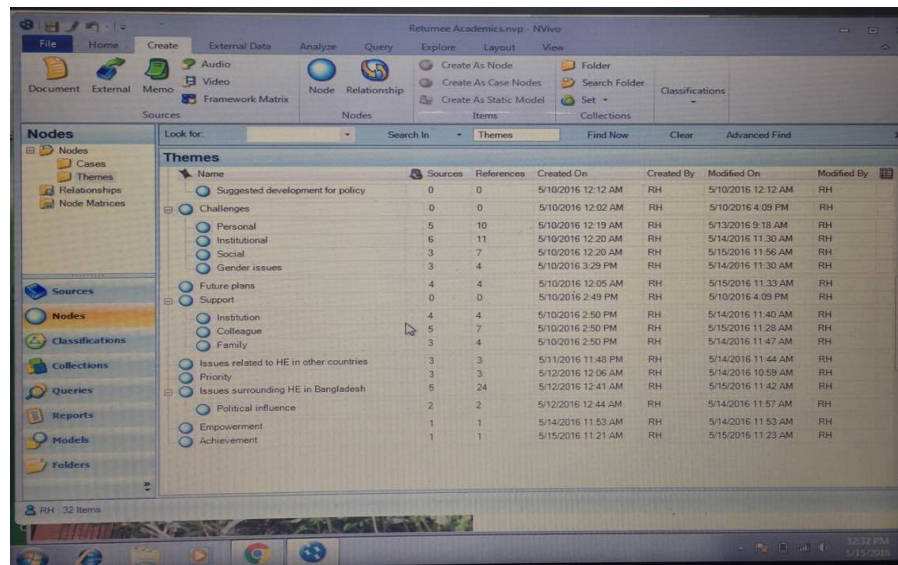
After conducting the interviews in the first phase of the data collection process in Jan-Feb 2016, it took me almost six months to complete the transcription of all thirty-five interviews with the returnees. I started initial coding of the interview data on NVIVO 10, an electronic analytical tool, on completion of the first phase of my fieldwork. With the initial codes drawn, I went for the second phase of my data collection, the stakeholder interviews, in August 2016. The transcripts of the stakeholder interviews were prepared immediately on return from fieldwork and the manual analysis of this dataset (only eight interviews altogether) was completed by June 2017. Though initially I planned to use only NVIVO for analysis, later (and especially after finishing the analysis of the stakeholders' interviews), I realised that with thirty-five interview datasets, I could not see the whole picture and interconnectedness of codes at a glance (Welsh, 2002). Consequently, I decided to use both manual and electronic coding to interpret the data and identify themes and relationships between them, and then employed NVIVO to categorise and sort the data.

However, in December 2017 I was diagnosed with a long-term eyesight issue that limited my screen time to two to three hours a day. Dealing with the blurry vision and settling down to work with frequent breaks took months of my PhD time. My initial thoughts were that I had lost connection with my data. So, I started reading the transcripts over and over again, in order to 'read data as data', as Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 205) put it: 'Reading data as data means not simply absorbing the surface meaning of the words ... but reading the words actively, analytically and critically, starting to think about what the data mean' (ibid.). This time, I started to see through the experiences more clearly and the statements of the returnees seemed to make better sense than they had done during the initial coding. As I had been instructed to limit my screen time, I had to abandon my initial plan of using NVIVO and continued with manual data analysis.

The process of coding, as Creswell (2013) asserts, is putting together small categories of information, finding evidence for the coding from the interview transcripts of the study, and finally assigning a label or a code. As I went through the interview with each participant, the recordings and the transcriptions, I approached the data with an open mind to whatever meanings emerged (Hycner, 1985). I started marking the transcripts for significant statements and assigned initial codes in the left-hand margins of the statements. At this stage I also started looking for patterns to form sub-themes, which involved constant moving back and forth within data. Later, I developed a more succinct list of the statements and codes (*horizontalisation of the data*) related to the participants' return experience (Creswell, 2013, p. 193). Some of the codes were *in vivo codes*, words that were used by the participants, while some were chosen by me as I found them to best describe the information. The codes were reviewed and refined multiple times as not all the codes and subthemes were connected to all the participants. I then took the significant statements and sub-themes that were common to all the participants' transcripts (Colaizzi, 1978) and arranged them into larger units of information called meaning units or themes (Moustakas, 1994). In doing so I remained careful not to make the list repetitive or include overlapping statements (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

Another important thing while identifying themes was that I should not be over-reliant on recurring themes, lest I lose some very significant themes which did not appear repeatedly in the interviews (Pavlenko, 2007). Therefore I became more reflexive and transparent in reporting and representing the interview data (Mann, 2010). In order to show the development of the codes I include here a visual representation of my initial coding carried out through NVIVO 10, followed by how the manual codes were clustered into more general themes (*ibid.*). I have also included a scanned copy of a coded interview transcript as an example in Appendix J.

Figure 2: An example of primary codes created in NVIVO 10



Academic factors
Economic factors
Cultural
Research
Benefits
Silver lining

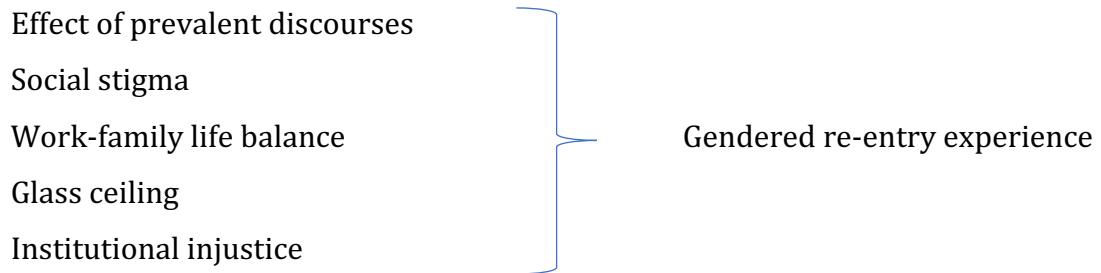
Prevalent experience of returnees

Workplace
Society
Family

Reintegration challenges

Tension between academics
Dissatisfaction towards HE
Systemic and accountability issue
Failing standards
Power relations HE policy

Academic reintegration



Next I started adding the *textural description* (Creswell, 2013, p. 193); that is, what the participants experienced on return from study abroad with verbatim examples of the participant academics' and stakeholders' statements. For example, in Chapter 5 the findings are presented as:

Table 6: Examples of themes and quotes from Findings chapters

Chapter	Themes	Participants' statements
5.2.	Earned benefits of academic mobility	Samad: <i>PhD gives you the recognition of a scholar... getting exposed to an academic community, global community, getting yourself published and all that. So, it itself is a rigorous training process that helped me as a scholar and also humbled me in the process.</i>
5.3.3.2.	Research and research funding	Rashna: <i>My work/research remains within my department/school. It does not even reach the faculty, let alone other disciplines. No reward. There is no accountability or dissemination of our works/research abroad. We just submit our degree/PhD certificates and that is all.</i>
5.4.	Societal reintegration: Torn between roles of parenthood and an academic	Sophia: <i>Now their life has become limited to homeworks, class tests, more and more studies. With all these they have lots of frustration. As a mother I have to deal with those frustrations. It was tough. After two years they have sort of settled down but still</i>

		<i>my daughter cries every now and then for Australia.</i>
7.4.	Stakeholders' negativity towards current system of higher education	VC3: <i>The experience of the academics who have studied abroad could have been utilized for the training and development purposes of HE. But to date no initiative has been taken up in this regard. Actually, all this depends on the leadership. [VC3, Para 6]</i>

In putting together all the themes and evidence in Chapter 5, 6 and 7, I started interpreting the data sets by 'abstracting out beyond the codes and themes to the larger meaning of the data' in order to make sense of it (Creswell, 2013, p. 187). My interpretation thus became a combination of my personal views and social constructs such as neoliberalism, neoliberal feminism, and social role theory. Rather than including tables to illustrate the significant statements, meaning and theme clusters, as typical of a phenomenological study (Creswell, 2013), I have included vignettes of four randomly selected but contrasting participant stories in Chapter 7 to show the variety of evidence in one space. I also wanted to capture verisimilitude and present the vignettes in such a way that the writing is clear and engaging, and that whoever reads the work experiences 'being there' (Creswell, 2013, p. 54).

The next step was to include the *structural description* (Creswell, 2013, p. 193) where I have reflected on the setting and context in which the phenomenon of return was experienced. The setting and context of the research has already been introduced in Chapter 2 and the methodological details are presented in this chapter. The description has been provided by answering all the research questions and sub questions in Chapter 8, followed by an overview of the prevailing neoliberal ethos and its impact on Bangladeshi HE (8.4) and the return experience of the academics. In this work, the *essence* (Creswell, 2013, p. 194), which follows the structural description of a phenomenological analysis, has been conveyed through the synthesis of the discussion (Chapter 8) and the conclusion

(Chapter 9). The conclusion chapter knits together the meanings and essence that all individual participants experienced in common.

4.6. Trustworthiness

For an interpretive research paradigm, the validity labels that Lincoln and Guba (1985) described are trustworthiness and authenticity. They associated trustworthiness with 'credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability and authenticity with fairness and understandability' (p. 300). I have employed manifold strategies to support the integrity and ensure trustworthiness of my research. First of all, the context, settings and participants have been clearly stated and a rich and vivid description of the same provided (Creswell and Miller, 2000). Secondly, I have made my role and position explicit in the research (see 3.2.3) and tried to maintain a heightened awareness of myself acting in the social world with returnee academics around me (Elliot, 2005). Thirdly, I have maintained a detailed step by step process of my research in a journal, and this has helped me to reflect on my role in the research and to keep my biases in check. Fourth, I have carried out sample checking on the quality of translation and transcripts to ensure accuracy (see 3.4.1.3)

Fifth, in order to strengthen the credibility of the findings, data was collected from two sets of participants. Moreover, I conducted some documentary analysis (the review of the 1973 Act, UGC Annual Reports, published interviews) and consulted the British Council and American Centre websites (see Chapter 2) to gather and cross-check relevant information as a form of data triangulation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998, Miles and Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). The process of triangulation involves 'corroborating evidence from different sources that shed light on a theme or perspective' (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). In line with other researchers, I have brought the two sources of data the returnees and the stakeholders, together in the discussion section when documenting a theme, and in the process have attempted to enhance the trustworthiness of my findings (ibid.).

Sixth, I maintained a personal research journal or log throughout the research process which contained notes on every decision I made during the study (Gillham, 2000; Merriam, 2009). There were descriptive comments on the data collection process, on how categories were derived, and personal notes and reflections on my thoughts and feelings during my research journey. This journal helped me immensely to get back to the coding and analysis stage, which went through various levels of interruption due to my visual impairment. Moreover, I was able to create an audit trail via my researcher journal to increase the dependability of the findings. An audit trail in a qualitative study, according to Merriam (2009, p. 223), 'describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry'. By making use of this audit trail, I could track my data collection and decision making throughout the research process and use it to help me interpret my data. This is evidenced in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Lastly, I used rich, thick descriptions of the results to allow for the transferability of the findings to other groups, communities or context (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Erlandson et al., 1993). I included details of my context, participants, settings and circumstances of the study, so that readers can explore the potential to apply this study to their situation and judge its transferability to similar contexts (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009).

4.7. Chapter summary

In this chapter I have presented a detailed account of the methodology and research design of this study to address the research questions. The methodological decisions outlined in this chapter have been informed by the review of literature in Chapter 3. My decision to carry out a study that draws on insights from phenomenology was based on the perceived knowledge gap stemming from the fact that most existing studies on return experience were in-depth and broadly based on cultural adaptation. Alongside detailing my ontological and epistemological stance, I have also clarified my research aims as the intention to learn about the return experience of the academics as a phenomenon and to

include the stakeholders' positionality regarding the returnees. The justification for recruiting 35 participants has been included. Issues surrounding validity, reliability and ethics have also been discussed and my role as a researcher highlighted. To ensure trustworthiness, I have attempted to be transparent and have reflected on the challenges I faced throughout the data collection and analysis process, providing explanations to justify my decisions. The next three chapters (5, 6 and 7) contain detailed analysis of the findings.

Chapter 5: Findings from Returnee Academics' Interviews

This chapter outlines the findings that emerged from the interview data from the returnee academics. As mentioned in the methodology chapter above, the returnee academics here share their reintegration experience on return to Bangladesh from their study abroad destinations. This chapter is organised into five main sections, each covering a specific area related to the reintegration process. The first section presents the participants' motivations for studying abroad in retrospect followed by what they felt were the earned benefits of academic mobility. The focus then moves to exploring their academic reintegration, maintaining motivation, tension between academics with local and overseas qualifications, and dissatisfaction towards the current higher education system and policy which affected their reintegration process.

5.1. Motivation for studying abroad

This section of the analysis examines what prompted the participants to decide to study abroad. To show the dominant motivating factors, this section and the following sections include some numbers to show dominance of a motive, for example how many academics were interested in making a contribution (see 4.2).

The predominant motivating factor among the Bangladeshi academics who went to study abroad on scholarships and self-finance seemed to be related to economic gains. Finding a suitable highly paid job and/or professional advancement in the form of promotion and increments was mentioned by 17 out of 35 academics. Of the total 35, five out of 12 women academics and 12 out of 23 male academics mentioned these factors in their interviews. Sakif shares:

My cousins from abroad encouraged me. You should have a degree from abroad if you look at the job market from a Bangladeshi perspective, and I had a desire to join academia. So, without doing a PhD in academia, it is quite difficult to survive.

The second motivating factor for both sets of participants were developing themselves by joining academia, as mentioned by 15 (11 male and four female) respondents. Increased work efficiency by gaining updated knowledge and also gaining global recognition was mentioned by 12 academics, of which nine were men and three women. 10 respondents expressed their motivating interest in their subject matter, learning to research better and carry out further research. While only six out of 23 male academics mention these motivating factors, four out of 12 women academics cited them. Participant Sabina shares:

My first paper was published when I was a 4th year student. My interest in research actually developed at the time of studying in my 4th year. I collected data from 300 students from my university and analysed them. My friends laughed at what I was doing ... because they didn't approve of the idea of doing research.

Eight academics, five male and three female, said that they wished to go abroad for further studies as they have seen their predecessors do. The current trend for academics to have an overseas qualification, particularly a PhD, seems to be a valuable addition to their names. Participant Samad's opinion sheds some interesting light on some of these motivating factors:

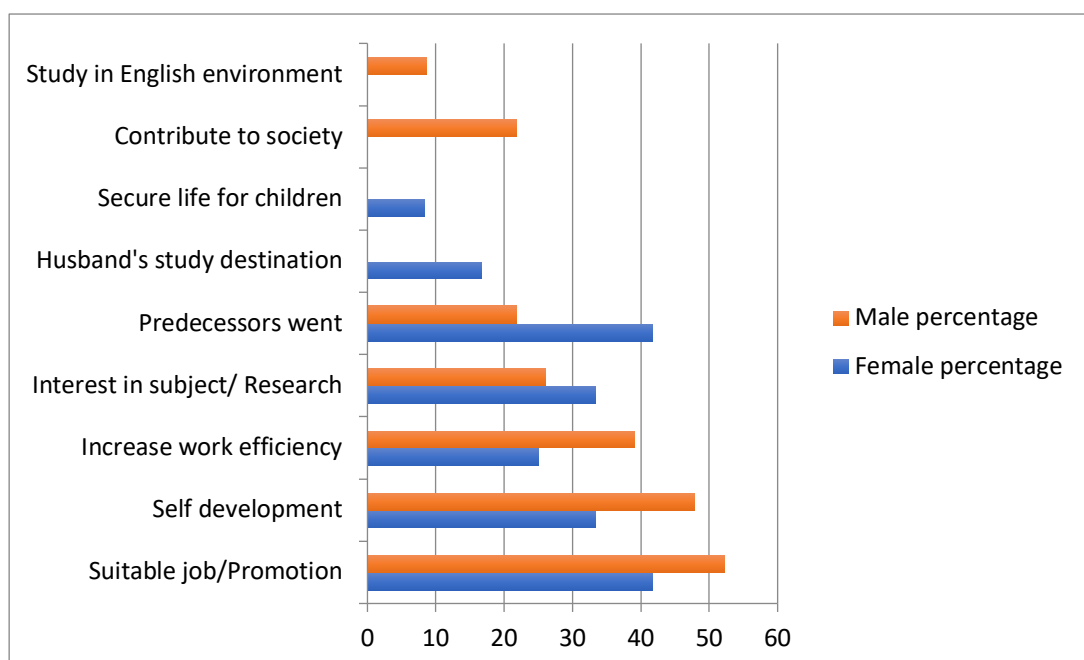
The motivation is like that if you're in academia you need a PhD so that's the prime motivation because when you go abroad you see that even a lecturer has a PhD ... But once I went abroad to do my second MA I realised that without your PhD you should not claim yourself as an academic as simply as that. And also the training process of the PhD, getting exposed to an academic community, scholarly community, getting yourself published and all that. That in itself is a rigorous training process.

These are the common motivating factors that both male and female participants came up with. However, there are gender-specific factors mentioned by only male or female academics. Two of the women academics' husbands also work in academia and went to study overseas accompanied by their families. The spouses,

inspired by their partners and the research and academic environment and culture, became interested in pursuing their PhD studies. The most convenient option for this purpose was to choose the study destination of their spouses. Another female participant said she believed that going to study abroad would ensure better education and social security for children. Like her, many of the participants' decision to study abroad might have been affected by the idea that spending 3-5 years abroad studying would have a beneficial effect on the education and upbringing of their children. It seems children are much more involved in people's motivation for study abroad than is generally acknowledged.

While female-specific motivating factors were all concerned with family, men were more inclined towards professional and personal development issues. Among male-specific factors, five academics mentioned their desire to contribute to society and the country. For instance, Tarif says, 'I wanted to serve my country. I felt Bangladesh is quite the place that I wanted to live in'. Two male academics also expressed that they were inclined towards studying in an 'English environment', i.e. an Anglophone country. Moreover, the majority of the participants mentioned more than one motive for studying abroad. The following chart ranks the motivating factors of the male and female participant academics:

Figure 3: Motives for study abroad mentioned by participants



5.2. Benefits of academic mobility

The majority of the academics (30 out of 35 respondents) spoke highly of their gains during study abroad in the interview. While library facilities, a wide range of resources, and technological advancements have been mentioned as advantages of studying overseas, the majority of respondents also spontaneously spoke of the accomplishments they attributed to SA.

Samad, a public university teacher who also holds a part-time faculty and senior administrative position in a private university, affirms that his experience abroad has earned him the admin position at the private university. He adds that according to the UGC rules the candidate must have a PhD degree to hold any top academic positions:

It has also opened that administrative area which I didn't have access to earlier. The degree from abroad does not matter in the public system. But here, like in the private system, I need this.

He adds that his PhD from UK has given him confidence to compete at both the global and local level. His thesis has also been published by a reputable publisher.

Another participant, Sama, feels:

I wouldn't have learnt this much about life had I not had these experiences by studying abroad.

Namira states that she has managed to introduce creative thinking in her classroom through interesting project works because of her exposure abroad. Yet another respondent, Arib, shares his positive views of studying abroad:

The job that I currently hold at the OU is due to my MA TESOL degree from UK.

Along with Samad, Sama and Arib, returnee academics like Reshad, Karim and Samad state that they gained respect in the workplace and among colleagues

because of their degree from abroad, their publications and updated knowledge. So no matter what their motivating factors were, academics who received the opportunity of studying abroad had reaped benefits from their overseas experience in some way or the other.

5.2.1. Formation of a new identity

The perks of academic mobility, related to enhanced knowledge in their subject matter, have helped many of the participants to form a new identity. For Asif, a public university teacher who started his career in a top-rated private university, study abroad has opened the door to observe things from an interdisciplinary perspective. He says:

My study in ... carries great significance for me. I could use an interdisciplinary approach, which I had studied in Bordeaux in teaching my students. My academic horizon has actually broadened because of this exposure.

Another respondent, Hamza, relates that his expectation of the PhD was that it would provide him with philosophical knowledge with which he would be able to continue research and contribute further to society. He says:

I think I am trying to apply what I have learnt from my experience overseas through my teaching, through my research activities.

Nusaiba endorses Hamza's views:

I introduced research methodology and a new course in my department when I joined this university after completing my MA from UK.

Shobuj, another respondent, shares how he developed himself as an expert in his area. He mentioned the enormous amount of literature he was exposed to while he was studying abroad:

I got myself introduced to this wide breadth of literature, something I did not know existed before I considered myself a serious teacher. I never had any access to online resources.

Shihab speaks of a different dimension of learning from his study abroad experience. He happily recalls one of his supervisor's ways of dealing with students during his MA days that contributed substantially to shaping his identity as an academic. He sent his supervisor a friend request on Facebook, which his supervisor in an email politely declined. Shihab was very much convinced by his supervisor's approach as explained in the email:

I was his current student and he was supposed to evaluate my script. So he was not in a position to accept my friend request. But he assured me that after having completed my degree he'll accept my request. He said he did not want to be biased anyhow, at any level, which really enlightened me.

Shihab wiped his current students from his Facebook page and he no longer accepts requests from his current students. He established this practice in his workplace and fondly recalls his learning from UK.

Another participant academic, Munia, shares her view about study abroad. She feels there is a huge knowledge gap between education at home and abroad. According to Munia, her foundational theoretical knowledge of educational development has been enhanced by her PhD from abroad. Formerly she worked on projects without proper knowledge of their theoretical underpinnings, but now she feels more confident and has learnt to judge the effectiveness and non-effectiveness of a project. She further adds that along with all the knowledge related to her subject and teaching-learning, she finds there are other perks to studying overseas, saying 'I find intercultural communication to be an added bonus of study abroad.'

Saba feels that it is because of her study abroad experience that she has become familiar with the term *accountability* and providing feedback to students. During her PhD days, she had to explain her comments on an assignment to a student as a

teaching assistant. This was the very first time a student came to her to demand explanation of the marks and comments that she had provided. At home students seldom came to the teachers to ask for explanation of marks, partly out of disinterest and partly in fear of offending the teacher by asking for clarification.

Saba speaks of further change in her identity on return due to studying overseas:

After doing my PhD, I felt confident, empowered and somewhat privileged. Privileged in the sense that when someone learns that I have done a PhD from a western country, people do judge you with respect. Moreover, if it is done from an English-speaking country, you get more respect.

Saba's perspective is a reminder of the colonial history of Bangladesh when some of the key policymakers of the independence era (1971) studied in Western countries, especially Britain. English ever since has been held in high esteem in the country, and a Western degree holder enjoys additional respect and awe in the society. Saba further adds that her experience of study abroad has raised consciousness and self-awareness in her which she had previously overlooked. She goes on to say that she is a changed personality because of her study abroad experience. Academic mobility has accentuated her self-consciousness and lowered her dependency on others to complete her tasks for her. She adds:

Before going abroad, I used to ignore the dust and dirt in my lab and at one point if it became too unkempt brought it to the notice of the cleaners. But now I try not to leave my work unfinished and remember to leave my desk/worktop clean so that others do not have trouble doing their work.

Further to all these gains, 6 out of 35 returnee academics mentioned that publishing opportunities with renowned professors was another professional gain deriving from their study-abroad PhD experience.

Finally, an interesting feature that occurred on several occasions during the interviews was the participants' use of codeswitching. This tendency of switching

back and forth from their first language of Bengali to second/foreign language of English might have been owing to their exposure overseas. In many of the interviews, codeswitching occurred quite naturally between Bengali and English, Bengali being the mother tongue and English being the widely used and academically emphasised language. Another reason to codeswitch could be that, knowing the interviewer's background, they wanted to validate their position as sojourners to her. For instance, Mohit explained his motivation to do his PhD abroad. He was well aware of the interviewer's background and emphasise the situation and make himself understood he frequently switched codes:

কিন্তু এখানকার পিএচডি বাইরের লোকজন ও খুব একটা ভাল চোখে দেখে না। আগের প্রজন্ম, যাদের PhD ডিগ্রি আছে, আমার ধারণা, এবং সোসাইটি, যে একজন faculty member কে রেসপেক্ট করে না যদি তার পিএইচডিটা দেশের বাইরে না হয়। So, যে faculty member, if you have a PhD from a prestigious university it means something. To have a PhD from a prestigious university it was like a dream. I believe that until today this is a practice. To every young faculty member of the university, it is a dream. It is a dream for everyone to have a PhD from a prestigious university. আমরা যেটা সবাই মনে করি if you have a PhD from Oxford, Harvard, Princeton, then that will be a fantastic one. So, যেহেতু এই Harvard, Yale বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গুলোর cost মোটামুটি বেশি আর আমার সামর্থেরও একটা ব্যাপার আছে, so, I went there where I got the chance.

Here Mohit basically commented on the trend for doing a PhD in a prestigious Western university. Degrees from high ranking universities always remained covetable but because of the hefty expense people end up getting a degree from wherever they get a chance or can avail a scholarship.

5.3. Academic reintegration

The reintegration of the returnee academics has been marked by various levels of cultural, social and academic adjustment issues. It should be mentioned here that none of the academics addressed the cultural change on return as a shock. Moving aside from the concepts of culture shock and reverse culture shock, i.e. the feeling of anxiety, confusion and disorientation one feels when exposed to a different

society and culture from one's own (McGrath, 1998), and then going through a similar process on returning home, respondents mention it was more like returning to the same old system with various levels of discomfort. Hence I have used the term 'cultural discomfort' in place of culture shock and reverse culture shock for the participants in this study.

5.3.1. Remaining motivated central to contribution

According to 26 out of 35 respondents, remaining motivated remains a huge factor in continuing effective teaching and standard research in academia on return. For the women academics, social ties and responsibilities acted as a barrier, as mentioned by Nusaiba and Sabina. In this connection, Samad speaks of another type of obstacle. By citing his own example, he tries to explain why academics who have had exposure to modern teaching techniques abandon their plans to reform their teaching methods and continue with traditional lectures. He says that he tried making his classes interactive but it varied from class to class. In a private university where the class sizes were small, he could apply various interactive and learner-centred techniques, but in a public university context where student numbers are around 120 per class, innovative ideas did not work. He feels that it became difficult to ensure everybody's participation and that four or five students dominated the scene. He concludes:

So, like, I don't blame my colleagues why they let go after delivering whatever they can in a short span of time. No point ... They just give up ... They lose interest.

Though Samad does not want to blame his colleagues, he himself has fine-tuned his teaching techniques according to classroom situations, which points to his motivation to contribute. Hamza speaks of optimism regarding becoming a changemaker in academia. He is among the respondents who believe that remaining motivated is central to introducing any changes or implementing any techniques in academia. He says:

It all depends on the person. How that person customizes his/her learning to this environment is really important. Otherwise if I hope that I would get all the facilities here that I used to get abroad, that would never be possible. We have to situate our learning within the environment, within the limited facility we have. It's up to the person.

Reshad echoes this:

A person might do his or her PhD from say USA and think of holding a reputable position in society. But on completion of his/her study, whether that person would carry on dissemination of his/her knowledge or have the urge to contribute depends fully on that person's motivation.

However, 23 out of 35 participants implied that study abroad is a matter of personal gain for the academics and not much of a contribution to higher education. Respondent Namira found academic mobility to be a matter of personal gain as she started losing motivation:

I think I am a much better thinker, a much better writer on a personal level. On a professional level, I don't think that I needed this MA degree from USA to teach these levels of Bangladeshi students. With my degree from [University in Bangladesh], I could have easily taught them. But definitely education abroad gives you a certain edge.

Namira's disillusionment is an indicator of the disappointing quality of students who come to study at private universities in Bangladesh (see Chapter 2). So when she feels that the requirement of a degree from abroad is unnecessary to teach poor quality students in private universities, she might have a point.

Saba, Rashna and Neema, all academics from STEM disciplines, endorse this view, saying that only if an academic is personally motivated will they make an effort to adjust within existing limitations. Saba says her study abroad helped her to obtain a grant with which she started her project on return. The lab facility in the

department where she worked was inadequate. She took the initiative to develop collaborative research with a more developed research centre at another university. Saba believes she could achieve all this because she is a very self-motivated and positive person. Rashna speaks of the adjustment she had to make to continue her research. She had worked in the region of genetic engineering for her PhD but there were absolutely no facilities at her home institution to continue research in this subject. Therefore, in order for her students to get involved in projects, she simplified her project into bite-sized chunks for which she could receive small pots of funding. Neema explains:

If I try experimenting with the instruments I have at home, I will never get the precise result I used to receive with the state-of-the-art instruments overseas. I need to make compromises regarding these issues. I am well aware that Bangladesh is a developing country and we have limited resources. As I am a positive person, I am trying to adapt by cutting down on the lab experiments as the lab facility is unavailable. I am focusing instead on questionnaire-based research.

Nusaiba, an academic from social sciences, reinforced the idea of remaining motivated, explaining that when an academic goes to study abroad, they can learn a lot that can be fully utilized on return if in a *receiving mode*. She claims that as she was in that mode, she could introduce Research Methodology and another course to the syllabus of her department based on her learning from her overseas study. Holding on to her motivation despite many hurdles, Munia developed classroom effectiveness research tools for her department based on her PhD research when she returned.

Nusaiba's remark on her academic reintegration was more of anguish. She explained that despite the tension of leaving her husband and son behind, her level of productivity was very high when she was abroad on account of her MA. Nusaiba here points at the restrictive socio-cultural discourses existing in the society that puts majority of family responsibilities on the shoulder of women:

But after coming back home that level has crashed drastically. It takes months to finish the same amount of work that I used to finish within weeks. The reason was that I had so many responsibilities here apart from my studies. This was like the first blow on return.

The same is echoed by Sabina when she says that academics usually come back strongly motivated to contribute, carry on with research and so on. But on return the motivation gradually diminishes because of existing social ties and responsibilities in the form of marriage, family and socializing. Juggling all the responsibilities, she feels, '[w]e are dragged down by too many social commitments'. Both Nusaiba and Sabina's comments are indicative of the social role and responsibilities assigned to women in society irrespective of their professional commitments.

5.3.2. Tension between academics with local and international qualification

On return, when the academics joined their respective workplaces, the majority witnessed an underlying tension between the academics with local and those with international qualifications. After spending year(s) studying abroad, the academics seemed to return to the same traditional classroom constraints of insufficient logistics and resources and in some cases a non-cooperative working environment. For instance, 13 out of 35 of the respondent academics faced hostile situations from the recruiting institutions or from colleagues on return from study abroad, from non-cooperation to questioning the legitimacy of their degree.

Sophia found that the class routine had already been set and the courses allocated before she returned on completion of her PhD:

I started to teach Educational Psychology, which has nothing to do with my area of knowledge. I was not even interested in it. I was not given the option to teach the courses where I could provide input. The senior teachers went on teaching the courses of their choice.

Moreover, the classes were scheduled in the evening, the time when her children needed her the most. Her colleagues knew she had young children. Despite this she was not shown any consideration by being assigned earlier time slots.

Rashna was surprised to find some of her colleagues developing adverse feelings towards her without any apparent reason:

I have never tried to show off to others that I have gained so much professionally, either to family members or to colleagues. But some of my colleagues who are in the same position as I left them, developed some antagonistic feelings towards me.

Both Sophia's and Rashna's stories could be interpreted as a case of threat to the existing academics who might not have updated themselves in the meantime.

Munia had to come back after her PhD defence as her study leave had come to an end. But she was under tremendous pressure from the university authority as she had not brought her certificate with her. She was warned from time to time not to disagree in any administrative matters as she was yet to receive her certificate. Even after receiving her certificate, one of her colleagues was critical of the phrase 'admitted to the degree of' written in her certificate and suspected it was forged. He went as far to write to the university to check its authenticity. Moreover, when she was interviewed for a position in another institution, the expert professor called her aside and asked her to change the status of her degree from *admitted* to *awarded* because to him that was the established norm in Bangladesh. Munia says:

When I was about to leave, the expert called me up again. I was surprised and at the same time pained when he said that I had used a wrong word and the correct English would be awarded not admitted. I thought in my mind as he was such an expert in the field, he would probably ask about my research or the methodology that I had used. But instead this! A professor not asking anything about research but pointing only at a seemingly wrong word!

Samad also experienced a similarly antagonistic situation on his return from overseas study. Like Munia, some of his colleagues were suspicious of his PhD degree. They wrote to his supervisor and to the registrar of the University to check his degree status. Samad expresses his dismay:

So that was quite disappointing that you don't get recognition, you don't get approval or anything. But suddenly like you know you have all these allegations labelled against you.

Namira also emphasizes the professional jealousy aspect:

The institution I joined, my own alma mater, had this rule of not giving MA classes to teachers without a degree from abroad. I found my own teachers not getting the chance to teach MA classes whereas I, being the youngest, got it. So there was a kind of friction and jealousy over that.

This professional jealousy arising in Munia or Samad's case might be owing to the fact that the locally-educated academics felt threatened by the expertise of the overseas-trained academics. It is also indicative of some local and overseas unaccredited universities selling certificates for money, which some prospective job seekers might buy to fulfil the job requirement.

Shobuj speaks of professional jealousy from a different angle. Before he went abroad for his PhD, some of his colleagues lodged a complaint against him saying he asked his students to read too much literature. After receiving his PhD from UK, those colleagues probably became more jealous as Shobuj then had justified reasons for his use of literature because of his exposure abroad:

I was so disappointed when my colleagues said that I should not be referring this much literature to my students. I defended myself, saying that I felt these references were necessary for this topic. But it was not accepted then. But now that I have completed my PhD and continue to do the same [provide a lot of reading], they cannot complain against me because they think I have a degree.

This change in disposition from being a homegrown academic to an overseas-trained academic seems to draw attention to existing social discourse that thinking out of the box or in a different way is unacceptable until and unless it has been endorsed by a Western education seal.

Munia shares another changed behaviour on the part of the returnee academics. She feels that only an overseas-trained returnee seems to value the experience and expertise developed by another returnee and shares:

Nobody is interested in your research. Only people who have studied abroad come forward to register their interest.

Samad shares the same sentiment as Munia:

Very few people are really interested. There are so many PhDs around. But very interestingly, those who have gone abroad, they showed interest. But those who haven't, they actually did not bother.

The same feeling of 'nobody asks about your research' was expressed by 18 participant returnees in total, a good share of academics who have done their PhDs abroad. The 16 others, who have done their MAs, share similar views that their study or experience of overseas study/research only came up while socializing or in the form of chitchat with their colleagues. The fact that only the ones who have studied abroad are showing interest in others' work/research indicates that study abroad contributed in developing interest and bringing positive changes in attitude towards learning.

5.3.3. Dissatisfaction with the current higher education system

Dissatisfaction with the current higher education system seems to prevail among the academics who have returned to Bangladesh on completion of their overseas study.

5.3.3.1. Systemic and accountability issues

31 out of 35 academics spoke of the existing education system as non-transparent and lacking accountability. They make accusations that suggest the state is not sincere enough in providing world-class education. For instance, Samad finds the system of six-month semesters at his public university to be in conflict with the existing conditions in his university. If the number of classes and the number of teachers are taken into account, it becomes extremely difficult to accommodate a large number of students into smaller groups and arrange ample time for them within the duration of a semester. He accuses the university authority of being neglectful as this attempt at semesterization resembling private universities or universities abroad does not fit the public university scenario. Samad explains:

Here we have a six-month semester system. But ideally only 13 classes take place. Moreover, there are so many teachers ... you've got to accommodate all of them. The class slots are three hours, but you seldom get three hours for your class. In the short span of time you need to deliver a lot of things. They actually cannot do the things that we have done abroad.

He also points at the systemic issues relating to the difference between studying for an MA degree at home and abroad. He feels his MA from UK was based on rigorous coursework, reading 500 pages for one assignment. However, the assessment system at home institutions lend themselves to shortcuts. Anybody can read notes or summaries and pass the exam because of the traditional set of questions repeated over the years. He finds the whole assessment system to be delusive as the system is based on reading from notes and memorizing them for success. Samad's noticing of such differences is an indication that the academics simply move with the flow as long as they are in the system. It is mostly after studying abroad that they notice and start indicating the issues with teaching, learning and assessment.

Saba adds that the students are used to seeing the teachers as authoritative figures and the tradition has been such that the students do not even ask for explanation of the remarks on formative assessment scripts, whereas it is expected abroad that the student would ask for clarification if he/she fails to understand a comment or wants to know more about how to improve. She feels that once teachers get exposed to the transparent system and accountability abroad, they should try to break free from the current baffling education system at home and start taking measures to bring changes.

In this connection, Munia recalls her bitter experience on return: the non-cooperation of her home institution where she worked previously. She says:

As soon as I completed my defence, I had to come back. If my institution had allowed just six more months, I could have brought my award, the certificate back with me. I had to face so much harassment because of not having my certificate when I returned.

Her institution threatened her every now and then on different counts until she received her certificate. She refers to the study leave policy as 'unhelpful', as she was not issued more leave for her graduation.

Hamza speaks of lack of accountability in HEIs. He believes that the higher a person rises in position, the greater should their responsibility be. However, in HE policy documents or service rules there seems to be no stated responsibility for the academics nor any room for accountability in the service rules. He takes his position as an example and poses some questions:

Say, four years into my position as a professor, shouldn't my accountability towards my institution, towards education be manifold? What are my contributions to society? If I am accountable, my responsibility will be greater. But I am not accountable. So I see the big-headed professors engaged in politics, busy working in private universities.

Shobuj and Tarif speak of yet another point of dissatisfaction related to scholarships and funding for academics in HE. Both have been victims of prevailing unwritten conditions regarding allocation of scholarships like the Commonwealth Scholarships. Tarif says:

I found my own professor at the interview for Commonwealth scholarship. He said that it was too early for me. I was naïve enough to believe that I had got it as I was number one in the list. Later I found that I had not got it. There is probably a system in the whole thing. Probably it is based on seniority. There might be a list, there might be other factors. Maybe the seniors applying would be given preference.

Though these words seem to be Tarif's surmises, he might have come across these ideas from his seniors. Similar views were shared by Shobuj, which indicates the potential truth:

The first time I applied for Commonwealth Scholarship, I was shortlisted but was told it was too early as I had passed only a year ago. When I applied the second time this time I was sent back saying I was too late in applying. I strongly believe I was the better contender for the scholarship.

Shobuj also shares his experience with a Commonwealth scholar he met later who had done his MA abroad. He was submitting an application and Shobuj discovered at least five spelling mistakes in the first four lines of his application. This might be a very trivial example, but the two comments might be an indication of corruption and nepotism going on in the system.

Maria talks about her experience of working in a private university where there are less qualified teachers who have entered academia through nepotism. They secure their position by oiling the higher authority and maintaining close ties with the senior positions by lending extra hands/extra hours for their work.

5.3.3.2. Lack of research funding

When speaking of research and research funding, the majority of the returnee academics agreed that allocated research funding has been so miserly that doing quality research with such a sum would be very difficult. A number of articles published in the national dailies such as *The Daily Ittefaq* and online discussion fora like *Shocholayotan* support the academics' complaint. There is no allocation for research and development alone in the budget; instead the sum of \$6.8 billion has been allocated for the entire education and technological development sector. This amount is negligible compared to neighbouring countries India and Pakistan, who spend \$6.8 billion and \$66.5 billion respectively per year on research alone (Hossain, 2017).

Mofiz understands negligence to be at the heart of the allegedly dilapidated condition of research at Bangladeshi universities:

Nobody asks you what your PhD is about. No-one is bothered about how people are continuing their research. What I am trying to say is, since the university is not valuing quality research, it is not progressing.

This is echoed in Tarif's words when he speaks of the scenario surrounding research and publication. There is monetary involvement in the different stages of research which has not been taken into account, let alone providing incentives for quality publications:

You need money for data collection apart from getting a promotion, right? Here, publishing in a normal journal carries the same value as publishing in a top-quality journal. Just matter of an article, quality does not matter.

Tarif continues that since funding is sparse:

At least a year is needed to produce a quality publication. You also teach one or two courses along with it. In order to do that you need to be dedicated. If

you are teaching 2/3 courses you would not get the time to dedicate to research. Moreover, what do I get by investing my time? You are to make one publication per year. So, one should be enough. The value is the same.

Tarif meant as the requirement is only one publication per year and there are no incentives, academics see no point in planning or working towards more publications.

Rashna, who worked on HIV for her doctoral project in US, lodges her dissatisfaction, saying:

My research remains within my department. It does not even reach the faculty, let alone other disciplines. No reward. There is no accountability or dissemination of our work/research abroad. We just submit our degree/PhD certificates and that is all.

The same situation was mentioned by a further eight academics out of the 35, who affirmed that all they had to do on return from their overseas study was to submit their certificates and get an increment on successful completion. It seems that what the participant academics are trying to say is that research and quality education is in no way a priority for the stakeholders. Ashab, working in a public university, says:

Here we have very limited funds for research. The way to want to organize things we do not have enough funds for. I have been given responsibility for an office but there is no logistical support for this.

In this connection, the mention of Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) comes up in the interviews with the participant academics. The Ministry of Education, with the assistance of the World Bank, undertook this HEQEP which aimed to improve the quality of teaching-learning and research capabilities of the tertiary education institutions through encouraging both innovation and accountability and by enhancing the technical and institutional capacity of the higher education sector. However, according to the academics, corruption

surrounds this project too. A number of participants reported that the fund only goes to the department/universities who have a strong connection with the management committee of the project. The reason behind this remark could be double-edged. One reason could be that the participants themselves did not fulfil the criteria to apply for funds under this project. Another reason could be that their funding application, despite being strong, was unsuccessful.

Hamza shares his opinion of the condition of research funding. In his view, UGC is the centre of corruption and many of the university teachers are also engaged in this corruption. He asks the question: if those who are responsible for the enhancement of higher education are themselves involved in corruption, then who to depend on? He also mentions HEQEP and the aid and funds coming from foreign donor agencies:

I have received funds from the HEQEP project for two years. What I have seen while doing this project is how a brilliant idea gets destroyed in the hands of corrupt people. Their idea was really ideal: to enhance higher education. They have implemented ideas like this in many other third-world countries. The fund comes to our country and gets shattered. Our teachers arrange tours and workshops with these funds. I also did some. Where is the overall development in the whole process?

He adds:

Funds and initiatives are taken up by different donor agencies. But the moment those ideas reach our country, they begin to rot. Donors think of an ideal situation when they give but we only think about our individual benefits when we receive. If we fail to realise our own good, who will come to save us?

Hamza's comments depict the ongoing corruption regarding project funds allocated by various international donor agencies. He puts his own case forward as an example to establish how funds from donor agencies are wasted and do not lead to the enhancement of higher education.

5.3.3.3. Perceptions of falling standards

Namira had difficulty adjusting her high standards of critical thinking and academic writing to the poor-quality students she was getting in the institution she was teaching in. The private universities take in even poor quality students. For an overseas trained teacher it was a challenge for Namira to stoop to a lower level and adjust the grade according to their performance, but she had to do it. In her words:

I had nothing to do but to adjust. I had to grade them according to the authority's instructions. Because if I had to grade them according to the way I was graded in the USA, half the section would fail in the General courses. At this university if we could maintain proper a standard in the courses 101 or 102, then the majority of the students would fail. Nobody would get an A.

What Namira was not overtly revealing was that she would probably lose her job if she did not adhere to the instructions provided by the university authority. This is indicated by Mahin, when her students demanded high grades even after performing poorly in the exams. Mahin says:

Since this is the private sector, there is a lot of pressure. Please consider, please do this, please do that ... it just goes against the norms. Even the students know that we have been instructed to provide at least a B+. So they know they really do not have to study hard. They will eventually end up getting a B+.

Saba, a public university teacher joined this group as she also expressed her frustration regarding her students. She had noticed this current trend for her students to become very target oriented. They want to study a subject which is more market-oriented in order to get to a certain job or secure a teaching position. She says:

Our education sector has become so market oriented. The students want a shortcut to success. They do not wish to invest enough time to study in detail

for the sake of knowledge. If we could guide them properly, I am sure they would study but this would require change in the overall education system from the SSC, HSC level because the analytical capacity is not being developed in the students. Neither is narrative or imaginative capability harnessed.

Hamza, Namira and Saba's experience of teaching reflects the falling standard of education due to its marketisation and commodification.

5.3.3.4. Political influences in HE

A large number of the respondents, 29 out of 35, believed that getting involved in local politics, especially with the ruling party, has much to do in empowering the academics whether they have studied abroad or not. In their opinion, this identity enables them to receive undue advantages such as receiving university funds, extension of study leave, higher education funding and so on. Sajib points out that power and syndication are big factors in public universities. He cites the example of one of the largest public universities:

If you look at X university, if you are a dedicated researcher there, there is no guarantee that you will secure a top position or reach the peak. Get involved in politics, you will become the VC or Pro-VC.

Mofiz was a respondent from a public university who on return from his PhD studies faced an untoward situation at his department. He then got himself a political identity because:

My own senior colleagues were not allowing me the scope to supervise the researchers that I had expertise in. I was deprived of the research funding that was assigned for the faculty members. The ones who had better connections with the seniors or had political connections were the gainers. I wanted to work, wanted to do research. So I readily joined politics, applied for and got elected for a position, and now I can derive research funding for various

projects, and provide my students with various research tools and subscriptions to academic journals.

Mofiz added that he could take part in various developmental activities that he thought he would get involved in on return. He also feels that:

the quicker one accommodates oneself to the existing system by compromising his/her idealistic principles, the better chance he/she has of survival and success.

Mofiz's opinion stands in stark opposition to his colleague Ashab, who works at the same university but in a different department. Ashab states that he received three scholarships for his PhD, one from abroad to cover the difference in local and international fees, one for maintenance, and the other a specific scholarship from the home institution. Allegedly, this particular scholarship only goes to a person who believes in the same political ideology as the scholarship provider. But he was cautious while speaking of his own political affiliation and rejects the idea of being seriously involved in politics. He has pictures hanging in his office of him receiving awards from the same political party that provided him with a scholarship. He believes becoming a member of any political party to be a manifestation of free thinking and that there is nothing wrong in working for that party. However, he rejected the idea of political influence in his university:

Joining politics and reaping the benefits of it is not feasible in our university context. The ones who get promotion, they are being promoted because of their qualification specially in our department. Otherwise, there are many politically powerful people without PhDs who have not been promoted.

He added:

Political influence is very rare in our university context. Not only in humanities, but even in science and commerce the selection committees are formed with people from different groups. So the selection process is quite rigorous here.

On the issue of local and national politics influencing decision-making in HE, Mofiz and Ashab present two contrastive perspectives of the same university. This could be an indication of the compromises or adjustments they have made in their professional trajectories prior and post return from study abroad. However, getting involved in party politics has been proved beneficial for both the colleagues and has played some role in empowering them.

Mala, a participant from a different public university, also sounds to some extent like Mofiz. She said:

I joined politics to raise my voice and strengthen my identity. Before that my voice was unheard.

Namira cited an example of how political affiliation influenced recruitment in her previous workplace. She felt that the corruption and political influence which once prevailed only in the public domain has crept into the private sector as well. In her previous HEI, during a recruitment process, a very well-renowned and respectable professor was the advisor of the board. The department recorded a selection of four people and sent to the authority for the interview. But the authority sent the names of six people in total, an additional two for the interview. They were wildcard entries. She still remembers that conversation with her professor:

Is this a reality show? How can they place wildcard entries in university recruitment? They were the ruling party-recommended people. One of them still exists in that institution and the other has left. This was a sensitive matter and it shook the whole department. If our opinions get superseded like this, what does the future hold for us? My respectable professor eventually left that HEI.

Reshad, a respondent from a public university, spoke about the underlying power struggle in the public universities. At a public university, the head of the department/school is a position that happens by rotation based on seniority. The

Dean, which is supposed to be the most superior academic position, is elected from among the academics. In contrast, at the public universities, the nomination for this position is only given to a person who has a political identity, believes in a definite political ideology and supports one of the two major political parties. Reshad said:

Thus logically he/she is representing a political party. Next in line are the higher positions of Pro-VC, VC and Treasurer. Here, the government appoints to these three positions. It means that whichever ruling party prevails, these three positions follow that ruling party's ideology.

What Reshad is trying to point out here is that the government prefers academics who belong to their political camp, and perhaps have been active members of that political party, for the top positions in HEI, namely Treasurer, Pro-VC and VC. In this way, everything inside a university, starting from recruitment to allocation of funding, becomes politicized.

5.3.3.5. Complaints about the higher education policy

Higher education policy and the sine qua non seems to be a dominant theme in the narratives of the academics, as 18 out of 35 participants talked about problems with HE policy. As universities are autonomous organisations they have their own service rules, but the policy regarding promotion for academics who have been abroad on study leave seem to be similar in most public universities. 12 of the academics working in public universities mentioned in their narratives that their promotion was delayed as they were on study leave. Mofiz says:

I have become a bit junior in my department because I have done my PhD from abroad.

Reshad also explained:

If you are studying abroad, say for five years, you may fall behind the ones who are pursuing their PhDs at home. Say you have taken five years to complete

your PhD but the ones doing that at home completed within four years, so they get their promotions. Some even complete their PhDs within two to three years. Because they do not need to take study leave, they are carrying on their service and performing other tasks at the same time. Also getting promoted before you.

Saba adds:

I am still lagging behind in my career. My promotion from assistant to associate professorship is due but I don't think that the recognition I deserve can be reciprocated by a title. Hence I am not hankering after it. If I agreed to some of the unwritten criteria, said yes to some of the things, maybe I could have got some advantages.

Saba here was pointing at the existing local politics and their influence in her institution, and her reluctance to join such advances to take undue benefits.

In the service rules it is mentioned that active service of 3-5 years is required for most promotions and postgraduate study overseas is not counted as active service. Hence, on completion of their doctoral studies abroad the academic cannot fulfill this criterion and in many cases become junior to their colleagues who have completed their PhDs from the home country, creating professional dissatisfaction among the returnee academics. This feeling was echoed by Hamza:

If I see my own colleague who joined with me getting promotion just because he did his PhD at home, then I feel compelled to say that my university is discouraging academics to pursue their PhDs abroad.

The majority of the participants informed me that the institution's role on return of the academics from study abroad was in most cases limited to asking for submission of a copy of the degree certificate, a small monetary increment and promotion if due. Rashna provides straightforward information in this regard. She feels that as she is from a STEM discipline, the majority of her colleagues have a

degree from abroad, which has made them interested in updating themselves and learning from others about what they have learnt/researched. She said:

There has been no incentive or recognition on the institution's part. There's no system. But I got my promotion. I had to mention that I had completed my MA and PhD from abroad in the Yearly Report and had to submit my certificates and that's it.

Similarly, Nusaiba is critical of her institution's response:

On return I had some discussions with my colleagues about my studies, but it was as part of chatting. It was not a purposeful discussion, not a discussion which might be addressed as worthwhile. I submitted my certificate for promotion and to get an increment.

In this connection, 11 out of 14 participants working in public universities implied that study abroad is a matter of personal rather than professional gain for the academics. The interview with public university academic Tomal was arranged in a top private university where he was teaching part-time. Tomal touched on the issue of teaching in private universities:

The title of Dr that we have managed to add to our names is small, but because of that we have come to this place to teach.

What he meant here was that public university lecturers get a negligible increment/payrise, and in some cases a concession in service years, when they submit their MA/PhD certificates from abroad. This amount is allegedly insufficient compared to the growing economy and for meeting family requirements. But this overseas qualification increases demand for them in private universities, where they can draw a handsome figure from part-time teaching.

Another respondent, Samad, feels that taking up an overseas qualification has become totally money oriented. He feels since the state is not serious about

providing world-class education, the whole education system has become a marketplace for buying and selling education in place of economic goods. He asserts that the interest of academics in study abroad has become purely monetary:

So they are mostly interested in overseas funding. HEQEP etc are buzzwords. The teachers are getting a degree from abroad just for the sake of doing it and not for the sake of knowledge as the case should be.

The idea central to this comment is that the teachers have become more interested in drawing money for personal benefit than in employing the fund for research.

Hamza also expressed his thoughts on academics' interest turning towards economic benefit rather than knowledge dissemination. He also mentioned HEQEP:

Our teachers got the taste of money through this HEQEP project. The responsible senior professors divided the sum into such small amounts that it would not come in handy for any sort of developmental activities. The first phase of the project was aptly allocated based on qualification and according to the quality of the proposals. But from the second phase onwards, things got politicized.

Hamza witnessed this corruption himself as he received funds from the project and faced trouble when he applied for the second phase. He also seemed to be cynical about the qualifications of the assessors involved in the evaluation process.

Dissatisfaction seems to be held in common among most academics regarding the service rules and HE policy. The 1973 Act, an outdated policy document, has become a source of disappointment for most of the academics on various grounds, as seen in this section. As the policy document does not provide any specific guidelines and despite some amendments being drafted a couple of years back, they are yet to see daylight. The 2013 UGC Report mentioned that it is time to make amendments and provide more facilities and incentives, like a higher payscale, to stop brain-drain and encourage teachers who are studying abroad to return to

Bangladesh on completion of their studies. However, the absence of further development since then renders the intention of the stakeholders questionable here.

Hamza came up with an explanation for why the experts in their respective fields might not operate in the way they are expected to:

If I try and have a look at the stakeholders/experts in HE, many of them do not have a degree from abroad, let alone know about how that degree is valued. They have pursued their degree at home and thus formulated the rules according to their desire. Now these rules have never been modified. If you ask one of these heads of an institution what his thoughts are for enhancing higher education, I am damn sure his answer would not match any progressive thoughts.

What Hamza meant by progressive thoughts is that in the era of globalisation and technological advancement things are changing fast. A stakeholder has to be well informed and updated about these changes and implement these in their thoughts and HE policy accordingly. Tomal adds to this view:

The ones who are running the university, they are administrators. But actually, by nature they are not administrators. For example, the vice-chancellors in our universities are teachers. Then how did he or she get this deputation? Somehow, they make their way to administration. Now, we can expect that these people will be able to identify and work on the existing problems. But is this really happening?

Tomal's point here referred to the inexperience of the top administrators, like VC or Pro-VC, who reach these positions with very little administrative training or experience.

5.3.3.6. Dissatisfaction with the difference in policy and practice in public and private universities

There are a number of differences in policy and practice in public and private universities that come up in the interviews with the academics. While the private university teachers work full-time in their institutions, public university teachers with overseas qualifications get the opportunity to work part-time in these institutions. The latter receive double benefits in the form of drawing salary from two institutions, flexibility in work and scope of research, which become a point of enmity for the private university teachers. However, they cannot complain because the difference in pay for the academics working in public universities is negligible compared to any top-ranking private university salary. Moreover, in the top-ranking universities academics are required to possess an MA/PhD degree from Western countries like North America, UK and Australia. These academics receive higher salaries compared to those with local degrees. Asif came up with an explanation regarding this preference for overseas degrees by private universities:

There is a kind of notion. Culturally, we are taking the West as superior which creates problems. If a person goes abroad to study, he [sic] is more knowledgeable. Not exactly knowledgeable; it is better to say that he is eligible because one might not really possess the knowledge. But one might be eligible for getting a better job, for getting a better position, getting early promotion ... so this overseas degree is a criterion which has engulfed our education system.

Moving forward, while these academics adhere to all the strict rules regarding teaching, assessment and evaluation in the private domain, they show reluctance to implement the same rules in public university terrain. Hamza stands witness to this reluctance as he wanted to introduce student evaluations in his department, but received support neither from his colleagues nor from the university at that time (2006). However, student evaluation has been introduced in some of the departments in recent times under the HEQEP project funding. Hamza feels that decisions are honoured or taken into account only when they are top down or receive backing from politically powerful teacher groups:

I have tried to introduce teacher evaluation and student evaluation systems at my university but my colleagues had divided opinions. Hence the proposal failed to get acceptance.

Kamal tried implementing the same in his department in another public university. Initially, being highly enthusiastic, he initiated the evaluation process, but within a short time it came to a halt. He assumed that it was probably the manual process of evaluation (as there was no software at the time) that led to disinterest among the academics. Later, with the help of another academic from the IT sector, software was developed for reviving student evaluation. Still, this initiative did not materialize either because the higher authority was divided in their opinion. He summed up the whole scenario of what happened to the initiatives in two sentences:

I learnt about the significance of evaluation during my thesis days, tried to implement it in my department and came across various barriers. Eventually I had to abandon the whole idea.

Hamza felt that the reason for this reluctance might be that many of the academics do not take classes regularly at public universities. They attend and take classes for only two days a week at the mother institution and work the rest of the five days on peripheral lectures in various private institutions. The quality of these academics' teaching might then become questionable because they spend all their time and energy teaching at various institutions in place of updating themselves or incorporating research into their teaching.

In the service rules of a number of public universities, it is mentioned that academics with permission from the authorities can teach part time in the highest two institutions. However, according to academics like Mofiz, Samad and Saba, academics are abusing the flexibility provided by their institutions. Hamza commented:

Everybody wants to be economically stable. But there has to be a limit to how far we can go. We have no limits. How many universities can one academic teach in? He/she has a parent institution. Can teach in highest another institution. But how about teaching in three to four other institutions? How is this feasible?

Karim, on the other hand, adds a different edge to this allegation. He says he does not like teaching in other private universities apart from his parent public university, as it involves a lot of extra labour in preparing, assessing and commuting. However, he provided reasons for working in other places:

I am a researcher. If I need to worry about my child's tuition fees, how to manage all the home expenses and other bits at the end of the month, then I am sorry to say I cannot do research.

He added:

We are compelled to teach in other institutions because at the end of the day the expenses remain our chief concern. If the authorities could ensure that they provide enough for our domestic needs like education for our children and proper home expenses, why would we not provide all our hard work in teaching and research in our home institution?

A big difference between the public and private universities is the recruitment process. The recruitment process in the public university is quite lax. According to Asif, a public university teacher, this recruitment process has been and still is a faulty one as it should be more rigorous and involve demonstration. He said:

The system needs to be changed. The private institutions recruit through some specific validations. But these are absolutely non-existent in public universities. You get recruited just by a couple of minutes of interview which is absurd. This cannot be an ideal system.

He posed further questions:

Look at our recruitment criteria. Our student who last week was a student of MA, I mean I have just had classes with her about a week back, now she will be lecturing for the MA classes herself four weeks later. I don't find her eligible for this ... not at all. Training is required. One who has made a gross mistake three weeks back, how can she take classes after four weeks?

While public university academics point to the differences between public and private universities, Sajib highlighted some negative aspects of working in private universities. His institution does provide him with study leave for three years but in lieu it doubles the years he has to serve at the university. Sajib said:

We are gainers in the sense that a private university has given us three years study leave. But they have set the rules that I have to stay and serve the institution for six years on return. I do not find this an incentive.

This bond is double the amount of time for public university academics, who usually sign a bond to return and serve the same number of years spent on study abroad. However, one positive trait that the top-ranking private universities have started recognizing is the value of quality research. This view was endorsed by Sajib, Rahat, Sabina and Neema, all of whom work in different private universities. Sajib said:

In general, in Bangladesh, the focus is on the quantity of publications and how many you have published, for example to get a promotion. Initially they will look at the quantity then the quality. But nowadays in ... this issue of quality publications, like publishing in two-star or three-star ranking journals, is coming up and will be gradually introduced into policy. This is positive.

Neema, Sabina and Rahat also state that their private university authority is encouraging research and the members of staff are given necessary assistance to

carry out projects, like providing small funds or conference bursaries and leave to present at various conferences.

5.4. Societal reintegration: Torn between roles of parent and academic

Of the 35 participant returnees, 10 of the academics expressed their elation at reuniting with their family and friends. However, most of these academics happened to be single people without a partner or children. 15 of the 35 participants maintained that they did face difficulty in adjusting to their home environment mainly because of their children. Moreover, all the female respondents (12 of 35 participants) chose to speak about their family reintegration when provided with an open floor to pick any area of re-entry experience to comment on.

5.5. Gendered re-entry experience

During the interview, the female respondents started with their family and the struggle associated with their choice to study abroad. Hania said:

I had mixed feelings, to be honest. Initially it felt a bit weird, I was missing my life abroad. Then again, I was happy that I was home after all these years. My children also went through a similar transition phase.

Hania further added that she was mentally prepared for the return. She did witness a lot of changes at her workplace, but she knew in her mind that she would return to her workplace, so she prepared herself for the possible changes. Hania stated that she was welcomed at her university warmly. Her husband was in Bangladesh during her study abroad years and the idea of reuniting with the family helped her to settle down even faster than she had imagined.

Though Hania said she did not have much difficulty, for most of the returnees with children, social security turned out to be a big issue. In this case, the children's expectations about their education and social life might have been greatly raised by

their time abroad. Consequently, on return they were the ones to make grievous compromises to accommodate to the different social environment. Parents, like Hania and Nima, who were more or less aware of the situation at home, went through real hardships trying to make this transition as smooth as possible for their children.

Children's lives in Bangladesh are heavily burdened with study pressure. Moreover, for children living in the capital city Dhaka, severe traffic jams and lack of social security leave very little time or space for extra-curricular activities. The 11 respondents who had their families with them while studying abroad reiterate this. Eight respondents emphasise that their children had a very tough time adjusting at home owing to the schooling system abroad and the social security that they had greatly enjoyed. In Sophia's case, she joined her workplace on return while her children remained at home. It took some time for Sophia to get them admitted to a good school. Sophia shared:

One day she came to me and asked whether there was anybody in my family who was abandoned. When I replied in the negative, she said that she felt like an abandoned child. My children had a life in Sydney, we did have some quality time despite my studies. They went to the beaches, went cycling, swimming and also enjoyed weekend shopping.

She further shared her mental agony on the part of the children, which may echo the feelings of all the children of returnees:

Now their life has become limited to homework, class tests, more and more studies. With all these they have lots of frustration. As a mother I have to deal with those frustrations. It was tough. After two years they have sort of settled down but still my daughter cries every now and then for Australia.

Nusaiba, Sama, Saba and Munia express their guilt because they either had to separate from their children/family or, despite having their children with them, could not give them proper time owing to their study pressure. What they probably

failed to realise is that the children were much more involved in their decision to go abroad than they initially thought. Nusaibah expressed her torment:

I have a very supportive husband. I left my three-year-old baby behind. I felt so distraught ... so distressed! My baby wept every time I spoke to him over Skype. I stopped talking to him over Skype then.

Munia shared:

I could not give much time to my three-year-old daughter when I was doing my PhD. I used to scream at her at times. But my little girl was a friendly child just like her mother. I would say her patience is her contribution to my studies. First my husband and then me ... she had to bear our neglect for eight long years.

These are few instances of the mental trauma academics went through on account of their children. In the next section I examine the gendered experience of the returnees, which eventually provides answer to the research question on male-female differences in experience on return from study abroad.

Saba shared her first return impression on her return after completing her PhD in Australia:

The immigration officer at Dhaka airport threw an angry gaze at my crying baby as if we had committed some crime. I felt so angry. In Australia, wherever I took my baby with me, people were so helpful ... people stopped to say hello to my son. I miss this so much. I realized I have come back to a culture which is not at all child friendly.

The social readjustment started from the moment she set her foot in the airport; this reinforces the central theme of this section, that children were at the heart of social reintegration for returnee academics with family. It was not very different for the other female participants, who narrated their share of social reintegration

issues. The focus of reintegration varied extensively between male and female participants, as pointed out in the sections below.

5.5.1. Effect of prevalent discourses on female academics' return experience

In a patriarchal society like Bangladesh, men are seen as the breadwinners of the family whereas women are expected to play the role of a good wife and mother, who preferably stays at home to take care of the family. In the same line, the female partner is expected to make all sorts of compromises and sacrifices when it comes to her professional life. Likewise, in this study all 12 of the female academics prioritise their family and speak about their turmoil in deciding their overseas study and their hardships on adjusting their family/themselves on return. On the other hand, only four out of 23 male academics deliberately spoke about issues they witnessed in reintegrating their families. Of this four, two male returnees did not even mention their families, though their family was with them during their study overseas. They just touched on their family issues as a matter-of-fact thing when asked whether they had any trouble reintegrating on return. This is how a male academic, Shaikat, spoke of family issues:

My daughter had trouble with her studies on return and had to be sent to an English-medium school. Later when I chose to go abroad for my postdoc, I thought I would go alone. I do not need to take all the hassle again.

Nabil just touched on his daughters' trauma and reverse culture shock in reintegrating with Bangladeshi education and cultural norms, while his wife, another participant academic, prioritised the family as a whole and began by speaking of their distress on return. Neema said:

I had the mind to do a postdoc but my daughter will be sitting her GCSE exams in the coming years, so I am not planning on anything else. I will stay at home and try to gather research funding for further research. I will give time to my daughters. The trouble is, as a mother I cannot ignore the needs of my

children; then again, as a professional, I cannot ignore my career. So it is a challenge.

Hamza spoke about his son's trouble with education in the same way, but he judged the struggle as one of the side-effects of reintegration. This difference actually points to the typical patriarchal beliefs prevailing in Bangladesh, where women and children are time and again viewed as household responsibilities.

Endorsing the same belief, Namira spoke of her compromising role and dilemma as a partner:

When I got married my husband worked in Singapore. I took a year's leave to stay with him in Singapore. I also studied and taught there. But I do not know where we are heading next. He wants to go to UK. I want to go to USA. We have to settle midway. But this is where I am now.

Munia, another female academic, said:

I will never be able to forget my husband's contribution to my studies. He helped me out a lot. When I went for fieldwork, I could not give time to my daughter. My mom and other family members took care of her. This was a huge support for me.

However, none of the male academics, except for Reshad and Taimur, mentioned any such sacrifice on their part. Maybe for the male academics family matters carried less significance in comparison to professional matters, as their society seems to attribute family responsibilities mostly to women. Female academics like Namira were quite vocal in articulating or expressing gratitude for the support provided by her spouse and family members for her progression of career, while the male participants totally ignored this aspect.

Following a similar trend of sacrifice and compromise, female academics like Neema and Munia chose UK as their study destination as their husbands were

already pursuing their studies there or had offers to study there. Sama went to US for her studies, but could only decide to go when her parents volunteered to look after her baby. She went to US, and her husband was in a different district while her baby was with her parents in another. She said:

Just imagine my condition, the struggle I had been through. My whole life was shattered in taking this decision to go abroad to study.

Sama decided on return that she would not even apply to study for her PhD in the next few years so that her family would not suffer the trauma of separation again. Participants like Sophia, Nusaiba and Maria suffered from the same mental pressure of prioritization.

Again, support from family was a noteworthy issue for the female academics when taking the decision to study abroad. For instance, Saba could do her PhD in Australia as she received full support from her in laws. Her husband continued his profession in Bangladesh and visited her twice or thrice a year. She stayed with her brother's family in Australia and her son was born there. Eventually, she had to return immediately after submitting her thesis, without the degree being awarded, to put an end to her husband travelling to and fro between Dhaka and Australia. It was not that she was under terrible pressure and could not have returned after graduation. However, it was made obvious through gestures of losing patience and mention of various family issues arising owing to her absence that signalled that she should return immediately after submission. Sophia also had to do the same; finish as soon as possible and return, as she also wanted to put an end to her husband's commute.

5.5.1.1. Effect of existing social stigma

Of the 12 female participant academics, four were unmarried when they went abroad to pursue their MA degrees. Such is the effect of existing social stigma that all four had to get married immediately on return because of the parental pressure that arose out of the fear of stigma. The social discourse of getting a daughter

married before she becomes highly educated and starts thinking of herself as a liberated woman raising her voice on equality and progression, pushed Namira, Sara and Maria to get married soon after return. Examples of societal pressure are apparent in the participants' words. Before Namira set off for her MA studies, her aunt from US called up her mother to say:

You are sending off your daughter here without getting her married ... what if she marries a person from another race?

Since her mother was on her side regarding her overseas study, Namira was sent off happily. She returned a self-dependent person managing things on her own. But then:

The scenario changed as soon as I came back to Dhaka. You cannot move without a car. You need to come back home by 6pm. If I am late by 15 minutes mom calls up and asks for reasons. Who am I going out with? When? Who's coming? I went back to my childhood days.

Moreover, by the time she returned, her mother was fully convinced of the stigma and started saying 'you are becoming too educated. You have started thinking too highly of yourself', and so on. Adding fuel to the fire. other female relatives joined in:

Your daughter has already started working in a university and has also done an MA from abroad. Why don't you get her married now? If not now, then when the hell would you get her married?

Namira tried dating her fiancé for a while but her mom wanted to marry her off right away. This time the thought of an unmarried girl moving around with her fiancé in a conservative society was associated with the stigma that made her mother force her into marriage within a month. Namira, who received an award for Outstanding MA Thesis of the Year, could have started her PhD immediately, but she was homesick and decided to return. The rest has already been mentioned

above. As described in section 5.5.1., she is now in the horns of the dilemma of where to go for her PhD and, at the time of writing this thesis, she has yet to reach an agreeable solution.

Sabina took her MA in the UK before she got married but is now thinking of Malaysia as an alternative destination for her PhD studies because her husband does not want to move far from the country. All these female academics are liberated, as in educated and economically independent academic women who have eventually conformed to 'man-made' societal norms, sometimes in the form of societal pressure or their partner's choice of destination. In contrast none of the male academics, apart from Reshad and Taimur, had made any such sacrifice for their partners or families. Reshad took a semester off from his MA degree to be with his wife during her pregnancy, while Taimur decided to come back to Dhaka to stay and work with his wife.

Again, social stigma seems to follow a woman in academia who has had a divorce, just like any other woman in society. Maisha, like Namira and Sabina, had to get married immediately on the of completion of her MA degree and return from UK. However it did not last, and she had to get a divorce within nine months of her marriage. Maisha explained the circumstances:

There was this circular for a lectureship (in academia) right after I got married. I applied, got selected and took up the job. But then a family feud ignited between me and my in-laws on account of my job.

Apart from the psychological anguish of the separation due to far-reaching bitterness, she became subject to gender discrimination from her male colleagues at her workplace. The stigma associated with a broken marriage followed her everywhere as the prevailing conservative culture tends to denounce divorce and holds women responsible for the separation. Moreover, men around her tried to make a pass at her. Maisha shared her steps to combat this stigma:

After my divorce, the blow did not come from my department, but the university as a whole started pointing the finger at me that I am available. People started passing comments behind my back. I joined politics just to establish an identity for myself after that.

Maisha might be the only participant who tried to stand tall against male advances. She might have figured that the only way she could avoid this male intrusion into her privacy was to have a strong position inside the university backed by political affiliation.

Maria spoke of a different social stigma related to women's study-abroad experience:

When you go to study overseas, the aspiration remains that you expect something very nice to happen on return. But in many cases, it does not happen. If I had not got my job early on my return, people would have started raising questions - has she really studied? Or what was she really doing during her time in London? They judge that quickly on your character and everything.

Participant Rashna adds another interesting dimension to how men wish to view women in Bangladeshi society. She found on return that people still like to comment on women as a body/showpiece rather than a female professional. Her sharing of these episodes is evidence that nobody has ever asked her about her work or research:

Since you asked me about my experience, I have given you all this information. Otherwise I would not have said these things publicly. And nobody wants to know what happened on return. What they want to know is why have I put on so much weight? You have become fairer/darker/why have you shortened your hair? They do not ask what have you gained from your study abroad? What was your area of research?

Thus once again women were identified by physical attributes in place of their intellectual blossoming, despite being members of the upper echelons of society as academics.

5.5.2. Responsibility for work-family life balance thrust entirely on women

When it comes to the question of work-family life balance, female academics seemed to be torn between whether to prioritize family or career - and in most cases, it turned out to be family. Sama went to US for her studies but could only decide to go when her parents volunteered to look after her baby. She went to the US and her husband was in a different district while her baby was with her parents in another. She said:

Just imagine my condition, the struggle I had been through. My whole life was shattered in taking this decision to go abroad to study.

Sama feels that she did take up the challenge of prioritizing her studies but the agony she suffered by being separated from her family has compelled her to postpone her desire to do a PhD at least for the next couple of years. She said:

My son did not want to eat the food I cooked, he did not want to come with me. Wanted to stay back with his Grandma. Then I decided I would not apply for PhD for at least three years. Otherwise my child would face dire consequences. The parent-child relationship would be hampered. We would lose our importance in his life. Parents play such vital roles in a child's development as a human being. He should be growing up with our guided presence.

Munia shared her position regarding choosing a destination for overseas study:

As an academic, I needed to do a PhD. I could not go according to my wish. Since my husband was in UK at the time, I had to choose UK as my study abroad destination.

Neema also chose UK as her study destination as her husband was already pursuing his PhD there. Saba could do her PhD in Australia as she received full support from her in laws. Her husband continued his profession in Bangladesh and visited her twice or thrice a year. She stayed with her brother's family in Australia and her son was born there. While the female academics spoke of their struggles with their work-family life balance and trying to portray themselves as successful homemakers, mothers and wives, for the majority of the male academics family matters apparently carried less significance and were rather ignored during the interviews, as mentioned in Section 5.5.1 above.

5.5.3. Glass ceiling on return

Despite all the progress, the glass ceiling, i.e. the invisible barriers that women encounter in their career progression (Bombuwela and De Alwis, 2013), in Bangladesh has been central to the experience of the female respondents like Namira, Maria and Sabina. Respondent Nusaiba, who took first place in her MA exam and received a prestigious scholarship to do another MA from UK, is still in a dilemma regarding whether or not to do a PhD. She left her child behind to pursue her MA for a year but is now abandoning her thoughts of a PhD, not only because of her son's education but also because of insecurity related to her partner:

Well, this is such a struggle. It is like fighting against the wind. You are leaving your spouse behind and heading towards uncertainty. By the time you are back, you really do not know whether you will come back to the same person. Divorces are becoming quite common these days.

Nusaiba's worry points to another dilemma for the married women academics: if the partner is not an academic, he might not be happy about his spouse's decision to go abroad to study and leave the family behind. Nusaiba spoke of this dilemma. Her spouse did not say no, but separating the family for four to five years to do a PhD abroad became a period of suffering for the whole family. It also raised the obvious question of whether the sacrifice is at all worth the outcome. Thus female academics suffering from the guilt of separating their children from their father is

unsurprising. Society seems to point fingers at them or hold them responsible for any mishaps in family life. As Nusaiba said: 'How strange this is! Going abroad for a woman is like going for a battle!'

Nusaiba also worried about the escalating divorce rates in the country in recent years. There are also stories circulating of cases where the husband/wife went to study abroad and the spouse embarked on an extramarital affair(s) out of loneliness, which eventually resulted in a divorce. Nusaiba's apprehension has been endorsed by articles published in newspapers like the *The Daily Star*. In two articles published in August 2017 and September 2018 the focus was respectively on the divorce rate doubling and the separation rate tripling, and understanding the rise in divorce in Bangladesh. The articles quoted data compiled by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) showing that the crude rate of divorce was 0.6 per 1,000 of population, which increased to 1.1 in 2016.

Maria, a participant from a private university, added:

You are not getting any firm assurance from your family. The husband doesn't say you go or go ahead. He says do whatever you wish to. Or who's gonna look after your kid? So if you are not receiving proper support, how would you go to study overseas?

There seemed to be no scope for a mutual decision on what could be done in this regard. Maria said that if she persisted in discussing the issue, silence followed and her husband stopped responding. Basically, in Maria's case the male partner expected the female partner to decide that she would sacrifice the opportunity and abandon the idea of higher studies for the family's sake.

In the case of Saba, she returned immediately after submitting her thesis and without the degree being awarded. In her own words:

I had to return before my degree was awarded. I had my baby with me but my husband was in Bangladesh. I submitted my thesis and came back to end this trauma of a separated family.

Apparently, she was not pressurized to return but was asked repeatedly when she was submitting. The eerie silence following the discussion related to submission was enough to signal her to get back home. Sophia also had to do the same; finish as soon as possible and return to put an end to her husband's commute. Sama echoed this:

My family life was in complete disarray when I went abroad to study leaving my husband in one place and my baby with my parents. I got this MA degree at the cost of my family life. Can anyone imagine the struggles I went through?

The mental pressure that the women academics like Maria, Saba, Sophia and Sama went through either in taking the decision to go abroad for studies or return immediately on/prior to completion indicates what an upward battle these professional women had to fight for their career progression.

5.5.4. Women's voice against institutional injustice

Munia narrated her experience of how her institution and colleagues raised barriers for her at her workplace on her return from study abroad. She had to come back after her PhD defense as her study leave had come to an end. However, she came under tremendous pressure from the university authorities as she had not brought her certificate with her. Whenever she tried to raise her voice regarding any issues, she was reminded of this. Finding her in a vulnerable position, her colleagues and a recruiting professor also doubted the authenticity of her degree, as mentioned in 5.3.2 above.

Nusaiba's remark on her academic reintegration was more of anguish. She explained that despite leaving her husband and son behind during her time abroad for her MA, her level of productivity was very high. She said:

But after coming back home that level crashed drastically. It takes months to finish the same amount of work that I used to finish within weeks. The reason is that I have so many responsibilities here apart from my studies. This was like the first blow on return.

This is echoed by Sabina when she says that academics usually come back strongly motivated to contribute and continue research. However, on return the academics' motivation gradually diminishes because of social ties in the form of marriage, family and socializing. Juggling all the responsibilities, she sighed, means that 'we are dragged down by too many social commitments'.

Maria adds a point to society's negative outlook on women's study abroad experience:

If I had not got my job early on my return, people would have started raising questions - has she really studied? Or what was she really doing during her time in London? They judge that quickly on your character and everything.

Despite the difference in outlook from the male academics and the struggles expressed by the women academics, there still seems to be a note of positivity in the female narratives. They are, compared to their mothers' generation, liberated women, as they have the power to advance their careers to a certain extent. Thus they express their gratitude to their spouse and family and remain strong in their disposition. It was felt that the female academics were trying to frame a positive picture of themselves in the eyes of the researcher. This show of positivity against all odds might be an indication of how complicit they are in their submission to the ongoing male hegemony. From their confessions, the majority of the female academics seem to have witnessed the glass ceiling in the form of hostility from colleagues, institutions, and/or unsupportive family, and embraced their positions by not protesting. They seem to have developed a sort of compliance within themselves to remain under the glass ceiling. Only one of the female academics in this study, Maisha, decided to raise her voice.

5.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has focused on communicating the experiences of the participants who actively engaged in reflecting on the various aspects of re-entry. In the first section, it was found that the participant academics' motivation for studying abroad revolved around professional progression and economic stability in the form of finding a well-paid job and promotion. Interest in research and developing expertise in their subject were also mentioned, along with a male-specific (contribution) and female-specific (social) factors. The insights gained from the interviews reiterated the beneficial effects of study abroad i.e. enhanced knowledge and well developed skills that led to the formation of a newer, more knowledgeable identity of the academics. However, incidents quoted by participants on various occasions signify that there are underlying issues in the existing higher education system e.g. political intervention, corruption, problematic service rules and higher education policy and also antagonism between homegrown and overseas trained academics that has impacted on the return experience of the participants. In this circumstance, the highly motivated ones managed to establish their positions while others diverted their attention towards economic gains or various other pursuits. It was the women participants who shared more about the social side of reintegration, highlighting that family support and reintegration of children into the home environment were crucial factors on return. The fact that all four unmarried women academics got married soon after return, the compromises and the slow progression (except for the highly motivated women academics), point to the existing sociocultural discourses and the glass ceiling that stand in the way of women's progression.

The next chapter offers four carefully selected stories of the academic participants as vignettes to provide a clear and complete understanding of their return experience.

Chapter 6: Vignettes of participant academics

The end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time. ~T.S. Eliot

This chapter is structured as four individual stories carefully selected from the interviews with the 35 returnee academics. All the participants had a variety of experience on return and some have had success in reaching their goals, while others have found their return experience to be very frustrating. In the previous chapters the UGC, VCs, the British Council and the American Centre articulated their aspirations for the investments made in academics when sending them abroad for higher studies and commented on their fulfilled and unfulfilled expectations of the returnees. From the analysis of the interviews with the academics, I can say that every story is individually different. However, there are identical patterns of return experience within these stories, such as positivity, frustration, and change in mindset. The first vignette, an academic's success story, exemplifies how both personal and investors' investment paid off despite the struggle she underwent. Unfortunately, not many of the participants shared that kind of positive experience. Thus the other vignettes are stories of frustration and compromise and show how expectations have not materialized. However, the fourth vignette, despite some bitterness, contains a silver lining: a year of study abroad transformed the participant's thoughts on career choice and on return turned her inclination towards intellectual development.

Moreover, throughout the presentation of these vignettes, many of the themes that I have analysed in the previous chapter will be evident. However, my intention is not to reemphasise the themes, but rather to show how these themes play out in individual lives, what this means in individual terms, and the implications it has for academics in Bangladesh who have not had the privilege of going abroad. In a way, these stories also involve people who were part of the returnees' journey - their husband/wife, families and colleagues. Thus these stories are in the academic's own terms of reference, from their *emic* perspective. The stakeholders' perspectives in the previous chapter are another version of this reality.

6.1. Sophia

I had to work really hard in planning lessons and guiding these students. However, the result was very satisfactory.

In this section, I offer as a vignette a nuanced account of the success story of Sofia, a participant academic who returned from Australia two years before the time of the interview. Sofia had done a postgraduate diploma and taken an MA from UK before she received a scholarship to study for her PhD for four years in Australia. As she worked in a public university, she was on study leave during her study-abroad years, and on return she joined the same university. Sophia's achievements include publication in top journals, international recognition as a teacher-researcher, and an increment and promotion in her workplace. This is Sophia's story on return, with a prelude about why and under what circumstances she went abroad.

For Sophia, the academic motive to study abroad to further her learning arose from the fact that resources and scope for research were very limited at home. Having more international exposure would enable her to explore her field further, and her work would gain global recognition through international publications and conferences leading to future collaborations. In Sofia's words:

We lack resources. When I come across some of the articles submitted for reviewing, I can see that the references used are from 1972, 73. This is because we do not have access to latest research. So I thought since I got the chance I will research and publish on some latest and newer theory.

Sophia did manage to research and learn according to her intention, which earned her the success and 'international recognition as an academic' that she longed for. She also managed to publish five articles in renowned international journals. She claimed:

I wanted a new dimension for my research. So I chose the theory most appropriate for my study and it happened to be a new one. I feel since I

worked on a new theory my articles were accepted quite easily as it was a solid contribution to the field.

When I asked her to share her experience on return from studying abroad, Sophia chose to speak about her personal account of reintegration in the beginning and later spoke about her professional re-entry. While doing her MA, Sophia left her children with her enthusiastically supportive parents in Bangladesh. However, this time she took her children with her to Australia while her husband remained back home. The separated family life was inevitable as her husband's leaving a permanent well-paid job at home did not seem feasible to the couple. During the four years, her husband visited them a couple of times. Sofia took all the pains to arrange accommodation and school to settle herself and her children there. However, her troubles started on her return, in the form of re-entry into her social and professional environment.

Sophia went through some very hard times readjusting her children to the social and educational environment in her home country. On top of this, the hostility she encountered from her colleagues at her workplace made her miserable. Initially, while the parents were going to work, the children had to stay at home. It took Sophia some time to get the children admitted to a good school, and the extreme study pressure and absence of co/extracurricular activities in and outside of school doubled the children's frustration. During the little free time they got, they either watched TV or played video games in place of physical activities. Sofia voiced her frustration:

My children had a life in Sydney, we did have some quality time despite my studies. They went to the beaches, went cycling, swimming and also enjoyed weekend shopping. Now their life has become limited to homework, class tests, more and more studies. With all these they have lots of frustration. As a mother I have to deal with those frustrations. It was tough. After two years they have sort of settled down but still my daughter cries every now and then for Australia.

In struggling to adjusting the children, Sofia had little time or space to worry about herself as she went back to her professional life in academia. She joined her institution only to find that the courses she specialised in and would be interested in teaching were already assigned to her colleagues. Her workload had been assigned without any prior consultation with her. The subject that she researched was being taught by senior teachers who were teaching the course with the same materials which had been used for years. Sofia recalls:

The attitude of my colleagues was like you were abroad all this time and have not done any work in the department. We have done all this for four years, now it is your turn to work on all the administrative and pending work. I have been asked to arrange freshers' reception and other programmes but I do not have the mind to do these because I have so many academic commitments.

Sofia felt she had moved from a completely academic setting to an overtly non-academic environment. She claimed that because of the discouraging university policy, she was pushed back three years in her career. Her study leave was not counted as active service while her colleagues at home progressed in their careers with local degrees and publications.

Moreover, the poor research knowledge and skills of her MA dissertation students made her despair. She felt 'the level of understanding of the students on research matters' was poor, as they had not worked on any smaller research or investigative projects earlier in their school or college, or even at undergraduate level (depending on their subject). Further to this, when students chose their dissertation focus, they were encouraged to play safe by their supervisors by choosing well-worn topics. Sophia doubted the professional commitment of some of these academics:

It is not that the teachers are not competent. Most of the time they are more than competent. But spending the time to research a new area becomes a factor for them. If you are to supervise a student with a challenging project, you yourself need to work hard, read and guide them to proper references. The

senior professors often do not wish to double their effort in supervising a research project.

Sofia had not realised these existing systemic issues would cause such psychological pressure for her. However, she had already published widely in local and international journals and had some more partially ready papers from her thesis suitable for international publication. She concentrated on these alongside her regular classes and administrative work and managed to publish in very high impact international journals. While her colleagues were impressed and congratulated her on her array of publications, Sophia says nobody seemed to be interested in what she was working on:

In fact no-one is bothered here about research. Nobody asks a question like what research have you done or the impact of the research. What have you published? Where? The institution does not ask about the quality of publications either. I just submitted my certificates and that is it. But I made it a point to email my work to my friends and colleagues whenever I managed to get my research published.

However, a couple of students successfully completing very interesting research projects under her supervision lifted Sophia's positivity. These students, when they entered their professional lives and managed to get their work published, thanked her for showing them the way to reflect and research. She says she finds pleasure in thinking she has managed to turn some students into 'reflective practitioners'. In her words:

I have studied abroad and am benefitting from the knowledge and skills gathered. So I try my level best to utilise my expertise to develop innovative materials/courses for my students. Not all students respond to your call or become interested in research. But when some of them do, it becomes a motivating factor for us as teachers. I had to work really hard in planning and guiding these students. However, the result was very satisfactory.

Sophia says her success with students and her international publications made her more confident to maintain her prior motivation. She had offers of postdocs in Australia as she was finishing her PhD but she decided not to separate the growing children from their father. Rather, she wished to continue disseminating knowledge and opening up newer avenues for herself to research and contribute further.

In her story Sofia clearly articulated her devotion to being an academic, her passion for knowledge which instigated in her the desire to study abroad, her drive to become a changemaker and lastly her account of success, negotiating and braving various challenges. Her success story is an illustration of an opportunity availed, that a person's strong motivation, interest, competence and developed confidence can win over temporary challenges. Her dedication makes both personal and professional investment in study abroad worthwhile and seems to be benefitting Bangladeshi academia.

6.2. Hamza

I think people like us who have studied abroad, the things that we get to learn there, if we could utilise even ten percent of that acquired knowledge, there would have been significant changes in the teaching-learning scenario.

This is the story of Hamza, a participant academic who went to study abroad with a mindset to become a changemaker. Hamza spent four years in England with his family, studying for a PhD on a Commonwealth Scholarship. At the time of the interview, he had been back in Bangladesh for seven years. He was working in a public university when he received the opportunity to study abroad. Like Sophia, he was on study leave during his PhD years and returned to the same institution on completion of his degree. Hamza initiated teacher evaluation, received funding for various developmental projects, published in international journals and received an increment and promotion in the years after his return from study abroad. However, Hamza's story is more of frustration than pride in his success. He seemed

to be losing hope in the education system and shared various incidents describing how his initial euphoria on return gradually turned into a story of hopelessness.

Hamza's initial plan to do an MSc was transformed into a PhD because of his nomination for the Commonwealth Scholarship. He spoke about his motivation to study abroad in retrospect:

When I joined as a lecturer my idea of modern teaching and research was from a Bangladeshi perspective. I felt an international flavour was needed to contribute to my subject at home.

On completion of his overseas degree, Hamza returned to his workplace to witness the same institution through a different lens. The hostility of the education system as well as some of his colleagues, and which he had not witnessed before, soon pushed him out of his utopian world. The hard reality that bringing changes would be onerous made him feel dismissed. The first blow was the discriminatory service policy of the university for the academics related to overseas study. Hamza feels that an academic goes to study abroad for their PhD with the hope of refining themselves and bringing back new and up-to-date knowledge. But when he returned, he found that his junior colleagues had become senior to him as they were at home delivering 'active service'. Hamza found the policy demoralising, saying 'university is discouraging the academics from doing a PhD abroad'.

Moreover, the existing tension between academics with local and those with overseas degrees was heightened on Hamza's return. He tried implementing teacher evaluation in his department but neither his colleagues nor the university administration supported him at that time. Though many of the departments later implemented an evaluation system, his department was reluctant to adopt this. He also wanted to develop a structured procedure process for evaluating 4th year theses/reports, as there were no guidelines. But he found resistance there too. He said:

When I joined as a Chair, each year I used to explain to the teachers how to evaluate the thesis/report in parts, like introduction, methodology, results, discussion, and do the marking likewise. The moment I tried to develop this as best practice and wanted to implement it at the Faculty/University level, there was resistance.

This time, the resistance came in the form of not passing the proposition in the faculty meeting because proper training facilities were unavailable for the teachers and developing a framework would require time and effort. This was not the end for Hamza. Witnessing the poor publication record of professors at home, he proposed a 'one publication a year for professors' idea in a meeting with the Academic Council. This got overturned by the then VC himself who pointed out that as professors are engaged in various other activities, the further burden of publications should not be put on their shoulders. Hamza later realised that when academics like him return after doing a PhD from abroad, they rise to a better position academically. This can create insecurity in other academics who have not had the opportunity or privilege of studying abroad. Hamza now feels his insularity distanced him from some of his colleagues. He had made the mistake of trying to implement the same ideas about teaching, learning and research in his own context without contextualisation:

What I can say is, a year back I had this superiority complex in me. But my complex has developed an inferiority complex in someone else. If I had had this realisation at that time, how I learnt what I have learnt abroad, the way I should have customised my learning, the way I had handled situations, I would have acted differently.

Causes of dissatisfaction followed one after another for Hamza. It came to his notice that the recruitment process of academics, as well as of those of the highest academic positions - VC, Pro-VC, Treasurer and Dean - are political. He discovered that although Dean is supposed to be the 'highest academic position', in public universities they are all politically appointed, and the majority are far from academically excellent. He claims that if academics are more inclined towards

politics and power play, their priority is power instead of quality enhancement of education. Hamza further noticed that there was no coordination between teaching, learning and research:

I have heard of a couple of trainings where the trainers themselves do not know what they are training on. They are training on creativity. Whereas they are in no way creative. Just creating a couple of slides is not creativity training. So how would our teachers learn to be creative out of these trainings?

Hamza claims the teachers are not incapable; rather, they have not been equipped with proper materials and ample training to teach creativity and analytical skills.

Again, Hamza came to learn that funds for research were mainly project-based and arranged by donor agencies like UNDP and World Bank. Though Hamza considers the objectives of the donor agencies to be positive, there are drawbacks to these funded international projects as the agencies can neglect contextual factors in allocating funds.

Hamza became self-reflective at this point and accepted that during his tenure as the chair of the department, money from such projects (HEQEP) was spent on trivial purposes in place of planning a proper development project:

This was not the objective of the World Bank. The donor agencies are taking various initiatives towards the enhancement of higher education. But the moment the project reaches the hands of our countrymen, the good intention gets demolished. They consider an ideal situation and we think of our gain. If we are less bothered about the development of our country, how will others help us?

Being self-critical he reports that he finds his effort to adjusting to the academic environment at home inadequate. He feels there were some people around who were keen on supporting him, but there were a few who pushed him back. At that

time, he felt support was needed from all sides and one unsupportive person was enough to knock down the whole effort. He said:

I used to complain that people were not cooperating with me. Now I feel I probably have not been very profound in my action. I wanted support but probably was unable to work towards obtaining that support. I mean what I was trying to do, how I should have acted to gain their acceptance. I probably couldn't do that.

Hamza claimed that 'corruption and monetary gain' have become integral to higher education. Commodification of education has reached a new height through the mushrooming of private universities and the scope of teaching part-time in these universities. He shared his feelings:

Everybody needs economic benefits. But there is a limit to it like where to draw a line. We have no sense of limit. How many universities can one person teach in? He [sic] has a parent institution. The highest number of private universities he/she could teach in is one. But they are teaching in three or four institutions. How is that feasible?

One incident that totally destroyed Hamza's confidence and urge to be a changemaker was when he was asked to do something unethical by a political party leader during his Chairmanship. He was threatened with false cases being lodged against him if he did not comply with their 'request'. Hamza said:

You do not have any security in this country. Would you look into your security or would you try to contribute? You would totally lose your interest to work.

Turning from the professional frustrations, Hamza points to the social side of the return experience that feeds into academics' loss of motivation in general. Academics start looking for the same social security that they used to enjoy abroad. Hamza summarised:

Since there is no accountability on the academic side but there is from the side of the family, academic work becomes the lesser priority. When an academic returns, initially his [sic] thoughts are to contribute, be the changemaker. Within a short time, he sees he can suffice ignoring the responsibilities. Gradually he occupies his time elsewhere because there is no accountability at work.

It was at this point that Hamza spoke about his family in answer to a question, as he feels social reintegration was not much of a challenge for him and his wife. Rather it was a good learning experience for them, as his wife was also quick to settle with a job on return. This is one notable difference between Hamza's story of despair and Sophia's story of success: in Hamza's story he mainly chose to speak about his professional gains and losses, while Sophia chose to speak about her personal reintegration first. Hamza, like most of the male participants, focused on his professional reintegration and towards the end shared the issue of his son's education, which caused some anxiety at that time. Hamza's son got entangled between two different education systems which eventually resulted in a loss of two years switching back and forth between mediums of instruction. Large class size, excessive homework and constant demand for parental intervention from the schools added to his bitterness. Hamza expressed his remorse as '[my son] lost two years of his education life just because of my PhD'.

He used to enjoy school in England. He tried to avoid going to school here. Now it is alright. But it was a shock initially for him. The way he was learning there had little resemblance to the education system here.

Hamza's story is just one example of the many despairing academics who have struggled to reintegrate and became frustrated as a result. This frustration might hold him back from making a worthwhile contribution in academia. In Sophia's story, her positive experience and fighting spirit is benefitting academia. However, she had returned home in the three to four years before the interview while Hamza had been back for longer, which might have contributed to making him more discontent.

6.3. Mofiz

It is high time to update the 1973 Act and universities should run under an updated management system.

The third story is of Mofiz, an academic working in a public university who chose to study abroad for a PhD as a necessary requirement for becoming a full professor. Mofiz spent four years in England with his family on account of his PhD and had returned two and a half years prior to taking the interview. He was working in the same public university from which he took study leave to pursue his PhD. In addition, he was also teaching part time in two leading private universities. On return, he published in international journals, was successful in funding applications, got involved in academic committees to contribute to decision making, and received an increment and promotion. Mofiz's story is a story of adjustment and compromise and not entirely a story of frustration. He was an academic who was quick to adapt to the existing higher education scenario by means of which he ensured his professional success and financial stability. Therefore the question arises: if Mofiz has reached his desired goal, why is this vignette not a success story like Sophia?

Mofiz began his story by stating that he finds economic benefit to be a 'direct benefit' of study abroad, which ensured his material wealth by making him eligible for part-time positions in private universities. Moreover, networking during his PhD days earned him a couple of consultancy positions in big companies on his return. He said:

Why would people not avail themselves of opportunities if there is scope to? In fact, it forms part of your motivation.

Thus the economic side was secure for Mofiz, but there were barriers to his empowerment that caused frustration. He initially felt discouraged when he realised that the road to success – that is, to be an 'internationally recognised academic with strong administrative power' - would not be easy. Like Hamza and Sophia, Mofiz says his re-entry experience in his institution was marred by hostility

from his colleagues as well as the system. When he first joined on return he was assigned courses beyond his area of expertise. The courses he had developed expertise in were assigned to teachers who were teaching the courses with the same materials year after year, as in Sophia's case. There were teachers who had neither an overseas qualification nor research ability, but were holding the central positions in the academic committees in the department. They were doing research evaluations and chairing the seminars where Mofiz was not allowed to enter. The regulations for being in the central academic committee were such that only senior professors, irrespective of qualifications or quality, could be part of it. These academics held the post for as long as they wanted to, adding to Mofiz's frustration. Therefore Mofiz's hard-earned overseas qualification, which proved to be beneficial for his career, did not matter to his home institution. Rather, because of the 'active service' issue mentioned in Sophia and Hamza's stories, he became junior to some of the members of staff in his faculty. The ones who pursued their PhDs locally finished it within three years, whereas he struggled hard in England to finish his thesis within four years.

Mofiz further expressed his dissatisfaction by saying that the policy document the 1973 Act for HEIs neither provides any guidelines for the teachers nor any institutional framework in this regard. He claimed:

When the 1973 Act was created it might have been fit for that time. Because at that time famine was going on and people were starving to death. So if criteria and rules were added to the policy nobody would be interested in joining academia. But now it is high time to update the 1973 Act and universities should run under an updated management system.

Furthermore, in his university's policy on academic publications only the number of publications mattered, rather than quality of work or where the article has been published. Thus he did not receive any benefits for his publications in highly renowned international journals. In addition, his desire to become empowered seemed to be an arduous task:

There are academics who are excellent teachers, super researchers, have published widely in renowned world-class journals that have brought fame to the country. But you will not find them in any higher positions inside the university. They are not among the VCs, Pro VCs or even the Deans of the University.

Mofiz says that these big posts are held by people who are not among the most academically sound. Rather, they hold poorer qualifications than many other qualified and eligible academics. He feels that since these people are not very academically involved, they do not have empathy for academic work or 'an inclination towards excellence'. He added:

Unfortunately, they are the ones who hold these posts. They are the ones who get more salary. They come to the limelight and their views are taken as the views of an expert.

On top of that, posts like VC and Pro-VC are 'selected directly by the Prime Minister'. Mofiz claimed that VC and Pro-VC candidates are academics who have close affiliations with the ruling political party. Thus interested academics who want these higher academic positions are pushed towards joining teachers' politics. The ones with the local degrees then find themselves in a disadvantaged position as they have a 'Made in Bangladesh' brand assigned to them. These academics also want financial gain and the only path to that is to bring in large-scale, high-budget projects where MPhil and PhD students can be recruited. Mofiz claimed that since the 'setup' and the 'thinking domination' in Bangladesh is so different, the easy way to lobby for these projects is by joining politics. He cited the example of the HEQEP project:

If you look at the profile of the project directors, you will know what I mean. I came to know from the newspaper that only 10-20% of these project directors are high profile. The remaining 80-90% have very low profile.

Mofiz further stated that the donor agencies, like World Bank, are providing funding for these projects but are not associated with the selection. Like Hamza, Mofiz referred to the 'corruption and power politics' issues here and stated 'if the head is not functioning properly then the whole system will become asymmetrical'.

Mofiz was perplexed but eventually decided to adjust and surrender to power play by sacrificing his intellectuality. He wanted a strong academic position and funds for conducting research projects where he would engage and train his PhD students. He joined politics, secured a position and achieved his goal of empowerment. However, this is what he lost:

I have given up writing for international journals. I am doing politics now. I hold various posts and represent my faculty in the committee meetings. In fact, I am an active educator politician now.

However, before this, when Mofiz realised the road to success would require compromise, he was adamant about producing 'at least one quality ensured project' before he got sucked into the system. At that time he still had his international connections. However, he had to sacrifice his 'family life' to successfully complete the project and create a space for himself on return. He worked late in his office and came back home with more work related to the research project he was working on. He could not give his family any time, which caused a lot of difficulties. One notable point here is that although Mofiz had his wife and young children with him during his time abroad, this is the only other occasion he touched on his 'family' issues. Earlier, while speaking of his motivation to study abroad, he expressed his desire to maintain his family well alongside becoming a renowned academic in his field.

Mofiz's story is a returnee educator's account of the difference between a well-developed forward-facing educational setup and a higher education sector that is ripe for development and enhancement. He initially struggled on return before he realised that he needed to change. He had to join a political party and network appropriately to reach his desired goal. The existing corrupt culture in the higher

education system led to a change in his attitude. However, the loss of his intellectual contribution in the whole process of compromise and adjustment indicates a wasted opportunity. At the same time, if Mofiz decides to totally give up on his intellectual prowess, the question of whether the experience was really worth the investment of the stakeholders would resurface.

6.4. Maria

If I had strong emotional as well as carer support from my family, then I could go for my PhD. But I have neither.

The fourth vignette is of Maria, an academic who works in a private university. Maria did an MA from UK and had returned home seven years prior to taking this interview. She finished her undergraduate degree from a top public university and was fortunate to secure a corporate job straightaway. However, she soon realised that without an MA, it would take years for her to get a promotion. She preferred not to join her previous university and chose to self-fund her study overseas instead. Maria was unmarried when she went to UK but was quick to get married on return. Like the other participants, she did not return to her previous workplace but started searching for a better place to work and ultimately joined a private university. Her achievement is limited to success in applying some of the teaching techniques she learnt abroad and a few local publications. Yet this story, which begins from a jobseeker's perspective, turns into an account of a woman academic who underwent a change in attitude towards teaching, learning and research. However, the pre-existing social discourses had a strong impact on her career progression, which she shared in the course of the story.

One reason for Maria to opt for an overseas qualification was to secure a higher-paid job. This is how she ended up in her current workplace:

On return from England, I tried for various corporate jobs for four months. But nothing clicked. Then academia became my only choice. The salary range I was looking for was offered by this institution.

As an overseas qualification was a mandatory criterion for recruitment in some and an advantage in many private universities, Maria, finding no other alternatives, almost reluctantly chose academia as a career path. Notwithstanding the career, more distress followed:

When you are studying, you have a kind of aspiration. You expect something very nice to happen. But it does not happen. If I had not joined this position, people would have started doubting whether I had studied at all while being abroad, or whether I just fooled around in UK. They judge that quickly on your character and everything.

Maria had a good experience studying abroad but doubts her decision to return home, as she had opportunities to stay away. She made an 'emotional judgement': the call of the homeland, being unmarried, and her caring responsibilities for her mother overtook her considerations and she prioritised her ties back home.

On return, when Maria joined the private university as a faculty member, the working and teaching conditions in that university reminded her of the treatment she received as a student in UK, which she felt she received despite paying fourteen thousand GBP to her university. In contrast, in the private university where she is working, students are treated as 'valuable customers' as they pay for the service. This, Maria feels, changes the dynamics of the teacher-student relationship.

Further tension arose when she witnessed professional jealousy from her colleagues there, particularly from those who did not have an overseas qualification. They were rather intimidated by her knowledge. She said:

Say I shared an image with them or a teaching technique, they would not use it. Neither would they say thank you. For instance, when I give an assignment to the students using innovative teaching techniques and put that up in the departmental meetings, they regard me with contempt. If you do it this way, then we will also have to follow you.

She further realised that since the teachers are teaching only from the prescribed books, students have lost interest in learning. They developed a shortcut survival technique of passing the exams by going through the slides provided. Moreover, Maria claimed that, English being the medium of instruction in the private universities, some of the students did not even understand classroom instruction, especially those who came from the suburbs or villages. She became quite disheartened to find that there was a huge difference between the students' learning and their development of skills for the workplace. The learners had no idea how to develop their skills or make them 'transferable'.

Moreover, she claimed, private universities, including hers, have become quite lenient in providing grades. The students take total advantage of this leniency. They know that whether they study or not they will get a minimum grade of B+. The authorities, exercising their power verbally, instruct the teachers that they cannot provide less than a B+ as the students are customers, paying a lot of money. Maria says she finds this practice of leniency in providing grades to be extremely derogatory to the quality of education. She added:

This means the students who are studying in a private university will in no way be able to compete with a student of a public university. If they come across something new, they can simply Google. But they have lost interest and just want the answer only.

Maria feels the commodification of education has destroyed the very essence of education in these institutions. Moreover, the 'request culture' - saying 'please' to make an 'exception' or to ask for an undue advantage - has become part of the culture in private universities:

At institutions abroad, if you plagiarise your work is not accepted. You know that and there is no exception. And what happens here? Please consider, please do this, please do that. Especially in the private sectors of Bangladesh. It goes against the norms.

She was further saddened to find that professional relationships in her institution were constantly being turned into personal relationships, paving the way for nepotism and favouritism. Some colleagues of hers stayed back after work and tried to please the seniors by lending a hand in their work so that they could get favours in return. Maria, with family responsibilities and two young children, could not even think of such a practice. As she did not want to comply with this 'system', her senior colleagues were disapproving of her. Maria expressed her frustration:

You give me a job. You give me a position. Your job is not to stay 24 hours. Yet you allow him to go to your room and gossip with teachers and other members of staff.

Further to that, Maria found there is neither scope nor funds to carry out research in her institution. She noticed that donor agencies like the Commonwealth Commission, World Bank and DFID provide funding for projects to enhance the quality of higher education, such as the HEQEP project. But like other participants, Maria doubts whether the project fund is being 'utilised properly'. She claimed that if the project money was fairly deployed, it could contribute substantially to the teachers' professional development, which would ultimately enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

However, Maria appreciates that her institution provides some incentives in the form of funding for attending international conferences as part of professional development. Again, while academics in her university were expected to publish, Maria claimed she could not manage time for a second publication. At that time, her last publication was four years old. Maria said:

You teach six courses. This moment you are thinking about ethics, the next moment the lesson plan for tomorrow. It is difficult to plan research in this way. With six courses, where is the time to teach? When is the time to do the administrative work? Check scripts? Moreover, students can constantly knock at your door with their issues.

Despite her frustration and her reluctant choice to work in academia, Maria's interest in research shows she has had a change in mindset. She developed a more positive attitude towards higher studies and research as she started to feel the need to update herself with current research. Her engagement in scholarship or the excitement of teaching on joining academia might have been responsible for this positive development in her. Moreover, not progressing in learning was bringing forward newer challenges in the workplace for her. Maria added:

The experience on return from study abroad was delightful in the first few years in terms of knowledge. But without a PhD, now I have to compete with someone who has returned in the last two or three years. They have come recently and are more up to date. I feel so pressurised.

Maria then turned to her current social bindings. She said she has every intention to go for a PhD abroad to further her learning, but unfortunately finds her future bleak:

I have three offers for PhD. I couldn't manage enough funding to take the whole family. So I did not go. If I had strong emotional as well as carer support from my family, then I could go for my PhD. But I have neither.

Earlier, Maria had received a well-paid short-term teaching position abroad. Even her visa arrangements were made but she had to opt out at the last minute. She failed to get support from her family to leave the children with them for a short time. Maria feels this lack of 'support' is a huge deciding factor for a female academic in Bangladesh:

Plus you are not getting any sort of assurance. Husband doesn't say you go. They [family] don't say you go ahead. Rather they say do whatever you find pertinent. Or they say who will look after your kids?

For a woman academic to progress, 'family support' is extremely crucial, said Maria. As stated earlier, she finds herself in a gridlock with little or no hope of breaking free.

Maria's story is quite similar to the other unmarried participants in this study. The issues with private institutions and getting married on return under social pressure are also not uncommon. Bangladesh has come a long way in empowering women but stories like these tell us there are still hidden issues, waiting to be brought to the surface.

This chapter has provided four different themed stories of returnees' reintegration which highlight various issues in Bangladeshi academia in need of change and attention. Sophia's story demonstrates that strong motivation can win over certain barriers; Hamza's story contains a detailed account of professional struggles. These two stories also account for the distress of the returnees' children in readjusting to the home environment. The story of Mofiz reveals how power politics inside universities transformed the identity of a dedicated academic into a power-seeking politician. Lastly, the story of Maria highlights the societal impact on a professional woman, making her vulnerable in terms of progression. Maria seems to 'struggle with her social devaluation and powerlessness in her family' (Stewart, 1994; Creswell, 2013, p. 30).

The next chapter offers the stakeholders' view of study abroad and their perspectives on the returnee academics.

Chapter 7: Stakeholders' Views of Returnees and Higher Education

The interviews with the stakeholders of higher education in Bangladesh provide rich insights into their perception, mindset and visions of higher education and academics engaged in the sector. This is an attempt to secure an answer to the research questions that involve the views of the stakeholders:

2. What impact did the returnee academics have on their organisation?
3. What are the stakeholders' expectations for returnee academics of HEIs?

Having addressed the challenges of data collection, the process of analysing the data began. The audio recordings of the interviews were put into NVIVO to prepare transcripts, followed by identification of themes for the analysis. Though the first phase of the interviews with the academics was coded through NVIVO, the stakeholder coding was done manually because they were only eight in number. It was more convenient to have the hard copy of transcripts and highlight them to identify emerging themes. Multiple readings were required to unpack the themes.

7.1. Stakeholders hold positive views towards studying abroad

Whether a public or private university, the UGC, the VCs or the agencies (American Centre and British Council), all participant stakeholders seemed to speak highly of the advantages of studying abroad. According to the UGC respondent, as Bangladesh is a third-world country it is imperative that academics be in contact with the education system in advanced countries. The VCs also share the same sentiment, adding that studying abroad is like an eye-opener for the academics because they see the home country from a different perspective and start noticing things they may have overlooked before their overseas exposure. VC 1 feels that in the era of globalisation the world has become a place without boundaries. Therefore, in this borderless world studying abroad should be a natural process and knowledge should be treated like fluid or oxygen, not to be limited or confined by labeling it as local or foreign. He added:

We do not want any gap to remain between the knowledge world internationally and locally. Say what is being taught in the area of Physics abroad, the syllabus followed should almost be identical locally. I think this is what our goal should be. To keep the level similar. [VC1, Para 2]

The Heads of Department take higher education in the Western countries to be the benchmark of standard education. The British Council spoke of the benefits of studying abroad, using marketing terms like quality education, internationally recognized qualification, career prospects, opportunity for intercultural experience by living overseas, and improving English language skills. The American Centre, on the other hand, claimed to be 'in favour of student mobility globally', and emphasised building and expanding educational linkages between Bangladesh and the USA:

We currently are very much encouraging our students to study in other countries so in that way they learn other values, they understand who's going to be across them in the boardroom or an NGO or in a higher academic setting when they come back to US and influence their fellow citizens' feelings. [AC, Para 1]

Interestingly, in whatever terms the stakeholders express their idea of overseas study, only the American Centre mentioned that overseas experience is not a one-way process because of push and pull factors. The spokesperson for the American Centre stated that US has an intense interest in business in Bangladesh as it is one of the vibrant emerging economies in South and South-East Asia. The US universities are looking for STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) students and Bangladesh, with its long tradition of overseas study, is a ready market for these students. Thus through study abroad Bangladesh is a gainer in terms of knowledge, technological advancement and language development, but there is also a willing audience on the other side who are ready to take in the intellect and skills of the overseas students, which would then remove the benefit to Bangladesh.

7.1.1. Returnees' productivity depends on favourable working environment

The majority of the stakeholders find that returnees function best if they have a supportive work environment and cooperative colleagues. However, ensuring favourable conditions all the time might not be possible, stated VC2. It has to be reciprocal and the initiative has to come from both ends. VC2 pointed to facts that might be considered barriers to an academic's progression. One is their determination and mentality to carry on and the other is people trying to hold academics back from their desired destination:

Say there might be jealousy arising between colleagues who have done a PhD from abroad and one has a PhD from home. At times hostility or noncooperation arises between colleagues, which also pushes people to be nonchalant. Now, if you let these things come in the way of your progression then all is lost. [VC2, Para 3]

The public university HoD, like VC2, mentions the jealousy or insincerity of the other colleagues in the department having a detrimental effect on the motivation of returnee academics:

If he/she finds that most of her colleagues are insincere or are against progression or do not wish to go that extra mile, then he/she in course of time merges with the same flow. We have our limitations and cannot provide the necessary facilities to our academics. So the ones who are deserving, they find some other ways to engage themselves, say start teaching in private universities or join a consultancy firm. [Pub HoD, Para 3]

The private university HoD had similar views to share. When a returnee academic introduces something new in the class there is a positive impact when others try to follow, reciprocate or replicate things:

But at times the jealousy factor can be there like somebody is more exposed than others and the advanced teaching techniques he/she is using, so others

might feel left out. But when you see that because of the innovative techniques used by your colleagues they are having more students in their classes, then you also try to update yourself, which I find is a positive pressure. [Pri HoD, Para 2]

This statement could be an indication that the pressure the rest of the academics face might turn positive or negative, depending on the person.

Turning to the agency, the American Centre is highly praising of the returnees who have studied in US. Though many alumni are not academics, there are many examples of their successful careers on return, and their strong Alumni Wing maintains the connection. The British Council, though the more veteran agency connected with Bangladesh since its independence, does not hold any records or keep track of the returnees' success stories. It has only recently started a UK Bangladesh Alumni Association to get British-educated people together.

The remarks of VC3 provide a feasible explanation for some of the academics who get sunk in the system on return:

Except for a few cases, I have seen very few people introducing new things. They come back to the old situation in fact as if they have never been out. Reasons: they build cocoons for themselves and do not engage in other activities. They remain culturally aloof. [VC3, Para 3]

VC3 mentioned that at times the returnee academics get frustrated if they do not get the chance to teach the subjects they specialized in. He acknowledges this problem, saying:

I always provide opportunities for the teachers to teach the subject they have studied or researched. I actually source out the topic for them. Some people get frustrated that they cannot make any use of the knowledge that they have gathered from abroad. [VC3, Para 4]

However, one thing that the HoDs and VC3 are certain about is the updated and changed attitudes towards teaching and research of many of the returnee academics, and their efforts to do things differently and effectively in comparison to their colleagues with local qualifications:

In my department, I find my faculty members who have studied abroad to be engaged in various research works and they are encouraging their colleagues towards research and other development activities, which is very positive.

[Pub HoD, Para 4]

Speaking in line with VC2 and VC3, the private university HoD puts himself forward as an example regarding bringing a change in the social values of the students:

Also, by sharing ideas, the personal anecdotes, they can inspire the students. Like I have also shared my experience with my students and now some of them have gone abroad and they remember what I told them about my education there. So somebody has actually taken me as a role model. Maybe I have broken fresh ground and I have inspired others to follow the same. That is what teachers should be doing - presenting themselves as role models and setting examples to inspire the students. [Pri HoD, Para 3]

The comments of the stakeholders regarding the returnee academics and their contribution presents a positive impression of the returnees. However, it seems external factors like economic gains, unhelpful policy and often disapproving colleagues pose a threat to their contribution.

7.2. Expectations from the returnee academics

The cardinal expectation of all the respondent stakeholders is that the academics will learn, enrich their knowledge, develop themselves, return on completion of their studies and enlighten the students with the knowledge and expertise gained through their overseas qualification. According to VC1, there are a number of ways for the academics to gain knowledge from studying overseas:

There are thousands of opportunities these days for going abroad. There are seminars, conferences etc. It does not have to be for higher degrees alone but the interaction with international scholars and students and remaining in a network of knowledge exchange and collaboration should be the ideal situation. [VC1, Para 5]

Further to this, he finds the academics' going abroad to study is a win-win situation. He thinks getting a promotion and increment on completion of their degree is a matter of satisfaction and achievement for the academics on a personal level. On the other hand, the university authorities gain an enriched, updated and knowledgeable academic who will transfer the knowledge to the next generation of students.

VC2 holds similar expectations from the returnee academics:

The academics will attain as much as they can while they study abroad and on return share their updated knowledge with their students to prepare them for the challenges ahead. They will also try to restructure the current educational system as they have witnessed abroad. Any change will take time, but they should be taking the initiative to do so. [VC2, Para 2]

This means the stakeholders do recognize that change will not occur overnight, but rather will take place over years. In this regard, VC3 adds that knowledge dissemination should include both academic and social experiences, including time management, behaviour, punctuality and other transferable skills. What the stakeholders did not comment on or show any awareness of, despite emphasising on knowledge transfer, is whether this knowledge, e.g. teaching and learning best practice, is suitable for the Bangladeshi context.

Returning to the expectations, the HoDs endorse the view of the VCs and expect that academics who get the chance to study abroad will act as the trailblazers for their respective departments. According to the private university HoD:

Overseas exposure is much needed. Our own tertiary system is not up to date in terms of curriculum or classroom instruction, and unfortunately our teachers follow the traditional method of teaching. Lecture-based learning and classes are not student-centred, which has been a huge issue ever since. [Pri HoD, Para 1]

He is conscious that it is not possible for everybody to study abroad and he finds the alternatives to be MOOCs, Open Access and YouTube videos. Furthermore, if it is not possible to go for full-time education then going to international conferences or local conferences where international scholars are brought in can act as access to the outside world. He adds:

Even if you are doing Bangla literature you should not confine yourself to our own protected areas and pretend that the outside world does not exist. So there has to be this cross-current. [Pri HoD, Para 1]

Bangladesh, a developing country with a history of only fifty years, is still in the process of growing, and the commonality of the expectations of the stakeholders bear witness to this fact.

7.3. Reasons behind unmet expectations: Stakeholders blame the academics on several grounds

The stated expectations of the stakeholders give rise to the question of fulfilled and unfulfilled expectations. Only the HoDs speak of positive attributes of the returnees and endorse them working differently without blaming them. The private university HoD stated that of the 15 faculty members in their department the majority have degrees from abroad, and the difference is visible in their way of working:

When they prepare their course outline, the way they grade, the way they give their feedback, that's absolutely different from our traditional style. These

teachers just do not put A or B grades and some red lines in the assessment sheets just like we used to get without knowing exactly what was wrong in our scripts. [Pri HoD, Para 2]

He claims the overseas-trained academics have enhanced knowledge of handling the class and making effective use of technology like PowerPoint, YouTube videos, and online portals to come up with interesting handouts and assignments for classroom use. The public university HoD also endorses this, but added:

The ones who are less capable try to cover their quality or lack of updated knowledge by marking the works of the students more liberally. They take fewer classes, squeeze the syllabus and supply the students with selected questions so that they can prepare themselves by studying less. This means they try to satisfy the students by showing them the easy way to success. This is something a qualified faculty member would never do. [Pub HoD, Para 4]

The UGC official, when asked whether the expectations had been met, indicated that he was not satisfied in many cases:

Though there are examples of academics being quite committed to their work and trying to do their best on return, many come back and forget everything just because of lack of commitment, sincerity and honesty. As a teacher they are supposed to take regular classes but there are many teachers who do not do that. [UGC, Para 3]

The VCs and HoDs also speak of reasons which prevent the academics from fulfilling the desired expectation. These are power struggles and moral deviance of the academics on return from study abroad, the effect of prevailing social discourses, raised expectations of salary and other facilities, and returnees' unfeeling attitude towards research. The reasons given by the stakeholders are discussed in the following sections.

7.3.1. Power struggle and moral deviance on return

The UGC official claims dirty politics on campuses as the reason for the academics not meeting expectations. There are different groups, both political and non-political, amongst the academics. According to the UGC official, the majority (but not all) of the academics are engaged in these petty teachers' politics. Power struggles are at their peak within these groups because the political group affiliated to the political party in power decrees themselves to be the powerful faction. They abuse this power by not taking classes regularly, not returning exam scripts on time, or taking advantage by making a *coup d'état*, for example by providing marks in exams in consensus with the second/external examiner. The UGC expressed frustration with the current state of the academics:

The academics lack self-motivation. We have become too materialistic. Teaching is a noble profession. When a person chooses this profession it should be because they love it. The moral deviance is huge. We expect the government to solve all the problems. But this is a social problem. The morality needs to be high up. [UGC, Para 4]

VC2 blamed the returnee academics for not making proper use of their time at home. Though the academics have witnessed instances of how to make the most of the time available during their period of studying abroad, they spend a lot of time in petty discussions over small matters. He feels that, being educators, the academics should be more morally responsible towards their work and workplace. He said:

We actually are in need of bringing change to our mentality. We need to remind ourselves that we are educators. We need to recognize that your institution has contributed to your growth by providing you with study leave. Your family has made sacrifices for you to study abroad and so has your country by paying you your salary for which you could go abroad and study. [VC2, Para 5]

VC2's remark the need to bring changes to people's mentality, not only of the stakeholders but the educators as well, sums up the way forward in order to bring positive development in higher education.

7.3.2. Prevalent social discourses affect academics' choice and utilization of study-abroad experience

As mentioned in Section 6.2.1, the Heads of Department from both the public and private universities are very appreciative of the roles the returnee academics are playing in their departments. The public university HoD finds it highly commendable for an academic to receive the chance to study abroad on a scholarship because of his/her qualification. He also speaks highly of the academics who, despite having the chance to stay and work abroad and apparently lead a better life, decide to return and serve the home country and the institution:

Many do not return so I find the returnees truly humble human beings who are loyal to their motherland and have the urge to contribute. Since we are a developing country, we do not have enough funds to send our academics abroad. [Pub HoD, Para 1]

What this HoD indicates is that despite signing bonds to return on completion of studies, some academics decide to stay in the host country. They break their promises and ignore the conditions set out in the bond. The HoD stated that there are instances of such cases even in his department. VC1 added:

There are many barriers, like when we send our academics to study some settle in those countries permanently, some return, but many of them remain in the network and migrate when they get the opportunity. [VC1, Para 3]

VC3 adds a different dimension to the social life of the academics who go to study abroad with their families. He addresses them as 'cocoon people' who interacted only with their families and took nothing of the overseas culture. In certain cases,

he believed the returnees felt they need to withdraw from that particular overseas culture. The same belief was put forward by the private university HoD:

I have seen people who have done their PhDs from abroad who have remained basically the same maybe because they restricted themselves as a PhD student and maybe stayed with the Bangladeshi community. They did not go out, mix with people of that particular country. Just been to the library or laboratory and that's it, and so the essential self has not changed. [Pri HoD, Para 2]

In this connection, this respondent speaks of another dilemma an academic with a family faces when they decide to return home on completion of their studies. The ones who return might do so owing to differences in social, cultural and religious life, as they feel their children might get spoilt or become too Westernised if they settle there. Therefore they need to return home for the children to receive 'the right education'. This is however a controversial issue because there many instances in which the academics felt the urge to stay and not return home, as indicated by the HoD. In the case of the academics staying in the host country, the social security, better quality of life and higher salary seems to outweigh the prospect of the children becoming too Westernized.

7.3.3. Raised expectations of money and facilities among returnee academics

Expecting a similar level of facilities and salary on return to their home country and institution becomes an issue for many academics, according to the majority of the interviewed stakeholders. VC1 admitted that there are academics who function well within this limitation as they are well aware of the situation in the home country:

For example, there might not be ample materials or reagents in the laboratory or there might be a shortage of equipment. There might not be the latest books in the library. But this shortage has become much less because of digitalization. [VC1, Para 4]

VC1 and VC2 validate this statement by saying that when the returnee academics do not get these facilities, they feel frustrated and become laid back, which is a total waste of energy and time spent abroad. VC2 feels that while this happens to people in the science-related subjects, academics in the arts or social sciences are more at liberty to continue their research as they are not tied to barriers of funding or equipment. Again, VC1 claims that the salary expectations of some of the academics shoot up because of their overseas exposure, but providing a higher salary structure as in the UK or US is unrealistic within the current confines of the country. However, he acknowledges that these expectations at times create frustration among the academics as they seek work in different private universities.

In this connection, the UGC official feels that the culture of returning home from abroad full of enthusiasm to contribute no longer exists. The teachers lack commitment and run after the scholarships which are heavier in terms of money rather than the study destination, like the ZAIKA scholarship. They come back with a fair amount of money from different scholarships, with which many teachers can buy apartments of their own. For this monetary gain, academics might end up studying English literature in a Japanese university. He provided evidence by saying:

In our department 14 PhDs are coming from Japan. Apart from three or four, none of them are engaged in research. [UGC, Para 3]

The UG official's comment again emphasizes the unfortunate fact that society including higher education has become very product-oriented and profit-driven. Learners study to secure a well-paid job while academics teach/ study abroad for economic gain.

7.3.3.1. Teaching in private universities

All the stakeholders, except for the British Council, mentioned the role of private universities in the lives of the returnee academics working in public universities.

The mushrooming of private universities in the 1990s created job opportunities, but problems arose when these academics started dedicating more time to their peripheral working places than to their mother institution. While in most cases the public university academics were given permission to work in up to two other institutions, in the real world many of the academics exploit this privilege and work in a number of private universities for monetary gain. This is one of the causes of concern for the UGC respondent:

Academics these days are after money which is a very unpleasant thing to reveal. They teach in four or five private institutions. There are rules but they are not followed. On the university authorities' part there are no such mechanisms to enforce these teachers to comply with the rules. ... They come back and start teaching in private universities. There are 93 private universities in the country and not enough teachers. So teachers from commerce faculty and subjects like English, they keep on teaching in two or three private universities. That is a lot of money. So you do not need to do research. [UGC, Para 12]

The public university HoD endorses this, saying:

They get much higher salary in private universities and also better facilities. These same academics are working 9-5 in these universities whereas they were reluctant to work for a longer duration in a public university. [Pub HoD, Para 3]

VC2 also agrees that teaching in more than two private universities is detrimental. VC3, on the other hand, being part of a private university, speaks of a positive aspect of working in a private institution:

The good thing about being a private university is that we are not bogged down by bureaucracy. [VC3, Para 5]

By this he probably meant that while it takes many hurdles for a decision to be reached and implemented at public universities, it is quicker and more efficient to take a decision at the private level.

While the issue of teaching in private universities remains a cause for concern for other stakeholders, VC1 finds it positive. In his opinion:

A well qualified teacher should be allowed to disseminate his/her knowledge in the private universities as well where our students are studying. In our institution, the academics are permitted to take classes in two private universities. When they are teaching in private universities the benefit is both ways: the academic benefits financially, and on the other hand the institution is getting a good teacher and the students benefit from the same. [VC1, Para 4]

The private university HoD shares his opinion that if the prime reason for academics going abroad to study is money and promotion - that is, in terms of career and financial gain and not for personal growth as an individual human being and an educator researcher - then the exposure will yield no result. 'For him this is just another line in his CV' [Pri HoD, Para 6].

7.3.4. Returnees' attitude towards research

With the exception of the two agencies, stakeholders find research work to be solely dependent on the personal motivation of the returnee academics. VC3 finds that because of the spread of the internet and technological advancement, if somebody is personally motivated, getting up to date should not be very difficult. He feels that even going abroad for conferences and visits matter:

If a person is motivated enough and has the driving force to bring in the change, he or she can do it. But once people have done their PhD they tend to stagnate, as if doing a PhD and becoming a professor is like drawing a line and finishing off. [VC 3, Para 6]

He feels it all boils down to how serious a person is about their professional development. There are ample opportunities for exposure if one keeps one's eyes open. VC3 shares that there are study-abroad programmes in which students go to Europe, study for one or two semesters, and come back with a changed attitude to life. He believes the younger a person avails themselves of these opportunities, the better they tend to absorb it.

The public university HoD in this regard points to the difference in the research culture at home and abroad. There are many loopholes in the education system at home where students can dodge and still come out with a research degree, whereas for an overseas degree there are certain standardized set criteria for receiving an award. He provides an instance:

For example, I can say that if a department confers four PhD degrees, I am pretty sure only one of them has truly worked towards valuable research. But the others have not made enough effort to receive it. It could be they were not serious enough about their work or it might be that the supervisor did not provide ample time and guidance to them. It also could be that the supervisor did not have the capacity to supervise. So this is the usual case. [Pub HoD, Para 2]

The private university HoD also believes that if a person is aptly motivated by and dedicated to research, they will have the additional impetus to make their way through. VC2 adds that academics need to keep their eyes open to the facilities that are available. He cites the example of journal subscriptions and that many journals have open access, some of which are available through UGC. If an academic is inclined towards research, which they should be, they will search for all possible resources. He feels that maintaining good relationships with supervisors and colleagues abroad can also help the academic in finding an article or doing collaborative research. VC2 showed some optimism:

I know there are people who are continuing with their research quite successfully. You need to have dedication towards your profession and your country. [VC2, Para 7]

VC1 refutes the prevailing overtones regarding insufficiency of research funds. He states that the universities try to arrange research funding in collaboration with the foreign donor agencies for those who are highly motivated. However, he implies that the process of applying for donor-funded projects is indeed complex:

If personal motivation is high, I think research funding is not a barrier. Gaining funding from HEQEP is a difficult procedure, hence many do not want to climb through these bureaucratic hurdles. [VC 1, Para 10]

The UGC official sheds more light on the HEQEP project funded by the World Bank. There are five components of HEQEP and improving teaching and learning, academic innovation fund, and connectivity between universities are among them. Some universities get more funding depending on the quality of the project, which is evaluated by a team of experts. He finds the main reason for low-quality research, specifically in science, to be serious shortage of equipment:

But for the last four to five years government has been able to fund many universities under the HEQEP project, which has been able to fund sophisticated equipment for many universities. Other subjects, like social sciences and commerce, I don't think they are much into research. [UGC, Para 11]

He points an accusing finger at the academics for not making use of the provisions available. He stated:

Last year we could not give any funds to commerce and social science faculty because there were no projects. Very few faculty members are engaged in research in commerce faculty. Most of these teachers have PhDs from abroad. They come back and start teaching in private universities. [UGC, Para 12]

By putting much of the blame on the academics and their personal motivation, the stakeholders might have attempted to shift their responsibility for providing favourable working conditions for the returnees, as they mentioned in 7.1.1 above.

7.4. Negativity towards current system of higher education

The UGC official and the HoDs hold quite negative feelings towards the current educational system. Accountability and proper directives to run HE seemed to be imperative to them, despite the insufficient funding and logistical issues mentioned earlier. The UGC official feels that the top position holders in universities are not inclined to follow rules set by the government. They act according to their whims and for monetary benefit:

For selection of teachers, different universities follow different standards. From the UGC, a uniform set of rules were framed about 10 years back, but most of our VCs do not care. They just follow their own rules and say our syndicate has decided that... [UGC, Para 7]

Although the UGC is there to watch, the office can only put forward recommendations - it is not mandated to take any action. The government has not approved a separate higher education commission which could take action when needed, for example by closing down an institution which has turned a blind eye to quality teaching/administration despite repeated warnings. The higher education commission proposal, on failing to pass the bureaucratic hurdles, has been pending with the government for the last seven to eight years. He added that the government is not taking any action because of the underlying power struggle, i.e. they do not want their power to slip by and decentralise in the process. The central government, i.e. the education ministry, wants to be in control of the higher education sector so they can recruit favoured candidates to their desired positions. Adding fuel to the fire, many of the bureaucrats do not have any tertiary education and are unable to grasp the nature of tertiary education. VC3 feels that the top

positions dealing with the education system should be academicians and administrators who have worked actively in HE contexts. He adds:

The experience of the academics who have studied abroad could have been utilized for the training and development purposes of HE. But to date no initiative has been taken up in this regard. Actually, all this depends on the leadership. [VC3, Para 6]

In direct contradiction to the UGC respondent, the VCs of the public universities do not express such negativity about government policy, perhaps because they are directly appointed by the ruling government. VC2 loosely blames the deterioration of higher education on the academics and social causes:

There is another social side which might be considered a barrier to the progression of an academic. One is their determination and mentality to carry on. The other is that there will always be people who will try to hold you back from your desired destination. [VC2, Para 3]

He added that academics are at times put off by the lack of incentives:

I have a professor friend in India who has received an award of a handsome amount for five years because of his exemplary research. As he is financially content, he is inclined to carry on further with his research so that this award is continued for another five years. [VC2, Para 4]

This section highlighted both the stakeholders' awareness of the constraints of the returnees and also their dissatisfaction at the existing higher education policy and practice e.g. ambiguous recruitment policy and lack of incentives.

7.4.1. Dysfunctional government policy owing to corruption

Higher education policy does not stand to be a top priority for the current government. However, the deterioration of higher education, as suggested by

articles in various national dailies such as ‘Degeneration of education in Bangladesh, still a reversible process’ (The Daily Star, January 17, 2015) and ‘Steady deterioration of higher studies in BD’ (Prothom Alo, June 14, 2015), has been a lamentation from different sectors of civil society. The culture of corruption prevailing in various sectors seems to have engulfed the education sector as well. The UGC official and HoDs expressed frustration with the general tendency of the people of the country, who are not keen on following rules, have very little respect for laws and have lost ethical values. They wish to blame it on the irresolute UGC and an age-old HE policy document, the 1973 Act, which urges the academics to work on their ethics.

The HoDs from both the public and private universities are nevertheless critical of some aspects of government policy. One accuses the government of discrimination by reserving a large chunk of the available scholarships for government officials who actually might not need them. The other reports that the government is not keen on positive developments in the higher education sector, which in a way reinforces the views of the UGC respondent.

7.4.2. Contrasting views regarding women’s empowerment and brain drain

It is interesting to find a VC and an agency speaking of gender issues in contrasting terms. VC2 finds women’s empowerment to be a significant trait when it comes to the question of women in education or women going to study abroad. A woman overcoming hurdles both social and psychological, and deciding to go abroad for professional growth or career enhancement, is commendable. The conservative society is not appreciative of a woman being too ambitious. The situation today is changing though, as more and more women return home with their overseas qualification. VC1 takes the example of the interviewer/researcher herself and points out:

Take your example. Earlier how many parents or family or husband would allow their daughter/partner to go to England to study? But that concept no longer exists. Now, if you come back and initiate changes and try to implement

things as you have learnt abroad this would be like women's empowerment. Taking you as an ideal, some colleagues of yours might get enlightened, take inspiration from you and follow suit. [VC2, Para 8]

However, the American Centre takes the gender issue in a different direction. While the VC speaks of women's empowerment and women inspiring women to rise by returning to the home country on successful completion of their studies, US is thinking of channeling these scholarly women's brains to the US in order to minimise the existing gap between male and female students in the science and technological disciplines:

We are working equally on the gender issue as the vast majority of people studying in US universities are men. But there are many strong women STEM students in Bangladesh. Even in US the number of women studying is greater than men but not in STEM. We are trying to help the strong women STEM students get to the United States. [AC, Para 5]

In this connection, the VCs provide contradictory responses to this issue of brain drain. VC1 finds migration of academics to be 'positive':

We want our academics to have greater facilities, working in renowned universities abroad. We also would like enhanced international recognition of Bangladeshi academics. [VC1, Para 5]

On the other hand, VC2 considers brain drain a 'major catastrophe':

You are researching there contributing to another country's education or progression. But you just forget about your contribution to your own country. [VC2, Para 6]

The spokesperson for the American Centre in a way supported VC1 and added a third dimension to the issue. He stated that the American Alumni Association (AAA) has taken an initiative called 'Brain Gain'. He claims that the number of

Bangladeshi students who go to Western countries to study compared to students who opt for university education at home is negligible. Thus this 'tiny' number of students who go to study abroad can have an outside influence, and are brain gains than brain drains. He claimed:

The number is not so large that they can truly be draining the brain from Bangladesh. [AC, Para 7]

With a 'vibrant emerging economy in South and South East Asia' he finds Bangladesh to be a 'ready market' for students who wish to become more 'eligible employees' as they have that advanced degree. So, in his view, there is a 'willing audience' on both sides (AC, Para 5).

While all three opinions carry value, if the students of a small country intending to study STEM subjects are consumed by the Western world, how would a developing country like Bangladesh progress? This is a question our stakeholders need to clarify for themselves to keep the brain drain in check.

7.5. Notes of optimism among the negativity

Despite many negatives, there are nuggets of optimism in most of the interviews with the participant stakeholders. VC3 states that they are bringing in a change to their policy that emphasises quality of publication, like publishing in high impact factor journals, and not only quantity [Para 9]. VC1 gives a reminder of the common rule in most HEIs in Bangladesh, that on return academics need to serve the home institution for the same number of years spent abroad. His university counts the time spent abroad for PhD as active service, which differs from the policy of other universities. This is owing to their belief that the effort the academics are making abroad for their research is similar to the effort they would have spent teaching at home. He also appreciates that this is discriminatory, as other universities have separate service rules. However, he is hopeful because the UGC has drafted a uniform set of rules, such as how many publications are required for promotion, length of service required and so on, for all universities. At the moment UGC is in

discussion about these changes with the teachers' associations from different universities, though consensus is yet to be reached. [Para 8]

VC2, like VC1, also feels that there should be a unified policy for all the universities and is appreciative of the UGC initiative regarding a unified policy for all HEIs [Para 10]. The UGC official also speaks of this reform in the policy and hopes that in due course it will work towards the enhancement of HE [Para 8]. He said:

We are trying to reach that level where students will not want to go to study abroad. But it will take time. For example, say 10-20 years back, there were no universities where we could offer a PhD. But now there are various departments in a number of universities where they can offer a PhD. I would not claim that the quality will be as good as overseas countries, but there are universities abroad where the quality of research is questionable. The same is true here. There are departments and professors who produce very high-quality research. [UGC, Para 12]

In this regard, VC2 reiterates that he expects to see the returnees as active changemakers, restructuring the current educational system as they have witnessed abroad. He adds an optimistic line by saying that any change, be it educational or economic, will require some time to become sustainable, but the returnee academics are the ones who should be taking the initiative to do so [Para 2]. Like VC2, the UGC official feels that every developed country has more than a hundred years of history whereas Bangladesh has a relatively short history, and hence an array of issues to tackle. He shared:

Things will be better in course of time. Earlier to find an article in a journal you had to go through a tedious process. But things are so easy now because of technological advancement. [UGC, Para 15]

The spokesperson for the American Centre also expresses positivity for the growth of HE in Bangladesh and speaks of the rationale for academics to return to their home country:

We can't give you the exact figures of the people who come back but there anecdotally the trend has been going up. More and more people are really honestly going to the US with the intention of coming back. It has a lot to do with Bangladesh's growing economy, the surging of private universities, not only the private but the university sector as a whole. As Bangladesh develops more in the knowledge economy, there are more incentives for the Bangladeshis to come back quickly to their home country. [AC, Para 3]

He adds further notes of optimism, saying that the respect for US degrees in Bangladesh is very high and he has only come across people who went to US for particular objectives. They have come back and applied whatever they have learnt in the USA:

That could be a professor at a university here, could be in business, or it could be an MBA, but the good thing is I have not seen people that go to US, come back and languish. I feel like people who pick up those skills from the US come back to Bangladesh and they are put to work right away. [AC, Para 3]

What the VCs and the American Centre official shared provides evidence that some of the returnees if not all do contribute towards enhancement of knowledge and development.

7.5.1. Stakeholders speaking of future directions

Speaking of any future plans or what needs to be done for further development, the spokesperson for the American Centre described the returnees as their 'windows into the world', as the Alumni understand their perspective, and they can bridge the gap between the understandings of the American Centre and the existing reality. The American Centre keeps these returnees in the loop constantly through conferences, events and roundtables. They find that it is for the returnees to drive the agenda in these events and not the American Centre. The alumni should be telling the Centre what they need and why [Para 7]. The spokesperson further

explained that the American Centre has a grants programme aside from the Alumni, which started with US university alumni like the Bangladesh Youth Leadership Centre (BYLC). With the founder being a Harvard graduate, AC supported the organisation at birth. Whether they are exchange or university alumni, AC understands them to be the window and voices for the American Centre:

They know us best. We work with all of Bangladesh and we do lot of programmes to the community but these particular folks are the people who we speak a common language with and help connect us to more people. [AC, Para 9]

The British Council Dhaka, in an attempt to draw the UK returnees closer, formed the Bangladesh-UK Alumni Network (BUKAN) with the aim of helping returnee UK graduates to develop a networking platform for professional development. Establishing the Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) within seven selected universities to train the academics is another step to enhancing the quality of higher education in Bangladesh:

It will create opportunities to work together towards the country's future development and share valuable experience with current students who wish to study in UK. [BC, Para 4]

They also initiated a Career Summit last year with the intention to carry on as an opportunity for returnee UK graduates to interact with and gain access to top companies and explore the right job opportunities.

The UGC official closed his interview with a description of what is needed for the expansion of overall education, including HE:

Certain things we have lost maybe because of proper vision of the politicians. They are only after money and have lost their mission and vision. What we need is a visionary leader. [UGC, Para 17]

The comments of the stakeholders regarding future directions emphasise the urgency of building a strong community and leadership for the enhancement of higher education in Bangladesh.

7.6. Chapter summary

This chapter provides an overview of the stakeholders' perceptions of study abroad and their thoughts about the returnee academics. The main findings to report are: all three sets of stakeholders - the UGC official, VCs, HoDs and the agencies the British Council and American Centre - speak highly of the various advantages of study abroad. They share their expectation that returnee academics will engage in knowledge dissemination and contribute to the enhancement of higher education. The HoDs endorse that their returnees are making worthwhile contributions in their respective departments. The stakeholders also share the reasons why some of their expectations remained unfulfilled, such as unfavourable working conditions, power struggles, the effect of prevailing social discourses, raised expectations of salary and other facilities. They seem to hold the academics responsible for not making proper use of their time and expertise and seem not to acknowledge whether or not the favourable conditions that they talk about have been provided. Though stakeholders are aware that change will not occur in the higher education sector overnight, they do not mention whether the expertise the returnees have developed is suitable for the Bangladeshi context or whether the learning needs to be contextualized. There were also some differences in opinion between the American Centre spokesperson and the VCs, and also one VC and another, regarding the issues of brain drain and women's empowerment. The British Council and American Centre have taken positive steps to connect with their alumni and contribute to the enhancement of HE. Despite the differences in opinion and the unfulfilled expectations, it is gratifying to see that the stakeholders consider the situation in HE to be redeemable.

The next chapter provides answers to the research questions of this study and offer a deeper theoretical commentary on the study's main findings.

Chapter 8: Discussion

This chapter discusses the key findings from this study in relation to research about the experiences of the returnee academics and the concerned stakeholders. Sections 8.1- 8.3.1 provide answers to all the research questions and sub-questions, followed by 8.4, which provides an overview of the prevailing neoliberal ethos and its impact on Bangladeshi HE and the return experience of the academics. I have added this important section later because it provides grounds for me to establish how neoliberal the participants (both returnee academics and stakeholders) have been in expressing their return experience or their views of returnees.

8.1. What are the prevalent experiences of returnee academics teaching in higher education institutions of Bangladesh in the years following international study abroad?

The prevalent experience of the returnee academics seems to be a blend of hope and hopelessness for the majority of the participants, according to the findings reported in Chapter 5 and 6. There is an initial euphoria of getting back onto home ground and being reunited with friends and family. However, some of the returnees' experience transformed into a tale of despair or hopelessness as they were gradually exposed to the reality of the unaccommodating workplace and the insecure social life. Chapter 5, sections 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, and the trajectories of Sofia, Hamza, Mofiz and Maria presented in Chapter 6, reveal how the personal and professional world of the academics changed owing to their experience of studying abroad. The returnee participants also talked about the benefits of study abroad, professional development and barriers to implementing their knowledge. The fact that participants return to the home country owing to family expectations or having a prestigious job serves as a 'protective factor' for them to lessen the hardship of re-entry (Jung et al., 2013, p. 167). In the answers to the following sub-questions, it would also appear that some of the participants of this study too were elated on being reunited with friends and family and some were initially happy to return to their universities (as they were on study leave). More detailed discussion

on the prevalent experience of the returnees is provided in the discussion of the sub-questions.

8.1.1. What prompted these Bangladeshi academics to study in Western countries?

The predominant motivating factor among the Bangladeshi scholars (both male and female) who went to study abroad on scholarships and through self-finance (see section 5.1) has been identified as professional advancement in the form of promotion and increments and finding a highly paid job on return. Increased work efficiency by gaining up-to-date knowledge and earning global recognition as a scholar researcher, interest in subject matter, learning to research better, carrying out further research, the tradition of predecessors going abroad to studies, and the widespread favourable attitude towards Anglophone Western education were among the other factors mentioned by the participants. None of the female academics mentioned contribution explicitly; rather, education of children (Hania) or being inspired by their husbands' study (Munia and Neema) were mentioned (section 5.1). On the other hand, male-specific factors included desire to contribute to society and the country (four male returnees) and study in an Anglophone country (see 5.1 above). What is evident from the findings is that men seem to be more inclined towards personal and professional development and at least acknowledge their desire to contribute. The female participants were so engrossed in balancing their personal and professional lives that contribution might not have crossed their minds, similar to participants in studies like Morley and Crossouard (2014) and Kiaye and Singh (2013).

Apart from the female-specific motivating factors, the rest of the motivating factors have also been highlighted by Karacas (2020), Ghimire and Maharjan (2014), Hossain (2014) and Gill (2010) in their studies of international migration/study abroad. Wilkins et al. (2011) and Altbach (1991, 1989), in their discussion of push pull factors, include better employment prospects, better English skills, means of experiencing a different culture, and a safer environment as motivating factors for students going to study abroad. This urge for study abroad among some of the

returnees could be associated with Kramsch's (2009) concept of desire, a core drive towards individual achievements in life that could act as 'the desire to obtain freedom and economic opportunity' (pp. 14-15).

One specific concern in choosing a study-abroad destination, as mentioned by participant academic Hania, is the social considerations like education and social security of children (see section 4.2.3). One reason no other academics mention this could be that the recipients of scholarships like Commonwealth, AusAid, Erasmus or Fulbright, had family expenses included in their package. This helped respondents like Hania in their decision-making for studying abroad. The consideration probably included getting a good education for children, gaining proficiency in English, and reaping the benefits from the experience of being in a developed country for three to five years. This finding is consistent with studies like Monroe et al. (2008), who found that family and future of children have a huge effect on women's professional decisions. However, Aiston and Jung (2015) suggested that structural and systemic discrimination practices have equal significance for women academic's productivity and decision-making. For respondent Hania, it is likely that both reasons are valid (see section 4.2.3). Her children were the primary concern in deciding the study-abroad destination and on return the institutional and systematic hurdles made her doubt her decision to go.

As female respondents are usually held to in charge of 'family matters' by society (Eagley, 1987), the female participants seemed to hold themselves responsible for any decision taken that might later affect their children in particular or family life in general. Sama's trauma on leaving her son behind to study abroad, or Nusaiba's insecurity about separating her child from the father, all bear witness to this claim (see section 5.1.1). In a country where social security and education of children are pivotal considerations, it does not come as a surprise that children would be much more involved in people's motives for study abroad than is generally acknowledged. Therefore, what Hania stated explicitly in relation to motivation might have been an oversight by the rest of the participants with family, who as academics were more inclined towards stating reasons related to their profession or career.

8.1.2. Do they believe they have changed because of their international experience? In what ways?

All participant academics believe they have changed for the better because of their international experience (see sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4). Study abroad, which has been identified as *beneficial* by all the participants, is identified as beneficial in much previous research (Karakas, 2020; Almutairi, 2018; Barnawi and Phan, 2015; Christofi and Thomson, 2007). These studies observed that the dynamic nature of study abroad transformed returnees with new competencies, skills, values and broadened worldviews that distinguished them from the 'home-grown' academics. Similarly, the participants in my study spoke of their achievements and the challenges they endured in becoming the person that they are today. Study abroad widened their horizons and changed their perceptions of teaching, learning and research. They now feel more empowered and confident to carry out effective teaching and research because of their international exposure (see section 5.2.1). All the returnee academics seem to acknowledge a shared identity of being 'more knowledgeable and competent', and for some, an identity of an 'eligible' academic (e.g. Asif in section 5.3.3.5.1).

Participant academics mentioned library facilities, technological advancements, intercultural communication, international publications and collaborations as gains of studying abroad like the participants in Karacas (2020), Ghimire and Maharjan (2014), and Celik (2012). The stories of Sophia and Mofiz presented in Chapter 6 also contain clear illustrations of a clear transformation of identity. Respondents Reshad, Karim and Samad spoke of heightened respect in the workplace; Samad and Mofiz mentioned part-time teaching, senior administrative positions and international connections and collaborations (see section 5.2.1), which are also mentioned in the studies above (ibid.).

Again, factors that contributed towards returnees being 'more knowledgeable and competent' academics included more developed awareness of the practicality of teaching and doing effective research. as mentioned by participants Hamza,

Shoikat, Mohit, Saba and Namira (see section 5.2.1). The new knowledge gained abroad not only destabilised their perceptions of learning but also elucidated the necessity of proper training and guidance for both teachers and students (see section 5.2). These respondents claimed that their MA/ PhD degrees from abroad introduced them to the concept of learner-centred teaching and interactive classrooms, which also matches with the findings of studies like Crossman and Clarke (2010), Rizvi et al. (2010) and Altbach (1991). However, respondents like Hamza, Samad and Nusaiba emphasised the need to contextualise the learning from study abroad before applying it to teaching practices at home (see section 5.3.1). In this connection, Canagarajah, in an interview with Hossain (2018), provides an example of how this contextualization of knowledge gathered from L2 contexts abroad could be related to concepts in the L1 home context (see section 3.1.2). However, the participants added that the applicability and success of instruction remained entirely the personal discretion of the returnees and whether the teachers are keen on making these changes in their practices (see section 5.2).

8.1.3. How do they feel about their reintegration process?

Findings from sections 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5. suggest the reintegration of the returnees occurred on two levels: academic and social. While some of the participants expressed their elation and positivity on returning to home grounds (e.g. participants Saba and Shihab, section 5.3.1), academic reintegration for some of the others was quite distressing. The majority, 23 out of 35 participants, implied that study abroad is a matter of personal gain and not much of a contribution to higher education (see section 5.3.1). This finding is indicative that there must be factors that hold back the returnees from fitting in and add to their frustration.

Respondents might have felt the absence of a 'favourable working environment' which would ensure better productivity, as also mentioned by the stakeholders (see section 7.1.1). Recent studies like Karacas (2020) suggest that returnees' professional and career development were being hampered under the prevailing constraints in Turkey and they were in fear of losing their competencies and skills developed abroad. This seems to be consistent with the findings of this study.

Respondents like Munia, Arib, Hamza and Mala reported hostility from colleagues

in the form of non-cooperation in the workplace, which held them back from fitting in (see also Alandejani, 2013; Zhang 2011; Antal, 2001). More details on tensions between academics with local and overseas qualifications can be found in section 5.3.2.

Respondents in this study also speak of a flawed higher education system that lacks accountability as a reason for their frustration (see section 5.3.3.1). For instance, participants like Samad and Mofiz blame the stakeholders for not making education their priority and neglecting to provide quality education and research (see sections 5.3.3 and 5.3.3.5). This complaint was also raised in Rabbani and Solaiman (2014), which highlighted the deterioration of HE in recent years and criticised the current government for not prioritising Higher Education policy (also see articles published in national dailies *The Daily Star*, January 17, 2015 and *Prothom Alo*, June 14, 2015). 'Request culture' seeking undue favours in the form of passing a student, providing inflated grades or recruiting a candidate is another worrisome issue in Bangladeshi HE, according to academics like Maria and Hamza (see Ch 6, sec 6.4 and 6.2). In place of supreme academic excellence, the central administrative positions of VC, pro-VC and Treasurer are assigned by political government intervention (World Bank Report of Education, 2019), which remains another cause of concern for many participants, such as Reshad and Hamza (see section 5.3.3.4).

The outdated HE policy (1973 Act) for public universities that makes the difference between education in public and private universities more apparent also became a cause for concern for the returnees. Academics like Samad, Tomal, Reshad, Shafqat and Hamza spoke about these differences while expressing their dissatisfaction about the HE policy (see section 5.3.3.4). In this connection, some of the respondents also questioned the qualifications of the senior administrators in power, who are responsible for decision-making. Participant academics like Hamza (section 6.2) and even participant stakeholder VC3 (see sections 7.4 and 7.4.1), suggested that many of these administrators do not have the necessary quality or qualifications to be in senior positions. Therefore the decisions they take in the name of enhancement of HE policy (often without consulting concerned bodies)

raise controversies (see also Bhattacharya, 2018; Haider, 2014; Pandey, 2009). The staggering of amendment of the 1973 Act and the recent university staff recruitment policy stands as evidence to the controversy and existing bureaucratic hurdles (see section 7.4). Bureaucratic hurdles have also been a major cause of controversy in studies like Almutairi (2018), Celik (2012) and Gudykunst et al. (1996).

However, returnees like Saba and Shobuj seem to notice the intensity of impact of these existing issues mostly on return (see sections 5.2 and 5.3.1). Findings from Bramlin et al.'s (1990) study seems to be consistent with the finding that in the years of study abroad, remaining in a different environment from home makes people notice problems and start judging everything around them through comparative lenses. In this connection, Martin's (1984) study reported similar changes in participants' attitudes and beliefs of the participants (as mentioned in section 8.1.2). They also struggled to adjust to the unchanged, previously familiar home environment. Despite the time lapse of thirty-seven years, the similarity between Martin's study and the findings of this one indicates that the time spent in adjusting to a new academic community and returning to the old one is bound to lead to some degree of frustration.

More recent studies on return experience (Boafo-Arthur et al., 2020; Sengupta and Kapur, 2020; Karacas, 2020; Alsulami, 2020; Almuarik, 2019) are also supportive of the observation that shift from one culture to another and then reshift becomes a cause of cultural discomfort for the returnees. The cultural discomfort that my respondents experienced resembles the experience of the participants in Yi (2011), Gill (2010), Robinson-Pant (2009), and Butcher (2003). However, these studies were situated in specific contexts like China, Australia, New Zealand, the USA and related academic settings. None are based on the experience of academics; rather the emphasis is on the account of student returnees in general.

Alongside the cultural discomfort, there seem to be sufficient factors in the home environment to turn the returnees' initial euphoria about coming back home into survival stories. According to some participants, strong motivation is required to

keep on working among adversity (see section 5.3.1). Some respondents developed their own coping mechanisms in order to fit back into the home environment; for instance, returnee Namira lowered her high standard of teaching gained through her MA studies in the USA to adjust to the poor-quality students in her institution (see section 5.3.3.3); Mala joined politics to raise her voice against social injustice (see section 5.3.3.4) and Neema and Rashna, on not getting enough research funding, resorted to desk research and smaller projects (see section 5.3.3.2). Again, in the course of fitting in, an academic turning into a politician hungry for power cannot be a desirable option, as in the case of Mofiz. Mofiz gave up on academic integration and turned himself into a 'politician-academic' because of the disconcerting events that led to his dissatisfaction with the education system and policy (see section 6.3, Mofiz). In this case, Bangladesh gained an overseas-trained academic-turned-politician but lost out on the scholarship and intellectual contribution for which the initial investment of time (in the form of granting study leave) and money (as in paid leave and scholarship) was made. Mofiz's case of becoming an academic-turned-politician might have been the destiny of any other academic. Studies like Pritchard (2011), Almutairi (2018), Almuarik (2019) and Alsulami (2020) speak of similar systemic and social challenges for the returnees who went to study in the UK and the USA, as mentioned in sections 8.1.1 and 8.1.3 above.

Concerns for family and children seem to be central for the participants who chose to speak about the social side of reintegration. Ten participants did not touch on the social side of their re-entry. Another ten academics, including Saba, Sama, Mohit, Namira, Shoikat and Mala, expressed their elation at reuniting with their family and friends (see section 5.4). However, they were the minority academics for whom children were not a concern, as they were either single or had very young children at that time. The 15 participants like Hafiz, Nima, Sofia, Munia and Hania, who had their families with them while studying abroad, were keen to share their stories. They shared how their children, studying in primary and secondary schools, were quick to adjust to the system abroad. However, after spending three to five years abroad these children went through some very difficult times in adjusting to the different social environment and education system in the

homeland (see section 5.5). Owing to lack of social security, tremendous study pressure from the school, and parents' busy schedules due to various professional commitments, the 'cultural discomfort' on return made their lives miserable, which was painful for their parents too (see also Almuarik, 2019; Alandejani, 2013).

Thus a significant revelation of this study is that returnees who went with their children not only went through enormous stress in readjusting their children, but also their productivity was affected by this distress (see section 5.4). When Hania prioritised her children's education and wellbeing and took them abroad with her, or when Sophia's children accompanied her to Australia for her PhD studies (section 6.1), it might not have crossed their minds that readjusting their children to the home environment would turn out to be such a struggle. These readjustment issues could have been avoided if the parents had mentally prepared their children before return. Or better to say, if the parents were themselves better prepared to reintegrate the children to the changed social and educational settings, the re-entry could have been smoother (Pitts, 2016; Butcher, 2003; Antal, 2001). In this case, re-entry training or workshops (see Sussman, 1986, 2002) might have helped in creating this awareness.

However, a notable difference between my own study and those of Alandejani (2013), Almutairi (2018) and Almuarik (2019) is that their Saudi participants explicitly mentioned reverse culture shock. By contrast, none of my participants showed any symptoms of reverse cultural shock or even mentioned shock. One reason might be that the participants were interviewed two to seven years after their return. If they had been interviewed immediately on return, like those in Alandejani (2013) and Almuarik's (2019), reverse culture shock might have been a prominent feature. Both these studies by Saudi scholars showed that spending a couple of years studying in a very different culture (academically, socially and religion-wise) like the USA caused them several re-entry issues, such as mental isolation and difficulty crossing various bureaucratic hurdles.

8.1.4. Is there any difference in experience between male and female academics?

The experience of male and female academics varied considerably, starting from their decision to study abroad to reintegrating professionally and personally (see sections 5.4 and 5.5). When asked to narrate their experience on return, the majority of female participants chose to speak about their family reintegration first and then their professional reintegration (see section 5.4). Again, unlike the male participants, all twelve of the female respondents were torn between what to prioritise - career or family – either prior to going or on return from study abroad (see section 5.5.1). Despite being the so-called ‘empowered’ women in academia, the feelings shared by the participants (see section 5.5) suggest that they view their gender ‘as a restriction of possibility’ (Ahmed, 2017, p. 7). The experience of the women academics clearly shows that they are subject to patriarchal domination politically, economically, socially and psychologically (Tyson, 2006). The stories of Maria and Sophia depict the underlying struggle of the women returnees (see section 6.4 and 6.1). Some of these struggles have been reported in Almuarik (2018), Jung (2013), Cox (2004) and Brabant et al (1990). A more feminist reading of the experience of women returnees, focusing particularly on the aspects of (i) gender roles and glass ceiling and (ii) social stigma, follows this section.

i. Effect of pre-defined social roles and glass ceiling

As mentioned in Section 8.4.2, being a Muslim majority nation, Bangladesh is heavily influenced by the patriarchal societal structure (see Chapter 2). Despite all the progress, the experience of the female respondents like Namira, Maria and Sabina suggest that restrictive gender roles and glass ceilings still permeate higher education in Bangladesh (see sections 5.5.2 and 5.5.3). The South Asian female participants in Amin’s (2018) study also share similar gendered experiences. Chung (1994) finds the glass ceiling to be rooted in cultural and economic factors which vary among societies. These factors eventually become a hindrance to women’s higher achievements, according to Bain and Cummings (2000). As a result, some participants, like Sabina, Maria and Mala, have fallen prey to gender stereotyping (see section 5.5.1) and fear of being negatively evaluated if they try to

cross certain so-called boundaries or break the 'glass ceiling', similar to the participants in Wesarat and Mathew (2017), Sharif (2015), Kiaye and Singh (2013) and Wirth (2001). This gender stereotyping issue has also come up in the rhetoric of the married participants in Anwar's (2018) study.

As mentioned in the Chapter 2, Bangladesh's primary aim for female education post-independence was to train students into 'enlightened motherhood', on the premise that educated women are better mothers (Chanana, 1994). Though the concept of enlightened motherhood has been successfully modified in recent years, a complex blend of religious misinterpretations with cultural practices (Badawi, 1994) has made Bangladeshi women more susceptible to gender inequality and discrimination. This is also indicated by Ahmed and Hyndman-Rizk (2018) in their study of higher education and empowering women in Bangladesh. Kiaye and Singh's (2013) study of South African women and Ahmad, Fakhr and Ahmed's (2011) study of Pakistani women also affirm that social role and the dual responsibilities of women in those societies act as a career barrier. A major point of difference between this study and the studies based in Saudi Arabia regarding experience of women (e.g. Antal, 2001; Alandejani, 2013; Almuarik, 2018) could be that Bangladesh was a British colony and has incorporated norms and values from different nationalities with different religion and culture (Anwar, 2015). Thus culture shock for Bangladeshi academics might not have been as harsh a 'shock' as for the Saudi academics.

The participants of this study attempted to break the glass ceiling by overcoming the hurdles associated with the decision to study overseas. However, on return the pre-existing social roles made them vulnerable again. They once again started to feel the presence of the glass ceiling above them. Moreover, with every attempt to break it, the ceiling seemed to move higher for many of them, as seen in the experiences of Maria, Nusaiba and Namira (see section 5.5.3).

ii. Social stigma

All four unmarried female academics who went abroad to pursue a Masters degree got married immediately on return (see section 5.5.1.1). This is compelling

evidence of a social stigma that extends even to well-educated professional women. In the story of Maria (section 6.4) who went abroad unmarried, she returned immediately on completion of her MA owing to caring responsibilities for her mother. However, the ailing mother pressurised her daughter to get married soon on return. Her life, along with the lives of the other three unmarried returnees Namira, Mala and Sabina, changed considerably after they got married on return (see sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2). Accordingly, owing to the existing cultural and religious discourses mentioned earlier, the future of their career progression then relied on their partner's/family's decision. As a result, these academic women were equally vulnerable to shaming and labelling as good or bad depending on their mannerisms and behaviour, just like any other women in the country.

This shaming and labelling is evident in the broken marriage of Mala, early returns from abroad for Saba and Munia, indecisiveness regarding further studies or prioritising family issues for Nusaiba, Sabina and Namira, and lack of family support for Maria (see section 5.5.2). People judging Rashna on her appearance on return, rather than her academic pursuits and achievements (see section 5.5.1.1), was another example of how sections of society still prioritise the looks of a woman over her educational qualifications. Participants in Anwar's (2015) study of Bangladeshi married women opting to study abroad and Amin's (2018) on South Asian women scholars had similar experiences.

Earlier, in section 8.1.4, I discussed the mental agony the female participants went through in deciding to study overseas and their difficulty helping their families to re-adjust on return to Bangladesh. All the married female academics, like Nusaiba, Munia, Sofia and Sama (see section 5.5.1), who had to leave their spouses behind continued to feel guilty about separating the family or uprooting the spouse from his settled profession to join their venture abroad. This feeling of guilt is a reflection of their gendered social role (Eagley, 1987), as women are expected to be at home looking after family. Thus, if she chooses to work, study further or study abroad, the difficult decisions relating to maintaining a work-family balance lie entirely on her shoulders. As such, respondent Nusaiba is seen to blame the overtly socialising culture of the country, such as frequent social visits by friends and

relatives, social gatherings, family commitments that create extra pressure for women academics in maintaining work-life balance (see section 5.4). Nusaiba's husband refraining from helping her with the decision to go abroad for her PhD by remaining silent, Namira and Sabina's compromise in choosing study abroad destinations, and Maria left hanging in her decision to go abroad for her PhD owing to an unsupportive family, also reinforce the issue (see section 5.5.2). The mental trauma and vulnerability that the women participants experienced on return also came across vividly in Chitsamatanga et al.'s (2017) study of female academics in South African and Zimbabwean universities, Alandejani (2013) and Almuarik's (2019) studies of Saudi Arabian women scholars and Amin's (2018) study of South Asian women scholars.

It is clear that support from family is the deciding factor for many of the female participants thinking of studying overseas (see section 5.5.1). Sophia and Maria's stories of re-entry in Chapter 6 stand in contrast to each other regarding family support. While Sophia's trauma involved the readjustment of her children on return, professionally she could work with a sense of willingness and enjoyment on receiving full support from her family for her career progression. In Maria's case her desire to pursue a PhD remains undecided as her spouse and family are totally unsupportive of the idea. She seemed to struggle with the tension of moving between her personal and professional spaces. Maria's story, identical to the stories of other unmarried participants, provided a compelling account of the effect of these competing discourses on a female academic. This mental agony is entirely female specific; as Ahmed (2017, p. 9) posits in her discussion of struggling women academics. To her, being a female and in academia is like being a 'space invader', trying to make room in a space not intended for them. Alsulami's (2020) study in Saudi Arabia also shows that the female returnees experienced greater challenges than males owing to gender imbalances in a completely male-dominated social environment and culture.

What is striking in this regard is that the majority of the women respondents in this study expressed their gratitude for the support they received from their spouses, family or in-laws in the process of gaining their overseas qualifications (see section

5.5.1). They seemed to nurture the feeling of guilt within themselves that they had prioritized their profession and acknowledged that without support they would not be in the position that they are in. Moreover, the women academics seemed well aware of the prevailing hierarchical status of the male partners and seemed to respect the imposed social discourse. They seemed to believe that ‘dismantling the world that is built to accommodate only some bodies’ is after all a rather impractical job (Ahmed, 2017, p. 14). Munia and Neema pursuing their PhDs at the same study destination as their partners speaks to this hierarchical respect, as well as compromise on the women’s part (see section 5.5.2). Going to the same destination might have been the most convenient option, but given the choice, these women participants might have opted for a different institution or a different geographical location. Having said that, the difference in choice would have created further complications which both parties would want to avoid.

From the discussion above, the lived experiences of the female participants tell us that the country is in need of a more united, stronger feminist movement, to bring changes that prompt gender equality and social justice. Cases like Nusaiba and Maria only aggravate individual suffering and add to the nation’s loss of intellectual faculty, which is never desirable.

8.1.5. Were the returnees aware of any stated expectations from the stakeholders? What are their felt obligations?

In answer to the last sub-question, none of the participant academics mentioned any stated obligations from the stakeholders (see section 5.1). However, the service rules of public universities state that before going to study abroad, academics need to sign bonds to come back and serve the institution for at least two years (Chakuribidhi, Jahanagirnagar University, 2012). For the academics receiving scholarships from various donor organisations, a clause in a detailed contractual agreement states that they will return and contribute to development in their home country (Commonwealth Scholarships website).

Such a contribution seems to be widely overlooked by the majority of academics as only five of the 35 male returnees, all working in public universities, mentioned their desire to make a societal or wider contribution (see section 5.1). The other respondents also might have wished to contribute but at the time of the interview prioritised other issues. There might be a plethora of reasons behind this reluctance. One reason, as suggested by Neazy (2018), was precariousness and job insecurity (see section 3.4.3.1). Some private universities exploit fresh graduates by recruiting them on one-year contracts as entry-level lecturers so that nobody can object to the heavy workload, low pay and poor facilities. They remain in a precarious position, in constant fear of being replaced by a fresh graduate. Moreover, as reported by Hamza in section 7.2, there are many public university academics who teach in multiple private universities, turning themselves, according to Neazy (2018), into 'rickshaw faculty' who produce 'zombie graduates' (Husain and Osswald, 2016).

8.2. What impact did the returnee academics have on their organisation?

In answer to research question 2, the HoDs from both the public and private universities endorsed the up-to-date knowledge and changed attitudes of the returnee academics towards teaching and research and expressed their appreciation (see section 7.1).

The HoDs feel the overseas-trained academics put their effort into doing things differently and effectively in comparison to their colleagues with local qualifications (see section 7.1). For example, the private university HoD mentioned several practices that the returnee academics did differently in his department: preparation of course outline, classroom instruction, technological adaptation, grading, and providing feedback. Similarly, the public HoD expressed his satisfaction that his returnee faculty members are not only engaged in various research projects, but they are also encouraging their colleagues towards research and other development activities. This shows that there has been some transfer of acquired knowledge from the L2 context to L1 context. Studies like Rahman (2013, 2018) on the Bangladeshi context, Karacas (2020), Ghimire and Maharjan (2014)

and Christofi and Thompson (2007), also report on the positive contribution of the returnees in their HE contexts (see also section 3.1.2).

VCs agree with the opinion of the HoDs that some of the academics are trying their best to become changemakers by making a positive contribution towards teaching, learning and research (see section 8.2). The spokesperson for the American Centre also emphasised that they have an active alumni association who are visibly contributing towards the development of the community (see section 7.1).

8.3. What are the stakeholders' expectations for returnee academics of Higher Education Institutions?

Lastly, the answer to the third research question on stakeholders' (VCs and member of UGC) key expectations for the returnee academics included that they would:

- enhance their knowledge
- develop both academic and social skills - time management, behaviour, punctuality and other transferable skills - by attending seminars and conferences while studying abroad and disseminate on return (see sections 7.1 and 7.2).
- attempt to minimise the gap between local and global knowledge. In this connection, interaction with international scholars and students and remaining in a network of knowledge exchange and collaboration on return could act as an excellent way forward for returnees (see section 7.2). These good practices in academia mentioned by respondent stakeholders have also been mentioned in studies like Robinson-Pant (2009), Namgung (2008) and Christofi and Thompson (2007).
- return home on completion of their studies as stated in their contracts (see section 7.2).

It is clear that the stakeholders echo the same idea listed in the UGC Report (2013) and also mentioned by Crossman and Clarke (2009), that they expect the returnee academics to be agents of change by trying to restructure the current educational

system with up-to-date knowledge that they gathered abroad (see section 7.2). Stakeholders realise that any change requires time but felt that the initiative must be taken by the overseas-trained academics. However, it is not clear from their words whether the stakeholders are aware that what works well in the Western context might not work well in the Bangladeshi context. Moreover, the stakeholders provided their opinion that a 'favourable working environment' is needed for returnees to make proper use of their acquired knowledge (see section 7.1.1). Later the stakeholders seem to shift the responsibility for ensuring better working conditions onto the returnees by raising allegations that they are unmotivated (see section 7.3.4). It seems the stakeholders are giving contradictory statements themselves, showing awareness of one issue but ignoring others to cover their lack or negligence in providing satisfactory working conditions for the returnees. However, section 7.4 denotes that the stakeholders are themselves unhappy about the system and policy of HE owing to corruption and nepotism. This indicates that the system and policy needs to be revamped both for the sake of the stakeholders and the faculty members, to ensure sustainable development in HE.

8.3.1. Do they feel these expectations have been met?

When stakeholders were asked 'Do you feel your expectations have been met?', the answer yielded a mixed reaction of positives and negatives (see section 7.3). For instance, the UGC respondent mentions academics who are quite committed to their work. However, both the UGC respondent and the VCs point at various levels of lack of commitment on the part of the respondents, for example through their involvement in power politics, neglecting regular classes and duties, professional jealousy and moral deviance evidenced by chasing financial gain as seen in some academics' preference for JAICA scholarships with generous funds for maintenance. (see section 7.3, 7.3.1-7.3.4). Both the UGC official and VC2 felt that the academics should have felt more morally obligated, as they are educators and education is a noble profession (see section 7.3.1).

Stakeholders like the Pro-VC provide a reason for some of the returnees to fit in comfortably with the home environment on return even though many of them

struggle with this (see section 8.1.4). He addresses some of the returnees as 'cocoon people' who come back to the old situation as if they have never been abroad. According to the Pro-VC, during their tenure abroad these academics remain in their own cocoons and remain culturally aloof as they do not engage in any other activities (see section 7.3.2, Pro-VC). In contradiction of the Pro-VC, Alsulami (2020) and Sussman (1986) indicated in their studies that the longer an individual stayed abroad, the greater the challenges they experienced upon returning home. The ones who adapted most successfully overseas had a more severe re-entry problem than those individuals who did not adapt overseas. The difference here is that while the Pro-VC was referring to enhancement of knowledge and updating themselves, Alsulami (2020) and Sussman (1986) might have referred to the taking in of a different culture in all aspects without applying much judgement. According to Martin (1984), spending an optimum length of time in a culture ensures a high degree of interaction and integration into the host culture which eventually has a negative influence on the re-entry experience. The returnees become marginalised in terms of home culture as they become cognitively and behaviourally different from their peers at home. However, Adler (1981) contradicts this hypothesis, as the returnees in her study who had adapted to the host culture well learned cross-cultural coping skills and developed a widened cultural perspective. This debate calls for rethinking of SA experience as careful consideration is required from both parties, the academics and the stakeholders, to balance intercultural differences between home and host countries. Re-entry training (see section 9.3.1) can play a significant role in bridging this gap. Again, as participant returnees do not seem to recognise the expectations mentioned by the stakeholders (see section 8.1.5), the re-entry training workshop could be used to inform or remind them of these expectations.

Again, not only are the participant stakeholders and the academics seen to be blaming each other (see sections 8.1.3 and 8.1.5), but also the stakeholders seem to have some notable points of difference among themselves. For example, while the UGC Official and VC2 find the returnees teaching in multiple organisations to be a negative practice, VC1 considers this to be a positive opportunity for both teachers and students. Moreover, VC1 considers this teaching in private universities as good

practice and 'beneficial', as it contributes to the teachers' finances as well as furnishing students with the knowledge of an updated academic (see section 7.3.3.1).

Another significant point of difference between stakeholders arose with VC2 and the American Centre in relation to women's empowerment. VC2 feels returnee women academics can act as inspiration for other aspiring women to reach their goals. However, the American Centre spokesperson seemed to be thinking of channelling the academic women's brains to the US to minimize the gap between male and female students in the STEM disciplines (see section 7.4.2). Studies like Zheng (2010) maintain that the developed countries are the greatest beneficiaries when it comes to global human capital flows, while developing countries suffer from brain drain. Thus what could be an attempt to maintain gender equality for the US could be a loss of intellectual capital for a developing country like Bangladesh. If stakeholders remain oblivious to the current situation and fail to show sincerity in implementing positive changes in HE, there might be external forces, such as donor agencies, who want to reap benefits from the situation. If these differences and bureaucratic hurdles could be overcome, an opportunity for brain gain that promotes 'brain circulation and linkage' (see Shin and Moon, 2018) could be further promoted.

In the whole process there seems to be a strong socio-economic influence, specifically neoliberalism affecting the individual agency, reintegration and contribution of the overseas trained academics and the thoughts and values expressed by the concerned stakeholders. Since the spread of neoliberal ideology in many parts of the world (Block, 2012; Fairclough, 2006), as well as in Bangladeshi HE in the 1990s, there has been a gradual transformation in the sector. The participant academics and stakeholders seem to be speaking in neoliberal terms without explicitly acknowledging it (Flores, 2013). So, the data provided by the participants not only helped to answer the research questions but also enabled me to make some significant contribution to knowledge and understanding. For instance- (a) the impact of global neoliberalism on the thinking of the participants as they travelled between spaces i.e. the home country and the host country. This

would become more apparent in the next section 8.4. Another significant contribution is (b) the trajectory of the female academics under the neoliberal influence which in fact went above and beyond the initial expectation of a moderate difference in return experience between male and female academics. The feminist perspective in this regard gave voice to these professional women whose challenges have remained unheard till now. I have elaborated on this insight further in section 8.4.1.

8.4. Evidence of neoliberalism in Bangladeshi HE

In order to understand the return experience of the academics, the stakeholders' views and some of the pros and cons of study abroad, it is important to understand the neoliberal transformation of HE in Bangladesh. In Ch 3, sec 3.4.3.1, Table 3 adapted from Olssen and Peters (2005), shows an illustration of the change in internal governance of Bangladeshi universities from traditional to neoliberal. An example of this neoliberal transformation would be the UGC Report (2013), which refers to the objective of university education as building an educated nation rich in research and innovation. To prepare the students to be 'work ready' (Brabazon, 2020), in other words to produce a skilled and trained workforce, the teachers need to be trained both locally and internationally. The participant stakeholders have also registered their inclination towards SA (see section 3.4.3). Therefore, by putting an emphasis on IT skills, STEM subjects and written and verbal communication in English, Bangladesh started following the way of its neoliberal predecessors, the UK and the USA. The public universities started introducing four-year Honours degrees and a semester system, while private universities had already pioneered these systems modelled around North American tertiary education. Although some of the public universities are still following the British HE system to some extent, North American curricula, content and examinations have become the preferred model of education. Since the North American model dominates the job market globally, this has become the preferred model to make students ready for the market (Kabir, 2010). Consequently, counter to the previous educational goals of making students *educated*, the objective of education shifts to making them *work ready* (Brabazon, 2020). Education, which was formerly seen as

a public good, is now increasingly viewed as a private good (Collini, 2012) in Bangladesh.

This neoliberal transformation process mentioned above shows that Bangladeshi higher education was already infused with neoliberalism before the academics set off for study abroad. Yet the participants go to the Western countries which are equally neoliberally infused and bring back their experience with them. This overseas experience has been rather positive with open access to information/knowledge, state of the art research instruments and materials and advanced technology. However, the trajectory of some of the participants indicate the returnee participants were at times forced to replace their positive learning with the negative influences of neoliberalism pervading in Bangladeshi HE (e.g. Mofiz and Maria). I would argue, the negative neoliberal influences e.g. social imaginary, constant competition, marketization, corporatization and commodification of education has been largely responsible for this change in attitude of the respondents. While some of the participants' motivating factor (see sec 5.1) were already influenced by neoliberal ideology, the return experience has strengthened that neoliberal belief even further for the respondents to act in a neoliberal way.

The following table (Table 7) presents evidence of the neoliberal transformation of HE from this study alongside an adaptation of Collini's (2012) list and other scholars' views of the manifestation of neoliberalism in HE. A close look at the chart shows that there are only two positive (no. 4 and 5) effects of neoliberalism in the form of globalization and technological adoption. The rest have had a negative impact on higher education as evident in the rhetoric of the participants. Collini's (2012) two lists of major transformations happening in HE over the last 50 years - 'Major forces influencing higher education 50 years ago' and 'The new globalisation' - offer points for comparison in this regard. This chart is not exhaustive, but it helps to gain a clearer understanding of the pros and cons of study abroad in a neoliberal world, the return experience of the academics and the views of the stakeholders in Bangladeshi HE.

Table 7: Evidence of neoliberal impact on HE from the participants

	Neoliberal Ideology and its influences on HE	Author/ Year	Evidence from the Current Study
1	Higher study increasingly viewed as private good. Educational institutions embrace market mechanisms	Kabir (2010); Collini (2012); Giroux (2015); Phan and Barnawi (2015); Saunders and Ramirez (2017)	Saba, a public university teacher, expresses her frustration with her students becoming highly target-oriented. Their choice has shifted to subjects that have better job prospects like BBA, EEE and textile engineering (see 5.3.3.3). This tendency has developed especially after the introduction of the Private University Act 1992. Moreover, according to the Private University Act, any patrons of education associations, charity organisations or institutions can set up a private university with the permission of the government.
2	Reconceptualisation of students as consumers of HE. From creating educated students to creating satisfied customers	Titus (2008); Naidoo and Williams (2014); Goswami and Mumit (2018); Brabazon (2020); Quddus and Rashid (2000); Kabir (2010)	Participant Maria compares her student experience in UK with the treatment her students are getting in the private university she teaches in. Maria stated that despite paying GBP 14k, she received the treatment of a student, while in her workplace the students are treated as customers. The University authorities have instructed teachers to provide grades no lower than B. As students are paying high fees, they are treated like consumers, which changes the dynamics of the teacher-student relationship (section 6.4).
3	Research is externally funded, contestable, separate from teaching, controlled by government and external agencies	Olssen and Peters (2005); <i>The Daily Ittefaq</i> (19 June 2017); Osman (2015) in Online Discussion Forum <i>Shocholayotan</i>	Maria stated there was neither scope nor funds to carry out research in her institution. Hamza found funding for research was mainly project-based and arranged by donor agencies like UNDP and World Bank (section 6.2). The majority of the returnee academics felt that the allocated research funding had been so miserly that doing quality research with such a sum would be next to impossible (see section 5.3.3.2). A sum of \$6.8 billion, a negligible budget compared to neighbouring countries like India and Pakistan, has been allocated for the whole

			education and technological development sector.
4	Growing international adoption and convergence of higher education practices and models - higher education as an extension of globalisation	Collini (2012)	Samad stated that moving from the traditional system to a semester system has created chaos in his public university. Large numbers of students, delivering content-heavy courses in a short span of time, and poor infrastructure have led to a topsy-turvy situation inside the department (see section 5.3.3.5.1). Moreover, English has become the medium of instruction in all the private universities as part of a globalisation and internationalisation agenda. International scholars are invited to give keynote speeches at various conferences. There has also been a surge of students going to US on the Exchange Visitor Program (Education USA website) and British Council also funds researchers to go to UK on short-term visits under The Charles Wallace Professional Visits Programme (British Council Dhaka website).
5	Changing pedagogy, growing technological adoption	Collini (2012)	The private university HoD stated that the returnees are trying to implement change and teach using technology like PowerPoint, YouTube videos and social media in class (see section 7.1). Moreover, the British Council and the American Centre Dhaka has both introduced teacher scholarship programmes and MOOCs to increase teachers' awareness (Education USA website and British Council Dhaka website).
6	Government as adversary of the higher education community	Collini (2012); Chowdhury and Kabir (2014)	The then-UGC Chairman disagreed with the sanction for research to be small, as claimed by academics and newspaper reports (see section 7.3.4). He claimed instead that the allotted amount was not being properly utilized, mentioning the HEQEP program, where not even 30 percent of the huge amount had been spent. He claimed the Granting Commission had allocated 75 percent more money to research programs than in the previous fiscal year (Banikbarta Online edition, 31 July, 2016).

			Moreover, participant academics like Samad complained the state was not sincere enough in providing world-class education. The Government had only documentary plans to prepare university graduates to successfully compete in the context of an international knowledge society. Many of the respondents felt that HE was a rather neglected sector, though the government spoke of awareness of the challenges posed by globalisation (see section 5.3.3.2).
7	Global knowledge sharing and communication. Study abroad: an extension of globalisation that has become part of the 'social imaginary' in BD academia		Mofiz stated that when he returned home with a PhD degree, the ones with the local degrees then found themselves disadvantaged as they had a 'Made in Bangladesh' brand associated with them. These academics also wanted financial gain and the only way to get that was to bring in large-scale, high-budget projects (section 6.3). Stakeholders expected that returnees would attempt to minimise the gap between the local and international knowledge world, and VC1 emphasised the interaction with international scholars and students and remaining in a network of knowledge exchange and collaboration aligned with neoliberal values (see section 7.1 and 7.2).
8	Hopes, desires, ideals, and fear of a neoliberal subject is shaped in a way that they desire to be morally worthy, responsible individuals who can produce the best for themselves and their families.		Mofiz said that his desire was to maintain his family well alongside becoming a renowned academic in his field (see section 6.3). Sophia chose to lead a separated family life for four years on account of her PhD abroad. She saw no point in her husband giving up a permanent well-paid position at home. She did not feel morally inclined to ask her husband to make the sacrifice. Taking the responsibility on herself, she did what she thought was best for her family (see section 6.1).

In this connection, the concept of a 'social imaginary' (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010) that represents a 'prevalent way of thinking shared by a group of people that guides

everyday practice' (Kubota, 2016, p. 348) seems to be applicable to the participants of this study. As the social imaginary is also embedded in ideologies, theories and public policies (Kubota, 2016), the neoliberal orientation in Bangladeshi academia manifested itself through the privatisation and marketisation of education (see also Chowdhury and Kabir, 2014).

To further unpack the negative effects of neoliberal domination on Bangladeshi HE and academics, one manifestation of neoliberal ideology is that people are positioned as commodities in competition with each other, with weaker people inevitably left behind (Brabazon, 2018; Kubota, 2016; Flores, 2013). By studying overseas, the returnees became qualified to teach in top-ranking private universities. Consequently a clear hierarchical division was reinforced, which benefited the returnee academics more than their home-educated colleagues. Participant Ashab's showing off his achievements on receiving three scholarships (see section 5.3.3.4) and Samad, Asif and Kamal's statements that their degree from abroad earned them better positions, scope and 'eligibility' to teach in top ranking private universities (see section 5.2), stand as evidence of the prevailing neoliberal ideology working through a powerful 'social imaginary' (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Kubota, 2016). It can also be argued here that because of this neoliberal social imaginary, studying abroad in order to raise status and become economically solvent has become 'a prevalent way of thinking' in Bangladeshi society and academia, consistent with Kabir's (2010) study on neoliberalism and policy reforms in Bangladeshi HE (see also section 3.4.3).

The 'rickshaw faculty' who Hussain and Osswald (2016) show teaching in multiple private universities and saving money to get an overseas qualification, might become easy targets of universities/institutions who use commodified marketing terms like 'provider of student employability in a globalised world' that Holliday and MacDonald (2020, p. 625) mention and Kubota (2016) refers to in their study (see section 3.4.2). Study abroad thus seems to be fully aligned with the neoliberal concept of globalisation, which propagates 'greater interaction between people from different cultures and background' (Keeley, 2007, p. 61), and which is also evidenced in the studies of Kubota (2016) and Chowdhury and Kabir (2014) which

report on the recent escalating trend of SA and marketisation of education. However, in neoliberal thought, education is taken up by individuals who want to invest in skills and credentials that will increase their value in the labour market (Smith and Jeffrey, 2013). This concept of 'increase in value' has led neoliberal ideology and its reforms to undermine some of the basic purposes of study abroad. The extrinsic and mixed motives of majority of the participant academics (see section 5.1) is an indication that they consciously or subconsciously valued study abroad as an investment towards social and economic benefits more than as an investment in intellectual development (see also Amiri, 2010; Zheng, 2010).

Under the neoliberal regime, the role of the traditional teacher has also undergone change. Formerly, teachers were at liberty to choose the best practice they deemed beneficial for their students, and students acknowledged this practice. This teacher-student dynamic changed when the private university system centralized the authority of the academics. However, in lieu of authority, it has seized their liberty to choose the best for their students. Instead, the teachers were left to conduct surveillance on students by creating a uniform instructional experience through a prescribed curriculum and carefully sequenced student activities and frequent assessments. The issue of lowering standards because of massification of education and providing inflated grades, as predicted by Quddus and Rashid (2000) and Goswami and Mumit (2018), was reflected in participant Maria's account, as she was instructed to provide students with inflated grades and teach following a reduced syllabus (section 6.4). Namira's account of compromising her teaching standards also attests to the warning (see section 5.3.3.5).

Participant Maria (section 6.4) might have developed an interest in joining academia owing to her positive study abroad experience. However, on joining a private university, she was reduced to the status of a mere deliverer and inflated grade provider of a course. Goswami and Mumit's study (2018) of teacher evaluation in a private university in Bangladesh maintains that higher grades beget high teacher evaluation scores regardless of teaching quality, which evidences that grade inflation for good teaching evaluations has become a reality for many academics (see also section 3.4.3.1). In this way, transformative education, in which

students develop and practice self-awareness, empathy, social consciousness, critical thought and collective agency, has been diminished by the neoliberal intervention. This negative effect of neoliberalism on education worldwide, as observed by Brabazon (2020) and Kabir (2013), has had a similar impact on Bangladeshi HE, where transformative education is undergoing a corporate-like change in the process of making students *work ready*.

Again, research which is an integral part of a university has managed to receive very miserly attention from the stakeholders as shown earlier in Table 7 and as reflected in the words of the returnees (see section 5.3.3.2). I find this condition of neglect towards research resonates with the condition of a 'hollowed university' (Cribb and Gewirtz, 2013, p. 338), and 'hollow research methodology' (Holliday and MacDonald, 2020, p. 632). The academics in Bangladeshi HE are expected to publish quality research with minimum research funding. On top, the merit of their publications is reliant on the quantity rather than quality of research (see section 5.3.3.2). The stakeholders too talk about research and research funding but seem to miss out the issue of quality of research in their comments.

The next section discusses how neoliberalism has impacted on the return experience of the returnee women academics and feminist activity in Bangladesh.

8.4.1. Neoliberal effects on Bangladeshi feminism and women returnees

Central to all feminist activity is the goal of changing the world by achieving gender equality (Tyson, 2006). As discussed in Section 8.5.2, patriarchal norms have been ingrained in Bangladeshi society in such a way that gender equality seems still to be distant. The female academics in this study seem to have given up on the radical feminist ideals of men as adversaries to women's progression as they seem to be working towards improving themselves and their professional lives through educational scholarship and academic mobility. What can be discerned from the stories of Sophia and Maria (see section 5.5 and section 6.1 and 6.4) is that their academic identities developed an inherent connection to current neoliberal measures and the neoliberal values of production, consumption, and competition.

In this connection, Rottenberg (2014b) mentions works like Slaughter (2012) and Sandberg (2013), both of whom included a new 'discursive register' (Rottenberg, 2014, p. 418): a feminist subject who accepts full responsibility for her wellbeing and maintains a balanced work-family life that matches with the conditions of the female participants in this study (see section 3.4.4 for discussion of neoliberal feminism). The female respondents seem to act as feminist subjects unknowingly, seeming to embrace the idea that they really are not at a disadvantage as they can choose to further their career and go to study abroad. Notwithstanding the struggles they have been through, they internalised the neoliberal belief that their success or failure depended on their individual selves, positivity, resilience and adaptability to situations (Brown, 2003). They disclosed their struggle to me but acknowledged that they never attempted to raise their voice against such discrepancies (see section 5.5.1.1, Rashna).

The majority of the women academic participants in this study attempted to portray themselves as being 'positive' people (see section 5.5.2). However, in the case of participants Maria and Nusaiba, this positivity was juxtaposed by words suggesting the glass ceiling (see also Wesarat and Mathew, 2017; Sharif, 2015; David and Woodward, 1998). Despite facing countless difficulties, ranging from coming back before being awarded degrees (Munia and Saba) to getting married immediately on return (Sabina, Maria and Namira), none of these academic women in the study wanted to portray themselves as victims (see sections 5.4 and 5.5). Neither did they wish to assert themselves as being disadvantaged or treated unfairly owing to society, religion or gender issues. Rather, their stories speak of exposure to the prevailing neoliberal ethos that Bangladeshi society has progressed, men and women are playing on the same ground, and they have greater options and more freedom than women of previous generations to choose their trajectory (Baker, 2010). They attempted to position themselves as having 'highly individualistic selfhood, voluntaristic, intentional behaviour and choice', similarly to the Australian respondents in Baker's study who were attempting to live up to neoliberal values and evade any notion of vulnerability (*ibid.*, p. 190). This idea of individualism and working together towards one's own improvement

also comes up in studies on professional women like Meyers (2013), Valian (2005) and Rose (1990).

I would argue, pervading neoliberal ideology coincided with neoliberal feminist beliefs have pushed some of these female academics towards gradual submission to patriarchy and societal pressure in place of developing resilience (Hossain, forthcoming). The third wave of feminism blended well with neoliberal ideology in reinforcing the notion of competition to encompass only aspirational women and exclude unsuccessful weaker women (see also section 3.4.4). Sandberg's (2013) work within this third wave of feminism drew widespread criticism as it urges women to 'lean in' instead of challenging the worst exploitations of the neoliberal system: super-efficiency, competition and individuation for profit. The female academics in this study, whose general predisposition was to 'work hard' and 'do well' in their professional lives, blended perfectly with the neoliberal 'demands for autonomous self-motivating, responsabilised subjects' (Gill, 2010, p. 241). As a result, participants like Nusaiba, Neema and Namira, who are working in their own spaces in their respective institutions, may be trying to remain content with whatever they have achieved, without the consciousness that there are other female professionals around them who feel the same way (see section 5.5.1). With the exception of respondent Mala (see section 5.5.4), none of the participants made any attempts to uphold their agency or assert their academic status.

These neoliberal subjects (individual), that is the participant women academics, have, apparently without even realising, muted themselves regarding their struggles in this way (Rottenberg, 2014). As Flores (2013, p. 504) puts it, a neoliberal subject could be produced 'without an explicit acceptance of neoliberalism'. Neoliberal discourses have closed down the space available for articulating any sense of unfairness or oppression in social relations and women's claim for equal rights and opportunities (see section 3.4.4). In the process of closing down, the feelings of the participant women academics were ignored, their academic practices were individualised, and the sharing of their experiences was silenced (Rottenberg, 2014; Baker, 2010; Rose, 1990). If these highly educated women accept this position of being the lesser halves, then ensuring gender

equality and inclusion, the fifth of the seventeen sustainable development goals set by the United Nations (United Nations Website), will be difficult to attain even in meritocratic academia.

After all, we know that a humanistic view of study abroad is about widening horizons, becoming a wiser person and having a wider perspective, ultimately to improve the society that we live in. The introduction of Exchange and Visitor programs to widen the horizon of the academics and technological adoption to enter the global village of knowledge sharing are indeed positive attributes of neoliberalism. However, the evidence of my study shows that the detrimental effects of neoliberalism largely outweigh the positive transformations in Bangladeshi HE and among academics (only rows 4 and 5 of Table 11 imply a positive effect). Because of existing HE policy and practice and deterioration of overall educational quality, as expressed by the participant academics and stakeholders in this study, the return experiences of the academics were in many cases frustrating. If the academics are coming back to an unsupportive environment and struggle to reintegrate, how will they work for the betterment of the country? Will there not then be more cases like Hamza, Mofiz and Nusaiba, as the country loses out on human capital and intellectual prowess? (see sections 5.1, 5.3.3 and section 6.2 and 6.3).

The next and final chapter, Chapter 9 aims to outline the main contributions of this enquiry, including implications for policy and practice. Limitations, concluding remarks and directions for future research are also discussed.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Following the presentation of findings in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and discussion of the key themes in Chapter 8, I present in this chapter a summary of my thesis, its contributions, implications for policy and practice for Bangladeshi as well as UK higher education, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research and final reflections.

9.1. Thesis summary

Studying abroad is not a new phenomenon, and especially in an era of globalisation when knowledge is free and fluid, people from developing countries like Bangladesh are also entitled to this up-to-date and advanced knowledge. Propelled by the current neoliberal ideology that propagates study abroad as a legitimate form of self-advancement (Zheng, 2010), there has been an increase in study abroad among public and private university academics. From the findings and discussion chapters of this study, we can see that both academics and stakeholders equivocally endorsed the benefits of studying abroad. However, the return experience of the academics does not seem to correspond well to their expectations, and they blame the system, policy and policymakers. On the other hand, the stakeholders hold the returnees responsible for not contributing enough, while also questioning the system because of the absence of a proper higher education policy. Despite availing themselves of the fantastic opportunity to study abroad, the return experience of the participant academics was affected by the negative aspects of neoliberalism, such as treating educational institutions like corporate organisations and learners as customers.

The negativity expressed towards the higher education system and policy by the returnees and some of the stakeholders indicate weaknesses (e.g. recruitment policy, service rules) in the system and policy that demand immediate attention. In order to maximise the benefits of study abroad and the seemingly underutilised expertise of the returnees, these setbacks need to be identified and addressed by policymakers. Stakeholders need to ensure a healthy academic environment, free of

politicisation and bureaucratic hurdles. Academics on the other hand should hold realistic expectations about Bangladeshi academia, which comes with its own limitations, in order to manage re-entry issues. At the same time, the social issues and the disposition to suffer highlighted by the women respondents in their stories (see Chapter 6), calls for targeted support for them and a change in social outlook.

9.2. Contributions of this study

This study contributes to the small but growing literature on the phenomenon of re-entry. The participants are academics who are *privileged* to have availed themselves of study abroad opportunities. Because of this *privileged* status, these culturally important people in Bangladesh (Islam, 2014), or *cultural elites*, have rarely been the subjects of research. However, these *privileged* academics had a difficult return experience and, in many cases, could not make a significant contribution. Therefore, in this novel venture of raising their unheard voices to the surface, this study has made some valuable theoretical and practical contributions. I concentrate on the theoretical aspect first, followed by the practical contribution in the implications section.

9.2.1. Theoretical contributions

This study makes theoretical contributions to the existing body of literature on re-entry and to the theoretical understanding of neoliberalism and neoliberal feminism. Theories underpinning re-entry have not evolved much in recent years, as most of the studies on return experience have been characterized by cultural readjustment (culture shock and reverse culture shock) and intercultural communication (Martin, 1986; McGrath, 1998; Wang, 2016; Almuarik, 2018; Almutairi, 2019). However, none of these studies, nor or any other studies on re-entry, have exploited neoliberalism as a theoretical framework. This study thus distinguishes itself from the other re-entry studies with cultural adjustment as their focal point.

Moreover, in a neoliberal era in which education is treated as a commodity, Bangladeshi educators who have invested both time and money to gain an overseas qualification have never been the subject of research. This makes this research one of a kind. There are studies like Kabir (2011), Anwaruddin (2013) and Kabir and Greenwood (2017) which focus on how Bangladeshi higher education has been transformed by the neoliberal policy agenda. However, this study on returnees shows not only the neoliberal transformation of higher education in Bangladesh, but also how the social imaginary (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Kubota, 2016) impacted on the thoughts of the academics and turned them into 'neoliberal subjects' (Flores, 2013) who subconsciously pick up neoliberal references.

As I was interested in developing a deeper understanding of how these participants underwent the ramifications of the educational and sociocultural surroundings on their return, neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005) and neoliberal feminism (Rottenberg, 2014) seemed to be the most appropriate theoretical framework to explain this phenomenon of return experience. Concepts like social role theory (Eagley, 1987) and the glass ceiling (David and Woodward, 1998) have also been utilised as backdrops to neoliberal feminism. While I took neoliberalism as the overarching theory helping to explain 're-entry', neoliberal feminism helped me to understand the gendered experience of the phenomenon.

9.2.2. Contributions to practice

As mentioned earlier, studies on re-entry across the globe are quite limited. In the context of Bangladesh research has been carried out on the post-return experience of migrant workers (labour workforce), and their social and economic reintegration on returning home from their overseas employment (e.g. Siddiqui, 2003, 2005; Siddiqui and Abrar, 2002). Only two studies, Rahman (2013) and Rahman (2018), report on the post-return experience of academics. However, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the focus has been on why the migrant academics chose to return home and what contribution they made on return. My study extends beyond contribution and opens up the social and academic side of how returnees view their reintegration in their home country on both personal and professional levels.

Thus this research is distinctive as the focus is the process the returnee academics went through in making these contributions on return. Therefore, in my modest contribution towards putting things right, I have developed these implications for policy and practice for Bangladeshi academia. At the same time, as I have conducted this study in a UK university, I have included suggestions for policy and practice in UK academia, which appear later in the chapter.

9.3. Implications

Here I would like to echo the suggestion of Goodwin and Nacht (1986, p. 1) that in order to address ‘the widespread expressions of concern about intellectual and professional decay’, a brief one-time educational period abroad will not be enough in itself. Rather, the ‘aftercare’, that is the support on return through continuing attention, is more desirable for Third World countries. Participants should not regard study abroad as a one-time opportunity to gain a higher qualification that will help them become economically solvent on return. Neither should the stakeholders regard this opportunity as simply an investment in human capital. Rather, the objective of study abroad for the academics should be to make a contribution to the development of Bangladesh. Policymakers should direct their energy towards making the path to this contribution less challenging, by ensuring a healthy educational environment free from corruption and bureaucratic hurdles. Otherwise the country loses out on the intellectual talents of the academics and the time and money is invested in vain.

9.3.1. Recommendation for policy and practice for Bangladeshi academia

1. Revisioning the relationship between the university and the government

Firstly, universities and the government need to rethink their relationship with each other. The returnee educators are agitated as they are not getting the scope to contribute on return owing to sociocultural factors and unhelpful service rules and policies. On the other hand, stakeholders seem to ignore the issue of ensuring a favourable working environment and are more concerned about the deterioration of quality in HE. They accuse the academics of not being sincere in their duties. In

order to end this antagonism, there needs to be arrangements for regular public dialogue, open platforms, meetings and awareness-raising seminars for academics, stakeholders, and members of civil society.

2. Dismantling bureaucratic hurdles

Existing bureaucratic hurdles have diminished some of the constructive efforts of international stakeholders like the HEQEP project. Participant academics' assertions that favouritism and corruption are part of the process of selecting groups or organisations for dissemination of the project funds, has called into question the initiatives of international stakeholders. Thus better coordination between all sectors of education and the government should be made the first and foremost priority. One way of ensuring better understanding between various sectors would be to evaluate the knowledge and skill level of faculty and administrators by the Education Ministry. As some of the participants have questioned the qualifications of policymakers, appointing VCs and senior administrators who have experience of higher education from reputed foreign universities and who are well known for their academic leadership and research could be the way forward. There should also be clear guidelines for the selection committee, not only on paper, but also an audit system to remove corruption and nepotism.

3. Ensuring dissemination of knowledge and scholarly recognition for returnees

The frustration level of the academics on return also indicates that there needs to be greater recognition of their achievements. Many of the academics, such as Rashna, Munia and Tarif, said in their interviews that nobody asked them about their research; rather, they preferred to comment on trivial matters. Here a bit of attention to the power dynamics on the part of the stakeholders concerned might help in alleviating some issues. In a system where rules have always been formulated top down rather than bottom up, it is easier for the senior or head of the department or even the central policymaker to reintroduce the junior returnees and their work to the rest of the colleagues. This might ensure better collegiality, sharing of best practice and scholarship among the academics in an institution.

To enhance the visibility of their research and promote interdisciplinary collaboration, seminars or symposia could be arranged centrally by the University where both faculty members and senior administrators would be present. If it is urgent to save time, these seminars might become one full-day programme, or a quarterly or half-yearly arrangement. Moreover, as students learn first-hand from their teachers about current research projects and become research associates themselves, developing a healthy research culture would be mutually beneficial. Alongside these, public engagement through seminars, social media like Facebook and Twitter, developing personal websites and writing blogs, even holding public talks for dissemination of knowledge/research, could be a way forward. The University Grants Commission could easily take up a project to develop an archive of subject-specific research/theses so that the whole research community could benefit from it.

Here, the focus definitely needs to be the quality and not quantity of research activity or publications. The participants of this study have said they just need to report on the number of publications. The existing neoliberal policy seems to have turned knowledge into a commodity by measuring publication success in quantity rather than quality. Thus there is a greater need to develop strategic interventions in order to bypass the quantifying measures and map academic directions to focus on quality. A press conference or prize-giving ceremony could be arranged every year to create public awareness about research activities going on in both public and private institutions. However, these incentives need to be free from political interference so that the most deserving persons, papers or initiatives are rewarded.

4. Learning from best practices

Learning needs to come from good examples and best practices from home and abroad. If there is a shortage of cutting-edge knowledge, the returnees could easily fill that gap with their developed expertise. However, as participant Hamza reiterates in section 6.2, current educational practices in Western countries might not be suited to the Bangladeshi educational context; for instance, interactive classes with groupwork or pairwork are quite unmanageable for very large class

sizes with a class duration of one and half hours in most public institutions. Therefore practice needs to be contextualized before it is implemented. This concept of contextualization could be introduced in both pre-departure and re-entry workshops arranged for prospective candidates and returnees (details follow).

5. A new standardized framework for Bangladeshi higher education

As some of the participants mentioned the absence of pre-service and in-service training for the academics, this study supports the recent development of setting up a standardized framework of Higher Education in Bangladesh, like the recently established Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) within seven selected universities to enhance the quality of higher education. These universities have started training their academics. This initiative could be expanded throughout the rest of the HEIs, with recognition in the form of academic fellowship like AFHEA/FHEA for teaching and research. The alumni organisations run by the American Centre and the British Council are all constructive wings that could be further exploited to develop connections.

6. Revival of re-entry training

As I put forward my proposition to instate re-entry training, as recommended by Sussman (1986), I would like to emphasise that the training programme/workshop should be organised both pre-departure and post-return from study abroad in order to make the transition of exit and re-entry smooth. Studies like Pitts (2016), Butcher (2003), Antal (2001) and McGrath (1998) pointed to the under-preparedness of the returnees for their reengagement into their home societies, and this applies equally to the participants of this investigation. None of the participant academics in this study mentioned any kind of support on return from study abroad (see Chapter 8). Almutairi's (2018) study in Saudi Arabia also reported limited availability of support.

Pre-departure briefings/workshops are run in many other countries, like New Zealand (McGrath, Stock and Butcher, 2007), and also in Bangladesh by sending agencies like the American Centre. These pre-existing set-ups in the form of alumni

connections, meetings or events could be extended to other higher education institutes and become part of the pre- and post-study abroad programme package. The Education Ministry could easily coordinate with these organisations to develop a full re-entry programme for all returning scholars (both scholarship holders and self-financed returnees).

This study recommends that post-return workshops or programmes should come as part of the overall study abroad package alongside the pre-departure programmes (Sussman, 2002, 1986). To begin with, the pre-departure training should be carefully curated by the selection committees and programme coordinators, with advice for participants on strategies to develop long-term plans and implement them on return. It is also advisable that study-abroad candidates are made aware of how changes in self and identity could impact them upon return. We have seen that the returnees' expectations about working conditions in their respective universities have not been met. Their new selves and transformed identities, as well as cosmopolitan competences and skills, were not synchronised to the pre-existing constructs in their institutions, which were at times based on nepotism, favouritism, and seniority (Karacas, 2020, p. 266). In many cases, the educational system in the home country might be very different from that of the host country and discussions with mentors or buddies might help the new returnees to identify the environment of the institution by its social constructs, thus avoiding some distress (Parveen, 2013).

As an alternative to the buddy system, HEIs could launch a mentor-mentee scheme with previously returned scholars/academics. In this case, academics like the participant returnees of this study could become good mentors or trailblazers for new academic returnees, to guide them and share some of their distress. In this study Hamza (section 6.2) shared some important insights on narrowing the distance between academics trained at home and academics trained overseas, and on contextualization of learning. If the wisdom of previous returnees could be passed on to the new returnees through these workshops, re-entry distress could be significantly minimized. Even informal discussions with other faculty members or mentors could enable the returning scholar to regain an understanding of the

respective university's system and organisational culture, including environment, socialization, bureaucratic hurdles and power dynamics, to which they have returned or joined. Moreover, returnees can play the role of 'career promoters' for aspiring colleagues and students, providing them with relevant information on study destinations, the application process, writing references and so on (Rahman, 2018, p. 275; Rahman, 2013).

Extending the arrangement of the pre-departure workshop, the post-return workshop, which could be of two days' duration and involve lectures, activities and network events, could attempt to engage the returnees in the following discussion:

- returnees' ideas for what they might do when they return home, in terms of developing local capacity;
- what challenges they might face;
- how these challenges might be addressed;
- ongoing institutional support they can call on.

Returnees, especially those who immersed themselves in research for several years, might have unrealistic ideas about how they will be received on return. Therefore, when organising a re-entry workshop, it is of prime importance not to assume that previous familiarity with the participants' context will help their readjustment. As readjustment involves challenges at both the personal and professional level, creating awareness and preparing the returnees psychologically, as well as making them aware of the institutional expectations, will be key factors in these workshops.

As part of the psychological preparation, returnees need to understand that re-entry will take them through a number of difficult stages that they need to approach slowly and cautiously. The 'element of surprise' that causes initial distress, as Sussman (2002, p. 7) puts it, could be labelled repatriation distress. The participants could be advised to avoid false attribution by developing negative feelings towards family, friends, colleagues and professional settings, like some of the returnees in this study. It will bring them relief and prevent them from feeling

marginalised if they try to accept that the people around them will not be able to fully comprehend their experience abroad (Park, 2015). Returnees could also be reminded that repatriation distress gradually reduces with time.

Again, the returnees could be directed to ways to reduce their repatriation distress while they attend the workshop. Returnees could, during these times, associate with people who have been through a similar study abroad experience, who could appreciate and be interested in their overseas sojourn. The re-entry workshops could act as primary grounds for returnees meeting earlier sojourners and forming a buddy system. Here the workshop might divide into two streams, one for returnees with *short-term* experience of one month to a year, and the other for returnees with *long-term* overseas experience (e.g. PhD researchers), as these might require extensive support (Sussman, 1986, p. 237).

The returnees could also be advised to connect with colleagues, scholars and supervisors abroad to keep collaborative ventures going, like participant academic Mofiz has done. This study specifically recommends co-publishing with supervisors as a means of collaboration. Encouraging ties with the host country through email, websites, music, film and television might also contribute 'to keep[ing] the cross-cultural ties fresh and stimulating' (Sussman, 2002, p. 7). These steps would help them to remain up-to-date with current research, engage in collaborative projects and also publish in peer-reviewed journals (Almutairi, 2018). Nurturing these ties might be a way to promote *brain circulation* (Shin and Moon, 2018), with Bangladesh drawing on the skills, knowledge and other forms of experience of the returnees which, according to Perna et al. (2014), should be encouraged at all levels. Returnees then can contribute globally and at the same time contribute to building a high-quality market-ready workforce for Bangladesh (Brabazon, 2020). The American Centre and British Council in Dhaka already have well established alumni organisations which they have endorsed as the organisations' windows into the world. In Ireland and Gao's (2001) study, returnee participants who studied in New Zealand formed alumni organisations in their respective countries and are playing vital roles in the transformation of society.

While psychological support like mentorship and buddy schemes might ease the emotional transition, there needs to be other incentives for these highly skilled overseas-trained academics. More aspirational projects for the enhancement of HE could be a revised competitive salary structure, potential job prospects for those who are not returning to an already established or semi-established career, research opportunities, and networking events which could be run in connection with existing cultural exchange infrastructure and other business and industry sectors to provide opportunities for returnees.

Overall, these training sessions should be a significant part of the application, selection, orientation, and re-entry procedures arranged by the sending agency/university/country. In fact, looking at the multitude of academics going for overseas study, there could be a separate wing/institute under the UGC where these training/transition programmes are developed and organised by selected advisors/facilitators or connectors who have had re-entry experiences themselves.

Here I would also like to suggest re-entry orientation for international students studying at British universities. I have noticed only one or two UK university websites with pages for raising consciousness among international students returning to their home countries. Because of the recent globalisation and internationalisation of education, concepts like culture shock, cross-cultural communication, and multicultural/culturally diverse environment have received extra attention on Western university web pages dedicated to international students. In this situation, a little extra effort in the form of introducing re-entry workshops by UK universities for interested international students would go a long way in helping with the transition (Wang, 2016; Ramos, 2013). Along with my suggestions for re-entry workshops, it is always possible to hold one to one discussions as in the mentor-mentee or buddy scheme, awareness-raising seminars, or forming learning community groups among students to reach out to one another, for example language or cultural groups which could be of further assistance in the transition process.

7. Targeted support for returnee female academics

Lastly, the study also calls for targeted support for female academics. The female returnees in this study, like Nusaiba, Neema and Namira, who adhered to predefined sociocultural gender roles (Eagley, 1987), seemed to be suffering alone post-return from study abroad. Because of the predefined sociocultural gender roles, the women academics were already stressed about pursuing their careers. Neoliberal values advocate for women to concentrate on being autonomous, strong and independent individuals rather than focusing on changing society or societal injustice (see Sandberg, 2013). The female participants in this study seemed to have accepted that they 'cannot have it all' (Slaughter, 2012) and abandoned thoughts of becoming changemakers. This study strongly reiterates the need to ensure gender equality and inclusion, the fifth of the seventeen sustainable development goals set by the United Nations (United Nations Website). To initiate the end of the 'silent suffering' of these highly educated women, who should be trailblazers in their respective areas, and to work towards empowering more and more women, this study recommends a separate institute/centre for women under the UGC to ensure gender equality in academia. Well-planned social awareness programmes depicting the everyday struggle women professionals undergo could be initiated from this centre.

9.4. Limitations of this study

Despite making some worthwhile contributions and carrying implications for policy and practice, this study has a few limitations that I should acknowledge. While qualitative research provides rich and informative insights as deemed in this study, it comes with subjectivity and interpretation issues. To avoid this, I tried to remain as reflexive and transparent as possible in understanding and explaining my steps in detail during my data collection and analysis phases.

Another limitation of the study could be that the accounts of the participants are all retrospective in nature, as I chose participants who had returned two to seven years before conducting this study. On top of this, there always remains a chance that participants might have hidden information or give answers they believed I

wanted to hear. One way of avoiding these limitations could be to carry out a longitudinal study, which I will discuss in the next section.

9.5. Directions for further research

As mentioned earlier, this work has opened up several avenues for future research. I was fortunate enough to learn from returnee colleagues from Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Vietnam and Nigeria that their return experiences were fairly similar to the experience of the Bangladeshi returnees. This made me confident of the transferability of this research to other settings and contexts. Moreover, this similarity in experience extended the scope of my research and suggested opportunities for future international collaborative work. Ideas for further research also arose in the process of sharing my findings in various seminars and conferences during my PhD journey.

1. Given the chance and funding, for my next project I would like to carry out a longitudinal study on returnees from study abroad in which I would recruit the participants immediately after their return and learn about their transition in five phases over eighteen months. The advantage of this study would be that if I were to watch over them from the outset I would get a fresh perspective on the first phase, then track the gradual change in their outlook, their involvement as foreign-trained scholars, and the causes behind their change (if any). Finding participants for a longitudinal study would not be an onerous project as universities in Bangladesh maintain databases of participants and returnees from study abroad. Having said that, I am not assuming that everyone would be willing to become participants in my research.

As this study involved academics who spoke in retrospect, having returned within two to seven years before conducting this study, none of them mentioned culture shock. A longitudinal observation might reveal that participants do witness culture shock and reverse culture shock immediately on return. The data could therefore be viewed through various theoretical lenses like reverse culture shock and cross-cultural analysis (Alandejani, 2013; Wang, 2016; Almuarik, 2018; Almutairi, 2019), or communities of practice. As I drew insights from phenomenology in this current

study, the longitudinal study could even be grounded in phenomenology and narrative inquiry, as the experiences of returnees can be recounted well through stories or narratives. The studies mentioned above are all on the Saudi Arabian context, except Wang (2016), which is on the Chinese context. It would be interesting to see how the study pans out in a different context like Bangladesh.

2. Another suggestion could be to carry out a study of returnees' partners' perspectives, as this area is yet to be explored. Including the voices of the partners in the study would provide a more holistic approach and yield interesting insights as to how the partners perceive the return, share responsibilities, and contribute to each other's readjustment. It would also provide a gender edge to the inquiry.

3. Mental health has been an elephant in the room in Bangladeshi academia. Multiple stressors and tensions might impede the academics' progression. Fortunately, my participants are all survivors of various levels of mental pressure. The survivorship bias I have made by choosing the sane and stable participants could be avoided by deliberately carrying out future studies of academics who have 'disappeared', perhaps by withdrawing from their studies or giving up on their research.

9.6. Final reflections

As I contemplate my return to my home country on completion of my studies, this research has acted as an eye-opener for me. When I began my journey, I knew I was attempting to research my future. Despite my supervisors' warning that this was not going to be easy, I was under the impression that I 'knew it all'. What I was unaware of, despite being an academic, was how little I knew about Bangladeshi academia, policy, and the hardship of the returnees. The depth of challenges my predecessors underwent and the concerns they shared shook me to the core. I could relate so much, which left me embarrassed, confused, stressed and withdrawn. Then again, I felt I was on a mission to hear their stories and give them a voice, which made me regain my strength.

As I reflect on my research journey, I have learnt and developed in terms of research, research methodology, being reflective and reflexive, creativity, teaching online, and last but not the least the art of surviving and smiling at the most difficult circumstances, like some of the participants of this study. I find it imperative to share my hard-earned wisdom with the world around me. Despite facing various physical and mental hardships in the years of my doctoral research, I am glad that I am on the verge of completion. There were so many occasions when I started to doubt my work. However, I found it reinvigorating as my supervisors seemed to agree with my recommendation of introducing re-entry workshops both for Bangladeshi and UK universities. I feel blessed to be able to contribute a drop to the ocean of knowledge and hope that the academic community will be able to reap at least some benefit from this work.

References

- Adler, N. (1981). Re-entry: Managing cross-cultural transitions. *Group and Organization Management*, 6(3), 341.
- Ahad, L. R. and Gunter, H. (2017). Women in Leader Roles within Higher Education in Bangladesh. *Management in Education*, 31(3), 135–140.
- Ahmad, M. S., Fakhr, Z., and Ahmed, J. (2011). Working women work-life conflict. *Business Strategy Series*, 12(6), 289–302.
- Ahmed, R. and Hyndman-Rizk, N. (2018). The Higher Education paradox: towards improving women's empowerment, agency development and labour force participation in Bangladesh. *Gender and Education*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2018.1471452> [accessed 1 Jan 2020]
- Ahmed, S. (2017). *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Alandejani, J. (2013). *Coming home after studying abroad: How Saudi female scholars re-adapt, re-adjust, and transfer their knowledge*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Colorado State University.
- Aiston, S. J. and Jung, J. (2015). Women academics and research productivity: an international comparison, *Gender and Education*, 27(3), 205-220.
- Almuarik, G. S. (2019). *A Qualitative Study of Saudi PhD Returnees' Readjustment Experience: Their Perceptions and Impressions*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Newcastle University.
- Almutairi, Y. M. (2018). *The Re-entry Experience of Saudi Scholars in a University of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and How their Administrators Perceive the Re-entry of Saudi Scholars*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Northern Colorado.
- Alsulami, N. D. Z. (2020). Factors affecting the re-entry experiences of returning Saudi international students after studying abroad. *Journal of Education*, 69, 98-141.
- Altbach, P.G. (2004). Globalisation and the university: Myths and realities in an unequal world. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 10(1), 3-25.
- Altbach, P.G. (2006). Globalization and the University: Realities in an Unequal World. In P. Altbach and J. Forest (Eds.), *International Handbook of Higher*

Education (pp.121-139). Dordrecht: Springer.

Altbach, P.G. (2013). *The International Imperative in Higher Education*. Rotterdam: Sense.

Altbach, P. G. (1989). Twisted Roots: The Western Impact on Asian Higher Education. *Higher Education*, 18 (1), 9-29.

Altbach, P. G. (1991). Impact and adjustment: Foreign students in comparative perspective. *Higher Education*, 21(3), 305-323.

Amiri, F. (2016). *Globalisation and the Neoliberal Labor Market: Education Commodification and the Growth of Study Abroad*. Working Paper. Research Gate. Affiliation: Lehihg University.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288993463> [accessed 1 Aug 2016]

Antal, A. (2001). Expatriates' contributions to organisational learning. *Journal of General Management*, 26(4), 62-84.

Anwar, T. (2015). *The Bangladeshi Perspective: The Case of Married Academic Women Pursuing Foreign Degrees*. [Unpublished MA dissertation]. Carleton University. https://curve.carleton.ca/system/files/etd/4e962962-805b-45a3-aeef-4377e76e6b25/etd_pdf/7cc1d8e622524f70d852d7dd33c2984c/anwar-thebangladeshiperspectivethecaseofmarried_r.pdf [accessed 1 Feb 2018]

Anwaruddin, S. M. (2014). *Education Neocolonialism and the World Bank: A Rancierean Reading*. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*. https://www.academia.edu/8114978/Educational_Neocolonialism_and_the_World_Bank_A_Rancierean_Reading [accessed 28 Mar 2015].

Arthur, N. (2003). Preparing international students for the re-entry transition. *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, 37(3), 173-185.

Asian Development Bank (ADB). (2010). *Country Gender Assessment Bangladesh*. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/31338/cga-women-bangladesh.pdf> [accessed 30 Nov 2016]

Aslan, B. and Jacobs, D. B. (2014). Erasmus student mobility: some good practices according to views of Ankara University exchange students. *Journal of Education and Future*, 5, 57-72.

Australia Government Website. (2015). *Australia Awards*.
<http://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/australia-awards/Pages/australia-awards.aspx> [accessed on 1 May 2015]

Average quality of education declining due to the lack of skilled teachers - Dr. Abdul Mannan. (2016, 31 July). *Banikbarta Online edition*.
<https://bonikbarta.net/archive?day=31&month=7&year=2016> [accessed on 1 Oct 2016].

Azad, S. M. I. (2016, 12 May). Problems of Primary and Secondary Education in Bangladesh. *The Independent*. [Online].
<http://www.theindependentbd.com/arcprint/details/43527/2016-05-12> [accessed 1 Nov 2017].

Badawi, L. (1994). Islam. In Holm, J. and Bowker, J. (Eds.), *Women in Religion*. London: Continuum, 84-112.

Baker, J. (2010). Claiming Volition and Evading Victimhood: Post-Feminist Obligations for Young Women. *Feminism and Psychology*, 20(2), 186-204.

Ballard, B. (1996). Through Language to Learning: Preparing Overseas Students for Study in Western Universities. In Coleman, H. (Ed.), *Society and the Language Classroom* (pp. 148-168). Great Britain: Cambridge University Press.

Ballard, B. and Clanchy, J. (1991). *Teaching Students from Overseas: A Brief Guide for Lecturers and Supervisors*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.

Bangladesh. *SJR Scimago Journal and Country Rank*. (2016).
<https://www.scimagojr.com/> [accessed on 1 Nov 2020]

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *2016 Statistical Year Book Bangladesh*, 36th Edition.
http://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/b2db8758_8497_412c_a9ec_6bb299f8b3ab/StatisticalYearBookFinal2016.pdf [accessed on 5 Feb 2018]

Barnawi, O. Z. and Phan, L.H. (2015). From Western TESOL classrooms to home practice: A case study with two 'privileged' Saudi teachers. *Critical Studies in Education*, 56(2), 259-276.

Beulah, F. R. and Martin, J. N. (1991). Host Country and Re-entry Adjustment of Student Sojourners. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 15, 163-182.

Bhattacharya, S. (2018, 8 Oct). Bishwabidyalaye Gobeshok Niyog Din. *Prothom Alo*. [Online].

https://www.prothomalo.com/opinion/article/1564410/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে-গবেষক-নিয়োগদিন?fbclid=IwAR05OIlOeOwJMq9A8G2ezXfKdDH0wNOWBdj5xAFCzD9g_o_9B2CVF5GyQ9U [accessed on 1 Nov 2018]

Block, D., Gray, J. and Holborow, M. (2012). *Neoliberalism and Applied Linguistics*. Oxon, Routledge.

Boafo-Arthur, A., Boafo-Arthur, S., Attah, D. A., and Tsevi, L. (2020). The Sojourner's Return: Narratives on the Re-entry Experience. In U. Gaulee, S. Sharma and K. Bista (Eds.), *Rethinking Education Across Borders*, (pp. 241-254). Singapore: Springer.

Bombuwela, P. M., and De Alwis, A. C. (2013). Effects of glass ceiling on women's career development in private sector organisations—Case of Sri Lanka. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 5(2), 3-19.

Brabazon, H. (2020). The Academy's neoliberal response to COVID-19: Why faculty should be wary and how we can push back. *Academic Matters*. [Online].

<https://academicmatters.ca/neoliberal-response-to-covid-19/> [accessed on 1 Jun 2020]

Brabazon, H. (Ed). (2018). *Neoliberal Legality: Understanding the Role of Law in the Neoliberal Project* (1st Ed.). Routledge.

Brabant, S., Palmer, C. E. and Gramling, R. (1990). Returning Home: An Empirical Investigation of Cross-cultural Re-entry. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 14, 387-404.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners*. London: Sage.

Briggs, C. L. (2001). Interviewing, Power/Knowledge, and Social Inequality. In J. F. Gubrium and J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method* (pp. 911-922). California, USA: Sage.

Brinkman, S. (2018). The Interview. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 576-599). California, USA: Sage.

Brinkman, S. and Kvale, S. (2005). Confronting the Ethics of Qualitative Research. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 18, 157-181.

British Council. (2015). *British Council Bangladesh*.
<http://www.britishcouncil.org.bd/en/programmes/education/higher/international-higher-education> [accessed on 25 Mar 2015].

Brown, L. and Brown, J. (2009). Out of chaos, into a new identity. *Existential Analysis: Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis*, 20(2), 341-361.

Brown, W. (2003). Neo-liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy. *Theory and Event*, 7(1), 1-19.

Brubaker, C. (2017). Re-thinking Re-entry: New Approaches to Supporting Students after Study Abroad. *Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*, 50(2), 109-119.

Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods* (3rd ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Butcher, A. (2002). *No Place Like Home: The Experiences of South-east Asian international tertiary students in New Zealand and their re-entry into their countries of origin*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Massey University.

Butcher, A. (2003). Whither international students? University reforms in New Zealand 1984-1999. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 38(2), 151-164.

Butcher, M. (2011). *Managing culture change: Reclaiming synchronicity in a mobile world*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Cannon, R. (2000). The outcomes of an international education for Indonesian graduates: The third place. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 19(3), 357-379.

Cao, C. (2008). China's brain drain at the high end: Why government policies have failed to attract first-rate academics to return. *Asian Population Studies*, 4, 331-345.

Chanana, K. (1994). Social Change or Social Reform: Women, Education and Family in Preindependence India. In C. Mukhopadhyay, C. Chapnik and S. Seymour (Eds.), *Women, Education and Family Structure in India*, (pp. 35-38). Colorado: Westview Press.

Charmaz, K. (1995). Between positivism and postmodernism: Implications for methods. *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*, 17, 43-72.

- Charmaz, K. (2002). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In J. Gubrium and J. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*, (pp. 675-694). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Clandinin, D. and Connelly, F. (1994). Personal experience methods. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 413-427). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Çelik, S. (2012). The Role of Foreign-Educated Scholars in Turkey's Higher Education System: A Narrative Study of Two English Language Teacher Educators. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 3 (3), 56-70.
- Chirkov, V., Vansteenkiste, M., Tao, R., and Lynch, M. (2007). The role of self-determined motivation and goals for study abroad in the adaptation of international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 31, 199–222.
- Chirkov, V. (2009). A cross-cultural analysis of autonomy in education: A self-determination theory perspective. *Theory and Research in Education*, 7(2), 253–262.
- Chowdhury, R., and Ha, P. L. (2014). *Desiring TESOL and International Education: Market Abuse and Exploitation*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Chowdhury, R. and Kabir, A. H. (2014). Language Wars: English Education Policy and Practice in Bangladesh. *Multilingual Education*, 4(21). <http://www.multilingual-education.com/content/4/1/21> [accessed on 1 Jan 2016]
- Coffey, A. and Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complementary Research Strategies*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Colaizzi, P. F. (1978). Psychological research as a phenomenologist views it. In R.S. Valle and King, M. (Eds.), *Existential phenomenological alternatives for psychology*, (pp. 48–71). Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Collini, S. (2012). *What are Universities For?* London, England: Penguin Books.
- Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK. (2015). <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/commonwealth-scholarship-commission-in-the-uk>. [accessed on 28 Mar 2015]
- Cox, J. B. (2004). The role of communication, technology, and cultural identity in repatriation adjustment. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 28, 201-219.

- Crabtree, B. F. and Miller, W. L. (Eds.). (1992). *Doing Qualitative Research*. Vol 3. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*. (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W. and Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39, 124-130.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* (2nd ed). London: Sage.
- Cribb, A. and Gewirtz, S. (2013). The hollowed-out university? A critical analysis of changing institutional and academic norms in UK higher education. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 34(3), 338–50.
- Crossman, J. E. and Clarke, M. (2010). International experience and graduate employability: Stakeholder perceptions on the connection. *Higher Education*, 59(5), 599-613.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Crowne, K. A. (2009). Enhancing knowledge transfer during and after international assignments. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 13(4), 134-147.
- Darlington, Y. and Scott, D. (2002). *Qualitative Research in Practice: Stories from the Field*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- David, M. and Woodward, D. (1998). Introduction. In M. David and D. Woodward (Eds.), *Negotiating the Glass Ceiling: Careers of Senior Women in the Academic World*, (pp. 3-21). London: Falmer Press.
- Davis, N. W. and Meyer, B. B. (2009). Qualitative data analysis: A procedural comparison. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 21(1), 116-124.

- Davis, F. J. (1973). Problems of development in Turkey as seen by Turks returned home from study in American Universities. *Sociology and Social Research*, 57, 429-442.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds). (2018). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, (pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dey, I. (1993). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A User-Friendly Guide for Social Scientists*. London: Routledge.
- DiCicco-Bloom, B. and Crabtree, B. (2006). The Qualitative Research Interview. *Medical Education*, 40(4), 314-321.
- Dornyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dukes, S. (1984). Phenomenological Methodology in the Human Sciences. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 23, 197-203.
- Dwyer, S. C. and Buckle, J. L. (2009). The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1), 54-63.
- Eagly, A. H. (1987). *Sex Differences in Social Behaviour: A Social-role Interpretation*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Eisenstein, H. (2009). *Feminism Seduced: How Global Elites Use Women's Labor and Ideas to Exploit the World*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- Elliot, J. (2005). *Using Narratives in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London: Sage.
- Ellis, C. and Berger, L. (2003). Their story/my story/our story: including the researcher's experience in interview research. In J. Gubrium and J. Holstein (Eds.), *Postmodern Interviewing*, (pp. 157-186). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ellis-Hale, K. and Coplestone, G. (2019). Trending towards inequality: Understanding the role of universities in the rise of contract academic work. *Academic Matters: OCUFA's Journal of Higher Education*. [Online]. Fall 2019.

<https://academicmatters.ca/understanding-the-role-of-universities-in-the-rise-of-contract-academic-work/> [accessed 1 Jan 2020]

Emerson, P. and Frosh, S. (2009). *Critical Narrative Analysis in Psychology: A Guide to Practice* (Revised ed.). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Erden, Ö. (2013). *An assessment of MoNE-YLSY scholarship program from the perspectives of scholars: Changes in cultural, political, economic and educational perceptions* [Unpublished MA dissertation]. Middle East Technical University, Turkey.

Erickson, F. (2018). A History of Qualitative Inquiry in Social and Educational Research. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 36- 65). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Erlandson, D. A., Harris E. L., Skipper, B. L. and Allen, S. D. (1993). *Doing Naturalistic Inquiry: A Guide to Methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Esposito, N. (2001). From Meaning to Meaning: The Influence of Translation Techniques on Non-English Focus Group Research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11(4), 568-579.

Finlay, L. (2014). Engaging Phenomenological Analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 11(2), 121-141.

Flick, U. (2002). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (2nd ed). London: Sage.

Flores, N. (2013). The Unexamined Relationship Between Neoliberalism and Plurilingualism: A Cautionary Tale. *TESOL Quarterly*, 47(3), 500-520.

Foucault, M. (2008). *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978-1979*. New York, NY: Picador.

Foucault, M. (2002). *Power: Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984*. (H. D. Faubian, Ed.). Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Fraide, A., Ganotice Jr., F A., Downing, K., Chan, B. and Yip, L. W. (2020). Motivation, goals for study abroad and adaptation of Mainland Chinese students in Hong Kong, *Educational Studies*. [Online]. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2020.1746240> [accessed 11 May 2020].

Fraser, N. (2009). Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History. *New Left Review*, No. 56, 97–117.

- Gadamer, H. (2004). *Truth and Method* (3rd ed.). London: Continuum.
- Gavey, N., and Braun, V. (1997). Ethics and Publication of Clinical Case Material. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 28, 399-404.
- Gair, S. (2012). Feeling their Stories: Contemplating empathy, insider/outsider positionings, and enriching qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 22(1), 134-143.
- Gaw, K. F. (2000). Reverse culture shock in students returning from overseas. *International Journal of Intercultural Relation*, 24, 83-104.
- Gerson, K. and Horowitz, R. (2002). Observation and interviewing: Options and choices in qualitative research. In T. May, (Ed.), *Qualitative research in action* (pp. 199-224). London: Sage.
- Ghimire, A. and Maharjan, K. (2014). Student returnees and their reflection on contribution to Nepal: Use of Knowledge and Skills. *Migration and Development*, 4 (1), 90-107.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2014.935148> [accessed on 27 Feb 2015].
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gill, R. (2010). Breaking the silence: Hidden injuries of the neoliberal university. In R. Ryan-Flood and R. Gill (Eds.), *Secrecy and silence in the research process: feminist reflections*, (pp. 228-244). Oxford: Routledge.
- Gill, S. (2010). The Homecoming: An investigation into the Effect that Studying Overseas Had on Chinese Postgraduates' Life and Work on their Return to China. *Compare*, 40 (3), 359-376.
- Giorgi, A. (1994). A Phenomenological Perspective on Certain Qualitative Research Methods. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 25, 190-220.
- Giorgi, A. (2009). *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology: A Modified Husserlian Approach*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.
- Giroux, H. (2015). Henry Giroux on the Rise of Neoliberalism. *Humanity and Society*, 39(4), 449-455.

- Goswami, G. G. and Mumit, A. (2018). Are Grades Inflated for Good Teaching Evaluations? Evidence from Bangladesh. *US-China Education Review A*, 8(5), 203-216.
- Green, J. and Thorogood, N. (2009). *Qualitative Method for Health Research*. London: Sage.
- Gross, A. and Connor, A. (2007). Managing Chinese returnees. *Mobility Magazine*. Bethesda, MD: Pacific Bridge, Inc.
- Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (Eds.). (2001). *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gudykunst, W. (2004). *Bridging differences: Effective intergroup communication* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Gu, Q. and Schweisfurth, M. (2015). Transnational connections, competences and identities: Experiences of Chinese international students after their return 'home'. *British Educational Research Journal*, 41(6), 947-970.
- Guo, S. and Lei, L. (2019). Toward transnational communities of practice: An inquiry into the experiences of transnational academic mobility. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 70(1), 26-43.
- Guo, Y. (1998). The roles of returned foreign education students in Chinese higher education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 2(2), 35-58.
- Haider, A. A. (2014, 14 May). Problems with Our Education Sector. *The Daily Star*. [Online].
<https://www.thedailystar.net/problems-with-our-education-sector-23954>
 [accessed 1 Nov 2017].
- Ha, P. L. and Barnawi, O. Z. (2015). Where English, Neoliberalism, Desire and Internationalisation are Alive and Kicking: Higher Education in Saudi Arabia Today. *Language and Education* 29(6), 545-565.
- Halcomb, E. and Davidson, P. (2006). Is verbatim transcription of interview data always necessary? *Applied Nursing Research*, 19(1), 38-42.
- Hall, S. (2011). The Neo-liberal Revolution. *Cultural Studies*, 25(6), 705-728.
- Hamid, M. O. (2009). National Planning of European Languages in Bangladesh. *Dhaka University Studies*, 66 (1), 57-64.

- Harding, J. (2013). *Qualitative Data Analysis from Start to Finish*. London: Sage.
- Harding, S. (1987). *Feminism and Methodology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Harvey, L. (2015). Beyond member-checking: A dialogic approach to the research interview. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 38 (1), 23-38.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Holliday, A. and MacDonald, M. (2020). Researching the intercultural: intersubjectivity and the problem with postpositivism. *Applied Linguistics*, 41(5), 621-639.
- Holliday, A. (2007). *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research* (2nd ed). London: Sage.
- Holliday, A. (1994). *Appropriate Methodology and Social Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Holliday, A. R. (2017). PhD students, interculturality, reflexivity, community and internationalisation. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 38(3), 206-218.
- Holligan, C. and Wilson, M. (2015). Critical Incidents as Formative Influences on the Work of Educational Researchers: Understanding an Insider Perspective Through Narrative Inquiry. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 36 (3), 453-473.
- Holstein, J. A. and Gubrium, J. F. (1995). *The Active Interview*. London: Sage.
- Holstein, J. A. and Gubrium, J. F. (1997). Active Interviewing. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice* (pp. 113-129). London: Sage.
- Hosie, P. J. and Sevastos, P. (2009). Does the 'happy-productive worker' thesis apply to managers? *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 2(2), 131-160.
- Hossain, R. (forthcoming). Women in Bangladeshi academia: Are we really on the same grounds? In M. Ronksley-Pavia, M. Neumann, J. Manakil, and K. Pickard-Smith (Eds.), *Gendered Experiences of Working in Higher Education: Narratives of Academic Women*. Bloomsbury Academic.

- Hossain, R. (2017). An Interview with Dr. Suresh Canagarajah on Academic Mobility, Language and Literacy. *Bellaterra Journal of Teaching and Learning Language and Literature*, 10(4), 93-103.
- Hossain, T. (Ed.). (2017, 19 June). Public bishwabidyalaye gobeshonar hal. *The Daily Ittefaq*.
<http://www.ittefaq.com.bd/print-edition/editorial/2017/06/19/203601.html>
 [accessed on 20 Jun 2017].
- Huberman, A. M. and Miles, M. B. (1994). Data Management and Analysis Methods. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 428-444). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hurdley, R., Biddulph, M., Backhaus, V., Hipwood, T. and Hossain, R. (2017). The Workshop Sketchbook. *American Anthropologist*, 119 (4).
<http://www.americananthropologist.org/2017/11/01/the-workshop-sketchbook/>
- Husain, M. M. and Osswald, K. (2016). Zombie graduates driven by rickshaw faculty – a qualitative case study: Private universities in urban Bangladesh. *Policy Futures in Education*, 14(7), 1020-1035.
- Husserl, E. (1931). *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. (D. Carr, Trans.) Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Hycner, H. R. (1985). Some Guidelines for the Phenomenological Analysis of Interview Data. *Human Studies*, 8, 279-303.
- Ip, M. (2006). Returnees and transnationals: Evolving identities of Chinese (PRC) immigrants in New Zealand. *Journal of Population Studies*, 33, 61–102.
- Iredale, R. and Guo, F. (2001). *The transforming role of skilled and business returnees: Taiwan, China and Bangladesh*. Centre for Asia Pacific Social Transformation Studies, University of Wollongong, Wollongong.
- Ireland, M. S. (1993). *Reconceiving Women. Separating Motherhood from Female Identity*. New York: The Guildford Press.
- Islam, M. M. (2014). Dealing with Qualitative Methods in Bangladesh: The Potentials and Pitfalls of Research Design and Fieldwork. *The Oriental Anthropologist*, 14 (1), 13-26.

- Jackson, J. C. (2001). Women middle managers' perception of the glass ceiling. *Women in Management Review*, 16(1), 30-41.
- Jayaweera, S. (1997a). Higher Education and the Economic and Social Empowerment of Women - the Asian Experience. *Compare*, 27(3), 245-61.
- Jayaweera, S. (1997b). Women, Education and Empowerment in Asia. *Gender and Education*, 9(4), 411-424.
- Joffe, H. and Yardley, L. (2004). Content and thematic analysis. In D. F. Marks and L. Yardley (Eds.), *Research methods for clinical and health psychology* (pp. 57-66). London: Sage.
- Josselson, R., Wertz, F. J., Charmaz, K., McMullen, L., Anderson, R. and McSpadden, E. (2011). *Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis: Phenomenological Psychology, Grounded Theory, Discourse Analysis, Narrative Research, and Intuitive Inquiry*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- JU gets first female VC (2014, March 2). *Bdnews24.com*.
<https://bdnews24.com/campus/2014/03/02/ju-gets-first-female-vc> [accessed on 23 Feb 2018].
- Jung, A., Lee, H. and Morales, A. (2013). Wisdom from Korean re-entry counseling professionals: A phenomenological study of the re-entry process. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 35(3), 153-171.
- Kabir, A. H. (2013). Neoliberal policy in the higher education sector in Bangladesh. *Policy Futures in Education*, 11(2), 154-166.
- Kabir, A. H. (2010). Neoliberal policy in the higher education sector in Bangladesh: Autonomy of public universities and the role of the state. *Policy Futures in Education*, 8(6), 619-631.
- Kabeer, N. (2005). Gender equality and women's empowerment: a critical analysis of the third millennium development goal. *Gender and Development*, 13(1), 13-24.
- Kabeer, N. (1991). The Quest for National Identity: Women, Islam and the State in Bangladesh. *Feminist Review*, 37, 38-58.
- Kabir, A. H. and Webb, S. (2018). Governance of private universities in Bangladesh: the Myth of Institutional Autonomy. In R. Chowdhury, M. Sarkar, F. Mojumder, and M.M. Rashid (Eds.), *Engaging in Educational Research: Revisiting Policy and Practice*

in Bangladesh, *Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects*, (44), (pp. 279-298). Singapore: Springer.

Kairanova, K. (2019). *International Scholarship Program Returnees' Re-entry Adaptation Process: Exploring Experiences of Bolashak Scholarship Alumni*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Nazarbayev University.

Kalam, A. (2014). Social Norms and Impediments of Women Development in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(2), 100-109.

Karakaş, A. (2013) Intercultural attitudes of Turkish students studying in a UK university. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 3, 1-13.

Karakaş, A. (2020). Disciplining transnationality? The impact of study abroad educational experiences on Turkish returnee scholars' lives, careers and identity. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 15(3), 252-272.

Keeley, B. (2007). *Human Capital: How What You Know Shapes Your Life*. Paris, France: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Kelley, L. C. (2020). The decline of Asian Studies in the West and the rise of knowledge production in Asia: An autoethnographic reflection on mobility, knowledge production and academic discourses. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 15(3), 273-290.

Kiaye, R. E. and Singh, A. M. (2013). The Glass Ceiling: A Perspective of Women Working in Durban. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 28(1), 28-42.

Kramsch, C. (2009). *The multilingual subject*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Krueger, R. A. and Casey, M. A. (2015). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kubota, R. (2016) The social imaginary of study abroad: complexities and contradictions. *The Language Learning Journal*, 44(3), 347-357.

Kubota, R. (2002). (Un)ravelling racism in a nice field like TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36(1), 84-92.

Kuper, A., Lingard, L., and Levinson, W. (2008). Practice Qualitative Research: Critically appraising qualitative research. *BMJ*, 337 (7671), 687-689.

- Kvale, S. (2006). Dominance through Interviews and Dialogues. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12, 480-500.
- Kvale, S. and Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lamb M. V. and Wedell, M. (2015). Cultural contrasts and commonalities in inspiring language teaching. *Language Teaching Research*, 19(2), 207-224.
- Lanvers, U. and Chambers, G. (2018). In the Shadow of Global English? Comparing Language Learner Motivation in Germany and the United Kingdom. In M. Lamb, K. Csizér, A. Henry, and S. Ryan (Eds.), *Handbook of Motivation for Language Learning*, (pp. 429-448). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Larner, W. (2000). Neo-liberalism: Policy, Ideology, Governmentality. *Studies in Political Economy*, 63(1), 5-25.
- Lauretis, T. D. (1984). *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics and Cinema*. S. Heath and C. MacCabe (Eds.), Bloomington, USA: Indiana University Press.
- Lazarova, M. and Tarique, I. (2005). Knowledge transfer upon repatriation. *Journal of World Business*, 40(4), 361-373.
- LeCompte, M. D., Millroy, W. L., and Preissle, J. (1992). *The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- LeCompte, M. D. and Goetz, J. P. (1982). Problems of reliability and validity in ethnographic research. *Review of Educational Research*, 52(1), 31-60.
- Leong, F. T. and Leung, K. (2004). Academic careers in Asia: A cross-cultural analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 64(2), 346-357.
- Lewis, J. and Ritchie, J. (2003). Generalising from qualitative research. In J. Ritchie and J. Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers* (pp. 263-286). London: Sage.
- Lewis, P. (2014). Postfeminism, Femininities and Organization Studies: Exploring a New Agenda. *Organization Studies*, 35(12), 1845-1866.
- Li, H. (2006). Returned students and political change in China. *Asian Perspective*, 30(2), 5-29.
- Li, Y. L. and Peguero, A. A. (2015). Professional Women's Dilemma between Work and Family: An Examination of the ADVANCE Program. *Gender, Technology and*

Development, 19 (2), 119-144.

Lim, D. (2001). *Quality assurance in higher education: A study of developing countries*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.

Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Lipton, B. (2018). *Academic Women in Neoliberal Times: Gender, Time, Space and Emotion in the Contemporary Australian University*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. The Australian National University.

Long, T. and Johnson, M. (2000). Rigour reliability and validity in qualitative research. *Critical Effectiveness in Nursing*, 4(1), pp. 30-37.

Maliyamkono, T. L., Ishumi, A. G. M, and Wells, S. J. (1982). *Higher Education and Development in Eastern Africa: An Eastern African Universities Research Project Report on the Impact of Overseas Training on Development*. Heinemann: London.

Man, M. M. K. and Skerlavaj, M. (2009). Is there a 'glass ceiling' for mid-level female managers? *International Journal of Management and Innovation*, 1(1), 1-13.

Mann, S. (2010). A Critical Review of Qualitative Interviews in Applied Linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 32 (1), 6-24.

Marshall, M. N. (1996). Sampling for Qualitative Research. *Family Practice*, 13, 522-526.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. (2006). *Designing Qualitative Research* (4th ed.). London: Sage.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. (1995). *Designing Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Martin, J. N. (1984). The intercultural re-entry: Conceptualization and directions for future research. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 8, 115-134.

Martin, P. (1993). The immigration issue. In King, R. (Ed.), *The new geography of European migrations* (pp. 1-16). London: Belhaven Press.

Marwell, G., Rosenfeld, R. and Spilerman, S. (1979). Geographic Constraints on Women's Careers in Academia. *Science*, 205, n.p.

Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

- Mason, M. (2010). Sample Size and Saturation in PhD Studies Using Qualitative Interviews. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 11 (3), Art. 8.
- Mathews, D. (2016). Bangladesh's 'rickshaw faculty': a nadir of academic exploitation. *Times Higher Education*. [Online].
<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/bangladeshs-rickshaw-faculty-nadir-academic-exploitation> [accessed 15 Aug 2018].
- Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Maxwell, J. (1997). Designing a Qualitative Study. In L. Bickman and D. J. Rog (Eds.), *Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods* (pp. 69-100). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Mbachu, C. E. and Ekeke, J. H. (2013). Research in Higher Education: A Panacea for National Development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Current Research*, 5(12), 4284-4287.
- McGrath, T.M. (1998). *Homecoming: Reverse Culture Shock. An Investigation of New Zealand trained Graduates Returning Home to Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia*. [Unpublished MPhil dissertation], Massey University.
- McGrath, T., Stock, P. and Butcher, A. (2007). Friends and Allies: The Impacts of Returning Asian Students on New Zealand-Asia Relationships. *Outlook* (5th ed.), Asia New Zealand Foundation.
- McLeod, J. (2001). *Qualitative Research in Counselling and Psychotherapy*. London: Sage.
- McLeod, J. and Thomson, R. (2009). *Researching Social Change*. London: Sage.
- Mears, C. (2009). *Interviewing for Education and Social Science Research: The Gateway Approach*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative Research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Meyers, M. (2013). The War on Academic Women: Reflections on Postfeminism in the Neoliberal Academy. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 37(4), 274-283.
- Miller, J. and Glassner, B. (2016). The 'inside' and the 'outside': Finding realities in interviews. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research* (pp. 51-66). Los Angeles: Sage.

Mishler, E. G. (1986). *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press.

Monem, M. and Baniamin, H. M. (2010). Higher Education in Bangladesh: Status, Issues and Prospects. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 30 (2), 293-305.

Monroe, K., Ozyurt, S., Wrigley, T. and Alexander, A. (2008). Gender Equality in Academia: Bad News from the Trenches, and Some Possible Solutions. *Perspectives on Politics*, 6 (2), 215-233.

Morley, L. and Crossouard, B. (2015). *Women in Higher Education Leadership in South Asia: Rejection, Refusal, Reluctance, Revisioning*. Project Report. British Council.

Morse, J. M. and Richards, L. (2002). *README FIRST for a User's Guide to Qualitative Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mullins, G., Quintrell, N., and Hancock, L. (1995). The experiences of local and international students at three Australian universities. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 14, 201 – 232.

Namgung, S. U. (2008). The role of returnees in internationalisation at four Korean universities. Paper presented at the Asia-Pacific Sub-regional Preparatory Conference for the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education, Macau. <http://www.unescobkk.org/education/apeid/resources/past-events/higherdistance-ed-workshops/macao08/papers-presentations/> [accessed 28 Mar 2015].

Neazy, N. (2018). Bangladesh's private universities must offer a better workplace. *Times Higher Education*. [Online]. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/opinion/bangladeshs-private-universities-must-offer-better-workplace> [accessed 1 Oct 2018]

Novick, G. (2008). Is There a Bias Against Telephone Interviews in Qualitative Research? *Research in Nursing and Health*, Vol. 31, 391-398.

Nunkoosing, K. (2005). Problems with interviews. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15 (5), 698-706.

- Odendahl, T. and Shaw, M. A. (2001). Interviewing Elites. In J. F. Gubrium and J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method* (pp. 317-328). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Oddou, G., Osland, J., and Blakeney, R. (2008). Repatriating knowledge: Variables influencing the 'transfer' process. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 40 (2), 181-199.
- OECD. (2002). International mobility of the highly skilled, July 2002. <https://www.oecd.org/sti/inno/internationalmobilityofthehighlyskilled.htm> [accessed on 1 Nov 2020].
- Olessen, V. (2018). Feminist Qualitative Research in the Millennium's First Decade: Developments, Challenges and Prospects. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 151-175). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Olssen, M. and Peters, M.A. (2005). Neoliberalism, Higher Education and the Knowledge Economy: From the Free Market to Knowledge Capitalism. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20 (3), 313-345.
- Osman, S. (2015, 24 Nov.). Bangladeshe ucchyomaner bigyan gobeshonar hal: Nature Index 2014-2015. 24/11/2015. *Shocholayoton* [Online]. http://www.sachalayatan.com/shajib_osman/55332 [accessed on 4 May 2016]
- Padgett, D. (1998). *Qualitative Research Methods in Social Work Research: Challenges and Rewards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pandey, K. P. (2009, 18 Sept.). Manipulation of the University Act. *The Daily Star*. [Online]. <https://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-106410> [accessed 1 Dec 2018]
- Park, G. (2017). *Narratives of East-Asian Women Teachers of English: Where Privilege Meets Marginalization*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Parker, A. and Tritter, J. (2006). Focus Group Method and Methodology: Current Practice and Recent Debate. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 29 (1), 23-37.
- Parsons, B. A. (2007). The state of methods and tools for social systems change. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 39 (3/4), 405-409.
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. London: Sage.

- Pavlenko, A. (2007). Autobiographic Narratives as Data in Applied Linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 28(2), 163-188.
- Payne, G. and Williams, M. (2005). Generalisation in qualitative research. *Sociology*, 39 (2), 295-314.
- Pfister, G. (1998). The Struggle for Balance: The Career of a German University Professor. In M. David and D. Woodward (Eds.), *Negotiating the Glass Ceiling: Careers of Senior Women in the Academic World* (pp. 35-47). London: Falmer Press.
- Phan, L. H. (2017). *Transnational Education Crossing 'Asia' and 'the West': Adjusted Desire, Transformative Mediocrity and Neo-colonial disguise*. New York: Routledge.
- Phan, L. H. and Barnawi, O. Z. (2015). Where English, neoliberalism, desire and internationalisation are alive and kicking: higher education in Saudi Arabia today. *Language and Education*, 29 (6), 545-565.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Piller, I. and Cho, J. (2013). Neoliberalism as Language Policy. *Language in Society*, 42, 23-44.
- Pitts, M. J. (2016). Sojourner re-entry: a grounded elaboration of the integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation. *Communication Monographs*, 83 (4), 419-445.
- Pitts, M. J. (2009). Identity and the role of expectations, stress, and talk in short-term sojourner adjustment: An application of the integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 33, 450-462.
- Poland, B. D. (2001). Transcription Quality. In J. F. Gubrium and J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method* (pp. 629-649). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8, 5-23.
- Powell, G. N. and Butterfield, D. A. (2015). The glass ceiling: what have we learned 20 years on? *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 2 (4), 306-326.

- Pritchard, R. (2011). Re-entry Trauma: Asian Re-integration After Study in the West. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 15 (1), 93– 111.
- Prügl, E. (2015). Neoliberalising Feminism, *New Political Economy*, 20 (4), 614-631.
- Quddus, M. and Rashid, S. (2000). The Worldwide Movement in Private Universities: Revolutionary Growth in Post-secondary Higher Education. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 59 (3), 487-516.
- Rahman, T. (2013). From brain drain to brain gain: Leveraging the academic diaspora. In T. T. Yong and M. M. Rahman (Eds.), *Diaspora Engagement and Development in South Asia* (pp. 124-144). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rahman, S. (2018). Globalisation, Migration, and Knowledge Generation: A Study on Higher Education Institutions in Bangladesh. In R. Chowdhury, M. Sarkar, F. Mojumder, and M. M. Rashid (Eds.), *Engaging in Educational Research: Revisiting Policy and Practice in Bangladesh, Education in the Asia- Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects*, (44) (pp. 263- 278). Singapore: Springer.
- Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative Inquiry in TESOL*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Richards, L. and Richards, T. (1994). From filing cabinet to computer. In A. Bryman and R. G. Burgess (Eds.), *Analysing Qualitative Data* (pp.160-186). London: Routledge.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A Method of Inquiry. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 923-948). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Richmond, A. (1993). Reactive migration: Sociological perspectives on refugee movements. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 6 (1), 7–24.
- Rizvi, F., Walker, M. and Thomson, P. (2010). International students and doctoral studies in transnational spaces. In M. Walker, and P. Thomson (Eds.), *The Routledge doctoral supervisor's companion: Supporting effective research in education and the social sciences* (pp.158-170). Oxon: Routledge.
- Robinson-Pant, A. (2009). Changing academies: exploring international PhD students' perspectives on 'host' and 'home' universities. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 28 (4), 417-429.
- Robson, C. (2011). *Real World Research* (3rd ed.). London, UK: Wiley.

- Rohrlich, B. F. and Martin, J. N. (1991). Host country and re-entry adjustment of student sojourners. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 15 (2), 163–182.
- Rolfe, G. (2006). Validity, trustworthiness and rigour: Quality and the idea of qualitative research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 53 (3), 304-310.
- Rose, N. (1990). *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*. London: Routledge.
- Rottenberg, C. (2013). Hijacking Feminism. *Al Jazeera*, 25.
<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/03/201332510121757700.html> [accessed on 10 Feb 2018]
- Rottenberg, C. (2014a). The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism. *Cultural Studies*, 28 (3), 418-437.
- Rottenberg, C. (2014b). Happiness and the Liberal Imagination: How Superwoman Became Balanced. *Feminist Studies*, 40 (1), 144-168.
- Roulston, K. (2010). *Reflective Interview: A Guide to Theory and Practice*. London: Sage.
- Roy, S. (2013). Feminist ‘Radicality’ and ‘Moderation’ in Times of Crises and Change. *The Sociological Review*, 61 (S2), 100–118.
- Rubin, H. J. and Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. (3rd ed.) London: Sage.
- Ryan, G. W. and Bernard, H. R. (2003). Techniques to identify themes. *Field Methods*, 15 (1), 85-109.
- Saldaña, J. (2003). *Longitudinal qualitative research: Analysing change through time*. Oxford: Altamira Press.
- Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Samoff, J. (2012). ‘Research shows that...’: Creating the knowledge environment for Learning for All. In S. J. Klees, J. Samoff, and N. P. Stromquist (Eds.), *The World Bank and Education: Critiques and Alternatives* (pp. 143-157). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Sandberg, S. (2013). *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Sexual assault support centre website. Sascwr.org. (2018). [online].
<https://www.sascwr.org> [accessed on 20 Mar 2018]

Schwandt, T. A. (2001). *Dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Scott, J. W. (1992). Experience. In Butler, J. and Scott, W.S. *Feminists Theorize the Political* (pp. 22-40). New York: Routledge.

Sebastian, M. (2015). Why Moderate Feminism is Just as Bad as Radical Feminism. [Blog]. *Return of Kings*.
[www.returnofkings.com /69531/why-moderate-feminism-is-just-as-bad-as-radical-feminism](http://www.returnofkings.com/69531/why-moderate-feminism-is-just-as-bad-as-radical-feminism) [accessed on 08 Jan 2018]

Sengupta, E. and Kapur, V. (2020). Repatriation of Kurdish Students and Adjustment Issues. In Gaulee U., Sharma S., Bista K. (Eds.), *Rethinking Education Across Borders* (pp. 211-224). Singapore: Springer.

Sharif, M. Y. (2015). Glass Ceiling, the Prime Driver of Women Entrepreneurship in Malaysia: A Phenomenological Study of Women Lawyers. *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 169, 329-336.

Sharma, S. and Sehrawat, P. (2014). Glass ceiling for women: Does it exist in the modern India? *Journal of Organization and Human Behaviour*, 3 (2-3), 9-15.

Shin, G-W. and Moon, R. J. (2018). *From Brain Drain to Brain Circulation and Linkage: A Shorenstein APARC Working Paper*. [Online].
[https://fsi-live.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/brain drain to circulation and linkage 0.pdf](https://fsi-live.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/brain%20drain%20to%20circulation%20and%20linkage%200.pdf) [accessed 1 Jan 2020]

Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*. London: Sage.

Slaughter, A. M. (2012, July/Aug.). Why Women Still Can't Have It All. *The Atlantic*.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/> [accessed on 10 Feb 2018]

Smith, J. A. (1995). Semi-structured Interviewing and Qualitative Analysis. In J. A. Smith, R. Harré and L. van Langehove (Eds.), *Rethinking Methods in Psychology* (pp. 9-26). London: Sage.

- Smith, K. M. and Jeffrey, D. I. (2013). Critical pedagogies in the neoliberal university: What happens when they go digital? *Special Issue: Critical Geographies of Education*, 57 (3), 372-380.
- Smith, P., Caputi, P. and Crittenden, N. (2012). How are women's glass ceiling beliefs related to career success? *Career Development International*, 17 (5), 458-474.
- Smith, S. (1998). Identity and intercultural communication competence in re-entry. In J. N. Martin, T. N. Nakayama, and L. A. Flores (Eds.), *Readings in cultural contexts* (pp. 304-314). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Spencer, L., Ritchie, J. and O'Connor, W. (2003). Analysis: Practices, principles and processes. In J. Ritchie and J. Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers* (pp. 199-218). London: Sage.
- Spencer-Oatey, H. (2002). Managing rapport in talk: Using rapport sensitive incidents to explore the motivational concerns underlying the management of relations. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34, 529-545.
- Staff Correspondent (2018, 13 Sept.). Recruitment, Promotion at Univs: Irregularities for lack of uniform guidelines: VCs. *The Daily Star*. [Online]. <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/recruitment-promotion-univs-irregularities-lack-uniform-guidelines-vcs-1633195> [accessed 1 Nov 2018].
- Stake, R. E. (2010). *Qualitative Research: Studying How Things Work*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Stephens, M. (1982). A Question of Generalizability. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 9, 75-89.
- Stewart, D. and Mickunas, A. (1990). *Exploring Phenomenology: A Guide to the Field and its Literature* (2nd ed.). Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Stewart, D. W. and Shamdasani, P. N. (2015). *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Storti, C. (1990). *The art of coming home*. London, UK: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Strauss, A. 1987. *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stromquist, N. (2002). *Education in a globalized world: The connectivity of economic power, technology, and knowledge*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Sussman, M. N. (1986). Re-entry Methods and Trainings: Methods and Implications. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10, 235-254.
- Sussman, N. M. (2001). Cultural transitions: Psychological preparedness, repatriation, and attributions among American managers. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 25 (2), 109-123.
- Sussman, N. M. (2002). Testing the culture identity model of the cultural transition cycle: sojourners return home. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 26, 391-408.
- Sussman, N. (2002a). Sojourners to another country: The psychological roller-coaster of cultural transitions. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 8 (1), 3-11.
- Sussman, N. (2000). The dynamic nature of cultural identity throughout cultural transitions: Why home is not so sweet. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 355-373.
- Syed, K. (2008). Misconceptions about human rights and women's rights in Islam. *Interchange*, 39 (2), 245-257.
- Szkudlarek, B. (2008). *Spinning the web of re-entry: (Re)connecting re-entry training theory and practice* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Erasmus University Rotterdam.
- Talmy, S. (2010). The Interview as Collaborative Achievement: Interaction, Identity, and Ideology in a Speech Event. *Applied Linguistics*, 32 (1), 25-42.
- Talmy, S. (2010). Qualitative Interviews in Applied Linguistics: From Research Instrument to Social Practice. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 30, 128-148.
- Tierny, W. G. and Dilley, P. (2001). Interviewing in Education. In Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method* (pp. 453-471). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Tripathi, R., Cervone, D. and Savani, K. (2018). Are the Motivational Effects of Autonomy-Supportive Conditions Universal? Contrasting Results Among Indians and Americans. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 44 (9), 1287–1301.
- Tuckett, A. (2004). Qualitative research sampling - the very real complexities. *Nurse Researcher*, 12 (1), 47-61.
- Turner, D. W. (2010). Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigators. *The Qualitative Report*, 15 (3), 754-760.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2015). Gender Inequality Index. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-4-gender-inequality-index> [accessed on 25 Feb 2018]
- University Grants Commission. (2006). *Strategic plan for Higher Education 2006-2026*. Dhaka, Bangladesh: UGC.
- University Grants Commission of Bangladesh. (2014). Policies [Online] <http://www.ugc.gov.bd/act/> [accessed 5 Dec 2014]
- University Grants Commission of Bangladesh. (2014). *40th Annual Report 2013*. Dhaka, Bangladesh: UGC.
- Valian, V. (2005). Beyond Gender Schemas: Improving the Advancement of Women in Academia. *Hypatia*, 20 (3), 198-213.
- van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching Lived Experience*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- van Manen, M. (2006). Writing Qualitatively, or the Demands of Writing. *Qualitative Health Research*, 16, 713-722.
- van Nes, F., Abma, T., Jonsson, H. and Deeg, D. (2010). Language differences in qualitative research: is meaning lost in translation? *European Journal of Ageing*, 7 (4), 313-316.
- Wadood, S. N. (2006). *The Public-Private University Debate in the Higher Education sector in Bangladesh*. <http://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/10888/> [accessed on 20 Jan 2018]
- Walling, S. M., Eriksson, C. B., Meese, K. J., Ciovica, A., Gorton, D., and Foy, D. W. (2006). Cultural identity and re-entry in short-term student missionaries. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 34 (2), 153–164.

- Wang, M. (2016). *Homecoming: Foreign-Educated Returnees' Experience of Re-entry into Chinese Universities in Yunnan Province, China*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Massey University.
- Ward, C. and Kennedy, A. (2001). Coping with cross-cultural transition. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 32 (5), 636-642.
- Ward, S. C. (2012). *Neoliberalism and the Global Restructuring of Knowledge and Education*. Hoboken, NJ: Routledge.
- Warren, C. A. B. (2001). Qualitative Interviewing. In J. F. Gubrium and J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method* (pp. 83-101). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Welch, A. R. (1997). The peripatetic professor: the internationalisation of the academic profession. *Higher Education*, 34 (3), 323-345.
- Welsh, E. (2002). Dealing with data: Using NVivo in the qualitative data analysis process. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 3 (2), 1-9.
- Wesarat, P., Sharif, M. Y. and Abdul Majid, A. H. (2015). A conceptual framework of happiness at the workplace. *Asian Social Science*, 11 (2), 78-88.
- Wesarat, P. and Mathew, J. (2017). Theoretical Framework of Glass Ceiling: A Case of India's Women Academic Leaders. *Paradigm*, 21 (1), 21-30.
- Wilkins, S., Balakrishnan, M. and Huisman, J. (2011). Student Choice in Higher Education: Motivations for Choosing to Study at an International Branch Campus. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 16 (5), 413-433.
- Williams, M., and Robson, K. (2004). Reengineering Focus Group Methodology for the Online Environment. In M. D. Johns, S. L. S. Chen and G. J. Hall (Eds.), *Online Social Research: Methods, Issues, and Ethics* (pp. 25-45). New York: Peter Lang.
- Williams, R. (1983). *Keywords*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wirth, L. (2001). *Breaking Through the Glass Ceiling: Women in Management*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- World Bank. (2019). *Bangladesh Tertiary Education Sector Review: Skills and Innovation for Growth*.

<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/303961553747212653/pdf/Bangladesh-Tertiary-Education-Sector-Review-Skills-and-Innovation-for-Growth.pdf>
[accessed on 1 Feb 2021]

World Bank. (2000). *Higher Education and Developing Countries: Peril and Promise*. Report prepared by The Task Force on Higher Education and Society in association with the World Bank and UNESCO.
<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/345111467989458740/pdf/multi-page.pdf> [accessed on 7 Aug 2016]

Yang, Y., Zhang, Y. and Sheldon, K. M. (2018). Self-determined motivation for studying abroad predicts lower culture shock and greater well-being among international students: The mediating role of basic psychological needs satisfaction. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 63, 95–104.

Yasmeen, S. (1991). Hearing the Difference: Pakistani Feminism, *Asian Studies Review*, 15 (1), 108-110.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Method* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zhang, J. (2011). *Challenges ahead for China's returnee program*.
http://www.china.org.cn/china/2011-11/30/content_24028722.htm [accessed on 01 Jan 2018]

Zheng, J. (2010). Neoliberal Globalization, Higher Education Policies and International Student Flows: An Exploratory Case Study of Chinese Graduate Student Flows to Canada. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*, 2, Special Issue (1), 216-244.

Appendix A: Project Information Sheet for Participants

1. Research Project Title: Experience of Bangladeshi Academics Returning from Study Abroad

You are being invited to take part in a research project on the 'Experience of Bangladeshi Academics Returning from Study Abroad'. Before you decide on taking part I want you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please feel free to ask for any further information required. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

2. What is the project's purpose?

The proposed study is an attempt to consolidate the academics' experiences who have returned from study abroad and supplementing them with interviews of other stakeholders i.e. policy makers, vice chancellors, head of the departments and people from the British Council and the American Centre who are responsible for the overall handling of international mobility. You will be asked to share the story of your experience on return from study abroad which will provide me with insights of your aspiration, your motivation to study abroad, how you reintegrated on return and related topics.

3. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen as a participant based on the fact that you have studied at a post-graduate level (MA/ PhD) from countries like UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand or any European countries. Also you have 2-7 years of work experience post return.

4. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason. However, you can request to withdraw your provided information till six months from the date of the interview. Once the writing up process begins, you will not be able to back out of the study.

5. What will happen to me if I take part?

As a participant, you will be asked to undertake an interview of approx.1 hour duration which would be in the months of February-March 2016 at a time mutually agreed. If you are interested I would also like to invite you for a focus group discussion to validate relevant issues and themes. You would receive a copy of the

transcription of your interview prior to the FDG if you agree to take part in the focus group discussions.

7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work in addition to giving a voice to academics, will act as a document guiding policymakers towards action if investment in overseas education for university staff is to begin to benefit Bangladeshi higher education.

8. Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

Interviews will be recorded, unless you object to it. The audio recordings of the interview will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

9. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications resulting from the research.

11. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The data collected in this project will be used as inputs for my PhD research and subsequent seminars, conference papers and publications.

12. Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is undertaken by the undersigned researcher and supervised by Dr. Martin Lamb and Dr. Martin Wedell, School of Education, University of Leeds, UK.

13. Contact for further information

Researcher: Rumana Hossain

Email: ed13rh@leeds.ac.uk

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Martin Lamb

2. Dr. Martin Wedell

Email: m.v.lamb@education.leeds.ac.uk

Email: m.wedell@education.leeds.ac.uk

Appendix B: Background information Sheet for Participants (Academics)

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Marital status:

Subject of study abroad:

Length of study:

Place of study:

University studied at home:

Current job:

Name of Institution:

Salary per month:

Appendix C: Sample Consent Form

Consent to take part in the research project: 'Experience of Bangladeshi Academics Returning from Study Abroad'

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information of this form dated explaining the research study and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it.
- I understand that I might not take part in the research study and I can drop out at any time without stating a reason and without facing any problems.
- I agree to take part in the following research activities:
 - face-to-face interviews
 - follow-up interviews
 - focus group discussion
- I give permission for the interviews to be audio-recorded.
- I have provided my background information relevant to this study.
- I understand that my name and my contributions to the research study will not appear in any reports, publications or presentations with anonymisation and will be used for research purpose only.
- I give consent for this anonymous data to be used in the PhD thesis, future reports, presentations or publications of this researcher.
- I agree to take part in the research activities described above and will inform Rumana Hossain (email: ed13rh@leeds.ac.uk) if my contact details change.

Name of Participant:

Participant's Signature and Date:

Researcher:

Researcher's Signature and Date:

Appendix D: Ethical Approval

Performance, Governance and Operations
Research & Innovation Service
Charles Thackrah Building
101 Clarendon Road
Leeds LS2 9LJ Tel: 0113 343 4873
Email: ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Rumana Hossain
School of Education
University of Leeds
Leeds, LS2 9JT

ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee
University of Leeds

18 December 2015

Dear Rumana

Title of study: Experience of Bangladeshi Academics Returning from Study Abroad
Ethics reference: AREA 15-039

I am pleased to inform you that the above research application has been reviewed by the ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee and following receipt of your response to the Committee's initial comments, I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
AREA 15-039 Ethical Review Form_RH.doc	2	18/12/15
AREA 15-039 Sample Information Sheet_RH.docx	2	18/12/15
AREA 15-039 CONSENT FORM_RH.docx	1	02/11/15
AREA 15-039 Fieldwork_Assessment_Form_low_risk_RH.doc	1	02/11/15

Committee members made the following comments about your application:

- Please include your supervisor's contact details to your participant information sheet so that participants have an alternative person to contact.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted at date of this approval, including changes to recruitment methodology. All changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAmendment>.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited. There is a checklist listing examples of documents to be kept which is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAudits>.

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions for improvement. Please email any comments to ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Blaikie
Senior Research Ethics Administrator, Research & Innovation Service
On behalf of Dr Andrew Evans, Chair, [AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee](#)

CC: Student's supervisor(s)

Appendix E: Sample Interview Schedule for Academics

Prelude/ Initial prompt:

I would like to hear your story of going abroad and returning to Bangladesh.

Interview Schedule:

1. Looking back now, after (3-7) years of your return, do you think it was worth going abroad to study?
2. How do you feel now about your experience of returning to Bangladesh?
 - both personally and professionally?
 - Was anyone/ anything particularly helpful or supportive?
 - Was anyone/ anything depressing/demotivating?
3. Did you find any difference between your earlier thoughts, beliefs and practices at home and abroad?
4. What originally motivated you to study abroad?
5. What did you hope to do on return?
6. What did you do in reality?
7. What were the challenges you faced?
8. Do you feel empowered in some way because of your international exposure?
 - Do you feel political involvement effects empowerment in any way?
9. Do you think that people who study abroad have a duty to contribute to the development of their country? In what way?
 - Contribution towards society
 - Contribution towards education

10. Do you feel a lack of a higher education policy (except 1973 Act) effects the ability of returnees to contribute?

11. Do you have any plans that you would like to do in future?

Prompts:

What did you do immediately after your return?

What happened after that?

What did you do then?

Appendix F: Sample Interview Schedule for Stakeholders (UGC and VC)

1. What are your views on Bangladeshi academics going abroad to study?
2. As a member of what are your expectations from the academics who go to study abroad?
3. Have these expectations been satisfied?
4. Which expectation do you feel have been satisfied?
5. What are the unsatisfied expectations?
6. Why could these expectations not be met?
7. Do you feel the whole experience of study abroad was worth the time and money spent?
8. Do you or your institution have any plans for changing the policy?
9. Do you think it matters in what countries and institutions the academics study in?

Appendix G: Sample Interview Schedule for Stakeholders (Head of Department)

1. What are your views on Bangladeshi academics going abroad to study?

2. What impact did the returnee academics have on the department after their return from study abroad? Are they doing anything differently?

- On the students
- On the colleagues
- On the staff members

3. Do you think it matters in what countries and institutions the academics study in?

Appendix H: Sample Interview Schedule for Stakeholders (British Council/ American Centre)

1. What are your views on Bangladeshi academics going abroad to study?
2. As a facilitator of the process, do you hold any record or keep track of the people whom you assisted on their return from study abroad?
3. Do you think it matters in what countries and institutions the academics study in?
4. Any future plans for the returnees?

Appendix I: Sample translated interview

Returnee academic: SAMAD

R – I want to hear the story of when you did a PhD and came back 5 years later. What happened after?

S – Is this the topic?

R – Yes. Was it worth it actually? Going abroad.

S – Of course it was worth.

R – In what sense?

S – First of all you don't get enough credit as an academic you know unless you do a PhD. So basically get recognition as a scholar and it is very important to get that recognition as a scholar. Then on top of that like you want you get your promotion increments and others and so you need your PhD.

R – Should I call that motivation?

S – The motivation is like that if you're in academia you need a PhD so that's the prime motivation because when you go abroad you see that even a lecturer has a PhD that's kind of a different entry requirement for them but in our country you know you're supposed to be a good student, finish your masters and join your alma mater right? But once I went abroad to do my second MA I realised that without your PhD you should not claim yourself as an academic as simple as that. And also the training process of the PhD, getting exposed to an academic community, scholarly community, getting yourself published and all that. That in itself is a rigorous training process. That helped me as a scholar and also humbled me in the process you know it was quite a humbling experience so that's basically it. Humbled me and made me a good human being . You know it made me realise that there are things I didn't know before and it is not easy to prove your case and there are so many distractions. So, I am just grateful I finished that.

R – You did a masters then a PhD. So, it was a long time you spent abroad. So, after you came back what was the reality like? How was it? Was it hard to adjust when you came back?

S – not really.

R – challenges.

S – the initial challenge was like the resources that I had I was missing that. So, the idea was that you know I was getting used to having resources like if I needed an article or if I needed a book so there were inter library loans and all those things. Suddenly, it is

like work work work, take classes no research. The disappointing thing was that nobody was interested in your PhD. So that was the most disappointing aspect.

R – Say when you got back, anyone ask you or was there an incentive from the institution or anything about what you did?

S – very few. Very few. Only a handful of people were interested. Those who have gone abroad so they showed interest but those who haven't didn't bother. The other thing was that people were suspecting whether I actually finished my PhD from London. They even wrote to my supervisor, they wrote to the register of the University of London. So, the jealousy factor was there.

R – Okay. This was your colleagues?

S - Yeah. My colleagues from back home because it takes time for the actual certificate to be mailed and all that. So, I was using my doctorate degree and they felt that I was dodging the system. And so, they wanted to have a formal enquiry so there were chain mails and stuff like that. So that was quite disappointing that either you don't get recognition or you don't get approval or anything but suddenly have all these allegations you know labelled against you.

R – this was by your colleagues.

S – yes. These were my colleagues. Unfortunately.

R – something from the institution? What did the institution do?

S – so we have this financial increment and technically I was supposed to get a year off for my promotion that didn't happen so yeah.

R – so do politics play a role in this? Are you politically involved?

S – no. no.

R – okay. At that time?

S – I was before.

R – did that give you any sort of advantage?

S – not really, no it actually affected my career in a negative way and I was victimised because of that certain part of politics

R- so politics does play a part in this?

S – I mean I have seen people get advantages but not for me really it didn't work for me. Back people got funding and grants but not me and even extensions but for me it didn't.

R – the fact that you lived abroad for so many years what did you find was different between the two education?

S – Bangladesh follows the British module so the PhD was pretty much the same you are liable to only your supervisor that's it but for my Masters it was rigorous coursework do you know that was something else yet to read 500 pages a week it was quite intense and rigorous.

R – and here?

S – here we can find shortcuts for Masters because you can read notes and you can get away with it you can read just a summary of a novel and you can get away with it.

R – why is it like this?

S – the testing format is wrong the questioning is wrong the teachers are not exposed to new ideas so they're just like there is just only understanding of the teachers expectations so they have a very narrow view of knowledge.

R – if that's the case who would you say is liable?

S – very complicated situation because all the stakeholders are involved here and responsible one way or another. At the policy level the state is involved because the state does not patronise the University. Not that serious about getting a world-class education to be honest. So they are mostly interested in overseas funding, HEQEP, quality assurance so these are like buzzwords so they are doing it for the sake of doing and not for the sake of knowledge as should be the case. Changes are being done but the main problem is no peer assessment and there is no student evaluation. So frankly there is no transparency in the system. Unless there is transparency so that means no one is accountable. The lack of accountability is the reason these problems have emerged. Of course, the salary. Given the salary so you have to find an alternative funding source just to have a very bare essential lifestyle so yeah that's the main reason.

R – what about our learners. Are they prepared for changes?

S – the idea is that it is very different you know. The level of participation that's a huge shock. All the students are prepared so they write questions down before they even come to the class they participate as opposed to a very lecture orientated classroom a student abroad entered similar classrooms abroad but here it's still old fashioned. I have tried in my own classroom but having said that it varies from class to class and you can't do it in all institutions for example I tried in a private university where there are less students. I have tried inuniversity but usually 4/5 people dominate the classroom so with large classrooms even if you come up with all these reports they still don't work because not everyone can participate. Also the semester system is faulty. Here you have six months in a semester but you have 13 classes ideally. As you have to accommodate all the teachers to them. Here 6 months semester system. But ideally

only 13 classes take place. Moreover, there are so many teachersyou've got to accommodate all of them. The class slots are of 3 hours, but you seldom get 3 hours for your class. In the short span of time you need to deliver a lot of things. They actually cannot do the things that we have done abroad.....So it's almost like high school so the semesters with class of 1 hr 15 minutes you actually cannot do the things you do abroad so like I don't blame my colleagues when they just leave delivering the lecture..they see no point.

R – so what about the learners? Are they ready for the interaction?

S – I think I have noticed the changes because of the internet so when we were students we had to go to British Council to spend all day in the library just to get one page of notes as photocopying was very expensive but more because of the Internet you couldn't access a lot of things like books, notes, classroom lectures so you can listen to your professors sitting in Bangladesh. That exposure has gone up which wasn't there beforehand.

R – You were talking about learners

S – I can see that the motivational level of students are changing because often when teachers used to fail the students would lose interest whereas now students are using their own interest and material that the teachers don't even know about so that's one good thing that wasn't there before.

R – so that's a good thing.

S – so sometimes you are surprised by the outcome that your student has produced like you know you talked about things and it generates interest and then they find materials on their own and come to class so that's something new. So basically like things are changing because of technology for students have more access to information which they didn't have before so that's one positive and the other thing about learners, the problem with large classrooms, specially in a subject like English is that the basic problem is that they never wanted to study English so that's why there is lack of motivation?

R – what do you mean never want to study at it?

S – so they might have wanted to do science or something like that but ended up in English by default.

R – what about their writing and creative thinking?

S – that orientation was never there. So first semester they would think to switch so that takes the importance and energy of them. So that's why the motivation may be low in the learners.

R – any plans for the future?

S – yeah. Publish notebooks because in academia if you don't publish you perish. So you need to publish more articles and you need to take part and different conferences to see what others are doing but for me personally because I'm in an admin position my ideas also involve trying to have a set up in which so I can bring in new ideas new scholars etc. So that's the admin aspect of it. So I think that my PhD side has helped me get this admin position. Nowadays you can't hold a high position without having a PhD. In a way that has helped me but that has also opened up and administrative which I didn't have access to earlier. So in the public system there was a in built system which is why I became the chair whereas here in the private system.

R – so that is one difference between private and public.

S – so even places like North South University they rotate the chair because they need that to PhD in different places so what they will do they will place someone in admin or put them in chair

R – because they have objective.

S – so they want to hold the chair they need someone with a high academic credential so the PhD is actually helping me.

R – okay.

S – having said that I have to compromise my academic responsibilities because of this administrative aspect so suddenly I'm forced to do things I haven't done before so that something new which has come because of this.

R- It was about going abroad and studying and what are the differences now?

S – one difference is that you need to be highly motivated to study abroad so you need to do IELTS, GRE so people who couldn't go abroad the jealousy factor was there in my opinion. At the same time there might've been other reasons why people couldn't go. And then so you that they don't get the recognition. They might have done a higher degree but not all degrees are of worth or typical. So someone let's say got a PhD from India now holds a higher position but there was someone more qualified but couldn't go abroad, couldn't get the funding or there might've other family problems preventing this. When working in admin I notice I have many colleagues whose classrooms are excellent but they are not getting promotions because she do not have a PhD. So that's very interesting because the students variations are good... but since she does not have an official endorsement that's why admin can't promote her. That's another aspect of it.

R – well you are a successful case I would say because you have used most of your skills you have acquired abroad.

S – my final comment would be that it has given me confidence. My PhD has given me confidence and the main thing is that I can now compete on a global level because I have earned my degree from a reputable university and it's not a dodgy degree I know

that my thesis is published from a publisher and all that so I can complete on a global level I can apply anywhere in the world so that's an added bonus. And very interestingly when I went for my post doctorate degree I remember that some of the faculty members invited me for coffee and all they were actually trying to find out if I was interested in applying there or what was my agenda.

Appendix J: Coding samples

Member, University Grants Commission

Member- University Grants Commission

Thoughts- To have higher education in advanced countries as Bangladesh is a third world country. If you want to interact with people of developed countries then you have to go overseas and study.

Expectation- They will learn, enrich their knowledge, come back and try to deliver to the students and at the same time they will develop themselves further with the knowledge that they have gained overseas.

Expectation- These expectations have not been satisfied in many cases. But there are examples that people are quite committed. When they come back they try to do their best. But many come back and forget everything just because we lack commitment, lack sincerity and honesty as well. As teacher I am supposed to take regular classes but there are many teachers who do not do that. These are all because of some dirty politics in our campuses. There are different groups existing, some belong to this and some to that. The group which is in power will not work. Because of the petty teachers politics, many teachers but not all are engaged in politics.

It is seen that when the academics who return from study abroad return with a lot of enthusiasm. That was the time when we were students before sixties or seventies. It does not happen now. Mostly that culture has been lost. The reason is most of these teachers lack commitment. They come back with a fair amount of money from different scholarships. For example- if you go to Japan availing Zaika scholarship, it is huge amount of money. Many teachers can buy apartments with that money. In our department 14 PhD are coming from Japan. Except 3-4 none of them are engaged in research.

Which expectations satisfied-

Not satisfied- Lack of self- motivation. We have become too materialistic. Teaching is a noble profession. When a person chooses this profession it should be because they love it. The moral deviation is huge. We expect the government to solve all the problems. But this is a social problem. The morality needs to be high up.

Why academics need to study abroad- They need new knowledge, external latest knowledge of the world.

Was the time and money worth spend on study abroad- The academics these days go abroad for money. But you can only find these out when they return. Standard of many department have gone down for example chemistry. These days you can find very few people who are interested in their jobs. There are professors who have not written a single paper in their lifetime. They published three papers during their PhD. After coming back to Bangladesh, they possibly have their names with other authors so they publish the required number of papers for their promotion and that's it. That phenomenon exists everywhere. But there are some academics who are sincerely engaged in research, publishing papers in high impact factor journals but their percentage is very low.

Change in policy- In a broader perspective, people in this country are not keen to follow rules whether it is government rules or driving in the streets and follow traffic rules. We have very little respect to laws. That's a social and national problem you don't have to follow the rules.

Handwritten notes:

- UGC official
- unfulfilled expectations
- 3:1:3 majority
- Reason of unfulfilled expectations
- Research

Optimism

For selection of teachers, different universities follow different standard. From the UGC, a uniform set of rules have been framed about 10 years back but most of our VCs do not care. They just follow their own rules and say our syndicate has decided that.... So there are problems in this country. They will play with the rules and work according to their wish (no to be disclosed). We are going to frame a uniform rule of selection, the meeting is due tomorrow. We have already done that. Tomorrow it will finalised in presence of the teachers associations from different universities. The government wants us to do that. We lack ethics.

Most of the Asian countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, India or even Bhutan has a separate Higher Education Commission. HEC has the rank and status of a federal minister. They can take any actions when it comes to the question of quality. They can close a university or fire a person or take any action deemed necessary. UGC does not have the power to implement anything. It can just put forward recommendation but not mandated to any action. Everything is forwarded to the Ministry of Education. For the last 7-8 years the HEC proposal has been pending with the government. But the government is not taking any action because they do not want their power to slip by and give up the power to anyone else. So, any university be it public or private if they are not following the rules we cannot do anything. All we can do is recommend to the government. We can visit, investigate, file up a report and send it to the ministry and they put it on the shelf.

From that perspective, UGC is weak. We requested the government to form the HEC which would be directly under the Prime minister office's control. But it is pending for the last 7 years and has not been able to cross the bureaucratic hurdle. The bureaucrats do not want to give away their power. And many of these bureaucratic people do not have any tertiary education. So they do not understand the meaning of tertiary education.

Research

Definitely it matters which country or university they are studying-

HEQEP Project: Government is doing its part. You can apply for research grant from the Institute of Science and Technology, UGC and Ministry of Education. World Bank is funding a lot under HEQEP project. There are five components of HEQEP. Infrastructure development, Teaching and learning, Academic Innovation fund, connectivity between universities. Some universities get more fund while others do not. It depends on the quality of the project. It is evaluated by a team of experts. For instance Jahangirnagar University Chemistry Department because the quality of the project was very good. (To be noted, the example of Chemistry dept is coming again and again probably because science and related subjects are given priority in a neoliberal world or the person is from a chemistry background). Now a different project has been taken under HEQEP and created some disparity because same departments from different universities or different department but same university are getting funds but many are left behind. So we are trying to create a balance by inviting projects from different universities just for teaching learning and not for research.

26/11
14/12/2023

Partially
Optimism
12

Why not quality PhD from home: We are trying to reach that level when students would not want to go to study abroad. But it will take time. For example say 10-20 years back there were no universities where we could offer PhD. But now there are various department in a number of university where they can offer PhD. I would not claim that the quality would will not be as good as overseas countries but there are universities abroad where the quality of research is questionable. Same is true here. There are departments and professors who produce very high quality research. The main reason for low quality research specifically in science area was serious shortage of equipment. But for the last 4-5 years government has been able to fund many universities under HEQEP Project has been able to fund sophisticated equipment to many universities.

2 → Research

Other subjects like social sciences and commerce, I don't think they are much into research. They are after money which is very unpleasant thing to reveal. They teach in 4-5 private institutions. There are rules but they are not followed. On the the university authority's part there are no such mechanisms to imply on these teachers to comply with the rules. Like a professor should be spending a good amount of his time in research.

Spending of
priv,
uni

Research

Last year we could not give any funds to commerce and social science faculty because there were no projects. Very few faculty members are engaged in research in commerce faculty. Most of these teachers have PhDs from abroad. They come back and start teaching in private universities. There are 93 private universities in the country and not enough teachers. So, teachers from commerce faculty and subjects like English they keep on teaching in 2-3 private universities. That is a lot of money. So you do not need to do research.

15

Optimum
mission
vision

We are after money, or after power or after some positions. Every developed country has more than hundred years of history. Bangladesh is too young and hence so many problems at the same go. Things would be better in course of time. Earlier to find an article of a journal you had to go through a tedious process. But things are so easy now because of the technological advancement.

17

Future

Earlier teaching was the most respectable profession and the dedication of the teachers was praiseworthy. The commitment is no longer there.

Certain things we have lost maybe because of proper vision of the politicians. They are only after money and lost their mission and vision. We need a visionary leader.

Horie

File No.: 160208 003

- ১ তার মানে আপনি এখান থেকে পড়ার পরে হচ্ছে এখানে আমি ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় তে BBA complete করি
- ২ ২০০৫ এ তারপরে আমি DHR এ চু কোই চাকরিতে । I want to give internship but they offer me a
- ৩ job. then I thought to continued the job and after that I retired that everyone has done their
- ৪ master's but I'm without. তো I'm realized at that same time. Because at a certain point of life
- ৫ you realized that self actualization need টা আসে না। If you do not have a master's degree.

- ৬ তাহলে আপনি DU থেকে honors করে master's সাথে সাথে করেন নি। না, আমি just চাক্রিতে চু কোই ।
- ৭ তারপরে UK তে master's করি। ফিরে এসে join করলেন AIUB তে মানে academia তে আসলেন। আগে
- ৮ corporate এ ছিলাম। I have tried but চার মাস ধরে আমি চেষ্টা করলাম বিভিন্ন কর্পে রেটে DFID, British
- ৯ council এ চেষ্টা করলাম কিন্তু কোন organization could not click. তাহলে academy আপনার জন্য best
- ১০ ছিল। এটা আমার ১ম choice. it was my only choice. যে salary চাচ্ছিলাম এই salary এরাই offer করল।
- ১১ তাহলে master's যে করতে গেলিলেন with what motivation ? মানে বাইরে গেলিলেন কেন? আমার
- ১২ motivation ছিল ২ years to get a degree. আমি যে career এ ছিলাম it was fine with it. আমি যদি এখানেই
- ১৩ থাকতাম without master's এ আমি ওই salary ই পেতাম। মানে ৭ বছর পরে। মাঝে মাঝে মনে হয় আন্দু র
- ১৪ টাকাটা। I was in British council. DHR এর পরে british council তখন দেখলাম যে লাভ হযনি। but now
- ১৫ I have a foreign degree but my motivation was just go there কি হয় ওখানে বু স্বাধীনতা। ও রকম কোন
- ১৬ intention ছিল না। আমি তো masters টা DU তে করতে পারলাম না। re-admission নিলে পরের ব্যাচের
- ১৭ সাথে করতে হবে। So I didn't want that. এই আর কি।

- ১৮ ও রকম কোন motivation ছিল না। just go. তাহলে ফিরে আসার পর কি মনে হল? was it broad going
- ১৯ abroad? it was broad to go in abroad but coming back. it was not a good decision. still date আমি
- ২০ সেটাই মনে করি। why did I come back আমার সাথে যারা ওখানে থেকে গিয়েছিল তারা reached to
- ২১ ascertain level now এখন আমি চাইলেও I cannot catch up them .আচ্ছা। they are earning pounds and I
- ২২ have Taka. i have to think about my bills, they have to think where they go on next holiday. so
- ২৩ obviously their life style difference. আমারও scope ছিল but ওই সময় imotional দেশ, আমার বিশেষাদি
- ২৪ হয় নাই, আন্দু কি করবে, so that was more important এই যে মানু need base change হয় তো।

- ২৫ Academia তো আপনি chose করেন নি কিন্তু join করলেন। ওহাত what difference did you find? মানে
- ২৬ ওখানকার আর এখানকার education এর মধ্যে ? education এর মধ্যে যে difference ওখানে আমার যে
- ২৭ university আমি অন্যটা বলতে পারব না। -they are very straight but they have honest delivery. they
- ২৮ want honest work. যেহেতু worked in a private sector. তাই আমি এটাকে focus করছি যে এখানে বলা হয়
- ২৯ যে you are supposed to deliver but they are customers. ওখানে কিন্তু we are paying a lot of money.
- ৩০ 14000 pounds. ওখানে কিন্তু we are not customers. we are students. না পারব failed. শেষ . If you do

Mohamud

family

motivation

education

man obs, rational

with

FF

Ha

Commodification of education

cultural different - so please make teachers consider

- 31 plagiarism your work is not accepted. there is no explanation. আর এখানে হচ্ছে কি please
 32 consider, please do this, please do that, private sector, Bangladesh private sector. It goes against
 33 the norms. এখন যেহেতু students রাও জানে ওনি তো B+ এর নিচে দিতে পারবেন না। সে সেটা জানে the
 34 whole justice is backside. তারাও জানে পড়লেও কি না পড়লেও কি। আমি তো B+ পাব। not every cases
 35 অবশ্যই teachers আমরা যারা আছি, আমি চেষ্টা করে যাচ্ছি to keep the quality at any stage. তারপরে
 36 আরও আছে যে incompetency. I'm not going to say fully incompetent some people and even I feel
 37 how can he teach. But they are in a very high position. and আমাক তাকে সালাম দিতে হবে। আমাকে
 38 তার খাতিরে থাকতে হবে। আমি আমার কাজটা ঠিক মতো করবো কিন্তু If i mess with him then I face
 39 trouble. but he is not a very good teacher. still I have continue to show respect, not respect, I've
 40 to listen to him. authority বলে ওনি কি কোন political connection এ আছেন। ওনি authority হলেন
 41 কিসের connection এ. ওনি authority হলেন may be he is a very good psychofan যেটাকে বলে খু বেশি
 42 ভ্যালু দায়ী করতে পারেন, মানে ওনি ভ্যালু দায়ী কাদেরকে? the one who make decision, policy makers for
 43 the university. I've a family. I cannot stay, I've my kids. I've to go back my home অথবা অনেক
 44 male faculty ও আছেন। অনেকেই আছে কাজের পরেও they would just stay here and show respect. Sir
 45 এটা করে দেই ওটা করে দেই। এভাবে they obviously, they become the favourite. এটা আমাদেরকে ধরান
 46 হিসেবে দেখা হয় যে আমরা কেন পারি না? আমরা এটা কেন পারবো? we don't suppose to. you give me a
 47 job, you give me a position, your job is to stay 24 hrs, but its not my job. and again you allowed
 48 him to go in your room and gossip with teachers and other aculty. personal level এ নিয়ে যাওয়া।
 49 relationship ও entertain করা হয়েছিল. you are, should be drink this things, not very nice. এটা ঠিক
 50 political ব্যাপার না।
 51 এটা personally people are very weird in this cases. I won't blame them. একটা পর্য্যাক people চায়
 52 shortcut এ একটা opportunity বের করে ফেলা। shortcut এ কেন চায়বে? এটা তো academia? well that
 53 happening. মানে এটা তো করা যাচ্ছে তাই করছে তারা। তারা যেহেতু দেখছে যে আমি কষ্ট কম করে এই
 54 কাজটা করে ফেলতে পারছি। they want to do it with less hazards. যেখানে আমাকে ১টা বই কষ্ট করে
 55 পড়তে হবে, তার থেকে আমি যদি আপনার সাথে খাতির করে ১টা করে করে ফেলতে পারি। thats more better.
 56 এটা private sector দেখেই সম্ভব। জি, তাহলে ফিরে আসার পর আপনার কাছে reality টা কি? reality হচ্ছে যে
 57 I just try my best to get a proper thing. জাত আমায় ১টা scholarship হয়ে যায়. go for PhD. master's
 58 এ scholarship ছিল না কি self funding ছিল? self funding ছিল। তাহলে আপনি যেটা পড়তে চেয়েছিলেন
 59 সেটাই পড়তেন বাইরে গিয়ে? হ্যাঁ। people with simple degree, with no degree they are working there.
 60 i'm the one who have to try constantly to prove myself. সেই ২০০৭ এ কি পড়েছি, দেখা আছে যে আমি
 61 PhD না করতে পারলে প্রত্যেক ৭ বছর পর পর ১টা master's করা উচিত। academia এ ওই জন্য
 62 specializatopn করা। PhD বাইরে থেকে বা কোথা থেকে করবেন সেটা না। কোথায় কি করছেন সেটা very
 63 important. PhD is must for your specialization. what about research? my research is on

Diff between male & female? coll. I read some books about whole story of this prof. rel. to turning personal

64 sustainable consumption. আপনি তো ওখানে master's করেছেন। ওখানে research environment আর
 65 এখানে research environment কি different? different to every thing. ওখানে যারা পড়াচ্ছেন,
 66 supervision করছেন তাদের যে knowledge base সেগুলো তো এখানে কিছু না, আমার DU এর supervisor
 67 আমি ভর্তি হয়ে আছি DU তে, মানে করার ইচ্ছা নাই। মানে এই ওখলাই যদি ইয়েটা complete হয়ে যায়,
 68 proposal টা জেন অন্তত ready থাকে। সে লোক আমার title নিয়েও more bother. rather than my content.
 69 তাকে বোঝানও জাচ্ছে না। সে senior professor বেয়াদপিও তো করা জাচ্ছে না। কিন্তু বেচারি তো জালে না।
 70 তাহলে সে কেন জালে না? -how he became supervise at all? তাহলে এই project ওনি supervise করবেন
 71 কিভাবে যদি idea না থাকে। ওনাকেই আমার supervisor হতে হবে। I'm nobody. মানে আপনার আর option
 72 নাই? না, ওনি ছাড়া অন্য কেউ supervise করায়। আরও আছে DU এর মীল দল সাদা দল, মানে
 73 politilization. আমি আপনাকে সালাম দিলাম না ওনাকে দিলাম কেন? কিংবা আপনি আমার supervisor. আমি
 74 ওনার দিকে তাকাতেও পারবো না। but he is also my teacher. so আমি ১টা title নিয়ে কেন ওনার সাথে কথা
 75 বলতে পারব না? even teachers. ১টা ১০টা মানুষ স্থানে বসে আছে, আপনি যদি student হয়ে থাকেন you
 76 can ask any teacher. but আপনি ওনাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করলেন, আমি আপনার সাথে কথাই বলছি না। ওনি অন্য
 77 ১টা political party support করেন। so political support কেউ gainer হয়? হ্যা, Ruling party ছাত্রলীগ,
 78 ছাত্রদল, even private sector এর কথা যদি বলি যার যার সাথে খাতির করে তারা খু স্তাল। আবার দেখবেন
 79 the moment আমি এখানে চাকরি ছেড়ে দিবো, they don't want to talk with me চিনবেই না।

80 তাহলে আপনার জন্য reality টা খু different? yas it is. যখন পড়তে গেছেন তখন এক রকম, ফিরে আসার
 81 পর সম্পূর্ণ আনন্দ রকম। পড়ার সময় যে aspiration থাকে না যে, you expect something very nice to
 82 happen, but it doesn't happen. আমি যদি চাকরিটি না পেয়ে যেতাম তাহলে সে would ask me আসলে
 83 পড়াশুনা করছে কিনা, কি করছে লভনে গিবে, they judge that quickly on your character and
 84 everything.

85 ফিরে আসার পর তো AIUB তে join করলেন। তখন আপনার incentives বা কি জিজ্ঞাসা করা হয়েছিল কি
 86 করে ফিরলেন, about your research? ওখানে মানুষ different. my 1st publication was 2012, that ৩
 87 বছর আমি কিন্তু ৫.৬ টা কোর্স, একবার ethics চিন্তা করছেন, একবার মার্কে টিউডাচ্ছেন। all dimensuins
 88 মানে আমি কিভাবে পড়াবো, students দের বই কিনতে বলেন। তারা বই কিনে কি করবে এই কয় বছরে? -then
 89 how do I tell students to learn? আমি নিজেই তো জানি না। আমি তো আজকে সকালে একটা download
 90 করে একটু বু জ্ঞানের পড়াছি। -so thats going nothing to add to them, research এর কিছু নাই। কিসের
 91 research, fund নেই। research এর কিছু ফ্রাই। international conference এর জন্য fund দেওয়া হয়,
 92 আপনি যদি collaboratively কাজ করেন। তাহলে -they will fund for data collection procedures, which
 93 is very good. এখানে incentives টা অনেক ভাল। আর এখানে course load ও কম। মানে আপনার research
 94 করার সু যোগ্যতা আছে। ৬ টা কোর্স আপনি কোল সময় পড়াবেন, কোল সময় কাজ করবেন, খাতা দেখবেন?

Social stigma

Research funding

আপনি যদি ইংলিশ এ কথা বলেন then you are over smart. আপনি যদি ভালভাবে কথা বলেন you are extremely over smart. if you are asking them to participate something then you are rude. why this tendency? this is late back. they don't want that. how did they become like this? this has happened in last 3 or 4 years when we have private universities have done this. একটা সময় you will get 3.5. আর এখন 3.5 হচ্ছে very low subject. আমার 3.63 এই নাথার পেতে হলে I've to study a lot. একটা কথা হচ্ছে I know that ওর 3.5 এর কোন দাম নেই এখন। সে যখন একটা জায়গাই application লিখবে সেই application সে লিখতে পারে না। তার মানে grade টা খুঁজি দিয়ে দিচ্ছে। private university তে তার মানে যারা private এ পড়ছে তারা public university এর students দেব সাথে compete ই করতে পারবে না। না, পারে না। তারা পারবে না। কারণ হচ্ছে কি তাদের তো ওই grammar টাই নাই। তাদের মধ্যে তো সেই ইচ্ছাটাই নাই। জানি না এটা google করে দেখি। they don't want to see the answer, they want to easy way out. and easy way ওরা পাচ্ছে দেখেই তো হচ্ছে। my sister could not finish her exams. she has to retake one year কারণ সে routine লিখার সময় she has problem with her eyes, ওই যে লেখার মাঝে, সে ২৫ তারিখের বদলে ২৬ তারিখ লিখেছে। ২৬ তারিখ গিয়ে দেখে ২৫ তারিখে পরিক্ষা হয়ে গেছে। সে fainted. ১ বছর সে বসে থাকলো, ২৫ কি ২৬ কি, miss পরিক্ষা দেই নি, ঘুঁ ঝোকে উঠতে দেবি হয়েছিল, B দিয়ে দিচ্ছে। allow করছে।

এটা কি personal relationship এর কারণে নাকি অন্য কিছু না এটা rule. Rule টা relax যতটা বাচ্চা আসে আমার কাছে আমি কি B দিবে। আমার বোনের চেহারা আমার সামনে ভাসে। she would have got one year in her life. she would live a better life. she would not be depressed right now. but এখানে প্রতিদিন আসতেছে miss পরিক্ষা দিতে পারিনি। preparation নিতে পারি নি। teachers দেব কাছে access টাও তো তাহলে খুঁজি। আমরা teachers এর কাছে যাব মানে। oh my God. সালাম দিতে হবে। স্যার আসতেছে আমরা বেশি ঘুঁ খেলা জায়গায় যাই। এখন তো ক্লাস এ বলে teacher আমি আন্তে পারবো না আমার girlfriend এর birthday, surprize party দিতে হবে। এই জন্য আসতে পারবে না।

কোন future plan আপনার? I need to get a PhD. As soon as possible. I'm 34. I'll be 35 this year. I know যে যা হচ্ছে around me. আমার creditability একটা পর্যন্ত ঝেলে এসেছে। আমি কিন্তু এর থেকে বেশি জানি না। I know that now. this is very alarming. আমি master's ও পড়াচ্ছি। this is not very fair to them. then আমি researcher, for my own benefits. একটু বিদেশ গেলাম, আমার promotion এর জন্য better হলে। I have 3 offers for PhD. I didn't find enough funding to take the whole family. so I didn't go. এখানে আমার family support যদি থাকতো এবং আমার নিজেরও যদি strong imotional support ও থাকতো then I would go. কিন্তু ওটা আমি পাচ্ছি না। commonwealth funding টা যদি UGC Dhaka university কে সম্পূর্ণ দিবে সবাইকে properly দিতে পারত ভাল হত। main চাপটা DU থেকে আসে তারপর বাকিরা সামান্য পায়। ছিটেছুঁ আ পায় না। ঢাকা, জাহাঙ্গীরনগর, খুঁ লক্ষ্মীজশহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় পাবে। ওনারা তো master's ও পড়ছেন with scholarship. আমরা ওখানেও টাকা দিলাম, আর এখানকে ফোশা থেকে

Commodification of Education
 Easy money
 coming out
 Recent practice
 Easy work
 Teacher's decision

115
 116
 117
 118
 119
 120
 121
 122
 123
 124
 125
 126
 127
 128
 129
 130
 131
 132
 133
 134
 135
 136
 137
 138
 139
 140
 141
 142
 143
 144
 145
 146

পাবো? UGC চাইলেই কিন্তু fund টা দিতে পারে। কোথায় পাবে টাকা? Commonwealth, world bank and DFID তাদেরকে টাকা দিচ্ছে। এখন আমাদের একটা program চলছে Quality assurance. এর জন্য কিন্তু কোটি কোটি dollar ব্যয় করা হচ্ছে। -every university, public and private. এটা আমার জন্য নতুন না quality assurance মানে? the university itself with have a body who have worked for quality assurance. আমি আমার skilled develop করছি। এটা কি আসলে ঠিক হচ্ছে কিনা। আমি আমার নিজের সম্পর্কে report দিতে বলছি। excellent, যেটা quality assure করতে বলে তো সবচেয়ে ভাল। এটাও world bank এর project. they can work with UGC.	147 148 149 150 151 152 153
আমি এটা শুলি নাই। আমি একটু digging করবো। quality assurance মানে teaching, university এর quality assurance যে proper, this is just university itself as a person who will work in quality assurance of teaching methodology, lectures and everything else. এটা world bank এর একটা project. UGC থেকে funding হচ্ছে। টাকা আসছে ঠিকই but যাকে দিচ্ছে তার quality that does nothing. কিংবা কোন quality assurance হচ্ছে না। তাহলে টাকাটা কোথায় যাচ্ছে? and nobody is asking anybody. where is the money and what you do with the money. আমাকে quality assurance ঠিক রাখার জন্য আমি চাই যে British council এ এই course টা করতে চাচ্ছি, আমার English টা দু' বর্ষাঙ্গি এটা করতে চাচ্ছি কিন্তু সেটা কিন্তু হচ্ছে না। কয়েক মাস পর পর দেখি যে UGC তে they have a lot of fund with their projects. কিংবা এইটা ওইটা হয়েছে বা এইটা ওইটা হবে। ১০০ জন মানুষ শিখে UGC তে program হয়, UGC তে ১০০ জন মানুষ ঋণগ্রহণেই যতো টাকা লাগে সেই টাকা দিয়ে ১ জনকে master's করানো যায়। ১০০ জন মানুষ ৩০০০ টাকা, short course এও পাঠানো যায়। কিংবা university এর একটা ক্লাস রুম কেই উন্নত করা যায়। মানে আমাদের fund গুলো আসছে ঠিকই World Bank থেকে, DFID থেকে বলেন কিন্তু fund গুলোর proper utilization হচ্ছে না। fund গুলো যাদের দেওয়া হচ্ছে they are not right person। কোন political. যা খ্যাতির ভিত্তিতেই দেওয়া হয়। face value that person might do nothing and its happening. That's the case.	154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168
কোন political connection? involvement? me, no no. two kids. I've no time. two very small kids. আড়াই বছর, সাড়ে চার বছর। nothing to do. also my husband was worked in Australian high commission. so he has pushing me a lot to apply for scholarship. I'm trying it. এখন আপনি যদি master's না করতেন তাহলে বাচ্চাদের নিয়ে ধরেন এখানেই কাজ করতেন। তখন কি বাইরে যাওয়ার চিন্তা করতেন। না তখন তো বাচ্চা হওয়ার আগেই চলে যেতেন। তখন আপনি একা ছিলেন easily করে এসেছেন কিন্তু এখন তো বাচ্চা আছে। living expense টা একা গেলে পারতাম, আমার চেষ্টাতে একটা teaching job এসেছিল ২০০০ ডলার। মানে ৪ মাস ওদের ছাড়া থাকতে হতো। আমি ওই ৪ মাসের জন্যও রাজি হইনি। এমন অবস্থা যে আমার ভিসা ও চলে এসেছে। I just didn't go. মানে মেয়েদের জন্য এটা একটা struggle এর জায়গা। family	169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176

Gender

*Compromise
workate financing
again
priorities
family
indigence*

plus আপনি তো ওরকম assurance পাচ্ছেন না, husband doesn't say you go. they don't say go ahead.
তু মিতাল বু কোরো। কিংবা তমার বাচ্চা কে দেখবে? এরকম একটা, family support না পেলে difficult.

177
178
Boudal

কোন messages? I've to say the experiences of Bangladeshi academics to study in abroad. the experience was delightful at first. during this 7 years without a PhD . now I've to compete someone who has come last 2 or 3 years. তারা তো recently আসছে। they have more update. I haven't done much. so আমার এখন compete হচ্ছে the people who are much younger than me, now I have to take more pressure to prove myself. but my institution, my country not allow to do so. আমি কোথায় apply করবো scholarship এর জন্য? একমাত্র বিদেশে, বিদেশে এই pressure এর কারণে তো আমার মাথা থেকে কিছু বেরও হচ্ছে না। then monetary, we are not getting a lot of money. we have to continue our life style. so motivation and rational collide করে এক সাথে, because I know the reality, ওখান থেকে না আসলেই হতো। এটা এখন আমাকে bother করে। ওই যে I have family. ওখানে থাকলে হয়তো would marry someone who lives in UK.

179
180
181
182
183
184
185
186
187
188

Hope
vs.
desperis

↓
Gough
Competition. Harsh
reality

৮

Appendix K: My research journey

Publications:

Hossain, R. (forthcoming). Women in Bangladeshi academia: Are we really on the same grounds? In M. Ronksley-Pavia, M. Neumann, J. Manakil, and K. Pickard-Smith (Eds.), *Gendered Experiences of Working in Higher Education: Narratives of Academic Women*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Pownall, M. and Hossain, R. (2020). 'It's about dismantling power': Reflections on co-producing a PGR-led feminist pedagogy workshop. *Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal*, 3 (1), pp. 133-142.

Hossain, R. (2017). An interview with Dr. Suresh Canagarajah on Academic Mobility, Language and Literacy. *Bellaterra Journal of Teaching and Learning Languages and Literature*, 10(4), 93-103.

Hurdley, R., Biddulph, M., Backhaus, V., Hipwood, T. and Hossain, R. (2017). Drawing as Radical Multimodality: Salvaging Patrick Gedde's Material Methodology. *American Anthropologist*, 119 (4), 748-758.

Hurdley, R., Biddulph, M., Backhaus, V., Hipwood, T. and Hossain, R. (2017). The Workshop Sketchbook. *American Anthropologist*, 119 (4).
<http://www.americananthropologist.org/2017/11/01/the-workshop-sketchbook/>

Hossain, R. (2016). Impact of Studying Abroad on English Language Teachers at the University Level in Bangladesh. *Crossings: ULAB Journal of English Studies*, Vol. 7 (1), pp. 152- 170.

Conference papers:

"Women in Bangladeshi Academia: Are we really on the same grounds?" Discussant. Counter-Narratives in Language Education Research. Led by Dr Nelson Flores and Dr Giovanna Fassetta and organised by Centre for Language Education Research (CLER), School of Education, University of Leeds on 18 May 2021.

CLER Conversation: Multilingualism, Socio Economic Status and educational Success. Discussant. Led by Prof Cecile De Cat and organised by Centre for Language Education Research (CLER), School of Education, University of Leeds on 17 Nov 2020.

“Women in precarious positions in academia”. Panel discussant. “Feminist pedagogy and its links to teaching and learning: An interdisciplinary workshop”, The University House, University of Leeds, 5 May 2019.

“Erasing of women in various forms”. Panel discussion leader. “The Invisible Woman in Academia: Dealing with Erasing” Mini Conference, The University House, University of Leeds, 11 July 2018.

“Doing a PhD”. Invited Talk at the TESOL Forum “Careers in TESOL” for MA in TESOL students, School of Education, University of Leeds, 30 April 2018.

“Women in Academia: Seasoned stories of Modern times from Bangladesh” at QRM Conference held at Sheraton Albuquerque Hotel, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA, 27-29 March 2018.

“Impact of Globalisation on Academics in Higher Education” presented at The European Conference on Education “Educating for Change” held at the Jury’s Inn Brighton Waterfront, Brighton, UK, 1 July 2017. Won award for Best Conference Abstract.

“Stakeholders take on Returnee Academics: Fulfilled vs Unfulfilled expectations” presented at the 11th Research Students Education Conference, University of Leeds, 17 May 2017.

“Women in Academia: Are we really on the Same Grounds?” presented at the CES 5th Annual Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Conference, University of Warwick, 6 May 2017.

“Shaping my World: Trajectory of Female Academics in a Developing Context” presented at the ESSL Graduate School Conference, University of Leeds, 22 March 2017.

“Reflecting on the Data Collection Process of a Narrative Study: An Aerial View” presented at the 10th Research Students Education Conference, University of Leeds, 07 June 2016.

“Multiple Narratives as tool for Research: An Insider’s Perspective” presented at the Kaleidoscope Conference 2016, School of Education, University of Cambridge, 27 June 2016.

“Experience of a Returnee Academic: A Trial Interview” Seminar held at the Coach House, School of Education, Hillary Place, University of Leeds, 21 Sept 2015.

“Implementation of Modern Teaching Techniques in University Classrooms: Differences between Theory and Practice” presented at the Department of English, Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 17 Aug 2015.

“Returnee Professionals Experience in Higher Educational Context: Digging In or Digging Out...” presented at the White Rose DTC School of Education PGR Conference, University of Leeds, 29 April 2015.

“Impact of Studying Abroad on Returnee Professionals at the Higher Education Institutions in a Developing Country” at the ESSL Annual Postgraduate Conference held at the University of Leeds, 25 March 2015.

Teaching and research related activities:

Research Assistant, School of Education, University of Leeds, UK (May 2021-July,2021)

Lecturer in ESAP, Language Centre, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds, UK (Summer, 2019-2020)

Teaching Assistant for module EDUC1009 Education in a Multilingual World, University of Leeds, UK (2017- 2019).

Focus Group Organiser, School of Education, University of Leeds, UK (Jan 2019- Feb 2020)

Personal Tutor, School of Education, University of Leeds, UK (2017 – 2020)

PGR International Intern, Leeds Doctoral College, University of Leeds, UK (Jan 2018 – July 2018)

PGR Representative, School of Education, University of Leeds, UK (2015- 2018)

Research Assistant, TLang Project (Translation and Translanguaging: Investigating Linguistic and Cultural Transformations in Superdiverse Wards in Four UK Cities), University of Leeds, UK (Mar 2016- Apr 2016)