

**English translation:**

**Woman 1:** When writers Dr Nilima Ibrahim and Dr. Rabeya Khatun studied in university, the professors in Dhaka University escorted girls in and out of the classrooms; during that time, there would only be around four to five girls in each class in the universities, so at the end of class professors would escort the female students from the classrooms to the common rooms, and at the beginning of classes they would escort them from the common rooms to the classrooms. In this way, they respected and protected the women. In what ways could you educate women or encourage them to study hard and lean towards education? -- that was the aim. Up until the liberation war, the number of women in Dhaka University was quite small. But currently, with the grace of God, women have been moving forward in academics. Women comprise a higher percentage of pass grades in the final results. Also, the women in Bangladesh are very brilliant and are producing very good results. They are producing good results at every level -- school, college, and university. In every field, including the garments sector, the banking sector, the education sector, women are on top. And they work with dedication and sincerity. They are successful in their respective fields, successful in running administrations. The future of Bangladeshi women will be even brighter if things move in this direction.

**Woman 2:** I realized this after speaking to Tani. I saw Tani when she was this small, and the same Tani is now completing her final year of Honors. She has decided to pursue a Master's degree and eventually a career. She wishes to enter the field of education or banking, right?

**Woman 3:** Yes.

**Woman 2:** I am really happy to hear that. I could not imagine that the small Tani is all grown up and is now in university.

**Woman 3 (Tani):** Sometimes I also wonder, did I actually come this far ... completely on my own. In studying Honors, one is completely independent and must take the initiative to work hard and succeed. I gave all my effort and made the decisions. No one told me what subject to study or asked about my preferences. Your family [referring to Woman 2] advised me to go to Chittagong, and Osman uncle asked me to apply to City University and said that he would bear the tuition fees and other expenses. However, at that time, I was in such a predicament that I was not able to pick up the application forms much less take the admission test. I had some family problems, so I was not able to go through with the application process, so [I] just enrolled in a college in my hometown. A degree from a more prestigious university would hold more value. However, after I complete my Honors, if I am able to receive a Master's degree from a well-known college in Dhaka, it will hold value. Additionally, women are ahead in education so it should not be a problem. I will be happy with any respectable job.

**Woman 2:** What are you saying! In Bangladesh, even with all the hurdles, the fact that you have come so far, the fact that you will receive an Honor's degree and wish to pursue a Master's Degree is truly remarkable and only a few can achieve all this. I am very happy to hear this.

**Woman 1:** Not only in Bangladesh. Bangladeshi women abroad are very successful and are praised highly. Just the other day, I saw in the news that some Bangladeshi woman with a Ph.D. is at the top in probably the banking sector. Even in the U.K., women in the services sector are doing very well. Women on average are at very high positions. And now, parents are very serious about their children's education. Everyone is becoming more conscious. That is why young boys and girls are progressing very rapidly. They understand that they have to become conscious individuals and make their lives and futures fruitful; they have to stand on their own two feet, and make Bangladesh appear respectable to the rest of the world. These thoughts are embedded into everyone's minds now. Everyone is serious and works hard to bring about a change. Boys and girls are mindful to their education. Even farmers now understand the importance of educating their children. In the villages, the mindsets have been completely transformed. Every household understands the value of education and what it means to be a Bengali. "InshAllah,"<sup>1</sup> within the next ten years, Bangladesh can achieve success by a hundred percent in terms of education.

**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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<sup>1</sup> *InshAllāh*, or "God willing," is an Arabic term used by Indonesian, Arabic, Malay, Wolof, Persian, Bosnian, Turkish, Urdu, Hausa, Bengali and many Muslim English, German, and French speakers to indicate hope for an aforementioned event to occur in the future.