

CultureTalk Bangladesh Video Transcripts: <http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>
Primary Education in a BRAC School

Interviewer: What is your name?

Girl: Ruby Akhter.

Interviewer: What do you do?

Girl: I work in BRAC¹ school. I am a teacher. BRAC is an education program. It is an educational institution. We provide education for children from the first grade till the fifth grade. So we ... yeah, it is like primary education. We work here for about five and a half years. We teach these small children [in the BRAC school]. We have 25 children in this branch of the school. Out of those 25 kids, I don't have all of them. Now there are a total of 21 children attending this branch. The reason why there are 21 children out of the total 25 is because three dropped out. The reason behind this is the parents. What they are doing is, they are sending their children to school for a few days. The child progresses from first grade to second grade and from the second to the third and then the parents take them away from school. This is because ... the reason they take their children away from school may be due to various constraints (financial, societal, etc.) within the family. The parents think that they can put their children to work and get some money. We try to make them understand. For that, we have monthly meetings They are held in the school with the guardians. It is called *obhibabok shobha*.² Our goal is to sit with the guardians and make them understand the significance of educating their children ... that a girl has to study at least until fifth grade. This education will benefit the girl immensely, and she can do many things in the future if she studies until the fifth grade. A boy definitely needs education, but for a girl ... in our school the number of girls is higher. In our [BRAC] school, we put more stress on women's education, because usually girls don't get the same education opportunities as boys so. Yes, in the BRAC NGO, girls are given more importance. Compared to boys, girls get [are given] more importance because in our region, girls do not get that much [of a sense of] importance from their parents regarding education. That is the reason we have these BRAC schools. Our program's aim is to give girls the minimum education, at least until fifth grade. BRAC school was created with this endeavor in mind.

¹ BRAC, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, is one of the largest non governmental organizations in the world. Established in 1972, BRAC now operates in all 64 districts of Bangladesh and operates various programs, such as those in microcredit and education, in over nine countries across Asia and Africa. In Bangladesh alone, BRAC has over seven million micro-finance group members, 37,500 non-formal primary schools in rural and impoverished areas, and more than 70,000 health volunteers.

² Literally meaning "guardians' meeting"-- *obhibabok* means guardian and *shobha* means meeting, It is basically a parents/ teachers meeting.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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