

# **Urban Female Youth Choosing ‘Hijab’: A meaningful scarf**



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## **CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.



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## **DECLARATION**

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ahmad Razia Tasnim". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

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## **Abstract**

### **Urban Female Youth Choosing ‘Hijab’: A meaningful scarf**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century adapting hijab has increased significantly among the young Bangladeshi Muslim females. Though the history of Muslim inhabitants in this land goes way beyond in time but the gradual rise in the use of hijab is a comparatively new phenomenon, and what makes it more intriguing is its wide popularity among the urban female youth. Therefore, this choice of the urban young female population demands to be studied in its own right and beyond the simplistic understanding of the practice as being a religious one alone. To address this, the present study aims to understand the symbolic meaning and the reasons behind hijab’s huge popularity. To be more specific, the study examines if ‘hijab’ can be identified as a ‘capital’ by using Bourdieu’s concept of ‘capital’ as the theoretical lens. It also attempts to identify the increasing use of ‘hijab’ as a representation of ‘cultural hybridity’ following Homi K. Bhabha, and its impact on the social identity of young Bangladeshi women. The empirical data are derived from online surveys, conducted through semi structured questionnaires on 30 young Bangladeshi urban women, aged between 18-30. purposive sampling was used as a technique, and thematic approach has been considered to code and analyze the data. The study reveals some noteworthy factors like the symbolic value of hijab, young urban women’s self-perception who wear hijab. This study also found that hijab is a fashion statement as well in today’s Bangladesh, indicating an important social and cultural change.

## **Introduction**

### **Chapter 1**

This study examines the increasing popularity of the attire ‘hijab’ among the urban youth of Bangladesh to locate its symbolic meaning and related sociocultural changes. The youths are more likely to visibly practice any sociocultural changes and more conscious about ongoing trends. Among other socio-cultural elements such as food, language, arts and more, new adaptation in clothing choices in a particular social setup indicates changes in relation between power and agency. Also, a study on certain clothing adaptation can contribute towards interpreting underlying values, meanings and processes of identity formation relating to that adaptation. A basic market analysis can highlight the most demanding attires among the youth by observing its huge availability, fashion variations and advertisements. All of these factors are increasing about hijab. It is quite clearly noticeable that the female youth of Bangladesh is largely accepting hijab as a daily part of their clothing. The question arises if today’s hijab is only about religious practice or something more than that. The basic purpose of this study is to understand the extended meaning hijab is being associated with and the connotation hijab adaptation has as a sociocultural element, in the context of Bangladesh.

#### **1.1 Background of the study:**

Use of veil and unrevealing clothes is not new for Bangladeshi women. The fact that Majority of the population of this country is Muslim, sets ground for the old practice and tradition of wearing unrevealing attire and for some women wearing burqa. But the scenario of

using ‘hijab’, mostly among the urban youth, is somewhat different from the earlier ‘purdah’ (the practice in certain societies of screening women from men and strangers) tradition. In many cases the female youths are often not choosing seclusion according to Islam but they are preferring the adaptation of hijab as a representation of their Muslim identity. The discussions regarding hijab adaptation are gaining validity in the context of Bangladesh because of its increasing popularity, acceptance and consumer base. Bangladesh is undergoing rapid development regarding economic factors, changes in social behavior and culture. Among many other factors which are undergoing change, diversity and new adaptation in attire is significantly rising in recent years, especially among the youth. This study particularly focuses on the increasing adaptation of ‘hijab’ among the Bangladeshi urban youth. The reason behind concentrating on this particular attire is that, the use of ‘hijab’ and the global market of it has increased in last few decades, hijab is a global trend among the Muslim population. On the other hand, this particular attire has many assigned meanings to it, depending on time and context. As the modern Muslim practice of wearing hijab has reached Bangladesh as well, it needs more in-depth study to understand in the context of Bangladesh what symbolic meanings hijab represent. This chapter will provide background and relevance of the topic in the context of Bangladesh. And most significantly it will outline the research questions. Along with that, the chapter will identify the scope and limitations of this study.

The word ‘hijab’ by its literal meaning does not mean head scarf. The word by its original meaning denotes partition, a curtain, a kind of physical separation in real space. In describing the word ‘hijab’ American scholar Mark Juergensmeyer said that it refers ‘to the physical partition that divided the public from the Prophet Muhammad’s wives, allowing them greater privacy from Muhammad’s many visitors. Thus, hijab retains the meaning of barrier in

both usages, whether in the metaphysical or literal sense' (516). In Qur'an hijab has been mentioned as, which is known as 'Khimar' in Arabic, a manifestation of modesty and morality. Surat an-Nur (Q 24:30–31) suggests women to lower their gaze, be aware of their modesty and use khimar to cover their head and chest to prevent drawing any attention sexually, also to prevent any excess display of beauty. In today's usage of the word 'hijab', worldwide it means a head scarf covering the hair, ear, neck and leaving the face unveiled, which indicates that the usage and meaning of the word 'hijab' is changing with time.

Wearing hijab is a contemporary topic of discussion because this particular veil has political importance. There are debates and events like public protests regarding it. Also, there are many folded and sometimes contradictory underlying interpretations of the practice in today's time. To mention a few, in many cases, modern women in today's world interpret it as religious freedom. Nusrat, who is a practicing Muslim and writer, writes that women who wear hijab carries assigned symbolic meaning of 'oppressed womanhood' and also political aspect such as Islam and terrorism which must be addressed and should change (nytimes.com). There are many articles and physical protests against restricting hijab in western or Muslim minority societies, demanding to accept hijab as a freedom of choice, not a political issue. For example, there is a recent issue in India where women wearing hijab protested as hijab had been banned in the educational institute (HUSAIN, 'Hijab order affects religious freedom'). These are two examples where hijab is a prop to display socio political viewpoints and conflicts and there are many. Another perspective is, hijab is a tool of religious reinforcement, a patriarchal act of confining women and shaming the ones who aren't participating in the practice etc. In an article about a very recent incident in India, Gupta took interviews of the female protestors and from her observation mentioned that 'hijab is not an ordinary gender-neutral element of religion. It is

important to remember, piety and modesty are two different things. The former is self-driven, the latter is imposed and only on women' (news18.com). Pointing that hijab is often a misogynistic act and it creates discrimination for the Muslim women who don't participate in the practice.

There are also many discussions about 'hijab' as a means of social power relation. Arafa, a columnist explains how hijab has been implemented as sign of faith and dignity by the political Islamism saying, 'this modern-day movement spreads an ideology of political Islam, called "Islamism," enlisting well-intentioned interfaith do-gooders and the media into promoting the idea that "hijab" is a virtual "sixth pillar" of Islam' (washingtonpost.com), pointing out to the fact that hijab has now become an expression of Muslim identity, imposed by the religious politics. The article goes on saying 'We reject this interpretation that the hijab is merely a symbol of modesty and dignity' (ibid), indicating the complex political significance of it. The above observation highlights the situations behind creating discrimination among Muslim women who do and don't carry a hijab, imposing hijab as a symbol of modesty and dignity.

The many folded and diverse meanings of the hijab discussion must be understood and interpreted according to the particular location; As the cultural and religious background along with the recent social environment of that particular location have to be taken in consideration to come up with any observation regarding increased use of hijab in the context.

## **1.2 Background of Bangladeshi cultural attire:**

Women in Bangladesh, cover their head with the extension on their saree called 'achal' which is known as 'ghomta', the practice is more prominent in rural areas but also present in the urban areas. Often women use a separate cloth named 'orna' to cover their head and chest over the dress. This is a cultural practice of this locality which is also a demonstration of the belief

that women should maintain restriction from the outside world. Also, it indicates the values about how a woman should behave. This restriction was maintained within the home and outside depending on the situation, often regardless of religion in this locality. For example, women covered their head at home whenever an elderly person comes in or when a male member of the family is in the room, this was a practice performed by Hindus as well. Many historical documents and fictions are evidence of this gendered practice of this locality. The practice started being less strict in urban areas over time and women started questioning this gendered practice as it limited them from going outside for education and work. This study does not attempt to discuss elaborately the social change of Bangladesh regarding how and when women in Bangladesh slowly came out from the social practice of confining themselves inside their houses. But it did happen and women, especially urban women of Bangladesh reconstructed their gender roles and broke the cultural practice of being behind the curtain. As women came more vocal about human rights and equality, the tradition of covering the head also decreased.

Though it has taken a U-turn and women in Bangladesh started using head-scarf (hijab) in a larger amount. But this time not exactly as an expression of confinement. Columnist Abir points out that it was a rare occasion to see women with hijab ‘out on the street in 1980s’ but adaptation of hijab started to appear from the 1990s, and till then the adaptation of hijab is increasing in urban societies ([archive.dhakatribune.com](http://archive.dhakatribune.com)).

Along the same line, the United States Commission on International religious Freedom observes that ‘Wearing hijab, rather than the traditional sari, is increasingly common among Muslim women in Bangladesh’ (196). So, women are adapting hijab and expressing an alternative approach regarding attire. This alternative approach regarding attire and the huge

popularity of hijab inevitably participates in reconstructing the culture, social behavior and consumer behavior, therefore trend and fashion. Hence, it's not surprising that in today's market of Bangladesh there are many kinds of hijab available in different bold colors, fabric and size. The market is growing here with the modern global fashion. 'Hijab fashion' is a thing in today's Bangladesh.

Shamsuddin Ahmed, a veil seller at the Patuataly wholesale market, said that 'only three shops used to sell veils in 1975. Today there are 22' ("Bangladesh: increasing number of women"), and this information is from the early 2000s. The scenario today is more prominent as the hijab market has increased significantly. The influencers promoting hijab, online market, using hijab as a symbol in advertisements are increasing too. There is a term now called 'hijabistas', addressing the women who along with their religious practice use hijab as a fashion accessory (Harun 479). Along with buying this product for its functional attributes, the users are consuming this product for its symbolic representation, to construct and demonstrate an identity associated with young women wearing fashionable hijab.

In 2015 the first Hijab fair was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, sending an out loud message that 'hijab is a part of a Muslim women's life' ("Bangladesh Hosts"). Indicating that Bangladesh is marking its presence in the global Muslim culture. There is a day declared as 'World Hijab Day' 'celebrated in 140 countries' ([worldhijabday.com](http://worldhijabday.com)), and Bangladesh is one of them. These facts indicate that hijab is not an unblended religious practice anymore, it is an expression of Muslim identity, it has cultural embedded meaning and consumer culture associated. So, to understand the rising adaptation of hijab among the urban youth of Bangladesh, socio-political and cultural associations need to be observed. This is essentially an

important topic for Bangladesh too, as such cultural adaptation can affect the basic cultural practices of this country. Demonstrating the culture of Islamic countries through this kind of adaptation, which often is contradictory with Bengali culture (as by law, Bangladesh is a secular country) may become a problem for the heritage of this country. And also, such symbolic attire is not limited to external presentation, it takes an active role in shaping identity. Wearing hijab for any other meaning rather than the true practice of Islam is also a complicated standpoint which needs to be identified. Also, social change is inevitable, why a change is taking place isn't a question to ask here. The fact that grabs attention is, the veiling tradition had decreased in Bangladesh and it revived with a new expression named 'hijab', so what does this new adaptation mean? The study aims to explore just that. To this end, the exploration is guided by the following research questions.

### **1.3 Research question:**

The research questions of this study are as below:

1. As practiced by Bangladeshi urban young women, what are some of the specific uses of hijab?
2. As a clothing choice, what does hijab signify for the urban Bangladeshi young women?

### **1.4 Significance of the study:**

Hijab has been a topic of discussion in many countries. In some it is a symbol of modesty. Also, in some non-muslim countries it has some negative assigned meaning. Specially after the 9/11 incident use of hijab as become a political issue. Bangladesh being a secular country where majority of the population are Muslims the phenomenon of hijab adaptation is not

that extreme but the increasing adaptation of hijab in urban Bangladesh surely points to some significant change in social relation and social identity formation especially of the youth. The factors that influence hijab fashion besides religion is under observed in the context of urban Bangladesh. This study is significant as it will attempt to understand the hijab trend/fashion, influence of Islamic cosmopolitanism and its stance as a cultural capital, which can be a contribution to understand the cultural change of this locality. Citizens of Bangladesh are mostly Muslim but they traditionally have a vibrant Bengali culture, are the Islamic fashion trends and cultural influences affecting the cultural heritage of this country? That question can be further address from this research.

### **1.5 Scope and limitation:**

The major limitation of this study is that it is based on a small set of data. This study is done based on respondents from Dhaka and Rajshahi city, also, the media resources are mostly representative of the culture of Dhaka, which excludes the other urban areas. As purposive sampling will be used as the data collection method, there might be lack of generalization. Another possible limitation is that the respondents might want to represent hijab only from a positive point of view, disproving any misconception or debatable interpretation of it.

Despite the limitations stated above, a study on this topic can contribute to achieving a better understanding about the changes in society associated with hijab. For that, initiating discourses on this topic is the first necessary step to determine the paths of sampling large and diverse data.

## **Literature Review**

### **Chapter 2**

This chapter discusses the evolution of hijab and its many meanings over time. To be specific, this chapter discusses literature regarding how throughout time hijab has been used in different countries as a means of tradition and cultural identity. This background discussion is necessary because it makes us go beyond the simplified understanding of hijab as a mere religious imposition on women and makes us rethink why Muslim women widely find it necessary to wear hijab. Also, as this study concerns young urban women, it has been identified that fashion and modern identity have relevance with adapting hijab as a daily attire. This chapter highlights on Islamic fashion trends and globalization as well, also the way this adaptation is being translated in the context of Bangladesh.

#### **2.1 Historical Background of Hijab and Its Connection with Islam**

At present what we know as hijab is basically a head-scarf worn by Muslim women. But the use of head scarf and veiling did not originate with the rise of Islam. In fact, such practice of veiling can be traced back to the elite women in Mesopotamian, Greek, and Persian empires, who wore head scarf/veil as a symbol of aristocracy and high status. Leila Ahmed in her book pointed out that women of lower class, in some of the places were not even allowed to wear a head scarf because that particular cloth was for ‘respectable’ women (15).

Seclusion of women and veiling was established among Jews and Christians and later was adopted by urban Arabs of the upper classes and eventually it became popular among the urban Arab women (El Guindi and Zahur 297)

According to evidences, hijab was not introduced by Muhammad in Arab, but it was already an existing practice (Ahmed Leila 91). In the holy Qur'an the word hijab was used 'in reference to the physical partition that divided the public from the Prophet Muhammad's wives, allowing them greater privacy from Muhammad's many visitors. Thus, hijab retains the meaning of barrier in both usages, whether in the metaphysical or literal sense' (Mark Juergensmeyer 515). But the phenomenon was only associated with the prophet's wives. Although Surat an-Nur (Q 24:30–31) suggests women to lower their gaze, be aware of their modesty and use 'khimar', a head covering or veil worn in public by some Muslim women, to cover their head and chest to prevent drawing any attention sexually, also to prevent any excess display of beauty. So, seclusion and hiding themselves from the eyes of the men was a part of Islamic practice from the beginning but not particularly a headscarf. The evidence regarding usage of hijab mentioned till now reflects hijab to be more of a matter of higher class, civilization and aristocracy rather than a religious practice.

Now, when exactly Muslim women found it obligatory to wear hijab as a religious practice is hard to pin point. Reza Aslan in his book mentioned that Muslim women adapted hijab probably to emulate the Prophet's wives, as they are the 'Mothers of the Ummah' (29). He also mentioned that, "The veil was neither compulsory nor widely adopted until generations after Muhammad's death, when a large body of male scriptural and legal scholars began using their

religious and political authority to regain the dominance they had lost in society as a result of the Prophet's egalitarian reforms" (Ibid, 66).

The above discussion brings forth the idea that hijab carries more social and political meanings than just being a religious obligation. It represented higher class, emulating modesty of prophet's wives and lastly as means of regaining dominance by reforming the practices that Prophet Mohammad had started.

The next section tries to understand the gradual construction of 'hijab' as a symbol of cultural identity and factors behind hijab being a part of Islamic culture though the use of hijab has not been directly mentioned in Islam.

## **2.2 Hijab and Cultural Identity**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, upper class urban Muslim and Christian women wore head covers and *burqa* in Egypt (Ahmed Leila 143). However, a major population of the Middle East today identifies them as Muslims, also the tradition of wearing headcover and burqa which was borrowed from Byzantine and Persian empires. Interestingly even then wearing a hijab or *niqab* (a face veil attached to the headcover) was not merely a religious practice. Wearing a veil indicated that this woman did not need to go to the field to work or do any other physical labor, which is hard to do wearing a headscarf or veil. As it is said, 'a veiled woman silently announced that her husband was rich enough to keep her idle' (Jonathan Bloom 47).

Eventually hijab and niqab had been adapted as a well fitted expression of the Quranic guidance of maintaining modesty and seclusion. Along with hijab becoming a widely accepted

religious practice, it can be seen from the perspective of ‘embodied cultural capital’ as well. It is mentioned in literature repetitively that hijab/ veil/ niqab was an upper-class practice, a symbol of civilization. During the early twentieth century Egyptian women used to wear a niqab when going to the city as it could make them look more civilized (Silverstri 276). As the upper-class society dominates and has significant effects in shaping urban culture, it was very likely for headscarf/ hijab to become a cultural attire of the Muslim women eventually.

Though direct connection of increased usage of hijab in Bangladesh is hard to locate from history, as Bangladesh is a comparatively new country and it is not officially a Muslim country. Hence, the discourses that are mentioned below regarding rising use of hijab involves Pakistan. The increased use of hijab in Pakistan and in this subcontinent may have influenced Bangladesh due to their proximate cultures and shared geopolitical past.

As British colonialization took over, veiling women in the colonized Muslim countries had been highly criticized in Western discourses. And Western culture, as the dominating culture attempted to prove theirs as a better lifestyle, which included women’s dressing. Leila Ahmed discussed, Veiling is, to Western eyes, the most significant sign of the ‘differentness and inferiority of Islamic societies’. And it became the symbol of both the oppression of women (or, in the language of those days, Islam’s degradation of women) and the backwardness of Islam’. Veiling has become one of the easiest and widely used way of ‘colonial attack and the spearhead of the assault on Muslim societies’ (144-168). During 1970s Pakistan, adaptation of the Western culture rapidly increased, which was identified as a threat to the Islamic culture of that country. Nadeem F. Paracha in his article wrote, ‘‘In 1970’s.... the so-called ‘radical chic’ and ‘hippie attire’ developing in the West started to also catch the fancy of young urban Pakistanis’’ (dawn.com). It was mentioned that the attire of the female students and the urban middle class/

upper-middle class young women started getting shorter than usual. Even the Islamic culture was challenged in other practices in cities as well. “Night-clubs, bars, horse racing, and cinemas continued to thrive and mushroom, and religiosity largely remained a private matter, even though the government and state of Pakistan started using religious symbolism more often than before” (Ibid). Such changes appeared to be unacceptable and threat to the Muslim identity specially of the younger generations.

During the late twentieth century a revival of the hijab practice happened in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and some other Muslim countries. This revival was an act to show resistance against western culture and to express the Muslim identity more loudly. There was a movement announced by the Muslim students named ‘Sahwah’ (awakening movement) to reunite and rededicate themselves to the Islamic beliefs and cultural practices. And the dress code of wearing fully covered dresses with a hijab was a major stance of the female supporters of the movement.

Soon the practice of wearing a hijab spread and has been accepted widely among the Muslim countries, also in Muslim majority countries. Katherine Bullock wrote that the movement started during 1970s-1980s and had political engagement of the Muslim world as well. The act of regaining Islamic culture emphasized a lot on women’s attire and women’s public behavior, it has been noted as oppressive and against gender equality by the West and other countries (Bullock).

On the contrary, the Muslim women in Muslim dominated countries from Arab to Asia took this re-covering movement quite positively. Bullock also mentioned that “The re-covering movement challenges the reductive image of the veil as a symbol of Muslim women’s oppression” (22–53), They thought wearing a hijab gave their Muslim identity more definition,

also, that it helps to protect themselves from sexual harassment and abuse. Katherine Bullock in her study pointed out four main reasons behind today's Muslim women's preference of wearing hijab.: political protest, religious, continued access to public sphere, and statement of personal identity. Though her study is based on Muslim countries of Middle East, not Asia, but the themes show that Hijab is not only about showing/practicing modesty, nor is it entirely a religious practice, but more. It has become more political after the awakening movement. Hijab carries the symbol of protecting Muslim identity while protesting against the dominating Western ideas about hijab, as well it symbolizes free will and freedom of choice in today's world which expresses a bit more dominating gender identity of the Muslim young women. This study will focus on Bangladesh to find out the symbolic meaning attached to it in the context. Along with expression of identity, increased use of Hijab has been mentioned widely as 'Fashion' in the qualitative data of this study. Next section will shed light on this transformative turn that hijab has taken and its relation to young urban Bangladeshi women's choice of attire.

### **2.3 Islamic Fashion Trend**

Being aligned with global fashion or trend is much easier in today's world because of modern technology. Not only that people now can witness and follow the modern trends without any delay with the help of television and social media, even the products are easily accessible now. Bangladesh as a Muslim majority country, the people of this country feel associated with the culture of the Muslim countries, as a result, the increasing Islamic fashion trends are rapidly being adapted by Bangladeshis, especially the youth, as they are more likely to follow trend and are more frequent in using technology.

Now the question is, why is the Islamic fashion trends, especially in case of female attire widely accepted and adapted in daily practice among the Muslim population? According to Annisa R. Beta, the fashion magazines and media represent urban women with hijab as “urban, cosmopolitan women, yet at the same time maintains pious, traditional identities of Muslim women, who adhere domestic roles and conventional feminine representations” (55). The role of media in shaping and reshaping socio-cultural factors is evident, especially in case of adaptation of hijab.

Bangladesh is changing and progressing with the rest of the world. Women in Bangladesh are now way more educated, getting higher degrees and pursuing their career. They are a part of the ‘modern women’ race now, meaning the women in Bangladesh now are more independent and aware of freedom of choice. But at the same time Bangladesh is still led behind in terms of gender equality; it is a patriarchal and male dominated society. And it can be claimed at this point that the increased use of hijab in urban Bangladesh is not just about religious practice but more.

According to Islam, a hijab or any Islamic attire should be very neutral so that it does not attract extra attention. But today’s Islamic fashion trend is showing a contradictory drift with regards to the basic idea of veiling, if not always but in many cases. Islamic fashion trend has a huge consumer base. According to Thomson Reuters, world’s combined Muslim population, which was figured out at 1.6 billion in 2012, spent an amount of \$230 billion (approximately) on clothing and footwear during the year 2014 and it’s on rise since then (88). So, Islamic attires, especially women’s attire and hijab are more than just necessity, it is a fashion statement now.

Consumers buy a product, especially clothes and accessories, not just for the functional aspect of the product but as statements conveyed through the possession of the product plays a vital role. Grubb and Grathwohl referred to this process as ‘symbolic consumption’, in which people use a product as a tool to create, develop and maintain their identity (26).

The symbolic consumption of hijab is not entirely about seclusion but it is often more political and cultural. It is a fashion statement also, as mentioned above. The next section concentrates on the context of Bangladesh and examines the possible symbolic meanings attached to such consumer attitudes.

## **2.4 Hijab in Bangladesh and it’s Consumer Behavior**

A journal article, while describing the increasing popularity of hijab in Bangladesh mentioned that the use of Hijab among educated urban women is on a rapid rise in Bangladesh. On the event of world hijab day (which has been declared in 2013 and celebrated worldwide) ‘top-educated’ Bangladeshi hijab users claimed that ‘hijab is not only a religious obligation but millions of females across the world have realized that it beautifies and dignifies women’ (Kamruzzaman, aa.com.tr). The same article refers to the lived experience of educated Bangladeshi women who use hijab. The following quotes portray an alternative perspective in the context of Bangladesh, as it was taken for granted in Bangladeshi society that the only symbolic meaning attached to hijab is modesty and Islamic regulation. One of the comments says, “Now, the hijab is considered to be good culture. So, it is not only important to me religiously, but also socially and culturally.”

A medical student said, “Alhamdulillah, (All praise is due to Allah) the situation has changed a lot and even many ultra-modern females are using the hijab as a part of their fashion and beautiful dress code.”

The article also discusses the tendency of degrading or ridiculing the hijab users as backdated in urban and high-class society in Bangladesh. The mindset of anything that is not Westernized is not good enough is an ongoing practice in the context of urban Bangladesh (Ibid). The hijab users of urban Bangladesh also use their Islamic attire as a protest to that mindset, just as mentioned earlier, it happened in western and colonized countries.

As the above discussions indicate, hijab is an expression or medium of demonstrating Muslim identity in today’s Bangladesh as well. Also, Hijab is getting popular in the market and on social media in Bangladesh, we have hijab influencers now and many young women to follow them. Bangladeshi urban young women too assign hijab to the idea of free will, beauty, trendy, fashion, social acceptance, dignity, being true to themselves and more. As it is an increasing social practice and women wearing hijab feel empowered and benefited, this study will attempt an understanding of this new cultural expression on the rise through the theoretical concepts of Bourdieu’s cultural capital and Bhabha’s cultural hybridity.

## **2.5 Cultural Hybridity**

‘Cultural hybridity’ refers to a balance of values, socio-cultural practices and customs of two or more cultures. The process at the same time rejects the authority of a given culture but modifies itself according to the changes and influences which are inevitable, it creates a third kind, a hybrid culture. This hybridity creates a dual sense of the self, which goes beyond the

boundary of nationality, ethnicity and the core cultural practices of a certain area. The collaboration of choices and dual identity is relatable to the concept of what Homi Bhabha calls the ‘Third Space of enunciation’ (Bhabha 1995, 209). He emphasizes on the interrelation and interdependence between the colonized and the colonizer. He claims that mutual construction blurs the boundaries and creates a third space for a new and hybrid culture to rise. The hybrid culture embraces diversity. As Homi Bhabha explains, the “displacing”, “disjuncting” and the “encounters” give birth to different expressions or a hybrid point of view of being, which eventually plays a vital role in shaping and reshaping identity and challenges existing beliefs.

He basically provided this concept to understand the postmodern society and the relationship between the dominant and dominated cultures; fundamentally meaning the colonized and the colonizer. In this context the dominating culture, along with the west is also the ideology of ‘Islamic modernism’ (Encyclopedia.com) or the cultural practices associated with ‘contemporary Islam’.

## **2.6 Hybridity and Hijab**

Bangladesh, being a country of mainly Muslim inhabitants, the culture of this country and practices are noticeably influenced by the Muslim tradition, including dressing and the associated meanings. Along with that the colonial history of this land also has its impact and contribution in building the ‘hybrid culture’ of today. If noticed closely, the hybridization of attire and the dual identity, especially among the younger generations of women is quite prominently noticeable.

The concept of a ‘third space’ and ‘fluidity’ of culture because of the influence of the dominant cultures is very relatable with today’s youth of Bangladesh. In constructing and demonstrating a new or improvised identity, a vital medium is daily social practices, among which clothing is a significant one. Which makes the phenomenon of increased hijab adaptation a connected factor.

## **2.7 Hijab as a Capital:**

This paper mentions earlier from history that hijab was an attire of the rich and higher class. This factor is also relatable to Bangladesh. Hijab is more common in middle-class families. Fashionable hijab is widely common among youth and urban areas. What does the poor Muslim people prefer, one might ask. Columnist Abir mentions that the lower middle class and female workers do not bother much about wearing a hijab though they are faithful Muslims (archive.dhakatribune.com). Because it is sometimes just not practical enough to carry on this practice and work outside in a hot country like Bangladesh. He also mentioned “Wearing the hijab or maintaining Islamic veils has become a symbol of fashion, faith, and modesty for a certain class in society. It is definitely not a practice seen among the poor young women who are the driving force in Bangladesh’s RMG industry.” (ibid). It is noticeable that the contemporary use of hijab is related to social class as well. The trend or fashion statement assigned with hijab is performed by the urban youth mostly. Which makes ground for this study to consider the contemporary use of hijab in urban Bangladesh from the point of view of hijab being a capital.

To understand the phenomenon more specifically, this study reflects on Bourdieu's cultural as theoretical lens. 'Capital' is an important concept introduced by Bourdieu. He argued that the foundation of social life is formed by capital and it determines one's position in the social order. Bourdieu argues that the more powerful position in social life is occupied by the ones with more capital. The capital Bourdieu talks about is not limited to the economy. It is extended beyond economical or material assets to capital that are social, cultural or symbolic. For instance, sharing the same taste in dresses creates a sense of collective identity, where they can be under one umbrella "people like us". Cultural capital, specifically embodied cultural capital and the concept of symbolic capital is specifically relatable to this study. As these capitals and the means by which it is created or transferred from other forms of capital – plays a central role in societal power relations, as this provides the means for a non-economic form of domination and hierarchy (Gaventa 6). Cultural and symbolic capital creates a non-economic version of domination. A more relatable example is, different types of dresses, regardless of their price tags, create division among people with different tastes. And there is a general structure of which is superior and which is less. To define embodied cultural capital Bourdieu said, 'Embodied cultural capital' comprises the knowledge that is 'consciously acquired and passively inherited', by socialization to culture and tradition. The embodied cultural capital is a person's 'means of communication and self-presentation' and it is acquired from the surrounding culture (Bourdieu 1990, *The Logic of Practice* 114).

The term 'symbolic capital' has been explained by Pierre Bourdieu to refer to the power of language in providing its speakers with resources for recognition, acceptance, and prestige in various social settings (*On Symbolic Power* 165).

‘Symbolic capital’ is referred as a “degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity or honor and is founded on a dialectic of knowledge (connaissance) and recognition (reconnaissance)” (Bourdieu, “A Field of Cultural reproduction” 7). In *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu refers to ‘symbolic capital’ as: “the acquisition of a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honorability” (291). Embodied cultural capital is expressed through Habitus. In one of his major works, ‘*Distinction*’ Bourdieu goes on explaining habitus and takes higher class French citizen’s taste in ‘high art’ as example. He asserts that ‘Life-styles are thus the systematic products of habitus’ and schemes of the habitus ‘distinguish’ one class from another. Which makes habitus the physical embodiment of ‘cultural capital’ (Bourdieu 71-78) To understand the increased popularity of hijab, it’s fashion value and to understand hijab as a trend, finding the complex social power relation and assigned meaning of hijab is necessary. Therefore, the concept of habitus, cultural and symbolic capital is essential for this study.

## **Research Design and Methodology**

### **Chapter 3**

#### **3.1 Method**

This study is exploratory and constructed upon qualitative data. To collect the data, this study conducted an online survey and interviews. More specifically, semi-structured interviewing technique has been used in this study. This study chose semi structured interview as it allows more flexibility. Unlike unstructured interviews, semi structured interviews have a set of questions; the interviewer has a sample question and predetermined theme in their mind. In semi-structured interviews, the questions are loosely structured and give interviewees more opportunities to fully express themselves. To collect the data, purposive sampling has been used in this research for this study will entail deliberate selection of particular criteria to determine the suitable data. Purposive sampling is a sampling process where a researcher chooses members of particular context as participants depending on their own judgment. Unlike random sampling, in purposive sampling a researcher only approaches to individuals who are, according to their judgment are most well fitted for the study objective. So, the 30 participants are the people who matches the desired criteria of age, economic status and geographic location, and the 10 interviewees are the ones who brought forth aspects closer to the research objectives and also agreed to share personal experiences in detail. Primarily some of the questions had been constructed in a direct way so that the interviewees don't get derailed from the selected topic, and the participants can talk about their psychology behind choosing the particular attire on discussion without thinking too much about it, yet there is always a scope in semi structured

interviews/ questionnaire to respond spontaneously. The reason for asking some general questions was because I was a bit unsure which questions would elicit responses relating to my research, and there is always an opportunity to ask follow up questions. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

### **3.2 Participants**

My primary goal was to elicit my participants' thoughts regarding the choice of adapting hijab, finding out why a significant percentage of the urban young women are making certain decisions when they choose their clothing. The Participants are young women who live in urban Bangladesh, the participants are specifically from Dhaka and Rajshahi city. I took data from 30 young women between the ages of 20 and 30 who were already in the practice of wearing hijab and most exposed to change and new ideas and aware of the fact on discussion. The participants are students and private job holders in the mentioned two cities. Observing these young women in this age-range within the mentioned socio-cultural setting inspired my original research question which is related to why hijab adaptation is on rise among young women in urban Bangladesh.

The participants were selected according to the following criteria: Age, marital status and occupation. In addition, the participants belong to socio-economically middle class and upper middle-class backgrounds. I choose this particular group of people as this particular socio-economic group is more influential in depicting a general scenario of the society, also because this economic group contains a major portion of the population. Their perspective reveals a contemporary understanding regarding hijab adaptation of the given society.

As mentioned above, the respondents were women between the age of 20 – 30 years. And according to the data the respondents were 66% within the age of 25 and 33% within the age of 26-30. As it shows, the respondents are mostly the young adults, specifically urban youths; the people of a society who are the most exposed to anything new and among the most prominent age groups who are more likely to practice any visible social or cultural change.

**Table 1: Age**

| Age             | Percentage |
|-----------------|------------|
| 20-25 years old | 66 %       |
| 26-30 years old | 33%        |

Data also has been collected regarding the marital status of the respondents. This criterion seemed necessary as according to the culture in practice in Bangladesh, marriage plays an important role regarding a woman's social identity, even in performing the assigned gender roles. According to the data 73% of the respondents are unmarried and 27 % are married. Therefore, in most cases in this study the relation of choosing hijab because of the influence of in-laws or fitting in the gender role of being secluded because of being a wife is almost is low. Which deducts the possibility mostly to the influence of the primary family, social influence and independent choice behind hijab adaptation.

**Table 2**

## Marital Status

| Marital status | Percentage |
|----------------|------------|
| Unmarried      | 73 %       |
| Married        | 27 %       |

73% of the respondents are university students, 10% job holders and 13% unemployed. It is evident that the respondents are educated and as university students and private job holders in urban areas, they are among the representatives of educationally and culturally privileged social groups.

**Table 3**

## Occupation

| Occupation | Percentage |
|------------|------------|
| student    | 73%        |
| Job Holder | 10%        |
| Unemployed | 13 %       |

### **3.3 Designing the Questionnaire**

The setting of the interview and many other aspects make contribution to the interview and data. Most of the interviews were conducted over phone and through video calls during June 2021 nationwide lockdown because of the Covid-19 situation and the online survey was through google form which contained open-ended questions.

In total 30 responses have been collected. the respondents had been requested to write their responses in as much detail as possible. And later 10 in depth interviews have been conducted which included open-ended questions to achieve a deeper understanding.

Some of the questions address social behaviors and predetermined social conceptions about hijab as women's preferred attire, considering Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' which shows that predetermined social conceptions often unconsciously are adapted and implemented by individuals. It might be a point that sticking to an already prepared questionnaire can limit the participant's response, but the beforehand questions seemed important as the study has some specific objectives.

All questions that were asked during the interview, were fully consensual, confidential and would only be used for research purposes.

### **3.4 Analysis Technique:**

To find out a common idea and pattern of meaning this paper considers thematic approach for analyzing the qualitative data. This method was introduced by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clark. Thematic analysis is a very efficient approach specially to understand human psychology; to understand opinions, values and to analyze human behavior. As mentioned, this

study is based on open ended questions where the female participants express their insight and opinion on their practice of wearing hijab. It needs flexibility to interpret such kind of data, for that this approach seemed best suited.

In the first step all data has been transcribed and put together. To code the data a well appreciated software has been used which is specialized for qualitative data analysis named 'MAXQDA'. The software has been only used to deduct the themes from the code. Also, the transcripts have been manually coded depending on the following factors:

- Words and phrases repeated in several places
- Anything that seemed surprising
- When an interviewee explicitly mentions something, which connects to the research question
- Anything that connects to the areas mentioned in the literature review
- Anything that reminds or connects to any relevant theory

Next, the codes were reexamined, combined and narrowed down to the most relevant and important ones. Further the codes had been categorized to come up with some major themes.

In the second phase the themes derived from the software and manually deducted ones are compared, most common and significant ones are taken as main themes of the study for further discussion. And finally, the themes have been described, interpreted and justified by theories and a meaningful connection has been made between the themes to come up with the result of this study. The next chapter analyses the data under the themes derived from the data.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Understanding the Meaningful Scarf**

The study questionnaire addressed social, cultural and personal reasons behind the decision of adapting hijab. The responses brought forth the fact that indeed the foremost reason behind hijab adaptation is religious, a way to demonstrate their faith for the Almighty. But some other social significance behind the practice also have been mentioned widely in the data, which surely demand an in-depth discussion to understand the rising hijab adaptation phenomenon. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the most common and mostly addressed aspects have been coded. And further, themes have been created accordingly to describe the findings viably.

#### **4.1 Background Information**

The survey started with some structured questions addressing the time length of participants wearing hijab, whether they wear it in every public appearance or not and the age when they started wearing hijab. The purpose of these structured questions was to draw a background, to get a better understanding of the participants. 86% of the respondents said they always wear hijab when going outside, referring that for them it is an essential part of their attire, not optional. Also, 80% respondents answered that wearing hijab was their own decision, where only 20% said that there was peer pressure.

The Table below shows from what age and for how many years the respondents are in practice of wearing hijab.

**Table 4**

Length of time

| Years | Less         | 2-4   | 5-8   | 9-15  | More          |
|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|
| Age   | than 2 years | years | years | years | than 15 years |
| 20-22 |              | 1     | 2     |       |               |
| 23-25 | 1            |       | 6     | 11    |               |
| 26-27 |              |       | 1     | 3     |               |
| 28-30 |              | 2     | 1     |       | 1             |

Data from this study shows that the women aged 23-25 are in the practice for the longest time, essentially meaning they adapted hijab at a very early age. However, the phenomenon that the majority of the respondents started hijab right after their adolescence or before being an adult is an important finding for this study. This is because inevitably it is the age when people mostly shape themselves according to the reflection of their surroundings and society. But they also stated that it was completely their individual decision, which sheds light on the possibility that the practice of wearing hijab is more of a culturally ingrained habitus than a practice consciously adopted.

As the respondents were asked the reason and influences behind adapting hijab, many of the responses give evidence towards a newly adapted religious culture. The next section showcases the most common and noteworthy reasons behind wearing hijab according to the respondents.

#### 4.1.1 Reasons Behind Wearing Hijab:

**Table 5**

Reasons behind wearing hijab

| Reason                                    | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------------|------------|
| For religious purposes and self-motivated | 60%        |
| Influence of family/ surrounding          | 40%        |

Data shows that 60% of the respondents wear hijab for religious purposes and are self-motivated. The question arises what religious purpose does it serve according to them, as the modern practice of hijab doesn't really physically seclude an individual from the outer world. and Afterall religiosity isn't experienced similarly rather it varies depending on age and social context. In the follow-up questions regarding 'religious purpose' the respondents mostly addressed that the practice of wearing hijab makes them feel 'closer to the almighty', and that they feel more 'connected' to their religious belief. Although, 40% of the respondents are influenced by their family and surroundings, meaning they wanted to be included in the social

group who are in the practice of wearing hijab. Columnist David Brook in explaining the concept of Bourdieu's 'cultural capital', points out the significance of 'collective identity' and 'group position' (seattletimes.com); Meaning agents of a society collect symbolic elements which make them part of a certain and desired social class/group, which plays a prominent role in their social mobility, just like wealth or economic position. Given that 40% of the respondents felt the necessity to be included in the 'collective identity' of a religious woman indicates towards the sociocultural structure of today's Bangladesh where a woman with hijab has symbolic connotations and the rising popularity indicates that this particular collective identity dictates in hierarchy, thus it's possibility of being a symbolic capital.

The above discussion indicates the two basic reasons for adapting hijab according to the respondents. Although, the primary finding that hijab adaptation is a personal decision and the purpose is religious obligation needs some more discussions, as the participants had dynamic meanings associated with those responses which the follow-up questions revealed. The participants, though, said the purpose is religious and hijab adaptation being a personal choice, but they frequently mentioned the phrases 'socially appreciated' and 'social acceptance'. Which is seemingly contradictory with the initial concept of personal choice or solely being a religious obligation. It seems that the 'personal choice' is shaped by 'social acceptance', spontaneously but unconsciously. Which made this study consider the adaptation as habitus. Further, Influence of the surrounding has been identified as the second prominent factor. but the number is quite large which motivated this paper to examine it from the perspective of a symbolic capital and the kind of 'collective identity' it provides.

#### **4.2 Hijab, a Habitus and Islamic Culture in Bangladesh**

As the respondents are youths of the given society and majority of them are self-motivated or influenced by their surrounding and not in any means forced or directly ruled to wear hijab (only 2% respondents mentioned that hijab had been imposed upon them), it can be said that the religious culture is on rise as hijab adaptation is mentioned as a spontaneous choice. Now that it has been noted as a spontaneous choice according to the responses, it moves one step closer towards considering the revived hijab adaptation as ‘habitus. Columnist Brooks explains the concept of ‘habitus’ of Bourdieu, that Upper-class individuals in the French society have a taste for fine art because ‘they have been exposed to and trained to appreciate it since a very early age’. On the other hand, the lower class of the same society isn’t into ‘high art’ because they weren’t ‘exposed to’ the practice (nytimes.com). The fact that hijab has been a spontaneous choice of the respondents can be linked to the features of habitus; which is to adapt a skill or daily practice depending on the agent’s ‘life experience’.

Hijab is on discussion at the first place just because this particular clothing has variety of assigned meanings according to time and space around the world and we seek to understand the symbolic meanings attached to it in today’s Bangladesh, the responses already show that ‘hijab’ is a widely appreciated and accepted phenomenon in Bangladesh, the question is why, to be specific the reasons behind the sudden rise of interest.

There was a movement announced by the Muslim students named ‘Sahwah’(a awakening movement) to reunite themselves to the Islamic beliefs and cultural practices. This movement started spreading in the Muslim countries during the 80s, and the increased use of hijab publicly started showing in Bangladesh in mid 90s. There were people wearing hijab before that but it was quite limited so was the market. (See the discussion in Literature review, Bullock).

Interestingly this study also confirms that women aged around 25 are more likely to wear hijab and they are wearing it for the longest time compared to the women aged above that. Women who are 25 were born around mid-90s and by the time they were aware about their surroundings the use of hijab was already on rise. Also, Khondkar's study, quantitative research on 200 Bangladeshi women also showed that 80% of the women in practice are adolescent and youth, only 20% of them are middle aged. Also, 65% of them are from Dhaka city (Khondkar 65). Which indicates that the socio-political agenda of restoring Islamic religious culture in the Muslim and Muslim majority countries has positive results, as one significant physical agenda of the movement was to eliminate western attire and accepting more covered religious attire for women. The rising acceptance towards Islamic attire and Muslim identity among the youth of Bangladesh indicates uprise of the Muslim culture.

#### **4.2.1 Reasons Behind the Increased Acceptance of the Muslim Culture:**

This is to be noted that the religion itself and a culture that emerges around it are not exactly the same thing. Bangladesh was a Muslim majority country all along. However, the culture here has its unique qualities like any other. By 'Muslim culture' here is meant the cultural traits, values, identity formation and norms practiced in the Muslim countries or practiced in general by Muslims as Islamic culture around the world.

To discuss the reason behind the acceptance of the Muslim culture, this study will take the concept of habitus and cultural capital as theoretical tool.

The relation among the factors that this study constructs is, if an act, practice or skill is part of habitus it is potentially a symbolic or cultural capital of the given society. As Bourdieu claimed, habitus is the physical embodiment of cultural capital, indicating the deeply rooted

‘habits’, ‘skills’, ‘dispositions. So, something being an ingrained habitus leads that aspect towards being a symbolic/cultural capital, in this case the adaptation of hijab. The symbolic/cultural capital upholds individuals or social groups in a particular context higher in social power-relations. Individuals tend to be lured towards those symbolic capital as it provides ‘prestige’ (Bourdieu, “The field of cultural Production” 7) and thus that particular practice becomes a preferred ‘culture’ a symbol of ‘better’ and ‘respected’. As Bourdieu says about habitus, thus cultural capital that ‘It is a virtue made of necessity which continuously transforms necessity into virtue’ (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 175). So if hijab is a symbolic and cultural capital in the context of Bangladesh, that will be the reason behind the rapidly growing acceptance for the ‘Islamic culture’.

Previously the literature review showed the history of hijab and pointed that hijab was a mode of showing higher class, a sign of civilization, it was explicitly a cultural capital, more specifically an objectified cultural capital. But in the context of Bangladesh, it is not that explicit, as it is described more as a religious obligation and not as a cultural change. The users generally do not identify the use of hijab as a means of capital, as the data showed. For that reason, this study tends to provide evidence first to connect hijab adaptation to habitus, which makes ground to prove it as a symbolic/cultural capital. As habitus is a physical embodiment of cultural capital. Bourdieu mentioned that habitus also extends to our “taste” for cultural objects such as art, food, and clothing. And it is an important aspect to be mentioned that, attire or clothing is after all a cultural aspect.

To briefly point out the aspects that indicate any practice to be a part of habitus, habitus is described as a ‘feel’ or ‘just know’ what’s right according to the situation, learning from the ‘life

experience' what is the right thing to do as a part of the social structure. It is often described as 'a gut feeling' and 'intuition', which Bourdieu believed were collective and socially shaped. (LIZARDO 375-448)

Also, habitus not only is structured by an individual's objective past position in the social structure but also structures the individual's future life path. Now when explaining the influence behind wearing hijab many of the participants expressed similar responses, saying they were self-motivated to wear hijab because it is a 'better' choice, or to be a part of the collective social behavior. or 'just knew' that this is the right thing to do. A respondent says, '**I don't know the exact reason but it just felt right to wear it**', indicating towards the 'gut feeling' or 'intuition' which are features of habitus. Another respondent though mentions it as an intuitive right thing to do but also links the practice with social acceptance, saying, '**The society has a positive attitude towards those who wear hijab, it's just right to wear hijab**'. 30% of the participants explicitly uttered the word 'right thing'. The next one goes on saying, '**many of my close friends wear hijab which might have created interest in me, and lead me towards the right thing, this practice made me better**', again the words 'the right thing' and 'better' refers to the right thing and better according to the social structure. The individual seemingly makes independent decisions according to them, but it is made depending on the life experience they have about 'right thing' and 'better'. Thus the 'right thing' is an element of habitus. Further the response shows the 'unawareness' of the agent, the fact that habitus is not a 'conscious' act, the respondent says, '**I decided to do so because it is a good practice and Muslim women should wear it**'. Here, 'should' emphasizes on it being a strict religious obligation, though Islam evidently does not particularly suggest using hijab -the headscarf, rather it suggests seclusion. So, the 'good practice' and 'should' is according to the culture of the society, a decision of the social

structure which she mentions as ‘I decided’. As it is said, ‘habitus is created and reproduced unconsciously, ‘without any deliberate pursuit of coherence... without any conscious concentration’. (Bourdieu 1984, 170)

Further, when the respondents have been asked if there were any other reason, they would like to mention for wearing hijab, the responses somehow resemble and hover around ‘doing the right thing’ to gain ‘social acceptance’, to achieve ‘appreciation’. **‘Because everybody wants to gain acceptance of the society, so do I.’** referring to the life experience of the respondent and acquiring a habit to fit in the concept ‘people like us’. The next participant clearly assigns hijab with its symbolic meaning according to her, and her desire to be a part of that ‘collective identity’, **‘hijab is the sign of modesty. And everyone likes to be modest in Bangladesh.’** Habitus is neither a result of free will, nor determined by structures, but created by a kind of interplay between the two over time: dispositions that are both shaped by past events and structures, and that shape current practices and structures (Bourdieu, 1984,41). The statement clearly shows the interplay between structure and agency. Hijab is sign of ‘modesty’ to the individual because the structure is designed to appreciate it as modesty. The practice is influenced by social structure as it shows, also the preference of individuals contributes in forming the structure. The next respondent also links the practice with ‘social appreciation’. Says, **‘I personally feel that hijab is a great tool in maintaining one's modesty. Hijab creates a positive image for girls in our society’.** she said she ‘personally feels’ hijab is a good tool to showcase modesty, which means it’s more like an intuition to her. But also mentions the link between agency and social power relations by saying it creates a ‘positive image’. Which again refers to the practice or clothing preference being more of a social issue indicating towards a symbolic capital as it provides ‘prestige’.

The above-mentioned statements show that Hijab, for many, is a deeply ingrained habit which just feels a 'right', 'better', 'positive' choice to make. Also, the fact that they described largely the practice of wearing hijab to be personal and independent and then attached it to their life experience of a more appreciated cultural/social practice makes it what Bourdieu described as a decision 'collective and socially shaped' where the individual agents are 'unconscious' about the fact that this is not as personal as it seems. As the data showed 70% of the respondents mentioned 'social acceptance' at some point of the discussion. 40% of the respondents directly related to the hijab being the 'right thing' to practice. 20% associated hijab with only religion and nothing else. The feeling of doing the right thing is very high according to the responses, also a significant number associate it with social acceptance, which means it's dominated by social structure and power relations. Such findings give this study the ground to link hijab adaptation to habitus.

To briefly point out the reason behind the rising acceptance toward Muslim culture, it can be said that, besides being a conscious religious practice hijab works as a habitus especially among urban youth, the adaptation of hijab has a very positive connotation in the context of Bangladesh, it is appreciated and accepted largely which benefits the ones in practice as a form of symbolic capital.

#### **4.2.2 Hijab and Social Power Relation:**

Further, the aspect of social power relation has been coded frequently in the responses of the participants. To justify the discussion about that, the concept of symbolic/cultural capital discussed by Pierre Bourdieu has been considered to be best fitted. Cultural/symbolic capital plays a central role in societal power relations. As mentioned by J. Gaventa, it "provides the

means for a non-economic form of domination and hierarchy, as classes distinguish themselves through taste” (6). As Bourdieu explains, social agents struggle to achieve power and to avail that they try to possess different kinds of ‘capital’. The ‘capitals’ he talks about are symbolic capitals, the ‘markers of prestige’. These capitals are used to gain social acceptance, respect, to be a part of the group and to gain certain benefits according to the context. And we agents of the society bring these capitals to what Bourdieu mentioned as ‘social marketplace’. (Kramsch, 77-132)

In Bourdieu’s discussion the point has been made that habitus is the physical embodiment of cultural/social capital. The responses described above discuss the practice of wearing hijab being a habitus, therefore a capital. Further responses will be examined to find out what kind of social relation or social power relation is hijab assigned with which will help to make the point towards what the symbolic capital essentially implies.

#### **4.3 Hijab as a ‘Capital’**

Brooks in his article quotes Bourdieu, which says, we take our symbolic capital and our habitus and we compete in the ‘symbolic marketplace’. ‘We vie as individuals and as members of our class for prestige, distinction’. And the symbolic capital that wins the race defines what is right, what is ‘natural’, and what is ‘best’ for the society.

Also, while quoting Bourdieu, Brook writes in his article, “Every minute or hour, in ways we’re not even conscious of, we as individuals and members of our class are competing for dominance and respect.” (nytimes.com)

The discussion above gives a brief but primary and efficient understanding of what Bourdieu pointed as symbolic capital. Though in describing ‘habitus’ it has been said that the practices often are performed without consciously connecting it to social power relations, but if questioned and observed more closely the relation is visible. The respondents were further asked, despite hijab being an individual choice as they said and religious obligation, can they connect the practice of wearing it with any social aspects. The answers that came forward are evidently relatable to the quote mentioned above. They did mention a desire to gain ‘respect’, availing a ‘better’ position in society, and achieving ‘dominance’. One respondent says, **‘in society who follow Muslim lifestyle are more respected.’** As mentioned before ‘respect’ is undeniably a symbolic capital, as social respect benefits individuals, it provides more symbolic capital and puts one above on the stair of hierarchy. The respondent clearly links ‘Muslim lifestyle’ to be an embodied cultural capital, social position which is acquired through certain practices and intangible in sense that it cannot be just transferred from one person to another, it’s a lifestyle and comes gradually. To refer to the initial question of this section, which is what symbolic capital is provided by the use of hijab, it has been mentioned by the next respondent that it creates acceptance to the patriarchal society. **‘Wearing Hijab makes me feel secure among this male dominated society as wearing it provides you with a certain kind of immunity where the society will treat you as a religious and decent woman’.** In describing symbolic capital Bourdieu said that it is acquired through ‘a reputation of competence and an image of respectability and honorability’ (Bourdieu, 1984, 291), which in this case is the tag of a ‘decent woman’. Also, she mentions the dominant class, here which is the male of the society who plays the dominating role in setting up rules, social norms. And the women are there with their

symbolic capital to the symbolic marketplace to fit in under the assigned values to achieve respect.

Additionally, the respondents keep on linking the symbolic capital 'hijab' with 'respect' and 'prestige'. One of the respondents says, **'wearing hijab is in trend in society these days. It makes me look very sober from a common society's point of view.'** A society's point of view surely points towards the values, norms, that have been set, as previously quoted as 'right', 'best' or 'natural'. And who decides that 'right'? It's the Dominant class or people within the same class who dominate, as described by Bourdieu. Women, regardless of their economic class in general, are the members of the dominated class. So, an attire being in 'trend' and its relation to looking 'sober', which the dominant class prefers in a woman, legitimately shows that hijab as a capital provides 'honor' from the dominating class of the society, which obviously benefits them. This explains being the embodiment of symbolic capital, as the women as social agents also want to be higher in capital. Further respondents directly mention social appreciation saying, **'Women often wear it to look good or to be socially appreciated.'**

Respondents also mentioned counter scenarios, the effects of not wearing hijab. During that discussion 40% of the women said that hijab helps to avoid 'physical harassment', 'physical and/or mental exploitation' by the men of the society. In simple words, wearing hijab is appreciated, praised by the male dominated society. The dominating class 'honors', 'respects' provides the tag of a 'good woman' to the ones who have adapted hijab. Which indicates that this particular symbolic/ capital is formed not by the economically dominating class of the society, but the inclusion of the Islamic culture and making hijab a cultural capital is formed by the dominating gender of the society.

Although it is worth mentioning that Muslim women in many places around the world don't identify hijab adaptation as a form of oppression. Rather, the Muslim women has made it a part of their identity, especially the youth. The scenario is quite similar in Bangladesh as well according to the data of this study. The Muslim women indeed adapted Muslim culture widely after certain political movements and as a resistance towards western culture from 1970s onward (described in the literature review). But there are improvisations, which has been mentioned as 'Islamic modernism'. Islamic modernism surely attempts to revive Islamic faith with modern values associated with it, such as 'democracy, civil rights, rationality, equality and progress'.  
(Gale)

## Chapter 5

### Hijab and Identity, Rise of a Hybrid Culture

In constructing one's identity the influence of surrounding, social norms and values are undeniable. The respondents have been asked if they see any change in their 'self' and personality after being in the practice of wearing hijab. The most common words derived from the responses are 'confidence' and 'beauty'. Also 30% of the participants said they didn't notice any change. Now, why do they feel 'confident'? There wasn't any direct answer for most of the participants, but responses indicate towards hijab also being a fashion statement, one respondent comments, **'Now a girl can express her fashion sense by choosing cute hijabs, while abiding by the laws of Islam. It just boosts my confidence.'** Surely, this practicing Muslim woman has taken the Muslim culture, shows her obedience towards the Almighty, at the same time improvises with the changing fashion trends. It Indicates that hijab is a part of her identity but it's not confined, it's a modern identity, where Islam and fashion can reside together.

Ten out of thirty women said that the practice of wearing hijab makes them feel good because it is appreciated. There are multiple responses proving the point, to mention one, **'young women often wear it to look good or to be socially appreciated.'**

Every capital is related to power as Bourdieu boldly points out in several discussions. Social acceptance, practicing the largely appreciated gender role surely provides power, it upholds an agent of the society higher in social power relations which also plays an important role in constructing identity. And in this study the symbolic capital hijab adaptation related to is appreciation, which according to the data provides confidence and comfort, which the

respondents mentioned as constructing a ‘better’ version of themselves. As a respondent said, **‘I feel way more comfortable in public now, hijab creates a better self-image for me’**. Another one said, **‘I am in my best self and the most comfortable with who I am after adapting to the hijab’**.

Attire is a widely used symbolic capital around the world, this study does not exclude other attires which are in practice in Bangladesh and are used for its symbolic meaning. In fact, Hijab is not the attire proven to be the symbol of higher class and aristocracy in Bangladesh. But the data shows that it wins in the power relation game according to the responses because it is highly appreciated in the male dominated society of Bangladesh, which brings ‘respect’ and ‘honor’, and that’s how the uprising Muslim culture has made this particular attire a symbolic capital. Which then contributes in building a positive and empowered self-image.

### **5.1 Hijab, a Modern Expression of the Self as Well:**

As the literature review showed previously, that hijab has been the symbol of ‘modesty’ among Muslim women from decades in different contexts. Assumingly, the connection between adapting hijab and one’s ‘self’ should have referred to being more protected or concealed. But the respondents, as mentioned before, emphasized on ‘confidence’ and ‘beauty’. The follow-up questions in the interviews brought out the fact that confidence is linked with social acceptance and also with their social image. According to one response, **‘Hijab is appreciated more than before because modest clothing doesn’t mean It will be boring & ugly anymore. It helps to raise self-esteem.’** The respondent assigns fashion with boosting self-esteem, which is an established fact. But she is combining the Muslim practice of hijab, which was ‘boring’ in her words. Her statement indicates the modern Islam, a hybrid form of self-perception where one is a

dedicated Muslim with fashion and that, according to them is a better expression of their identity. Another respondent says, **‘hijab is not simply about religion, for university students hijab also means modest and fashionable’**.

The respondents expressed that being an educated woman with hijab is a modern expression of the self, they feel fitted in the trend. Obviously being in trend or latest fashion provides confidence.

We can notice by now that hijab is connected to beauty in the present time. As also mentioned in the literature review, according to Beta and Hum, the fashion magazines and media represent urban women with hijab as “urban, cosmopolitan women, yet at the same time maintains pious, traditional identities of Muslim women, who adhere domestic roles and conventional feminine representations” (127). This very idea is at the core of the newly adapted ‘hijab fashion’ according to the responses. The modern women with hijab are educated women who practice free will but are also obedient to societal preference.

The respondents mentioned religion as the primary reason behind the practice, which is legit, but then they associated the aspects such as ‘appreciated’, ‘to be accepted by the men of the male dominated society’, ‘beautiful’, ‘more confident’, ‘trendy’.

Further, the data indicates hijab as a fashion. This discussion is important because, though there wasn’t any specific question addressing hijab as a fashion or trend, almost every participant at some point of the discussion brought forth the fact of hijab as a fashion statement. 95% of the participants stated that the use of hijab among young urban women has increased and the code analysis pointed out that the most used words in describing the increase of hijab adaptation are ‘fashion’ and ‘trend’. The next section analyzes the data to find out what the ‘hijab as fashion’ adds to the changing culture, which is mostly practiced by the youth.

## 5.2 Hijab as a Fashion Statement and Rise of a Hybrid Culture

The purpose of hijab fundamentally is to prevent showcasing beauty. By default, the meaning assigned to hijab is quite physical, it indicates physical seclusion and prevention from exposure to the outer world. Now, that we are talking about hijab as a fashion statement the contradictory factor of the issue is quite visible. One can practically see the rapidly growing market with a variety of products, products related to hijab which are on demand because of their aesthetic value, it contradicts with the fundamental purpose of hijab. This study also received similar responses like, **‘I love to use ornamental hijab-pins. They are fancy and look pretty’**. Also, responses showing that the users often also understand the contradiction, for example, **‘Even though I shouldn't be using ornaments to look more attractive to others, but the mind often yearns to do so. That's why I guess I do sometimes use broaches and prettier pins.’**

Therefore, there must be a meaning assigned which can explain the growing consumer base of this particular attire and its fashionable varieties. A very possible explanation is the symbolic meaning that hijab serves. A very efficient way of justifying the growing global market of Muslim attire, particularly hijab in this case is ‘symbolic consumption’. In describing symbolic consumption Grubb and Grathwohl said that it’s a process by which “people use a product as a tool to create, develop and maintain their identity” (22-27). Symbolic consumption is also well connected with fashion, as, when consumers buy a product, especially clothing and accessories, it is not just for the functional attributes of the product but a statement conveyed through the possession, according to the responses which is beauty and a modern expression of ‘self’. Many responses of the study justify this fact, for example the following respondent

indicates to the symbolic meaning, referring to the symbolic consumption of hijab, she says, **“there are many fashionable choices in the hijab market now, a fashionable hijab makes someone more eye catchy, because she represents a modest woman with fashion sense.”**

We have already noticed that one of the prominent statements is to showcase their Muslim identity and another two are ‘improved confidence’ and ‘beauty’. Hijab has been repeatedly mentioned as a medium of expressing beauty. One says, **‘truly speaking, hijab is kind of a trendy fashion now. There are different types and styles of hijab which help to enhance beauty.’**

Also, this specific finding of this study matches with other quantitative research conducted in urban Bangladesh about hijab adaptation. To mention one, according to a study conducted in Bangladesh, the quantitative data showed that ‘Majority of the respondents (82%) consider hijab as a fashion item indicating acceptance of inclusion of fashion in Muslim attire.’ Also found that only 2% of the respondents think that hijab must not be considered as a fashion item. The study further shows that ‘Among the respondents, 54% believe that hijab undoubtedly enhances women’s beauty’ (Khondkar, 65).

Therefore, the contribution and power of fashion in making hijab an essential part of female Muslim identity is relevant in the context of Bangladesh. One respondent commented on the changing assigned meaning of hijab saying, **‘It was thought before that women who wear hijab aren’t that much fashion-savvy or smart. But now this outlook has changed, so the use of hijab has increased.’** This statement shades light on the phenomenon of symbolic meaning of the attire. According to her, people wearing hijab had an ‘unsmart’ tag attached. But

it has changes, Muslim identity of women now include smart and ‘fashion-savvy’ too and hijab fashion has its role in it.

To mention the reason behind combining hijab with fashion a respondent says, **‘Now a girl can express her fashion sense by choosing cute hijabs, while abiding by the laws of Islam.’**

Expression of fashion sense is important in young adults. expressing Muslim identity along with improved fashion sense, it can be considered a symbolic capital, which indirectly but surely benefits one’s social image.

Another significant factor that needs to be mentioned is the effect of globalization on the symbolic value of hijab. Also, this particular factor plays an important role in shaping today’s hybrid culture among urban youths of Bangladesh.

As a respondent mentions, **‘I think hijab use has increased because of the use of social media.’** Social media plays a significant role in molding the symbolic meaning regarding hijab adaptation, specially the modern and/or fashionable way of hijab adaptation. In the literature review, the term ‘hijabista’ has been explained. In the Muslim countries, hijab fashion and hijabistas are significant social phenomenon. As a part of globalization, Bangladeshi young women are also influenced by it. Which also indicates to the fact that the Muslim culture in the Muslim or Muslim majority countries is the dominating culture now along with the west in Bangladesh.

Another respondent directly links the increased use of hijab with the global Islamic fashion trend. Says, **‘As women are noticing the social media and south Asian culture that**

**they can still be fashionable wearing hijab, they are preferring to wear it more by themselves.'**

Noticing where? In the global market, specifically in the Muslim countries of Asia. The way dominating cultures are presenting women with hijab influencing the dominated ones, here which is Bangladesh. Hijab fashion, hijab influencers, Hijabistas are all over social media nowadays, many of them are from Asian Muslim majority countries and they are widely practicing this culture of combining western cloths, fashionable accessories and hijab. A study on Indonesian women efficiently portrays today's global Muslim fashionable attire and practices (Amail, Celebgram Hijab).

In several places the respondents mentioned these influencers. One respondent said, **'Some just wear it as a means of fashion. They are motivated by the hijabi influencers.'**

So, motivated by the media or effect of globalization is a noteworthy reason behind the increased adaptation of hijab. Another respondent goes on saying, **'Nowadays we are more knowledgeable and concerned regarding fashion than the past. It is because of the social media influencers. We love to explore different hijab styles for different occasions.'**

Though there is comparatively less evidence of the fashionable display and advertisement of hijab here in Bangladesh. But other Muslim majority countries and also western market who target Muslim consumers are thriving in this field. (Amail, Celebgram Hijab) And Bangladeshi pop culture is following the trail.

Also, one participant has brought forth the term ‘hijab for fashion’ a concept known to today’s youth, which again establishes the alternative purpose of hijab, that it is indeed a symbolic consumption in many cases.

**‘There are many varieties and ornaments for hijab because a term has been established- “hijab for fashion”, which was not there in the past.’**

The discussion above clearly shows the fashion value of hijab and also, we get an idea of the huge consumer base and popularity. It is quite evident that it is indeed a fashion statement. But why Muslim identity is a selling point for the fashion industry.

why exhibiting Muslim identity is on ‘trend’ or is highly appreciated needs to be discussed.

A very possible reason for the hijab fashion or trend to flourish is the symbolic meaning attached to Muslim identity of women in today’s world.

The literature review shows that in different parts of the world, hijab adaptation has been assigned to different meanings. But in near past, it widely had been attached to freedom of choice of the Muslim women, and socio-political aspect of ‘restoring’ the Muslim culture. Does the increased adaptation of hijab in Bangladesh indicates the adaptation of the Muslim culture as one of the dominating cultures? To explain Homi K. Bhabha’s concept of cultural hybridity can be used to understand this changing culture.

‘Cultural hybridity’ refers to a balance of values, socio-cultural practices and customs of two or more cultures. The process at the same time rejects the authority of a given culture but modifies itself according to the changes and influences which are inevitable, it creates a third kind, a hybrid culture. This hybridity creates a dual sense of the self which goes beyond the

boundary of nationality, ethnicity and the core cultural practices of a certain area. Bangladesh, being a country of mainly Muslim inhabitants, the culture of this country and practices are noticeably influenced by the Muslim tradition or more time appropriately the modern Muslim culture; Including dressing and the associated meanings. Along with that the colonial history of this land also has its impact and contribution in building the ‘hybrid culture’ of today’s. Homi Bhabha also talks about the ‘third space’, saying that mutual construction blurs the boundaries and creates a third space for a new and hybrid culture to rise. He basically provided this concept to understand the postmodern society and the relationship between the dominant and dominated cultures; basically, meaning the colonized and the colonizer. In this case the dominating culture on discussion is the Muslim culture, why it can be considered a dominating culture? Because the influence of Muslim culture is evident among the youth, the fashion industry and it being a symbolic capital as discussed above.

So further the participants had been asked about the attire they wear hijab with. The intention was to understand the culture in practice through attire, also the symbolic meaning they attach to the attire. This helped this study to understand the hybridity mentioned above.

As Homi Bhabha says, hybridity can be located if there is a blend of socio-cultural practices or customs of two different cultures, and it creates a third one which is not like either of them.

95% of the participants of this study wear hijab with traditional attire and some with western. 5% wear it with burkha. The initial purpose of ‘pardah’ therefore hijab is to not show defined physical structure according to studies. However, the responses this study received a slightly different perspective. The responses curved the fact from not showing the structure of the body to not showing ‘skin’. A respondent shares her opinion saying, **‘purdah’ doesn’t mean**

**you have to wear hijab only with 'burkha. So, if someone is not showing the skin it's ok. if anyone wants to be traditional and religious at a time it's also fine. some may wear hijab as a trend with anything she wants.**

It indicates a change in basic understanding, a new adaptation. Which is a popular one as well. Another respondent says, **'I think wearing hijab with other cultural dresses is fine. At least they are trying to reflect on practicing hijab and that is what matters the most.'**, according to the respondent practicing hijab is higher in importance not the traditional religious way of life. Which is not a traditional Muslim culture nor Bengali, it is a hybrid one. Where hijab carries certain symbolic meanings, which are important in defining their identity.

Many of the participants mentioned they wear hijab with western clothing. Here it needs to be mentioned that western clothing is not often loose fitting, which is a primary factor in female Islamic attire. The respondents said, **'I usually wear western dresses with hijab' and 'I wear western clothes and also traditional salwar kameez and saree with hijab'**. Some participants also do acknowledge the factor that women are wearing hijab with dresses which don't particularly matches with the concertation of Islamic attire, for example, one participant said, **'Women wear hijab with other culture's dresses just to show off their Muslim identity, not to follow the rules of Islam.'**

wearing hijab with long sleeves, full pants which doesn't contribute in not defining the body structure but contributes in not showing the skin is a popular aspect now among the young Muslim women in many countries, the practice is significant in South East Asian Muslim majority countries and the respondent already mentioned hijabistas and influencers which often are from that geographical area, here a study us mentioned that shows the increasing hybrid

culture among young Muslims of Indonesia (Amail, “Celebgram Hijab”) . The reference towards any cultural dresses whether it shows the body structure or not and wearing hijab with it to show a Muslim identity with the hint of fashion sense indicate towards a hybrid culture. In answering the question of what they wear hijab with, most of the responses were traditional or western dress. One says, **‘I usually prefer kurti, salwar kameez to wear hijab with and also hijab is maintained by me with all kinds of dresses.’**

As Bhabha says, a hybrid culture does not entirely look like the dominating culture, but it borrows some features from it, and also shows some features of the home. As, Participants mentioned that they wear **‘hijab with all kinds of dresses’**, in fact **‘Most of the girls do nowadays’** and the fact that they **‘wear Salwar-Kameez, occasionally Sharee too’** can be considered as the rise of a hybrid culture.

Not only the attire of course, the previous sections discussed the identity formation of the youth who are into the modern Islamic culture. Their perception of the self, assigned meaning of hijab adaptation and cultural value of it also plays a significant role in forming the hybrid culture in discussion. Because the young adults don’t perceive themselves only as Bengali or Muslim, they hold the identity of a modern Muslim woman, where hijab is not an object which helps the process of seclusion but it is a symbolic consumption which means a modern woman with dignity. A hybrid perception of the self.

This study already discussed hijab as a fashion trend. Where it shows that women with fashionable hijab does not entirely take hijab from the meaning of ‘seclusion’, rather it is a way of demonstrating their desired personality and identity. Also, data shows that only the headscarf ‘hijab’ is being widely adapted not the entire attire suggested by the Muslim tradition. The daily

practice of attire and the changed outlook towards hijab indicates that the urban youth who have adapted hijab are in a 'third space' where they are giving emphasis to their muslim and national identity, at the same time the modern identity of a progressive woman who is onbeat with the most recent trend, educated, outgoing also secluded and modest.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

Bangladesh is a Muslim majority country for sure, but it is different from the other prominent Muslim countries like Iran or Pakistan. In fact, it is a secular country by constitution. Though 91% population is Muslim, the traditional culture of this country, known as the Bengali culture has its unique features which prevails the Islamic culture. However, there can be noticed a gradual change in daily lifestyle, practice, as well as attire; exhibiting that the Muslim culture is more prominent than before. Among the changes, women's adaptation of hijab is a significantly visible one, especially among the young women of Bangladesh. This paper attempted to seek the reason behind the huge popularity of hijab among the young adults. In doing so, this paper considers the symbolic meaning assigned with hijab, social significance of it and also what hijab as a fashion statement indicates. This study conducted a survey on 30 young urban women aged within 30. The first important finding was that women who are in their early twenties now are wearing hijab for the longest time in their lives and are more in number than the middle-aged women, which aligns with the same timeline when hijab started being popular in Bangladesh. This fact specifies that hijab has become an ingrained cultural practice among the younger generations. It also indicates that preference towards Islamic culture is rising in Bangladesh. Furthermore, the findings showed that besides religious obligation, one of the most significant reasons behind choosing hijab is the social appreciation, acceptance and praise that come along with it, hijab provides the tag of a 'decent woman'. Which motivated this paper to consider hijab as a symbolic and cultural capital. Moreover, the repetitive correlation of hijab and fashion

mentioned by the respondents led to the discussion of hijab being a fashion statement, concluding with the fact that the young women identify themselves as modern women with Muslim identity. They are active agents of 'Islamic modernism' which indicates an improvised Muslim culture where human rights, equality and freedom of choice is included. Sequentially, this modern Muslim identity in practice has been discussed in-depth. The study found that young Muslim women who wear hijab also consider it as a way of expressing beauty, to be in trend and to express their fashion sense by being a modern Muslim who prefers and wear hijab with multicultural attires. It has been also found that 70% of the respondents experience positive change in their personal identity, they felt more confident. All these discussions regarding modern Islamic identity and improvised attire and daily practices indicated a change and a rising hybrid culture. Also, the effect of globalization, global market, fashion, and considering Islamic culture/fashion as a dominating one in Bangladesh played the role of catalysts which is constructing a hybrid culture among the young generations of Bangladesh. Acceptance towards Islamic culture is a socio-political discussion, also globalization has its fair share in the popularization and capitalization of Islamic culture. This study further can lead to the discussion regarding, what kind of effect of the Muslim culture has on the cultural heritage and Bengali culture of Bangladesh.

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## **Appendix A**

The interview evolved around the following 10 questions:

1. Since when do you wear hijab? (In years)
2. Do you wear a hijab every time you are outside home? Or is there any exception? (If any, please mention occasions when you don't wear hijab when in public)
3. Is it completely your independent decision, or were you influenced/advised to make the choice? (If there is any influence, please describe).
4. What kind of change did you find in your personality and identity after you started wearing hijab?
5. Do you notice any increase in the use of hijab among your friends, classmates, or close circle?
6. Do you use plain and same color hijab mostly or do you prefer many varieties of it? If yes, what kind of variety.
7. Do you use ornamental hijab-pins or any other accessories with your hijab? If yes, why do you prefer them?
8. Where do you buy the hijab accessories? And how often do you change them or buy a new one?

9. Muslim women wear hijab as a religious practice. Along with that, is there any social reason for you to wear a hijab?

10. Nowadays it is common to see young women wearing hijab with traditional (saree, salwar-kameez, etc.) and Western (jeans, tops, etc.) dresses as well. What dress do you wear typically and what do you wear occasionally along with hijab?