

CultureTalk Bangladesh Video Transcripts: <http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>
Street Food Vendor

Interviewer (I): How much are these?

Man (M): Four ... five [taka].

I: What did you make this *muri*¹ out of?

M: It is made out of rice.

I: Rice? How do you make the *jhalmuri*?²

M: With *chanachur*³ and chickpeas.

I: Make one well. Let's see.

M: Well?

I: Where's your *desh-bari*?⁴

M: My village is in Faridpur district.

I: Where in Faridpur?

M: The *thana* [police station] is Shadarkal.

I: How many children do you have?

M: I have three children.

I: Really? Three sons and one daughter?

M: Yes, one daughter.

¹ Puffed rice. It is usually made by heating rice kernels under high pressure in the presence of steam. *Muri* is a traditional puffed rice and is made by heating rice in a sand-filled oven. *Muri* is a staple food in Bangladesh and many part of Bengal.

² *Jhalmuri* (*spicy muri*) is a popular street food in Bangladesh.

³ *Chanachur* is a traditional South Asian street food. It consists of a variable mixture of spicy dried ingredients, which may include fried lentils, peanuts, chickpea flour noodles, corn vegetable oil, chickpeas, flaked rice and fried onions. This is all flavored with salt and a blend of spices that may include coriander and mustard seeds.

⁴ Literally translating to "village home," it basically means "hometown." Since most of Bangladesh is rural areas, most people hail from villages originally.

I: How long have you been in this business?

M: Seven years.

I: Is your business going well?

M: I manage somehow.

I: Can you support your family?

M: Yeah, I somehow manage.

I: Are you sending your children to school?

M: Yes, my daughter goes to school.

I: [repeats] Are you sending them to school?

M: Yes, I'm sending her to school.

I: Which grade is she in?

M: She is in the fifth grade.

I: Is this the daughter or the son?⁵

M: It is the daughter.

I: Where does she stay?

M: They all stay at my village home, I stay in Dhaka.

I: Oh, they stay in the village? And you?

M: I stay in Rayerbazar.

I: Rayerbazar? Do you stay in a mess?⁶

M: Yes, I stay in a mess.

⁵ In Bengali, there are no masculine/feminine pronouns. So when the person asked "what grade is she in?" he does not actually use "she" but a general pronoun that are used for both males and females.

⁶ A mess is the place where military personnel socialize, eat, and (in some cases) live. In some societies this military usage has extended to other disciplined services eateries, such as civilian fire fighting and police forces. In Bangladesh, a mess denotes a place in the cities that offers very cheap housing for people from the lower income bracket.

I: Who else stays with you?

M: I stay alone [in the mess].

I: How many siblings do you have?

M: It's only me.

I: You don't even have any sisters?

M: No.

I: Parents?

M: My parents also passed away.

I: Oh, okay. How long are you in this line [of work]?

M: Seven years.

I: You always work here?

M: Yes.

I: At what time do you sell the most?

M: Say around the time children get off from school.

I: When is that? Noon, or one o' clock?

M: Around one.

I: So you sell the most at around one?

M: Yeah ... I make around three, four ,or five [hundred takas].

I: Oh, so you make around three hundred to five hundred taka in that hour? Every day?

M: Yes, every day.

I: You come every day?

M: Yes.

I: What is your income like?

M: Income ... say if I sell four hundred taka worth of *jhalmuri*, I make a profit of around one hundred and fifty taka.

I: Out of four hundred taka, one hundred and fifty is your profit?

M: Yes.

I: And can you support your family with that?

M: Yeah. It's somehow manageable.

I: Okay. Give me two taka worth of *jhalmuri*.

M: Two taka?

I: Yes. Put [in] all the condiments and say what you're giving.

M: I'm putting in *chanachur*, chickpeas, cilantro.

I: What are you putting in now?

M: I'm putting *muri* into the mixture. Then I'll put in *chanachur*.

I: Then?

M: Then I'll add the chickpeas.

I: Chickpeas?

M: Yeah.

I: What are you giving now?

M: These are the diced onions and green chilies.

I: After that?

M: After that I'll put [in] the salt.

I: Then?

M: Then I'll add the spices.

I: Okay. Now what are you doing?

M: I'm just mixing them all together now.

I: What are you using to mix?

M: A spoon.

I: How much is this worth?

M: This is worth two taka.

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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