


<p>S. S. M. Sadrul Huda</p> <p>&amp;</p> <p>Afsana Akhtar</p>	<p><u>"Leisure Behaviour of Working Women of Dhaka Bangladesh"</u></p> <p>The International Journal of Urban Labour and Leisure, 7(1)</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.ijull.org.uk/vol7/1/huda.pdf">http://www.ijull.org.uk/vol7/1/huda.pdf</a>&gt;</p>	
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## **Abstract**

This paper theorizes on the concept of the women's leisure and examines the situation of the urban working women in Dhaka-Bangladesh. Based on the qualitative approach, this report presents the leisure scenario of the white-collar working women of Bangladesh. The major findings of this report are very similar to other situations prevailing all over the world. The working women have less time for leisure activities. The women with children face more time constraints than their unmarried counterparts. Though the unmarried working women have no marital obligation but in most cases they are subjected to the obligations of the parental family. In very rare cases, ideal leisure situations are found. A number of socio-economic factors make the situation more complicated. Watching TV, listening to music, reading, visiting friends are viewed as the most common forms of leisure activity for the working women.

## **Introduction**

People work for money, social status, self esteem, recognition and to put value in their time. Human beings are not machines. They have biological needs, need for affection and security and so on. The very basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, education, and medical treatment do not account for all of the urges of human population though seemingly they are fulfilling most of the needs. They also have need for relaxation and recreation. Article 24 of UN Universal Declaration proclaims the right to leisure with the following words:

‘Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.’ [n.d].

Biologically people have to take rest in the night after working for a whole day. Sleeping in the night is the compulsory free time for all human beings, which sometimes may be used for dreaming. Is dreaming a leisure activity? Dreaming is not a conscious activity though a pleasant dream may produce a pleasing and relaxing effect on the person. On the other hand, the unpleasant dream may leave some depressing feelings. But sleeping is definitely a form of relaxation. So the need for leisure is something inherent to human system.

The management of free time is always a complex issue for busy working people. How should people best manage their free time? They have to choose activities from the

available options. The Leisure menu of a given society is shaped by the socio-economic situation of the respective society (Kelly, 1992). So the leisure options differ from society to society. Free time activities of a Western woman sharply differ from her Asian counterpart. Traditional women of Asia spend their free time at home with family because the traditional culture advocates so whereas Western culture accommodates more outside activities. Even in a given society the leisure situation varies depending on a number of variables. Leisure options of elderly people are different from the young generation. It is observed in Bangladesh that elderly people mostly spend their time with family but the youngsters like to enjoy the free time with their friends outside the home (Syed 2003).

The leisure behaviour of women is clearly distinctive from that of men. Leisure has different meanings for women and for men. (Kelly, 1992). The resourceful class of the society has wider choices than their poor counterparts. The poorer families generally spend free time within the context of the family and extended family (Rubin, 1976). The lifestyle of special groups within the society creates their own leisure style. The presence of sub-cultures within the society has obvious socio-cultural implications for the society and also for the leisure activity. It is observed in Bangladesh that tribal people have their own way of passing time by dancing, singing and consuming local drink. The non-tribal people do not engage in such activities (Akhtar, 2000).

The leisure time of a busy people differs from that of a non-busy person. Seemingly, busy persons would like to get more free time to relax and for resting. What would happen to the leisure situation of the hard pressed working class? Do they have enough leisure time? How could they best enjoy their free time, if any? Incidentally, this report is dealing with Working Women of Bangladesh, who could be considered to be the busiest working class of the world.

### ***Key Research Questions***

The prime focus of this report is to find out the leisure situations of the Working Women of Dhaka, Bangladesh. This report will examine the free time behaviour of the working women of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Before formulating the research questions the following observations must be made about the research:

The definition of **working women** is “the women who are working in managerial positions in different organizations i.e. government offices, private commercial offices, non-governmental offices for at least 5- years in Dhaka City”.

The definition of **Free Time or Leisure** is “the time which the individual can dispose of without having to justify its use in terms of moral values attached to their professional or domestic position” (Bakers and Van der Poel 1990)”.

The research deals with the following questions:

- How do working women in Dhaka spend their free time and what is the significance of this to them?
- What are the factors that constrain their experience of leisure?
- Are there any differences in free time management among different types of working groups (e.g. government sector employee vs private sector employee, single women vs married women)?
- What will be the future trend of working women's leisure?

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Method***

Qualitative Research methodology is being used to conduct the research. The central questions of this research are most relevant to the exploratory type of research and the qualitative research design can take care of this syndrome better than any other available techniques. Though the objectivity of this research design is always questioned because of its lack of quantitative approach, the present researcher strongly believes that the exploration of the relevant variables is more important rather than quantifying the same for the present research.

### ***Data Collection***

Relevant Literature Review and extensive Open Personal Interviews (of research subjects i.e. working women holding managerial positions) are carried out for data collection.

A random sample of 30 professional women is taken for purpose of data gathering. An open-ended questionnaire is used as the tool. Four female interviewers are in charge of interviewing the female respondents since the female respondents traditionally feel comfortable in dealing with the same gender. Employment of female interviewer is one of the strongest points of this report. The researcher strongly feels that it helps the process to gain the maximum insights into the issue.

### ***Population***

The research population is the women who are working in managerial positions in different government and private offices of Dhaka City.

### ***Sample Frame***

A random sample of 30 professional women has been chosen from the research population.

### ***Limitations***

The limitations of the qualitative research approach lies in the fact that researchers have to pay a great deal of efforts to prepare the question checklist and to guide the data gathering process. Since it is an open interview the approach of the interviewers may influence the respondents, and the data recording technique may produce some faults as well.

The interviewers have used mostly tape recorder to record the answers of the respondents. And for analysis, the researcher along with the interviewers has invested a lot of time to conceptualize the answers in a general framework.

The limitation of this data collection process is the unwillingness of the respondents to talk with the interviewers for a longer period of time. Usually a typical interview process takes an hour and a half. The interviews are mostly take place in the home of the interviewees during weekend. The interruptions from the regular family life of the respondents distract the attention of both the interviewee and interviewer. As a result, the rapport between the interviewer and the respondents can be lost.

Though the interviewers are senior university students of sociology and have previous Experience in data collection in similar situations, they in few cases feel uncomfortable about the situations. But since both the researcher and the interviewers are sharing the same culture, so they are able to minimize the external effects, while analyzing the data.

Data are analyzed after every fifth interview. The respondents are busy individuals with their office and home. So they do not have enough time to spare for data collectors. But in general the researcher and the interviewers are happy with the quality and the extent of the data they have collected.

## **Women of Bangladesh - A Socio-Economic Profile.**

### ***Background***

Bangladesh is a developing country where the burdens of poverty and social restrictions often fall on women and yet a change in gender relations is taking place like a silent revolution. It has a society that organized itself around the needs of men. Though 48.8% (BBS 1996) of the total population are women, they are neglected if not bypassed in every sphere of life. Traditionally women are considered as the passive members of the society though their silent presence made it possible for the society to function properly. Bangladesh being a Muslim dominated country has a very conservative society. Some held religion responsible for the backwardness of the women. But according to Islamic philosophy women are at par with the men in all respect of life. Women in different roles as a daughter, as a wife, and as a mother, get priority treatment in Gender Law. (Sumaiya et al, 1999). But unwarranted explanations of Islam made the life of women difficult here in Bangladesh. Being a religious society it adheres to religious surmounts. Lack of education both formal and religious aggravates the situation to a great extent.

## ***Tradition***

Traditionally, women of Bangladesh are portrayed as vulnerable for whom male guardian is essential in all aspect of decision making.

## ***Identity & Role***

Until the mid-eighties of the twentieth century, a Bangladeshi woman's sole identity and basic achievements were weighed with very conservative balances. Her role was confined within the territories of her husband's household. Her role was to be a good wife to her husband and a good mother to her children. However, household expenditure and, schooling of children, investment of savings, and so forth were not to be her concerns. She was not to have any bank account and financial matters were not discussed with her. She was not to voice any opinion on these issues. Culturally these were accepted. Traditionally this was in effect with the few exceptional times of South Asian history.

In the past, women like Empress Razia Sultana, Mughal Queen Noor Jahan, Queen of Natore, Bhagvati, Begum Rokeya and the women of the Tagore family, Nehru family and the women revolutionaries of the Swadeshi Movement during the British Raj came out of their usual home making role. (Kabir 1995). They influenced society, education, politics and economics and ultimately made history.

## ***Present Trend***

Despite the historical and persistent discrimination against women, the situation is improving. Many of the gaps are slowly narrowing. Interestingly, both of the posts of the Prime Minister and the leader of opposition are held by the two women of this society. Though research (Huda, 1993) shows the rate of acceptance of female political leadership is not very high in Bangladesh, still two women politicians were leading the country for the last 10 years. Interestingly, the characteristic road to political power in this region (India, Bangladesh & Pakistan) is: after the assassination of a male leader his previously non-political wife or son or daughter steps into politics and gets the highest post (Kabir, 1995).

Even in the home there is evidence that women are having more influence. A (BIDS, 1996) survey claims that between 1990 and 1995 the proportion of women reporting that men dominated household decisions on house purchases fell from 36% to 27%. Some of these changes reflect broader movements in society. More women whether pushed by the poverty or pulled by opportunity, are working outside home and gaining greater independence both moral and monetary (UN, 1997). At the end of the twentieth century, average women of Bangladesh are rapidly overcoming social, cultural and corporate barriers and acquiring important positions in national, private and international sectors. They are also generating huge foreign currency through garment exporting sectors and export processing zones (BGMEA, 1999). They are becoming self-sufficient through Grameen Bank type of policies of micro-credit without any collateral.

These movements are changing the traditional gender roles and reshaping modern roles for both the genders of the country. One of the major changes is witnessed in fund management where average middle class and formerly poor women are voicing their opinions in terms of profit and loss, both at home and outside of homes. There has been a dramatic change in behavioural practice relating to family structure. The traditional concept of the family is undergoing a massive change. Even though changes appear more gradually in the family than in other institutions; education, moralists, and social planners frequently express fear of family breakdown under the pressure of social changes. With this, women's role has been constantly changing throughout the world, especially during the last few decades. The scale of change in Bangladesh has placed additional burden on women, who now face competitive jobs which has initially not be their domain as a result of seclusion. Middle class women were particularly affected by this sudden rise in the valuation of female labour. Changes in the distribution of employment certainly represent changes in women's role, status and attitudes. As a result, a careful mapping of family units of yesterday and today funds a large difference. The differences in the numbers found in each of the categories of the nuclear intact household, the single parent family, the dual job, the divorce rate and other structures. The incidence of female headed household is on increase. Official figure says it is about 6% (BBS, 1996) other sources suggest near 30% household are headed by female. (MOWC, 1997). Though the differences are going far and the attitude of women is changing, still only a few research studies in this respect are found.

With the changing role of women worldwide women in developing countries also embracing new role. Bangladeshi women being Muslim by religion is not an exception to this phenomenon. Striking changes in the position of women are taking place in our society. One of the distant features of the last decade in Bangladesh has been the emergence of women in the men's world. Modernization, industrialization and electronic communication with the modern world are bringing about rapid social changes in the country and the traditional social set up is giving way to new order. And it has its obvious impact on family. Family is an institution devised by the society for the preservation of the future generation. Changes in the family structure have also led to change in day to day working pattern and life style of the women. For many women such changes may have brought a new sense of liberty, specially the changes in conjugal norms. Islamic and traditional values are severe pressure. Women are not strictly following the code of Islam. They are more likely to move freely for their social, political, economic, and educational advancement. Marriage is the gateway to family life and family is the primary unit of society. This institution called marriage is under pressure and many women like men like to spend a significant portion of their life without a partner to pursue their career as a result the mean age of marriage for women rises to 19.9 years from 16.4 during 1975-1995 period (BBS, 1996). Women have now taken up professional roles in order to create a new meaning for themselves or out of economic necessity. Therefore the traditional role of a housewife has evoked into the dual more fulfilling role of a working women and housewife. Even in case of career women are going for new and newer areas, which are previously out of their domain. (Mahbub, 1998). Now-a-days women are engaged in ownership and management of

small and medium commercial activities like advertising, shipping, cold storage, travel agency etc. The entrepreneur women are having more busy life than the working women are in general.

After the rise of employment of the women in government, in business and in industry, particularly in garments and electronic assembly industries, there has been a rise in the number of female entrepreneur. This rise is itself being driven by the negative experiences women encounter in many large firms particularly the senior executives. They often find themselves passed over for promotions, subject to greater stress than their male counterparts and marginalised in corporate decision-making processes. (Mahbub, 1998).

Women's response to this can be categorized in two classes. One is to stay in job and put pressure to change the attitude and work culture. This very often produces expected results. The other is to quit the job and set up own venture. This is increasing in these days to significant extent. Qualified, competent and deserving women are coming up with their own projects and competing with their male counterparts on equal terms. Women are more likely to successful in business start-ups than men are and less likely to fail in first years. In addition, their business starting in a small scale, are more likely to grow and create jobs than those started by men. If large organizations fail to recognize the talent and promise of the female workers- the out come will be greater entrepreneurship in the economy with the entry of businesswomen. This is leading to new management styles, new types of business culture, and new ways of doing things.

Women entrepreneurs tend to reject the prevailing cultural practices of big business and to run their own enterprises on different principles. They link their need for personal growth to the expansion of their businesses. These become the channels through which they express their creativity, personal assertiveness and independence. In other words, their enterprises are reflections of their own psychology. Business growth for those businesswomen is as much about achieving personal success goals as it is about making money. Their experience of under-promotion in large organizations encourages them to manage their staff differently (Mahbub, 1998). They are more likely to empower them, delegate and use supportive leadership styles. This encourages open communication. The result is that their companies are more innovative, responsive to changing market trends and more growth-oriented. These trends are more evident in some economic sectors than others. But it is becoming important in professional and business services, in public relations, advertising, sales and marketing and media. Future projections by some analyst are that medium and small sized enterprises will dominate our future economy. It is perhaps ironic that women entrepreneurs are in an important stage of these structural shifts, because of the neglect of their talent and the prejudices they encounter from men.

Female entrepreneurship in Bangladesh confirms the failure of large organization to implement equal opportunity policies and for them to continue to undervalue their female staff. Women in businesses can power the future growth in our economy and soon we may see a large portion of all future business start-ups is in the hands of

women entrepreneurs. The government should now definitely provide a mechanism in its investment of banking policies that will contribute to an accelerated growth in female entrepreneur in the future.

### ***Equality***

But equality is still only a distant dream. In general, women have least influence in household decision making even when they have the knowledge about the subjects, only 7 female Member of Parliaments are in the parliament out of 300 (UN 1997). Though female part of workforce is increasing day by day but they are not prominent in the managerial positions (Hamid 1996).

### ***Role of NGOs***

Non-Government organizations play a vital role in the intellectual, economical, and physical development of our women. The target group of the world famous NGO *GRAMEEN BANK* is the women folk of rural Bangladesh. All other major Non Governmental Organization's including BRAC, PROSHIKA are primarily concerned with the development of women. They believe that emancipation of this traditionally backward class could bring ray of changes in all sphere of social life. Millions of women are now able to contribute not only to their family but also to the society in respects of social justice, income, education, health etc.

### **Literature Review**

A woman's life is a summary of a series of transitions of male guardians-from father to husband to son in Bangladesh. Until the mid-1980s of the twentieth century, a Bangladeshi woman's sole identity and basic achievements were weighed with very conservative balances. Her role was confined within the territories of her husband's household. Her role was to be a good wife to her husband and a good mother to her children. They are a fully domestic class in themselves; they have very little time for organizing their thoughts, and planning or implementing actions for their own sake. Henderson et al. (1989) labelled this phenomena as "Minute Vacation", referring to short periods of the day when women can take time 'just to enjoy being alone', for day dreaming or for an appreciation of the beauty around themselves (Henderson et al, 1989, pp103-104). So, leisure does indeed exist in the lives of the women, as a concrete reality or as an aspiration. According to a French study, (Hantrais 1982) female respondents have very little spare time for activities, which were not centered on home and family. They see their family role as geared towards servicing the needs of the family in the home. A German Study (1991) showed that regardless of the quantity of hours worked in paid employment, the intensity of work and higher domestic requirements, particularly for working women, have affected the real amount of leisure time available. After studying three occupational groups, a study by Harrington (1989) showed that, regardless of the nature of professional involvement, at the end of the day all working women face similar situations. They have primary responsibility for



household work. A study by Brown (1986) showed that the leisure of employed women is potentially constrained by social conditions, gender role stereotypes, work roles, limited economic resources, family life and time availability. A 1986 (Viteckova) study showed positive attitudes towards working women's leisure in that leisure time has increased for working women in Czechoslovakia. An Arizona study (1987) showed that professional women tended to experience flow in both work and non-working settings. They also experienced anti flow when they perform the same job repetitively.

The study of Hunter and Whitson's (1991) showed that women do not have any leisure in terms of freedom from obligations. This is true for women of Bangladesh also. In the daily lives of women, time is usually fragmented, so leisure and work may occur simultaneously, for example, in the case of housewife bringing up children (Gregory 1982,). In fact, women's leisure lacks the concept of freedom from obligation. As (Bella, 1989) pointed out women's leisure is nothing but an extension of family leisure.

Traditionally, women are responsible for home management in Bangladesh. In some cases, they are working 12-16 hours a day to keep the household on track according to a UN report (1998). A study from Israel by Samuel et al (1996) shows that women still fulfil the traditional role of homemakers and mothers, spending twice as much time performing unpaid obligations as men, regardless of whether they are employed outside the home or not. A UN report (1998) revealed a vivid picture of the dependent relationship that can be drawn on the basis of their involvement with the household. Women are the life bloods of the households. They are contributing to the well being of their husbands, children, in-laws and the family as a whole. In this process according to Independent Review (1999) they are sacrificing their own dreams and aspirations and giving up their potentials and prospects. They have no identity as such. In the period of identity formation they have received the signal that they would be homemakers and they should be home oriented or less outward oriented. In adolescent, while their male counterparts actively take part in outdoor games, they were the mere audience to those events. A Canadian study (1995) showed that level of participation in sports and physical activities was positively associated with identity formation for females even though they were less likely than men to portray themselves as physically active. From this study, it is possible to establish a link between eventual female identity and their adolescent outdoor activities in Bangladesh. As traditionally there are very few outdoor activities for the females their eventual identity is of purely a housewife. The achievements of their husbands are their achievements; the success of their children is their success and happiness. The time they are passing with their family is their leisure time. They barely have any time for themselves. The time demand by of their family far surpasses the fixed supply of time. In the present day, a growing number of women are joining the work force on every level. This sudden shift of a home based class to the working environment has made the leisure situation worse. There is an acute time crisis for them.

At the end of the twentieth century, average women of Bangladesh are rapidly overcoming social, cultural and corporate barriers and acquiring important positions in national, private and international sectors. So the women are in 'double employment'.

They are homemaker and breadwinner as well. Now, they have much less time than before for themselves, if any, at all. Working women are doing most of the household work while they are working full time for their employer with the minimum help from the family members or domestic help (UN report, 1998). Woodward et al (1988) supports the UN report on Bangladesh. A report of Green et al. (1988) also showed that even if women were significantly contributing to the family budget, they did all the housework.

Though the work-leisure relationship is not a direct one, as Parker proposed three types of relationship namely, extension, opposition, and neutrality, (Parker, 1983, p75) for Bangladesh, the case is very clear. The relationship is very distinct in Bangladesh, especially for the male population. According to Parker's model, it falls under neutrality. There is a clear boundary between work and leisure. But for women, the picture is very complicated. Generally, the average free time for women is one to two hours less than that of men all over the world (Szalai, 1972) and time budget studies show that women who have paid jobs, whether full or part time, have less free time than men (Szalai, 1972). Women are more involved in household activities. Parker (1983) supported the idea that people who have high involvement in their work can't distinguish between work and leisure. Household activities are the most involving sphere of work for women in Bangladesh according to a Dhaka study by Akhtar (2000). So in many cases, women's leisure cannot be distinguished from work in Bangladesh.

Dumazedier (1967) observed that women's domestic tasks create a problem for understanding their leisure (Dumazedier, 1967). The outside paid work of Bangladeshi women makes the scene more complicated. In this case, the time allotment among the three variables namely, domestic work, paid out-side work and leisure is extremely difficult. Very often, they have to sacrifice leisure time for the other two variables. The domestic work takes the most extended form in their life. It starts from early in the morning and continues until bedtime.

Housewives with newborn babies do not even have an undisturbed sleeping time. They have to take care of the baby when it demands attention no matter what time it. And the mothers do experience personal leisure when relaxing from the pressure of children at home (Wimbush, 1988). Practically women have less leisure time due to unequal distribution of domestic work (Hribkova's review, 1994, 30). According to time budget studies, working men in the Netherlands spent 42.4 hours per week on free time activities in 1985, working women spent 38.1 hours and housewives 49.8 hours (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 1986). Though evidence shows that male participation in the domestic work is on the increase in Bangladesh, still the burden is on the women's shoulders. According to Ericksen, Yancey and Ericksen, (1979), the higher the wife's status relative to her husband, the more likely she is to work outside the home and the more likely he is to perform tasks in the home. As more and more women are approaching working life, their male counterparts are embracing more and more domestic responsibilities.

As in France, where women's leisure time can be considered as socio-cultural time in the full sense of the word (Sorokin, 1964; Samuel, 1983; 1986), and the leisure time for

Bangladeshi women follows the same path. Women in general, and working women, in particular, devote their available free time to socialization, again on family life (after spending the whole day for family) and watching TV. A report conducted by INSEE (1966) showed the same pattern of women leisure activities. There is no significant change in their leisure behaviour overtime. A study ( Harrington – MA 1991) showed that the organization of women's working day to include household obligations affects their patterns of leisure time and activity.

The concepts of women's work and leisure cannot be adequately understood in the abstract. As G Mowl and J Towner observed, it is only through the development of a deeper understanding of the way individuals and groups perceive different places, with their complex mosaics of gender and class relations that a more complete, more contextual representation of women's leisure can emerge. To gain the understanding of their complex co-presence in life, we need to examine the actual work and leisure in actual everyday lives (Liz 1988, 16). Leisure is a dynamic concept. It changes over time. Women's leisure is not an exception to this dynamism.

Family being the central life interest (Dubin, 1956) of women. The family life cycle does have significant influence on women's patterns of leisure activities. The life cycle of Bangladeshi women centres on family life. So the family leisure exerts much dominance over them. The attempt of Rapoport and Rapoport (1975) for conceptualizing the idea of family life cycle deserves much attention. The family, socialization process, education, cultures, etc. moulds the leisure behaviour of women more than men especially in Bangladesh. Jackson et al (1995) observed that constraints on women's leisure for are a function of cultural interpretation of gender and not just biological sex. Truly, the gender role shapes up the leisure behaviour of women in Bangladesh. Eventually, the male partner triggers radical changes in the leisure behaviour of their female counterparts. Due to male dominance, in the society, most of the time the female partners sacrifice their choices to accommodate the other half's preferences in all spheres of life including leisure choices. Akhtar (2000).

## **Results**

The results of the interview with 30 working women are presented below. They are presented categorically to provide due emphasis on the different aspects of the problem.

### ***Personal Factors***

The name of the respondents is not reported as desired by most of the respondents. All of the respondents are working full time with government and private organizations in the entry or mid level positions. There is a clear pattern of age distribution of the respondents. Of the respondents at least fifty percent of them are of the age group of 30 35 and another group belongs to the age group of 20-25 .The respondents of the later

age group are unmarried whereas the respondents of the former age group is married and have children.

This distinction of the age and of marital status has specific implications in respect of leisure pattern and way of approaching the life. The family sizes whether it is parental family or conjugal family also bears significant implication. The married respondents of this case are living separately with their children. They have two children on an average and the age group of the children is from seven to twelve years. Only one of the respondents has a newborn baby and her leisure pattern is totally different from the other respondents. The unmarried respondents are living with their parental family. On average the family size is 4-5. In some of the cases (2%), the family is single headed but in most other cases both the father and the mother are alive. Family size has obvious implications for the leisure pattern of the respective respondents.

### ***Work Environment***

Most of the respondents are working for service oriented organizations like banks, insurance companies, which are privately owned. Some of them are government employees. The nature of the organization has direct effect on the time pattern of the workers. The private organizations in most cases demands more working hours than the fixed working hours, whereas, in the government services the fixed working hour is normally followed with some obvious exceptions. The nature of job of the respondents is of desk jobs. They are mid-ranking employees. The nature of the job doesn't require much about decision making but routine tasks. But the amount of the responsibility is not minimal. So the working hour deserves lots of attention and physical toil as well. All of the factors have serious implication for daily and weekend activity of the respondents. The exhausted workers of the private organizations who have to work for longer hour than what is fixed, do not have much energy for anything else when they come back from the offices. The normal office hour is 9 A. M –5 P. M for five days a week. But the private employees in many cases have to work two to three extra hours though they are enjoying higher salary but they normally long for more free time. The average salary of the private sector respondents is \$300 whereas for the government sector respondent it is \$175. In most cases, the respondents who are privately employed have less relaxed daily life. They want complete relaxation in the weekend. But the government employees are found to be relatively less stressed.

### ***Time Diary***

The time diary analysis is found to be very difficult. Because most of the respondents are somewhat confused and unaware about the exactitude of time. Only the office hours are reported correctly and exactly. The normal office hour is of eight hours. And there is two days weekend. The data found for other forms of time is not as exact as the former one.

Four types of time are to be considered for data collection and analysis. Home making time, working time, social time, and free time. Of them the working time is reported to be

of eight hours. But all of the respondents are talking about extra one hour on average daily for work. They also include the commuting time to and from job as working time, which is about 1 hour on an average. So the working time is 10 hours for the private employees and 9 hours for the government employees interviewed under present research. The married respondents reported at least 5 hours as home making time whereas their unmarried counterparts have 3 hours for homemaking.

Though the unmarried workers do not have their own family but they have to take part in their parental family activities. In respect of social time the married workers have less social time whereas the unmarried workers have at least one hour more for socializing. And for free time in most cases the married working women have no free time as such which they can use only of themselves. They normally refer to free time as the time when they are passing with their family e.g. husbands and children and also when they are socializing, for example, when any guest come to see them or when they receive phone call from their relatives or friends.

“I started working before I got married and now I realize that I am the well-dressed maid of the house made to do all the heavy work and no time for myself.”

“Contribution from the male counterpart can make a difference. They can take part in the household work. They should understand there is no shame or indignity in helping the better halves to do the household chores.”

But the unmarried workers have some free time, which they can use only for themselves. But again there are very few cases of the unmarried workers (5%), where the respondents though unmarried and living with their parental family have no free time as such. They are almost as busy as their married counterparts. The overriding factor is their family involvement. Mainly the big family size (more than 5 members) is responsible for it. They have to pass their time with the family members and working for the household.

“I am unmarried. I am working and living with my extended family. I do not find any time for myself in weekdays”.

The volume of the housework increases with the size of the family. Besides, the non-existent of the time saving machines e.g. oven, dishwasher etc makes the situation more complicated for the women. They remain busy making house with other female members of the family like mother, sister and so on.

The case of the extended family is more severe. The family size is normally bigger than the nuclear family. They have to do lots of work for running the family. So the female members are always busy with one job or another. Interestingly, the size of the respective house is also important. Even if somebody has free time but she can not use it as freely as she likes because there is not enough private space for her own. They

have to share facilities and spaces with the others. So they enjoy the free time by socializing with the family members or by watching TV in a common area.

“I am tired, so tired that sometimes I can hardly stand on my two feet. I have been doing all the housework for the last ten years. Servants being servants with all their dirty, filthy ways, I have also been doing without help many a time”.

One of the basic characteristics of the surveyed household and in general of any Bangladeshi family is usually they are assisted by the house maids for home making activity. The labour is very cheap. But interestingly, now days the housemaids are not easily available. Because the booming garments sector of Bangladesh employs primarily the women who were previously working for the households. The higher salary and social prestige as factory worker induce them to take job in the garments industries. Also the independent nature of working life entices them to join the garments factory. When they work for the households they have to work the whole day. They have no holiday. Normally they stay with their employers in the same house. There is special servant's quarter for the housemaids. So they have to work from the morning till the bedtime. Also they try little businesses of their own. Different NGOs and Grameen Bank have made it possible for them to get loans, which they can repay in course of time. Even if these domestic-aids are available, the security risk has become too great to just employ anyone. With the rise of crime in the country, the very idea of employing one is getting to be frightening. Though unbelievable but the family especially the family with working women depends to a large extent on this house maids group. But when they are not available in that case they have to do everything for the household on their own because they normally get minimum support from the other family members especially from the male members.

“I am doing without domestic aid for the last four months. Nobody helps me. I can't take it any more.”

### ***Are Women Tired of Working?***

The word “working” for working women does not mean just working outside the home. It also means working inside the home which has till today remained the responsibility of women alone. In the Western Countries, the males have accepted the situation that they must share the household chores with their spouses. In Third World countries, the males are still too proud and dominating to even think that they should lend a helping hand. The whole responsibility of doing the work in the house lies on the women who may also be working outside the home. All of the respondents feel that they are really tired of working and their male counterparts do not take part in home making.

“The difference between man and woman who have careers is that when a man returns home from work he expects the attention of the all the member of the family and in the morning when he gets ready to go to work the whole household is occupied doing what he needs. The poor woman has no one to bother about her because she is only a woman who is supposed to do everything”.

"I am expected to be superwoman who can work twenty-four hours without feeling tired. I am as machine which can cook, wash clothes, do the vacuuming; and at the same time be a nurse, a mother, a wife and what not, all rolled into one".

"After I return from work in the afternoon, I have to do all the chores, which is piled up for me. I have to do the cooking for that night and the next afternoon too, and store it in the icebox. Even a maid is paid for her job but my husband does not give me a little money to spend for my needs. So I will not leave my job though I am tired and worn out".

"I can breathe freely when I am out of my house, I am someone there, but the house I am taken for granted."

### ***Free Time Management***

The most interesting part of the data analysis is the free time management part. The respondents are somewhat perplexed to find out what they are doing in their free time. They are not at all conscious of the free time activities. Free time is a part of the normal life.

"Free time activity!! What's that? I have a routine life. I am maintaining the same routine for the last ten years."

They do not consider innovative or interesting activities to undertake. What they regularly do in their daily life are the activities of their free time. Whatever time they consider as free, usually they spend on selected and repeated activities. They are, socializing with family member, watching TV, visiting friends and relatives, reading, newspaper or books, listening to music, talking over telephone with friends, relatives or office colleagues and so on. In the weekends occasionally they visit a number of friends or spend the whole day with their friends or relatives. The out of home activity is very minimal and of course occasional. In Bangladesh, there are a number of holidays especially religious holidays for example, Islamic occasion of 'Eid' produces at least seven days of holidays, holiday's for Buddhist religion, for Christian (X-mass) and there are cultural holidays like Bengali New Year. Normally these holidays are the prime time for out door recreations. Attending in many festivals, visiting friends and relatives are very high in those times. Because these are the social customs and part of culture. In many cases during winter when the school closes for holidays for one month, many married women interviewed in this research go to the village homes for recreation. But this phenomenon is general. The Bangladeshi families who are staying in the urban areas usually visit their village homes during the holidays once in a year especially in winter.

It is very difficult to ascertain the degree of freedom women workers enjoy in choosing the recreation menu. A number of factors affect the situation. In most cases, this is a collective decision. Husbands, children, father, mother, family friend, friends of the

husband or other relatives normally influence the decision of participating any out of home activity. A number of factors also prominent on the scene e.g. money, time situation of all of the family members, weather situation, political situations and other prevailing situations in the family. Usually, in long government vacations like religious festivals e.g. Eids, all of the family members have times available, so the out of home recreations like visiting village home is possible during that period. Recreational activity of the couples is found in very rare cases. But the most desired form of out of home recreation for couple can't be ascertained. Usually they visit other couples or attend official parties. The most difficult part of this research is to find out the satisfaction level of the respondents in respects to their free time activities. In most cases (80%), the answer is *No* and in other cases the respondents are confused about the answer. They don't have a clear and firm attitude and perception about recreational activities and their importance. They are busy with their daily lives and also comfortable with the present life. But they do prefer recreational opportunities if available right at hand. They are also ready to pay for organized recreational activities from their family budget. An ambitious question is asked during the interview process by the interviewers about the role of recreation in motivating the respondents to participate in daily working life. As it is expected the answers came mostly negative. The only effect of free time activities on the life of the respondents is relaxation.

"Free time is resting period for me. I take rest.... rest... .& rest....."

The married respondents are of the honest opinion that the sleeping time is most desirable free time for them. It refreshes their body and mind. And they refer to sleeping as the most desirable free time activities for them. But in many cases (30%) the married respondents are disturbed by their husband's sexual desire.

"A sound sleep at night gives me a new life"

"I have to fulfil my husband's sexual desire even when I am too tired to enjoy it"

Respondents' view about the innovative leisure activities and their effect is optimistic. Though they do not search for recreational options actively but they have some idea about their desired recreational activities. Outing, voluntary activity, cultural festivals, art exhibition, stages drama, self-developmental activities are seen as the preferable recreational activities by the respondents. A number of case respondents are eager to develop their individual skills (computer skill, language efficiency etc) and they would like to use the available free time for that purpose. They think they would enjoy the time more if they could have opportunities to spare the time for self-developmental activities. The unmarried respondents mostly (80%) express this view. Among the unmarried respondents, inclination to career development is very high. The interviewers find this view when they are questioning the respondents about the effect of their daily activities (both work and private life activities) on their individual development.

"So I will not leave my job though I am tired and worn out. I'll pursue my career to its pick."



“The quest for better living standards has landed me where I am today. Initially it was a necessity as we had to construct our house, furnish it and put the kids into good schools but now it has become a habit. I can't quit, nor I do really enjoy working as much as I did before”.

### ***Changing Pattern of Free Time Management***

It is observed by most of the respondents that the pattern of free time management has been changing gradually. In the past, the immediate past generation has different approach to management of free time. Based on their personal experiences with their mother or grand mothers they are convinced that the elder generation used to spend their free time on homely matters. Most of them specially the women did not even think of going outside for recreation except visiting relatives occasionally. What did they do, they do for their family like for their children, brothers and sisters. In the past, there were more extended families than the nuclear families of the present day. The elder generations usually spend their free time on home making, sewing, special and traditional food preparation, taking care of the grandchildren or other members of the extended families and simply relaxing. The present respondents believe that their previous generations have more free time than they have presently.

“Definitely my mother enjoyed more free time than what I do today.”

Socio-economic change, employment of women outside the home (which is uncommon previously), globalization, opportunities, electronic entertainment, career centric attitudes of women, state and global policy in favour of women's emancipation, expansion of NGO activities, boom of garments industry (which mainly employs the females) are the commonly cited reasons of the changing patterns of women's leisure. The pace of life is faster now than the older days. Women are now working both at home and outside. They are more confident and their leisure pattern is more demanding though not properly fulfilled. Most of the respondents are of the view that future trend of women leisure in this country would comply with the other developments of the society. The future trend would follow the present trend of somewhat outward orientation of the women and would definitely be facilitated by societal forces.

“In the coming days the leisure pattern would be entirely changed. We would have more outside activities. There would be more leisure facilities more women.”

The effects of the globalization, changes of social order all over the world and its effect on society, economic change, increased level of education, and structural changes in the society are the factors which will shape the future trend of leisure, in general and women's leisure, in particular.

### **Leisure Life Style of Different Work Groups**

Based on the professional background of the respondents following Leisure Life Styles for different work groups have been developed.

### *1. Government Vs Private Female Employee Work & Leisure Pattern*

The governmental and non-governmental female employees have different work situations. The government sector focuses more on routine frame for work, work schedule, usually less extra or overwork, more job security, extra benefits for the upper-class employees, pay-scale, bonus-scheme etc. On the other hand, if the private sector is counted, we can call it non-formal while calling the governmental sector as the formal one. For the employees, this sector offers flexibility, work to be done on own interest, more chances of recreation/ expression of own views through workshops, seminars, training both in country and abroad (which is very much absent in government service). Over-time and extra-work here sometimes take the whole day of the employee. Dynamism, professionalism and working skills are more vibrant of the employees in this field.

Life-style - Individual & family-life is quite different of these two types of female employees. Because of the flexibility in time frame, a government female employee can give much time to her family than a non-government one. Providing time to children, attending family & social functions, going out for recreation, having own recreational time etc are very much possible for a governmental female employee. A non-governmental female employee has less time for her family due to her preoccupation with office, extra and/or over work, meetings, and seminars. So she has to curtail the family time. The family usually takes negatively of her coming back late from office (in the afternoon or at night).

“My husband gets very much annoyed when I back home late. I feel tired and can't accompany him in family and social functions.”

Sometimes, a non-formal female employee gets harsh words if she had foreign guests from her office and had dinner with him/her for office-purpose. Usually, the family does not appreciate it. The overall effect of any conflict between husband and wife falls upon their children. The children become isolated, disturbed, frustrated and sometimes agitated. If the family is an extended one, than the employee (wife) has to digest all sorts of scolding, negative words and remain silent for the sake of peace. It is also seen that the extended family helps the respondents by taking care of her children, as a helping hand in cooking and other domestic works and so on. These kinds of help are practically absent in nuclear families. Usually, the respondents belong to nuclear families suffer from frustration as they do not get anybody to talk with and share their agony.

“Sometimes I really feel lonely and alone as I don't get any one by my side.”

In the extended family, this frustration (exclusively the negative attitude of the husband) can be overcome by the other member's consolation. It is observed from the respondent's remark that husbands are becoming more and more helpful, both in

nuclear and extended families to look after children, and to share other household chores. Therefore, a good understanding between husband and wife reduces the burden of female married employee.

## *2. Single Vs Married Women-With/ Without Children*

Single-working women without children are in the better position compared to married women with or without children. She can enjoy more true free time than her married counterparts. A single woman with children faces most difficulties, on the other hand. Bringing-up the children as a working mother becomes too tough for her. The societal attitudes towards single mothers be separated or divorced is negative. But there is point of sympathy for widowed women. The society is too inquisitive about a single mother's life-pattern than those who have a married life with a husband.

"I am always under the eye of my neighbour as if I'm a criminal"

A single working woman fights against the whole society to protect herself and her child. If she lives in an extended family, the pain is a little bit relieved. Sharing with others makes her a little bit ups in her day to day life. A single mother is supposed to be very practical, harsh to the prevailing social practices and very straightforward. Along with fighting with the reality, she also loves the fragrance of life, amusements, mental cravings and deals with the cruel world to protect her child and herself.

A married woman with child leads a better life compared to the above mentioned one. At least, she has a partner to share her responsibilities and to make up new ideas for the better life of her kid/s. if it is an extended family; there are many people to suggest for the child's better life. So, we can say, if a child is brought up in an extended family, he/she gets all sorts of mental/ logistical supports for a better future. In absence of parents (specially, if the mother remains in tour), his/her care is taken by other members. The mother in extended family has less tension than that of the mother in the nuclear one. The mother of the later one has to depend on husband or the maid. Sometimes her mother gives 'proxy' on behalf of the child's mother. In nuclear family, the father is expected to have more patience, ideas to bring up the children - especially for the newborn one. A governmental employee can afford much time for her children in taking care, bringing out new ideas to improve her baby's livelihood. On the other hand, a non-government female employee returns home in a fatigue condition. Though she tends to offer some extra time to her kid but the situation does not permit so. She has many things to do in a very short time - abiding husband's orders, maintaining social formalities, managing guests' etc. She has no time for her own. With fatigues, she remains bored and frustrated over the whole situation.

## *3. Role of Religion: Life Style of Working Vs Non-Working Women*

Islam is the dominant religion in Bangladesh. The society traditionally follows Islamic codes, rules, ethics and norms in the private and public. Now-a-days the Islamic tone is under pressure from different sources. The practice of the 'Purdah (veil) system' for

women is on decrease with the course of time. Mainly the women in the village areas are still stuck to it. Besides, some highly religious families, the 'fundamentalist', and the religious 'elite' women, use the veil system in modest way.

Very few (only one %) of the respondents adheres to this religious custom. In general, the working women as they get very little time to arrange themselves for the office, they just rush out with a modest dress-up. Most of the respondents (90%) prefer conservative and traditional dress-up. It is observed that the government female workers have comparatively more time of their own. They are in a position to have more time for family, and to follow the regular Islamic rituals (e.g. five times prayer a day) on due time.

"I do offer my prayer five times in a day."

The work culture of government offices are more traditional whereas the non-governmental offices e.g. multinationals, international donor agencies and NGO's are more westernized and liberal. Office parties e.g. lunch, dinner etc are common events for private sectors. The employees are expected to attend those functions be it in daytime or evening. The governmental offices do not have such occasions. So the employees do not have to attend such functions. The female workers of NGO's, and multinational corporations are less traditional and open to change. They are becoming more westernized. The work culture surrounds them triggers these change. Sometimes, the non-formal female workers lead such a life, which is not appreciated by the family, in particular and the society, in general. As they have to go to the office parties, they become accustomed to alcohol, disco that are prohibited in this conservative society due to religious taboo. Their fast lives (mixing up with their male counterparts, giving much time to the donors/ partners, going to official trips - often outside the country, etc.) have negative impacts both on their husbands and other members of the family. In leisure situation, they also have less time to attend the family affairs and religious festivals than those in the government jobs do. Their religious activities are limited to the mourning ceremonies of the family members, occasional celebration of religious days/ festivals, etc. whereas the government female employees get more scope to practice the routine religious activities in their daily life and can avoid the religious taboos (for every religion).

#### *4. Working Women & Family Life*

The working women in Bangladesh mainly face problems in their conjugal lives. The prime allegation against them by their husbands is that they offer limited time to families. The husbands of the respondents want their wives to come back home earlier than them and to be in good mood.

"When a man returns home from work he expects the attention of the all the member of the family and in the morning when he gets ready to go to work the whole household is occupied doing what he needs."

Extra work, attending meetings and/or seminars often restrict them to return home early. The women working with private sector often neglect the household works due to tiredness after passing a hectic day. Their tiredness and lethargic mood influence other members of the family. They cannot participate fully in homemaking, helping kids in preparing school studies, attending guest's etc. In an extended family, they can commit less time to housekeeping because there are other members for assistance. Usually they spend their free time, if any, with their family.

"Family eats up my free time. I don't have any time for my own."

Few respondents (10%) are expert in time- management and can manage the family-works neatly. Workload is more on a female employee (especially private sector employee) in nuclear family whereas in extended family due to others presence the female employee can have some time of her. The over-burden of the single-woman family (nuclear family) can be reduced if the husband becomes sympathetic, considerate and offers a helping hand in household activities, bringing up children etc. Otherwise, she burns out at time and become frustrated.

#### *5. The Role of Extended Family*

In the nuclear families the female employee has to bear the load of the family affairs and activities on her own. The domestic help is the only recourse in many cases. In the extended families though the female respondents enjoy less freedom still the picture is rosy for them. The female respondents get help from the other members of the family. For example, the grandparents, uncles, cousins within the extended family takes care of their children while they are at work, helps the kids in sorting out their school homework, the female in-laws takes care of the kitchen and so on.

"I pass pleasant moments with my in-laws at home."

Limited time is the main constraint on recreation for the female employees. Visiting relatives' houses, arranging family picnics, shopping in-groups etc. is found more in the extended family than in the nuclear family. The conflict between husband and wife can be minimized by the presence of the senior family members. The female respondents in extended family though enjoy less freedom still they feel more comfortable than their counterparts of the nuclear family. The female respondents also agree that coping up with situations in the extended family can become difficult in many cases. According to the respondents the husband should try to build a bridge between the family and his wife so that both parties can have peaceful life.

#### *6. Public Vs Private Entertainment*

The respondents representing the extended families enjoy more group recreation both at home and out door. They can take rest, watch television, play with kids, and socialize with other members at home. Shopping with other members of family, visiting friends

and/or relatives, going to movie as a group, arranging family picnic etc. are reported by the respondents as their common free time activities.

“I enjoy the company of my in-laws.”

The respondents of the nuclear families are exhausted with house making, taking care of kids, socializing and so on. They have to squeeze their personal time for cooking, entertaining the guests and for socializing. Their ‘own’ time is grasped by the variables like - helping children in their school study, minimizing misunderstandings with husband along with washing clothes or doing other household jobs. A new mother in nuclear family remains in a vulnerable situation if she does not get any nursing hand. She remains preoccupied with the newborn baby throughout the office-time. After coming back home, she becomes busy with the child. It becomes her recreation. Their private entertainment becomes more or less home centred. The modern electronic entertainment e.g. cable television, Internet etc. is equipping them with different at home entertainment options. Besides, advent of time saving machines makes their life easier. It is possible to work with a washing machine, watching television, attending family members, and using an oven or pressure-cooker simultaneously. So the female respondents can have more relaxed time than before.

### *9. Conjugal Life*

The female respondents are contributing to the family income. In many cases, the family needs the income of both half for financial solvency of the family. According to many respondents (60%) clash between husband & wife occurs, as the husbands want their wives to be at home before they returned to home from work. In many cases it cannot be possible for the wives because of their preoccupation with office.

“I can’t get back to home before 7pm.”

On the other hand, the wife seeks cooperation from her husband. A day’s work makes the wives lethargic and tired. After returning home they become very busy with the household jobs and maintenance of the home. Conjugal stuffs (sharing, enjoying free time etc.) are shared less with a working wife than a non-working one. According to few respondents (5 %) both the husband and wife build up a world of their own where the counterpart gets no entrance. Thus the seed of an unhappy conjugal life is sown and the couple stays in two polls though living under the same roof. The gap increases and the ultimate result falls upon the children. Social intercourse- like family gathering, birthday party attending, going to family-parties etc becomes rare. The credit for a sound family goes to a systematic couple for their mutual understanding, problem solving capacity, interaction and above all, co-operation with each other.

### **Evaluations/Conclusions.**

In very few cases, social research comes up with firm answers. Instead, in the end, it gives birth to new questions rather than answering the present research questions in

full. The general impression of the respondents about the research questions of the present research is summarized below.

To a great extent, leisure of working women of the Dhaka depends on and centres on their family and community. Each of the respondents has their own family, friends and social circle. Free time activities of the interviewed individuals are seen to be centred on those factors. The husbands go out for leisure more than their wives, but in general most families conformed to the model of a privatized family spending much leisure time at home or as a family unit.

### ***Leisure menu: Home & Outside***

Respondents of this research, who participate in outdoor activities e.g. family picnic, do engage in meal preparation, cleaning and looking after the children. This conforms to Kelly, (1992) proposition that the differentiation between work and leisure is less clear-cut for women (Kelly, 1992). Respondents of this research viewed childcare, meal preparation and shopping as both leisure and work. This finding conforms to Cannon's (1978) research, which showed that many homemaking and childcare activities have elements of both work and leisure for women. Typical free time activities of women, as have been identified by this research, are reading, listening to music, watching TV, chatting or simply relaxing. Occasionally, they prefer to visit their relatives and have family gatherings, which are very common in Bangladeshi culture. Neighbours are considered as important sources of socialization and the respondents visit mothers and sisters several times a week. Outside the house, art exhibitions, traditional fairs, stage drama and religious festivals are the most frequently visited places by the respondents. Not a single respondent takes part in sport activities. The married respondents do not have large circles of friend's. One 'close' or 'best' friend and a circle of mates or acquaintances are common among the respondents. The married respondents base much activity on marriage partnership. Reading and music are the two most common hobbies reported by the respondents. It is also evident from this research that, provided there is an availability of outdoor formal recreational facilities, they also would join those with their family. No significant differences were found between married and unmarried or government and private respondents as far the leisure menu is concerned. It is possible to find out the reason in the social and cultural fabric of the society. Personal and professional development is viewed as two very important issues for working women. Most of the respondents prefer to spend a slice of their free time for this cause. It is observed that working women are inclined to participate in classes to improve their personal & professional skills. The respondents view English language and computer skills as crucial to their development. This finding supports Kelly's (1992) observation that leisure is related to personal development.

### ***Leisure Constraints***

This research enhances our understanding of the constraints on working women's leisure in Dhaka City. As Kelly *et al*, (1997) observed that "in almost all leisure contexts women were subservient to men". The respondents of this research also confirm this

observation. They have identified their husband's dominance in choosing free time activities as one of the major constraints on their leisure. Besides they also identified their children's choices, preoccupation with office and household work, lack of infrastructural facilities less financial resources and insecure outdoor environment as constraints on their leisure.

When men and women jointly undertake leisure activity, it is found that women are more likely to adjust much more easily than men. As has been identified by Henderson et al, (1989) adaptability is a major theme in the development of women is true for this traditional society. The socialization process of this society makes the women more tolerant to the extremities of life. They are taught to be patient. They are socialized in an environment where they are expected to be loving and caring. They feel good when they see laughter in their child's face. They feel delighted when their parents, husbands and so on care for them. They are better able to accommodate other people's views and choices by sacrificing their own aspirations. It is evident from this research that free time activities of the working women are primarily involved with individuals who are around them and based on the facilities easily available. Most of the respondents follow the leisure choices of their husbands and children. Following comments of the respondents can be cited in this regard.

"I usually watch my husband's favourite TV serials."

"I simply can't ignore my child's choice."

It is also evident that limited resources are available to meet the leisure needs of the society. In fact, facilities for systematic or formal leisure are practically non-existent in the Dhaka City. The culture of formal leisure is yet to be recognized by the people. Besides, the social security, increasing complexity of urban life, density of population, somewhat rising rates of crime & insecurity lead to the culture of home based leisure experience. Specifically, women with children, who are mostly preoccupied with the well being of their offspring in respect of education and security, prefer to live inside and have home based leisure.

"Nowadays we are very much afraid of going out after the evening."

"Time demands from different sources and the availability of the home entertainment apparatus also influence the respondents to be at home."

"We couldn't afford hours for watching a movie in the cinema hall. We rather like to spend the time for socializing, doing housework and watching home video."

Women do prefer out of home leisure activities but with their families. There are few respondents (only 5%) who have the habit of eating out with their families. The income of the women is mostly spent on the family life. They do not use it for fulfilling their own desire. Most of them do not see the idea of separate savings of their own. In their view, their money is family money and in most cases they feel good to spend the money for



the family affairs. Most of the respondents consider spending outside of family need as a luxury for them.

“Formal Leisure is a luxury for me.”

### ***Leisure Pattern in different Work Groups***

This research also shows that the women working in the government jobs feel less exhausted than their private counterparts and the unmarried workers are reported to be less stressed than their married counterparts. The married private sector employees with children reported the worst experiences. They have hardly any time for their personal leisure [Table I]. Free time is the time free from work or doing housework. But they are not free to engage in a particular leisure activity. They are on stand-by in case the family needs them. The reason behind that the married women have more responsibilities for running their respective households.

“We are working from dawn to midnight”.

Table 1 : Effects of Service & Family on Work Load & Free Time

MARITAL STATUS	GOVERNMENT		SERVICE PRIVATE	
	Nuclear	Extended	Nuclear	Extended
Married with children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office Workload: Moderate</li> <li>Household activities: High</li> <li>Child Rearing: Sole responsibility/ Shared with husband only</li> <li>Free Time: Less</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office Workload: Moderate</li> <li>Household activities: Low/ High (when there is no help)</li> <li>Child Rearing: Shared with other members of the family</li> <li>Free Time: Moderate/ Less</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office Workload: High</li> <li>Household activities: High</li> <li>Child Rearing: Sole responsibility/Shared with husband only</li> <li>Free Time: Least</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office Workload: High</li> <li>Household activities: Low/ High (when there is no help)</li> <li>Child Rearing: Shared with other members of the family</li> <li>Free Time: Less</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office Workload: Moderate</li> <li>Household activities: Moderate</li> <li>Child Rearing: Not applicable</li> <li>Free Time: Moderate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office Workload: Moderate</li> <li>Household activities: Moderate/Low (if shared with other members)</li> <li>Child Rearing: Not applicable</li> <li>Free Time: Moderate/ High</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office Workload: High</li> <li>Household activities: Moderate</li> <li>Child Rearing: Not applicable</li> <li>Free Time: Moderate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office Workload: High</li> <li>Household activities: Moderate/Low (if shared with other members)</li> <li>Child Rearing: Not applicable</li> <li>Free Time: Moderate/ High</li> </ul>
Married without children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office Workload:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office Workload:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office Workload: High</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office Workload: High</li> <li>Household Activities: Moderate/Low</li> </ul>

Single with children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate <i>Household activities</i>: Considerable</li> <li><i>Child Rearing</i>: Sole responsibility</li> <li><i>Free Time</i>: Least</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate <i>Household Activities</i>: Moderate/Low (when shared with other members)</li> <li><i>Child Rearing</i>: Shared with other members of the family</li> <li><i>Free Time</i>: Less</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Household Activities</i>: Considerable</li> <li><i>Child Rearing</i>: Sole responsibility</li> <li><i>Free Time</i>: Least</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(when shared with other members)</li> <li><i>Child Rearing</i>: Shared with other members of the family</li> <li><i>Free Time</i>: Less</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Office Workload</i>: Moderate</li> <li><i>Household Activities</i>: Low</li> <li><i>Child Rearing</i>: Not applicable</li> <li><i>Free Time</i>: Maximum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Office Workload</i>: Moderate</li> <li><i>Household Activities</i>: Low/Moderate</li> <li><i>Child Rearing</i>: Not applicable</li> <li><i>Free Time</i>: Maximum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Office Workload</i>: High</li> <li><i>Household Activities</i>: Low</li> <li><i>Child Rearing</i>: Not applicable</li> <li><i>Free Time</i>: Moderate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Office Workload</i>: High</li> <li><i>Household Activities</i>: Low/Moderate</li> <li><i>Child Rearing</i>: Not applicable</li> <li><i>Free Time</i>: More</li> </ul>

## Future Trends

It is observed in this research that leisure behaviour will change in future. Most of the respondents are well aware of the development in the leisure and recreation field. In the near future there will be more out door recreation facilities as foreign and local investors are coming up with outdoor recreation projects. It will reduce one of the major constraints on their leisure experience, namely, inadequate out door leisure facilities. The respondents also observe that the future husbands will be more considerate and share a significant amount of house- keeping. Consequently, it is expected that the future working women will get comparatively more free time. It is also expected that the workload in private offices will be reduced, enabling the female employees to leave the office at an earlier time. As Kelly (1992) observed that economic, social, political, and ecological factors will shape the future of leisure, the present study supports this proposition. Generally, the society of Bangladesh is very conservative in nature and it follows a somewhat stable path. The socialization process strongly teaches the individual to adhere to the social norms and conform to the social patterns. So deviant behaviour is rarely seen commonly. Though individual agency and differences could play a critical role in creating deviance, as leisure is a learned behaviour it heavily depends on the social context.

While scanning through the interview transcripts it is found that severely time compressed women working class of Dhaka City though do not have enough access to 'so called' organized informal & formal leisure, they are not extremely frustrated with their leisure experience. The family life, security, dignity in the society, affection and caring attitudes within the family, in particular and in the society, in general in many cases compensate to some extent their feeling of deprivation.

This study found that females prefer to use their free time for personal developmental purposes and to socialize with their near and dear ones. This supports Kelly's (1992) observation that leisure is related to our bonding to those most important to us and leisure resources may be derived from almost any other relationship or role.

As one of the respondents commented

"I feel recovered from the work stress when I pass time with my near and dear ones"

But the hidden shock absorber is the socialization process itself. Family is the most important institution of this society till today. From the early childhood they are used to socialize with their family, relatives and pass their time with them. So they do not feel extremely uncomfortable, if they have to pass their time with their family. Rather, they feel lonely & isolated when they do not have any relatives & friends with them. Even they do not enjoy the recreational activities on their own. They like to have their family, friends or relatives with them.

"We like to be with others'."

"We don't have much formal leisure. But we are not giving up. We try to take our life as leisurely as possible. Leisure is sometimes hidden in our life style."

The stress they encounter in their working life releases with the company of their family. The emotional affection and bondage prevailing in the society help to a great extent to minimize the stressful life of the working women. Kelly's (1992) generalized the central role of gender in both predicting and explaining leisure behaviour and Shaw (1985) observed that the distribution of leisure is significantly affected by gender. I hope to have contributed to the above observations by revealing the effect of gender on leisure behaviour and constraints on leisure of the working women of Dhaka City. This study supports the observation of Wimbush and Talbot (1988) regarding the strong influence of male power on women's leisure, opportunities, friendships, and social networks throughout their lives by pointing out male domination as one of the major constraints on leisure for working women. This study found that females are less likely to participate in outdoor recreation, which supports Kelly's (1992) observation regarding women's outdoor recreation. In general, this research supports Kelly's (1992) recommendation that to understand leisure it must be placed in its social context.

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### **Authors Biography:**

S. S. M Sadrul Huda currently working as an Assistant Professor of Business Department at East West University, Dhaka Bangladesh. He has earned his post-graduate degree on Leisure & Environment from Wageningen University, The Netherlands. He has versatile research interests, which include Work-Family Conflict, Gender and Environment, Negotiation Behaviour, Human Resource Management etc. He regularly writes on different issues in newspaper. He has two books to his credit. Address for correspondence: S. S. M. Sadrul Huda, Assistant Professor, Business Department, East West University, 43-45 Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh, Email: sadrul@ewubd.edu

Afsana Akhtar currently working as a Lecturer of Business Department at East West University, Dhaka Bangladesh. After completing her early education on Pharmacy, she has also pursued post-graduate degree on Business Administration. Her research interests are on Marketing, Urbanization, Consumer Behaviour etc. Address for correspondence: Afsana Akhtar, Lecturer, Business Department, BRAC University, 66 Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh

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