

**A Study of Influential Factors Upholding Women's Commitment to Higher Education in
refugee communities: Case study of women from Rohangyia Community in Myanmar**

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July, 20,2024

Acknowledgment

This study aimed to explore the key factors that enable women from the Rohingya refugee community to continue their education and pursue higher education. The study emphasized an unbiased approach to the issue and did not initially seek to assume the role of a specific factor. However, through preliminary interviews, the significant influence of male figures on the educational prospects of Rohingya women emerged. Consequently, this research focuses on examining the role of male figures in the commitment of Rohingya women to their education. The primary goal was to identify the supporting factors that have contributed to the success of Rohingya women pursuing higher education. By learning from their stories, the study aims to provide insights that can assist other women who are struggling in this regard.

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Kathlyn Elliott, for her valuable guidance and insight throughout this entire process. Despite her commitments as a faculty member at Johns Hopkins University, she generously allocated her time and knowledge to assist me in conducting this research. I truly appreciate having such a dedicated and supportive supervisor. Her encouragement and involvement in every step of the process helped me continue the project with confidence and motivation.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my dear parents for their invaluable advice and emotional support in continuing my education. Their well-wishes and prayers have sustained me throughout this journey, despite all the challenges. Additionally, I am deeply thankful to all the courageous and insightful women who participated in this research. Their honesty and vulnerability in sharing their experiences have been instrumental to this study. Without their contributions, this research would not have been possible.

Abstract

The educational challenges facing Rohingya women are deeply rooted in Myanmar's political, ethnic, and cultural landscape. The 1982 citizenship law classified the Rohingya as "illegal immigrants" from Bangladesh, denying them citizenship and access to regular educational institutions. The situation worsened with the violent crackdown in 2016 and 2017, leading to a massive exodus to Bangladesh and widespread atrocities. Rohingya women, facing compounded challenges due to their gender, are particularly affected, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive and sustained intervention to address their educational needs.

This research utilized qualitative Case Study design to conduct an in-depth analysis of the influential factors upholding women's commitment to higher education in refugee communities specifically focusing on women from the Rohingya community in Myanmar. This approach involves intensive data collection through semi-structured interviews with 20 girls studying at the Asian University for Women. Secondary data was collected from online databases such as ResearchGate, Google Scholars, Unicef, and the World Bank reports.

Based on the thematic analysis, several factors appear to play an influential role in upholding women's commitment to education within the Rohingya refugee community. Firstly, family support, especially from male family members like fathers, brothers, or husbands, plays the most significant role in encouraging and maintaining women's educational pursuits, particularly in the face of social and cultural barriers. However, this is not consistent in all cases. Secondly, the external support provided by organizations like the Asian University for Women and other NGOs greatly impacts these women by providing emotional, financial, and academic assistance, enabling them to overcome challenges such as lack of resources and societal pressure. Additionally, intrinsic motivation and personal resilience are prominent themes in this

community, with girls often viewing education as a route to personal and financial growth. The findings suggest that while familial and societal obstacles are substantial, the combination of external support, personal determination, and progressive family attitudes are critical factors that sustain the educational aspirations of Rohingya women.

The study stressed that to change cultural attitudes and boost support, it is critical to educate men and enhance their understanding of schooling in general and women's education in particular. Enhancing collaborations with organizations such as AUW and NGOs can offer crucial monetary and educational assistance. Important actions include setting up mentorship programs with accomplished local women and extending educational offerings in refugee camps. Policies that tackle societal constraints and financial difficulties must also be put into place to foster an atmosphere that encourages Rohingya women to pursue higher education.

Keywords: Rohingya refugees, Women's education, Family support, Social and cultural barriers, External support, Educational aspirations, NGOs

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Chapter 1- Introduction

According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), A refugee is a person who has been compelled to leave their country due to violence, war, or persecution. Refugee communities have a legitimate fear of being persecuted because of their race, religion, nationality, political beliefs, or social group membership. Most likely, they are scared to go home or cannot do so. Refugees are primarily driven from their countries by war and acts of ethnic, tribal, and religious violence. Throughout history, various nations and communities have been subject to this issue but the UNHCR (2023) has stated the Rohingya community in Myanmar is the most persecuted community in the world.

The Rohingya community is a Muslim ethnic group that has lived for centuries in Buddhist Myanmar - formerly known as Burma where they have witnessed systematic ethnic discrimination that has included deliberate limitations to this community's right to education (UNHCR, 2023). In August 2017, Thousands of Rohingya were forced to leave their homes in Myanmar's Rakhine State due to armed attacks, widespread violence, and severe violations of human rights. For the majority of these refugees, Bangladesh has been the main destination. Therefore, more than one million live in Cox's Bazar Camp, a coastal city in the southeast of Bangladesh (GPE, 2023). More than half of this population (52%) is children and (51%) women and girls (UNHCR, 2023).

Given the high number of women in this refugee community, providing equitable education for this community and empowering Rohingya women who have been subject to gender-based violence has been a top concern for the international community (GPE, 2023). Therefore, many projects have been initiated to provide education for these women. An example of this project is GPE which has been assisting Bangladesh in delivering fair and high-quality

education in the Rohingya camp and the neighboring host communities of Cox's Bazar since 2018, with UNICEF Bangladesh serving as the Grant Agent. However, from the total number of students that are enrolled in these projects and host schools only 49% are girls (GPE and UNICEF, 2023), while girl's dropout from classes drastically increases in the higher education levels.

While reports from organizations such as UNICEF (2023) point to the social norms as one of the barriers to girls' education in the Rohingya community, there should be more detailed studies that reveal needed information to guide the education initiatives for better-supporting education in the Rohingya community. Therefore, this research paper aims to do comprehensive research on the topic of the factors into influential factors upholding women's commitment to education in the Rohingya community.

The proposed research on influential factors upholding women's commitment to education in Rohingya refugee communities holds significant importance and potential benefits. By delving into this complex issue, the research aims to uncover critical insights that can inform targeted interventions and policy initiatives aimed at promoting gender equity and educational empowerment among Rohingya women. Understanding the factors that shape women's educational experiences in refugee settings is essential for designing effective and culturally sensitive education programs that address their unique needs and challenges. Moreover, by amplifying the voices and perspectives of Rohingya women themselves, this research can contribute to a more inclusive and participatory approach to education planning and implementation, ultimately fostering greater resilience, agency, and socio-economic empowerment within the Rohingya community.

1.1 Statement of the Problem:

Women in the Rohingya refugee community face significant barriers to education due to traditional and conservative societal norms, limiting cultural beliefs, poverty, and lack of opportunities. Since the onset of the Rohingya refugee crisis, which has displaced over 700,000 people to Bangladesh since 2017, efforts have primarily focused on settlement and physical health. However, a more fundamental and crucial aspect of their lives—education—has received less investment and research. This oversight persists despite the evident role that education can play in enabling these women to overcome adversity and contribute to a stronger, more prosperous community. Investing in the education of Rohingya women is vital, as it holds the potential to transform not only their personal lives but also the broader socio-economic landscape of the Rohingya community. However, there has not been sufficient research and investigation into the underlying causes and aspects of this issue. Findings from such studies will illuminate the matter and guide future projects and education policies concerning the education of the Rohingya community.

This study seeks to explore the factors that uphold the commitment of Rohingya women to higher education, with a particular focus on the role of male family members. The study utilized open-ended questions, allowing interviewees to express their experiences and any additional factors that may have influenced their educational pursuits.

1.2: Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to explore the factors upholding women's commitment to higher education in refugee communities: a case study of women from the Rohingya community in Myanmar with a focus on the role of male family members providing insight that can inform future projects and policy decisions related to education issue in the community.

1.3: Significance of the Study

The significance of this study on factors upholding women's education in the Rohingya community extends beyond academic inquiry to practical implications for society at large. By exploring the factors that sustain Rohingya women's higher education, particularly the role of male family members, this study highlights the critical barriers and support systems that shape the educational journey of women in the Rohingya community.

This study holds considerable potential for mobilizing international NGO aid projects and tailoring them to the specific needs of the Rohingya community. By examining the matter from the perspective and experiences of women within the community, this study informs the academic community, international organizations, and investors about the factors that have influenced the success stories of women currently pursuing education. It also identifies areas that need to be addressed to further pave the way for Rohingya women's education.

The insights from this research are particularly useful for policymakers in crafting educational projects and strategizing in a way that targets the issues with greater accuracy. Finally, this study will serve as a critical resource for future researchers interested in the educational and social challenges faced by refugee communities. By providing a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing Rohingya women's education, this research will lay the groundwork for continued exploration and intervention in this vital area, ensuring that future initiatives are well-informed and impactful.

2.1: Literature Review

Background of The Rohingya Community Crisis

There are many moving parts in the Rohingya refugee crisis. Since pre-colonial times, the Arakanese, who are Buddhists, and the Rohingyas, who are predominantly Muslims, have

coexisted in the region that is now known as the Arakan State in Myanmar and the Chittagong Division in Bangladesh (Ty, 2019). According to three historians, Muslims have lived along the border between what is now Bangladesh and Myanmar's Arakan State since the 12th century. Islam arrived in the area in the seventh century, or the Christian Era (CE), through Arab traders who also served as missionaries. By 788 CE, they had converted Buddhists to Islam and intermarried with local Buddhists (Ty, 2019).

For centuries, the Arakans and the Rohingyas, as they are now called, have lived on the border between what is now Bangladesh and Myanmar. For example, the independent Kingdom of Mrauk-U ruled over what is now known as the Chittagong Division in Bangladesh and the Rakhine State in Myanmar from 1429 to 1785. During that time, Muslims and Buddhists of various ethnicities coexisted. This area was under the Sultan of Bengal's protectorate at multiple times during the same period. It was a part of the Burmese Empire by the 18th century (Ty, 2019).

The Rohingya conflict traces back to a civil war initiated in 1948, originating from the flawed colonial map drawn by British authorities for Burma (Mohajan, 2018). This conflict reflects a broader global issue stemming from colonial-era boundary delineations. Post-independence, various ethnic groups in Burma, including the Rohingya, sought federalization or integration with neighboring regions, such as East Pakistan, and now Bangladesh. The ongoing armed conflicts in Myanmar among diverse ethnic factions result primarily from the exclusion of non-Bama ethnic groups from significant roles in government, politics, economy, and culture (Mohajan, 2018). The dominance of the Bama ethnic group leads to the imposition of Bama-centric education, language, and cultural norms, marginalizing minority groups. Consequently, ethnic and religious minorities, including the Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Rohingya, Shan,

Wa, and others, continue to advocate for their rights and engage in revolutionary struggles against Bama hegemony (Mohajan, 2018).

The military implemented a new citizenship restriction in 1984 to bolster the policy of excluding insurgent minorities from citizenship on the mainland (Farzana, 2017 as cited in Hossain, 2020). Before 1962, the civilian government recognized 144 ethnic groups, including the Rohingya, although previously 135 minor groups were recognized by law. However, the exclusion of these minority groups under "Citizenship Laws" in 1982, when they were referred to as "resident foreigners" and subjected to a long list of restrictions (including those related to employment, education, and healthcare) resulted in the Rohingya becoming de facto stateless (EU, 2017 and Ahsan Ullah, 2016 as cited in Hossain, 2020).

In the 1990's, there was a widespread demand for democracy which was met with violence and repression, resulting in numerous casualties and arrests. The nationalist party emerged as a significant player in mitigating ethnic conflicts and promoting national integration (Bepler, 2020). Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) achieved a landslide victory in the 1990 election but was not allowed to take power, as Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest (Bepler, 2020). She was released in 2010 and won a by-election in 2012, followed by a victory in the 2015 general election. However, she faced legal obstacles due to her foreign citizenship, which complicated her ability to hold office as the state councilor (Bepler, 2020).

The Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar continue to face exclusion and victimization, with religion and nationalism shaping notions of belonging in the country. While nationalism has implications for religious policy, particularly Buddhism, the focus remains on hostility towards other nations or ethnic groups. Additionally, Rohingya Muslims are not recognized as citizens of Burma, further exacerbating their marginalization (Ahsan Ullah, 2016 as cited in Hossain, 2020).

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing emphasized the Rohingya's lack of recognition as an ethnic group in Myanmar, citing historical grievances dating back to the Second World War (Hossain, 2020).

This sequence of internal conflict led to the events of 2017 which took the issue of the Rohingya community to the next level of severity. On August 25, 2017, shortly after the public release of recommendations by Kofi Annan's Advisory Commission regarding the situation in Rakhine State, which Aung San Suu Kyi endorsed, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) launched attacks on approximately twenty to thirty police outposts in northern Rakhine State, using knives and homemade bombs (Ty, 2019). These attacks involved around 150 militants and resulted in the deaths of 1 soldier, 1 immigration officer, 10 policemen, and 59 militants. Consequently, security forces carried out extensive counterattacks on the Rohingya population, in violation of international humanitarian law. This series of events, initiated by the ARSA's attack, led to an escalation of violence and ultimately triggered a mass exodus of Rohingya from their homeland in search of safety (Ty, 2019).

The majority of persecuted Rohingya sought refuge and safety in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, where they were welcomed by the Bangladeshi government (Hossain, 2020). Following their departure from their villages, their homes and possessions were demolished, with approximately 55 Rohingya villages razed to erase evidence (Ty, 2019). Despite this, around half a million Rohingya remain in Myanmar's Rakhine State. Yanghee Lee, a UN envoy, pointed to mass graves as evidence of genocide. At the same time, the former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, described the mistreatment of the Rohingya as a clear instance of ethnic cleansing (Ty, 2019). Nobel Peace Laureates urged the

UN Security Council to take action to protect the Rohingya from further assaults (Ty, 2019).

2.2: Women's Education in Refugee Settings

The term “Refugee” refers to groups and individuals who leave their country as a result of being persecuted and targeted in their country during internal political and armed conflicts (UNHCR, 2023). It has been consistently recognized that when a conflict happens the most vulnerable groups are women making them an easy target for violation of human rights, physical abuse, and sexual abuse (UNHCR, 2023).

Female refugees, particularly girls and women, often face discrimination, especially in accessing education. They are disproportionately burdened with additional responsibilities such as caring for their families during times of crisis, whether it be due to illness, conflict, displacement, or hardship. This can hinder their ability to support themselves financially and contribute to the economy once the crisis subsides, further marginalizing them. The importance of ensuring equal access to education for vulnerable groups, including refugee girls and women, was underscored as recently as September 2015, with 193 member states reaffirming their commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to provide inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all, promoting lifelong learning opportunities (Graduate Women International, 2015). According to Graduate Women International (2015), the barriers to women's education include children, early and forced marriage, early pregnancy, family care, increased threat of violence and instability, the long distance to school, and a lack of proper sanitation. Greenberg (2020) conducted another research on “The Challenges of Refugee Women in Accessing Higher Education in the Region Île-de-France” where he interviewed 12 women from various backgrounds on the challenges of accessing higher education in the Île-de-

France region and revealed four primary obstacles: language barriers, administrative hurdles, gender disparities, and limited access to personal, professional, and academic networks.

Another study done in the context of Syrian refugee girls living in Jordan examines gender role attitudes and their impact on domestic work and school enrollment among Syrian refugees and the Jordanian host community, revealing that women and girls generally hold more equitable attitudes than men and boys, with no significant differences between Syrians and Jordanians (Krafft et.al, 2021). Despite general support for gender equality in education, Syrian girls face substantial challenges, including lower enrollment rates compared to Jordanian girls, significant domestic responsibilities influenced by paternal attitudes, and limited decision-making power and mobility due to perceived risks (Krafft et.al, 2021). Progressive gender role attitudes, particularly from fathers, positively impact girls' educational opportunities, but community and socio-economic factors play crucial roles in shaping these outcomes (Krafft et.al, 2021).

Similarly, another research conducted by (Shaw et al., 2023) looks into the challenges of Syrian women in adapting to and educating in the United Kingdom using a feminist life history method to explore the narratives of three women. The result of the study identifies significant challenges for refugee women's education, including policy barriers, cultural adjustments, socioeconomic constraints, racism, Islamophobia, and bureaucratic hurdles. (Shaw et al., 2023) The results indicate that education is a tool for self-expression, social mobility, and overcoming political and socioeconomic barriers (Shaw et al., 2023). From the above literature, it is apparent that the challenges women face in education are to some extent related to the context and the society in which they seek refuge.

2.3: Education for Women in Myanmar

The status of education for women in Myanmar has undergone significant changes influenced by socio-political issues. Before the British colonization, education in Myanmar was predominantly monastic delivered by Buddhist temples (Lwin, 2000). The content of the monastic education was purely religious and women were not allowed to join it. Under the British occupation, there were three types of schools namely Vernacular School, Anglo-Vernacular, and English School (Lwin, 2000). These schools were the first to provide education on non-religious subjects. However, due to the high cost of the schools, only people living in urban areas, and coming from rich families could afford them. In addition, families prioritized sending their sons to school over their daughters, considering it a more financially reasonable decision (Lwin, 2000).

More recently, there have been attempts to improve education in Myanmar. Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) was aimed at enhancing access to early childcare with equality. However, in 2012 only 22% of children aged 3-4 were reached with substantial disparities in gender and region (Asian Development Bank et al., 2016). Progress in primary and secondary education has been marked by near gender parity in enrollment, with 49.4% of female students at the primary level and 51.8% at high school in 2009 (Asian Development Bank et al., 2016). However, high rates of high school dropout and low completion rates remain to be a problem, particularly among girls in rural areas and certain ethnic groups. Urban-rural disparities in school progression are common for example, 82% of children aged 10-15 years in Yangon were in school, while over half in Rakhine State were not.

Higher education also faces many challenges including gender imbalance. It is reported that 60% of students in higher education and 82.6% of academic staff were female in 2012 (Ahmed, Carslake, Dabrowski, & Lietz, 2020). Despite these figures, outdated curricula and

mismatches between education and labor market demands persist, contributing to graduate unemployment and underemployment (Ahmed, Carslake, Dabrowski, & Lietz, 2020). This complex interplay of policy efforts, socio-economic conditions, and cultural attitudes continues to shape the educational landscape for women in Myanmar (Asian Development Bank et al., 2016).

2.4: The Challenges of Rohingya Refugee Women:

The Rohingya community faces significant challenges in accessing education at both the primary and higher levels, with issues stemming from legal and structural limitations. According to Hossain (2023), who has studied the educational challenges in Cox's Bazar refugee camp, the Bangladesh government denies Rohingya children the right to attend the public education system due to their legal status and lack of documentation. Furthermore, the government is reluctant to establish permanent educational structures, anticipating that the refugees will eventually return to Myanmar once political and security issues are resolved. Consequently, NGOs and international aid organizations bear the primary responsibility for providing educational facilities (Hossain, 2023). However, these are often temporary education centers lacking basic amenities such as tables, desks, and electricity (Hossain, 2023). Additional barriers, including socio-cultural factors, economic constraints, safety concerns, and inadequate hygiene facilities, further restrict access to education, especially for females (Hossain, 2023).

UNICEF and Caritas Switzerland are among the most active organizations providing educational services to the Rohingya community, but their efforts are insufficient in both quality and quantity (Ullah, 2023). The Learning Competency Framework and Approach (LCFA) implemented by UNICEF covers only basic subjects and suffers from a lack of curricula,

structured lesson plans, textbooks, and adequate teacher training (UNICEF, 2020). Refugee girls, in particular, face significant challenges, including discrimination, cultural conflicts, mental and physical harassment, and limited participation in education (Ullah, 2023). These problems are exacerbated by overcrowded camp conditions and inadequate space for teaching and studying (Ullah, 2023). Educating mothers is especially crucial, as it positively impacts family health and education, and reduces early marriage, unwanted pregnancies, and maternal and infant mortality rates. However, fewer girls attend primary and secondary school, further limiting their opportunities (Ullah, 2023).

According to the Joint Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) report for 2022-2023, only 21% of Rohingya girls aged 12-18 in the Cox's Bazar refugee camps continue their education. A dialogue session organized by Plan International Bangladesh highlighted these findings, emphasizing the significance of education for women's empowerment and identifying societal barriers that prevent girls from advancing to higher education levels. The report also revealed that around two-thirds of Rohingya girls aged 5-11 drop out when transitioning to the next education level. In Ukhiya and Teknaf of Cox's Bazar, 90% of Rohingya girls aged 5-11 have access to education, while the dropout rate for girls in the same age group in the host community is 19% (Aziz, 2024).

Maria Begum, a medical doctor and feminist political activist working as the Program Coordinator with the Center for Social Integrity (CSI), highlights the profound educational challenges Rohingya women face. "In Rohingya communities in Rakhine State, the majority of Rohingya families cannot afford to send their children to high school due to discrimination, poor transportation, restrictions on movement, insecurity, and poverty. Most of the girls are married

off before even turning 18 and don't get a chance to attend high school or even middle school (Begum, 2022).

Many Rohingya people receive only religious education as they have no other options," Begum explains. She further notes, "Patriarchal traditions make girls' lives harder. The role of women is defined as a homemaker and a mother in our community. Mostly, girls don't get a chance to study after puberty which makes them vulnerable in every aspect of their lives." Despite these barriers, Begum's achievements, including graduating with a Master's degree in Australia and traveling to several countries independently, serve as a testament to the potential for Rohingya women to overcome these obstacles given the right opportunities (Begum, 2022). She is one of the few women from Myanmar who has had a successful educational journey and is now ready to take action to provide similar opportunities for women in her community. Beyond her story, it is difficult to find similar case studies published.

Chapter 3- Methodology and Material

To investigate the factors sustaining women's commitment to higher education among Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, a qualitative research approach was utilized. This method was selected for its suitability in gaining an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences, motivations, and challenges in their educational endeavors.

In-depth semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection method. This approach was chosen for its effectiveness in facilitating detailed and nuanced conversations, allowing participants to comprehensively share their stories and insights. The semi-structured format balanced structured questioning with the flexibility to explore emerging themes, making it ideal for capturing the lived experiences of Rohingya women. The participants included Rohingya women currently enrolled in general study programs, pre-UG programs, and junior

UG programs. All of these women are from the same ethnicity (Rohingya community) and have experienced living in Cox's Bazar camps. In addition, they are all of a similar age.

3.1: Research Design:

This research uses a qualitative case study design to explore the factors that uphold women's commitment to pursuing higher education in the Rohingya refugee community in Cox's Bazar. This methodological choice was driven by the need to conduct an in-depth exploration of a bounded system—the educational aspirations and experiences of Rohingya women—within their unique sociopolitical and cultural context.

The choice of semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection tool supports the qualitative case study approach. These interviews provide a flexible yet structured framework for eliciting rich personal narratives, lived experiences, and personal insights from the participants. The semi-structured format allows for predefined questions, which explore key themes such as primary motivators, important sources of support, and the role of male family members, as well as the flexibility to adapt and probe emerging topics during the interviews.

Moreover, this research design aligns with the primary goal of the study: to generate a comprehensive understanding of the influential factors that sustain Rohingya women's commitment to pursuing higher education. Unlike other qualitative approaches that may focus on broader phenomena or theoretical constructs, the case study method emphasizes depth over breadth, prioritizing detailed exploration within a specific context. This focus allows for a nuanced understanding of the unique challenges and support systems that influence the educational pursuits of Rohingya women in Cox's Bazar.

3.2: Research Participants:

For this research, a total of 18 female students from the Rohingya refugee community living in Bangladesh were interviewed. All of these women have experienced living in the Cox's Bazar refugee camp, and most come from uneducated and underprivileged families. The participants in this research are enrolled in the General Study program, the Pre-UG program, or the first semesters of an undergraduate program.

The General Study program is designed for students from vulnerable communities who wish to continue their education but lack fundamental skills such as language or math proficiency and have not graduated from high school. The Pre-UG program, on the other hand, is intended for students who have graduated from high school but need further education and skill-building in language and STEM subjects. Through these programs, the Asian University for Women (AUW) is doing a fantastic and humane job of supporting women from vulnerable communities such as the Rohingya.

3.3 Research Location:

For this research, 18 participants were interviewed, all of whom reside on the Asian University campus as residential students. Originally from Myanmar, they have lived in Bangladesh as refugees. All of the participants have experienced living and growing up in the Cox's Bazar refugee camp. Currently, they reside in the Chittagong province.

3.4: Data Collection:

The data collection process took place between July 20th and June 6th, 2024, and involved in-depth interviews with 18 women from the Rohingya community currently living on the AUW campus. These semi-structured interviews allowed participants to share their lived experiences and personal insights on the factors that most influence women in their community to pursue higher education.

The semi-structured format allowed participants to freely discuss their experiences while also including predetermined questions. These questions explored key themes such as the role of male family members—fathers, brothers, and husbands—in supporting or hindering women's educational prospects. The interviews aimed to uncover the primary motivators, important sources of support, and any challenges these women face as they strive to continue their education. Through this approach, the study sought to understand the influential factors upholding women's commitment to higher education in the Rohingya refugee community.

3.5: Data Analysis:

The data collected from the semi-structured interviews were initially transcribed from the recorded audio in a manner that preserved the meaning and tone of the participants' responses. Before the interviews, a consent letter was presented and explained orally to the participants, outlining the purpose of the research and the questions that would be asked. Due to a language barrier, despite the participants having some English proficiency, a research assistant assisted by asking questions and translating responses from the participant's native language into English.

The first section of the interviews, which contained demographic questions, asked about the participants' age, number of family members, education level or current semester, and the number of years they had lived in the camp. This demographic data was analyzed using SPSS Statistics, allowing for the creation of pie charts to visually represent the information and facilitate easier data analysis. The subsequent sections, which contained the main questions, were subjected to thematic analysis. This involved coding the data to identify recurring themes and patterns.

A significant approach used in this process was the (In Vivo) coding method, which relies on the participants' own words and thoughts to construct the analysis. This approach

ensured that the findings were grounded in the authentic experiences and perspectives of the participants. Thematic analysis revealed key themes related to the influential factors supporting women's commitment to higher education within the Rohingya refugee community, such as the role of male family members, the impact of educational programs, and the importance of personal motivation and community support.

3.6: Limitations:

The research study encountered several significant challenges. The first challenge was the language barrier. Many girls who live and study at the Asian University for Women are in the General Study program, which means they have difficulty speaking and understanding English. Therefore, the assistance of a research assistant was crucial for asking questions and translating responses. The second challenge was the participants' hesitancy to discuss the difficulties they faced. Coming from traditional families, many girls were reluctant to talk about their lived experiences. This hesitation made it challenging to gather comprehensive data on sensitive topics.

Finally, there were legal and official constraints related to visiting the Rohingya refugee camps. It was neither feasible nor safe to visit the camp for a thesis project. Additionally, due to cultural reasons and a lack of understanding about research projects, many families did not permit their daughters to participate, and many girls living outside the AUW campus were reluctant to be interviewed on this topic. Consequently, attempts to recruit participants from inside the camp were largely unsuccessful. Future research would benefit from the support of an organization or strong funding, providing both official and financial backing to facilitate visits to the camps. Such support would help overcome these challenges and enable a more thorough and successful data collection process.

3.7: Conclusion:

The study employed semi-structured interviews with 18 girls from the Rohingya community who have lived in Cox's Bazar camp and are currently studying at the Asian University for Women. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis, providing comprehensive information on the cultural, financial, and familial factors supporting women's education. The findings emphasized the significant role of male family members in facilitating educational pursuits for women in the Rohingya community.

Despite certain limitations, such as cultural restrictions that hindered some women from participating in interviews, financial constraints, and language barriers, the study offers valuable insights for policymakers, organizations, and educational programs to address this community's specific needs. The research underscores the necessity of raising awareness among Rohingya men, highlighting that their views and educational levels directly influence their attitudes toward women's education.

The findings advocate for targeted interventions to increase accessibility to educational opportunities for Rohingya women and emphasize the importance of educational and awareness programs for men within the community. These programs should aim to shift perceptions and encourage greater support for women's education, thereby fostering a more inclusive educational environment.

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the influential factors that uphold women's commitment to higher education within the Rohingya refugee community in Cox's Bazar. By highlighting the crucial role of male family members and the broader sociocultural and financial dynamics, the research provides a foundation for future efforts to enhance educational access and support for Rohingya women. It calls for comprehensive strategies that address cultural barriers,

financial limitations, and the critical need for male engagement in promoting women's education. Significant strides can be made in empowering Rohingya women and fostering a more equitable and educated community through these targeted efforts.

Chapter 4- Results:

4.1: Demographic Questions

To provide context for the research findings regarding the participants' personal lives and backgrounds, the interview included demographic questions such as age, number of family members, and duration of residence in the Cox's Bazar refugee camp. To give a clearer analysis of the questions, they have been analyzed using SPSS Statistics.

Participants Age

The results of the analysis on the age range of the participants of this research are stated in the table and pie chart below:

Table 1: Age group:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	14- 17 year old	2	11.1	11.1	11.1
	18-21 year old	13	72.2	72.2	83.3
	22-25 years old	3	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	18	100.0	100.0	

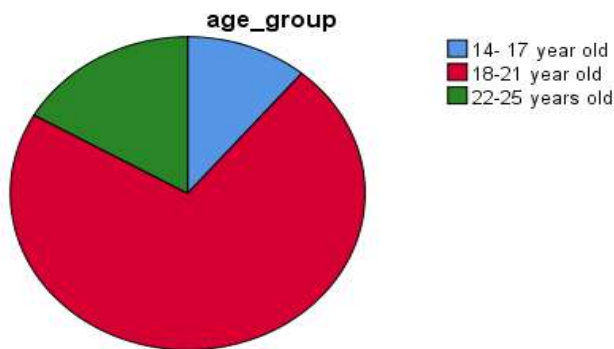
Statistics

Age Group

N	Valid	18
	Missing	0
Mean		2.0556

Sum	37.00
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The statistical analysis of the age groups provides further insight into the distribution of the participants. With a total of 18 valid responses and no missing data, the mean age group value is 2.0556. This mean value falls between the 18-21-year-old and 22-25-year-old age groups, indicating that, on average, participants are slightly over 21 years old, leaning more towards young adulthood.



The sum of the age group values is 37, confirming that the data accurately represents the 18 participants. This sum helps verify the distribution and ensures that each participant's age group is accounted for correctly. The concentration of participants in the 18-21-year-old category underscores the study's focus on young adults at a critical juncture in their educational and personal development.

Family Members:

Another important question in the research is the number of family members each participant has. The tables below provide detailed percentages and the participants' mean number of family members.

Table 2: Family members

Table 2: Number of Family Members				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	2.00	1	5.6	5.6	5.6
	5.00	2	11.1	11.1	16.7
	6.00	2	11.1	11.1	27.8
	7.00	2	11.1	11.1	38.9
	8.00	4	22.2	22.2	61.1
	9.00	1	5.6	5.6	66.7
	10.00	3	16.7	16.7	83.3
	11.00	1	5.6	5.6	88.9
	12.00	1	5.6	5.6	94.4
	13.00	1	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	18	100.0	100.0	

Statistics		
Number of Family Members		
N	Valid	18
	Missing	0
Mean		8.0556
Sum		145.00

The analysis of family sizes among the participants reveals a wide range of family sizes, with the number of family members ranging from 2 to 13. The most common family size is 8 members, comprising 22.2% of the sample. Smaller family sizes, such as those with 2 and 9 members, are less frequent, each representing 5.6% of the participants. Families with 10 members account for 16.7% of the sample, making it the second most common family size. The distribution indicates a trend toward larger families, as families with 8 or more members represent a significant portion of the sample (50%).

The mean number of family members is approximately 8.06, with a total sum of 145 family members across the 18 participants. This average suggests that the typical family in this sample is relatively large, which may reflect cultural or socioeconomic factors influencing family size. The data indicates that while there is some variability, larger families are a common

characteristic among the participants. This finding can have implications for understanding household dynamics, resource allocation, and the potential challenges these families may face.

Number of Years Lived in Camp

The following tables explain how many years each participant lived in Cox’s Bazar refugee camp.

Statistics		
How many years she live in camp		
N	Valid	18
	Missing	0
Mean		3.92
Sum		71

Table 3: Time lived in the camp

How many years she live in camp					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	2	11.1	11.1	11.1
	1	1	5.6	5.6	16.7
	2	1	5.6	5.6	22.2
	3	1	5.6	5.6	27.8
	4	1	5.6	5.6	33.3
	4	4	22.2	22.2	55.6
	5	5	27.8	27.8	83.3
	6	2	11.1	11.1	94.4
	8	1	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	18	100.0	100.0	

Based on the data provided, it appears that the majority of respondents in this study have lived in the camp for varying durations. The distribution shows that the most common responses are 4 years (22.2%) and 5 years (27.8%), indicating a significant portion of the population has experienced medium to long-term residency in the camp. Additionally, there are notable proportions who have lived for 3 years (5.6%), 6 years (11.1%), and 8 years (5.6%). The mean duration of 3.92 years suggests a central tendency slightly below 4 years, reflecting a distribution where durations vary around this average. The cumulative percentage reveals that 83.3% of

respondents have lived in the camp for 5 years or less, with a notable concentration around the 4 to 5-year range.

Education Level of the Respondents

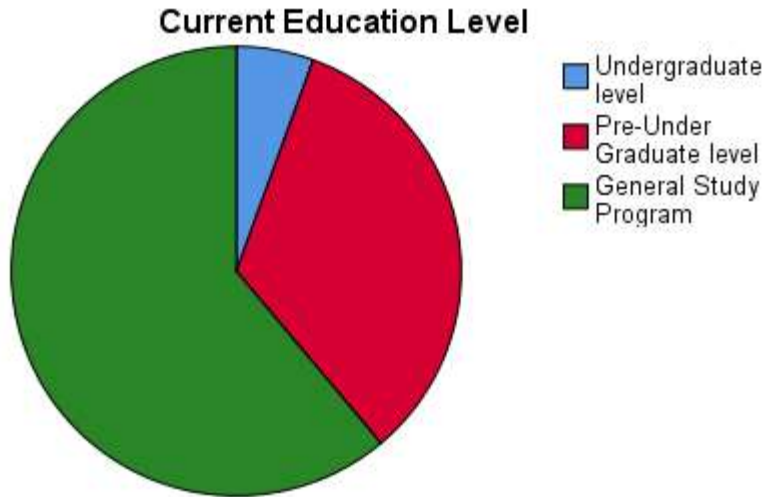
The education level of the respondents of this research is explained in the tables and pie charts below.

Statistics		
Current Education Level		
N	Valid	18
	Missing	0
Mean		2.5556

Table 4: Current Education Level					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undergraduate level	1	5.6	5.6	5.6
	Pre-Under Graduate level	6	33.3	33.3	38.9
	General Study Program	11	61.1	61.1	100.0
	Total	18	100.0	100.0	

The data on the current education level of the respondents provides insight into the educational attainment within the camp. The majority of respondents, 61.1%, are enrolled in a General Study Program, which suggests a focus on foundational or broad-based education. This high percentage highlights a significant engagement in general education, potentially due to accessibility or preparatory needs before advancing to higher education levels.

The remaining respondents are divided between those at the Pre-Undergraduate level (33.3%) and those at the Undergraduate level (5.6%). This indicates that while a notable portion of students is preparing for higher education, a much smaller fraction has progressed to actual undergraduate studies. The mean value of 2.5556 reflects the prevalence of respondents in the General Study Program, as this level is numerically the highest and most frequent in the dataset.



The pie chart visually supports this analysis, showing that approximately two-thirds of the respondents are in the General Study Program, with one-third in Pre-Undergraduate programs and a minimal number in Undergraduate programs.

4.2: Personal Motivation for Education:

The interview revealed an array of personal motivations both intrinsic and extrinsic that play a crucial role in Rohangya women's decision to pursue higher education. The findings highlight a combination of overcoming hardships, the influence of role models, the significance of support systems, and personal ambitions.

Several participants have expressed their strong desire to overcome the hardships that they or their families have suffered. They see education as a means for changing their life and the lives of their family members. A 22-year-old participant stated "My motivation is to become a doctor, in doing so, I can help the people in my community, especially the women. Additionally, I want to become a doctor to make money, which will help me have a better life and give money to my younger siblings." Similarly, another participant aged 24 shared "My mother died when I was small. My father married again. I have two siblings. I want to educate myself to support my

family and not depend on others.”. Next, a girl who has a long experience of living in the camp expressed her motivation for education as this “What motivated me to continue my education were the hardships I faced throughout my life. I don’t want to complain, but I have had a very difficult life.

It is a common motivation for girls from the Rohingya community to want to get an education and find a job so they can financially support their old parents and siblings, as a 22-year-old girl from the community shared” My main motivation for studying is to firstly save myself from poverty by getting a good job and earning a high salary. But more importantly, I want to help my parents. You know my father is old and my mother is very sick. She has been hospitalized three times during the past year. We have spent all our money on her medication. On the other hand, my older brother who is married is not willing to help our parents, therefore, I see it as my responsibility to take care of my parents when they grow old. I plan to graduate from the Asian University for Women, and then get a scholarship in the USA. But when I arrive there as soon as possible I will get a job and send money to home.”

For another participant who is 18 years old and is a student in the general study program, the motivation goes beyond changing her own life or the lives of her family members. For her, it is education is a tool for bringing positive change to the people in her community. She stated “Another important factor that motivates me to continue my education is my desire to bring positive change to my community. You know it feels bad to be part of the most backward and unfortunate community in the world. I have a love-and-hate relationship with my community but at the end of the day, I feel responsible for changing the situation for my people, especially women”.

For another participant, the main motivation for education is a mixture of personal ambition and the desire to overcome hardships. One participant who is a 20-years old and a student at the Pre-Undergraduate level stated that their motivation is as follows “My main motivation for studying is to save my own life. To be honest, I was raised under very difficult conditions where I suffered from poverty, back culture, and many more. In Bangladesh growing up, I saw that education can save the lives of many people and help you belong to a better social class”.

The presence of educated role models within their communities or families significantly motivated the participants. Seeing other women succeed instilled hope and provided a tangible example of what they could achieve. One of the participants who is at the Pre-Undergraduate level and 20-year old stated that “From early on, I was encouraged and financially supported by my parents to study. Also, I have brothers who are older than me, and both are university graduates and very supportive of girls’ education. They always tell me how much they want their sister to be educated.”

Another girl who is 18 years old and plans to study PPE in the future said “Later, when I went to education programs, one of our teachers was from the Myanmar community. She was the one who gave me a lot of awareness about the history of my community. There I knew what caused us to flee our country, why we were so poor, and so on. Right now I am mostly self-motivated.” As she said, her motivation is to Study PPE and play an active role in the politics and social matters in her community influenced by her teacher in the early years of her education.

Similarly, another girl who is 19 years old and studies in a Pre-Undergraduate program says that her motivation to study comes from the influence her female relative had on her early. She has stated “In Bangladesh, we have some relatives who have come here many years ago. I met them first when I came to Bangladesh as a refugee. Their daughters have been to school and university and they have a better life than us. This first motivated me to study.”

Another participant an 18-year-old in the GS program stated “My parents are my role models, and in our family, it is very normal for us (the children) to study. I am mainly motivated and supported by my parents; both of them equally support me.” Next, a 19-year-old girl who currently studies at the Pre-Undergraduate level added her experience “Coming to Bangladesh from the most unfortunate countries in the world, I was very impressed by the girls from the rich community in Bangladesh and they are mostly educated”. Similarly, another participant, a 16-year-old girl studying in the General Study program stated her main motivator for education as this “In the camp, I got sick with Dingo disease which nearly killed me. However, in the hospital, I met a female doctor who took care of me. She was very professional and kind. Seeing her inspired me to become like her in the future. So that is my motivation for studying”. Another girl who is 20 years old and studies in the General Study program stated her motivation for getting higher education as this “Back then, Barrak and other NGOs provided some educational programs in our community. Whenever I attended these programs, I saw women who had better lives—who were respected and financially stable. I was so impressed by them. In one program, I had a female teacher who was very kind and had everything I dreamt about. I told her I wanted to continue my education, and she eventually helped me come to AUW”.

Next, a married woman who studies at Pre-Undergraduate level and is 21 years old stated that observing women in her husband’s community motivated her to resume her education. She

said “Upon moving to Chittagong, I noticed many girls my age attending school and living good lives, which made me realize that I was missing something. Additionally, my new family often mocked and criticized me for being illiterate, which motivated me to pursue education to improve my social standing and become financially independent”.

However, for some other students, the motivation for studying was not as conscious or deep as others. In fact, for a minority of students especially those who come from a better economic background or are at younger ages, education is something that has been advised by their parents or they just have followed their sibling’s footpath. One participant who is 16 years old and studying in the second semester of the General Study program, stated her motivation for education as this “I did not know very much about education. I mean I am still very young. But my cousin and my sister study at AUW. They are at higher levels. Then my parents send me to study and live beside my sister”. Similarly, another girl who is 19 years old and a student in Pre-Undergraduate stated their motivation for education like this “In the beginning I did not like to study because it is difficult, but my parents sent me to school and later to AUW study beside some other senior students from Rohangyi community. In the first semester, I did not have any motivation but as time passed I learned about the value of education”.

For other participants, the motivation for education is personal ambitions. One participant who is a 22-years old and studies at the Pre-Undergraduate level stated their motivation as this “My main motivation for education is to improve my life both financially and intellectually and to defend my community and bring a positive change in the political situation of my community”.

4.3: Main Sources of Support:

Family Support

The main aim of this research was to explore the main source of support for students from the Rohingya community who have managed to continue their education by relating to the student's life experiences and observations from society. Based on the data from this research the main supporter or the main factor that helped women continue their education was family support and the support from organizations like the Asian University for women. However, other participants had a different observation that is stated in the codes in this section.

The first participant who is a 22-year-old girl studying at AUW University said the following statement about who was the main supporter of their education journey "Family was the main factor that helped me with my education. They provided me with money and encouraged me to continue my education, as both of my parents are teachers. Most of the support I got was from my father. I also have another sister who is currently studying in the AUW GS program in her last semester, and she helps me a lot with my education". Likewise, another girl who is 20 years old and studying in the GS program stated a similar experience saying that the main supporters for my education have been the family members and the availability of helpful organizations like AUW that provided them with the chance to join a higher education program.

Her experience is stated like this "One major factor that contributes to our education is the family. In our traditional society, many people do not understand why women should study. For example, when I came to AUW, many people told my father that I would be free at AUW to do whatever I wanted, so I could go outside and spend time with boys. Some of them told my dad that by sending your daughter to that university, you get money, so you are profiting from your daughter. But my father did not listen to any of those people.

Another girl who is 26 years old and studies at the Undergraduate level states that more than anything family has been the main source of support for her “My family helped me continue my higher education. Initially, I did not have the intrinsic motivation or desire to continue my studies, but my family insisted. They sent me to AUW and told me to seriously follow my education. As a traditional girl who listens to her family, I did as they told me, and now, after many years, I understand the value of my education. My family protected me against the close-minded and traditional society”. Likewise, another participant who is 20 years old and a student in the GS program reported about the main supporter of their education as this “My father was open-minded and knew the value of women’s education, so he sent us (me and my sister) to AUW. Since we have elder brothers and a father who supported us, we got the financial and emotional support to continue our education”.

Next, an 18-year-old participant who studies in the General study program stated that her parents were the main source of support for her she said “The main thing that motivated me and helped me continue my education was my family. Back then, when I was a child I did not understand the value of education. I was mostly interested in clothes and fashion and I got frustrated when I could not have them so I asked my parents to provide them for me. However, my family was living a very poor life in the camp so they could not. My father always told us that the only way to get what we want is to study”.

Besides family support which is the most prevalent source of support for girls’ education, the role of diaspora has been reported in a few interviews, however, still the main factor influencing their education is family. A 20-year-old girl who studies in the General Study program reported the role that her family and diaspora played in her education like this “Based on my personal experience and observations, the most important factor in educating girls in my

community is family. Those girls who have the support or at least the partial approval of their family members can continue their education. For myself, my family, especially my father, was very much in favor of my education. They gave me financial support, accompanied me wherever I went for my studies, and even found the AUW opportunity. My father and brother learned from other AUW senior students about the university that supports girls from Myanmar and listed my name”.

Next, a 20-years girl who is a student in the Pre-Undergraduate program reported that it was her family who ingrained the importance of education in her mind and supported her, she said “Unlike many girls in the Rohingya community, I come from a family where both parents were educated. Growing up, my parents always told me about the political issues we were facing and what was happening to our community, such as the discrimination against us, including laws restricting our movement or education. From early on, I was encouraged and financially supported by my parents to study. Also, I have brothers who are older than me, and both are university graduates and very supportive of girls’ education. They always tell me how much they want their sister to be educated”.

Likewise, another girl who is 18 years old and studying in the General Study program said “I am mainly motivated and supported by my parents; both of them equally support me. My father financially supports me by buying me books and stationery and helping me travel to AUW. My mother also helps me continue my education by not overloading me with house chores. You know, in my community, girls start working at home almost from age seven, which hinders their growth and prevents them from studying”. Another girl who is 19-year old and studies at the Pre-Undergraduate level stated “I say that all my family members are supportive because they don’t make me feel miserable. Also, my two older brothers are very supportive of

me financially. I receive money from both of them and they accompany me wherever I go. For example, when I have to travel somewhere inside the country they come with me”

Next, a 20-year-old student in the General study program reported that her parents played the most influential role in her education. She said “My mother is a very simple and traditional woman. She is kind, but she does not know much. My father is the same, but he is loving. He could not help me financially, but he allowed me to work and study. Before coming to AUW, I sewed clothes and did some handicraft projects to finance my studies”.

Another girl who is 22 years old and studies in a Pre-Undergraduate program talked about the most influential factor in her education “My father is financially supporting our education by sending us money and taking us to the school or university we go to. Also, he protects us from the harms that come from the bad-intentioned people in our community like those people who are against my education. Overall my father plays the most important role in my life”.

Next, a 16-year-old student who is in the General study program said that her father has the most influential role in her education, she stated “The main supporters who helped me continue my education after school are my father who allowed me to go to school”.

Despite the majority of the participants reporting on the positive influence of family members especially their father on their education, some girls like this participant said she was limited by her father but later when she married her husband supported her to continue her education. She said “My father who is a religious person said it is good if I can read and write. But when I was at the age of 14 my father and brothers who are older than me prevented me from going to school. I insisted on going to school but I faced a lot of anger and limitations from

my family especially my brothers who saw it as inappropriate. So eventually I got married when I was 17". About her husband's support she said "Once I married, I was disappointed that I could not continue my education but my husband who is a Bangladeshi had a more positive mindset towards education. In addition, now I live in a large city like Chittagong. This provided me with the opportunity to talk about my education with my husband. Upon agreeing to some terms like wearing modest clothing and things like that I convinced him to allow me to resume my education. But now he is supporting me financially and also he supports me against the society that causes problems now and then. So this is my husband who supports me the most with my education".

Similarly, another woman who is 21 years old and studies at the Pre-Undergraduate level shared her experience on how her husband and his family support her to continue her education "My sister-in-law is a student at the Asian University for Women, and we are very close friends. She inspired me to continue my education and helped me convince my family. My husband, who is a high school graduate and a businessman, understands the benefits of education and supports me financially".

Most of the respondents to this research explained the weak or secondary influence of mothers in the Rohingya community, however, there were very few respondents who considered their mother as the main supporter of their education. One example is a 20-year-old girl who is in the Pre-Undergraduate program, she said "I lost my father when I was a child so I have mainly received support from my mother and my sister who is married and older than me".

Likewise, another girl who is 17 years old and studies in the General Study program said "My family wants me to continue my education. Especially my mother. She does not want us to get married soon. My father sends us some money every month and my mother sends us food

like dried fish and fruit”. Next, another student who is 18 years old shared the same experience, she said “The person who gives me the most help and support is my mother, as my father has passed away and she is the eldest member of my family, she convinced my brothers to allow me to come to AUW. Also, she convinced them to send me money whenever I need. Without her support I could not come to AUW”. Finally, another girl who is 19 years old and studies in the General Study program stated that “my father is the person who supports me financially and protects me against the society, however, my mother plays a significant role by negotiating with my father on me behave and convincing her to let me continue my education. As she has been married at an early age and never got the chance to live her desired life, she wanted that chance for me”.

Education Opportunities

Another important question that this research asked from the participants was if any other person or organization helped and supported them in continuing their education. The findings show that organizations that provide learning opportunities for students from the Rohingya community are the second most crucial factor in upholding women’s education. However, the data shows that the influence of these organizations on women’s chances of getting an education is not as significant as family support.

A 22-year-old student who studies in the General Study program stated the role of organizations as this “Not much for me. It has been only my family and the availability of school and university (AUW) that helped and supported me to continue my education”. Another student who is 20 years old explained the role of educational organizations in Rohingya women’s education as “the key factor contributing to Rohingya girls' commitment to education is the availability of scholarships for our community. Many girls in our community want to study and

go to university, but the problem is that there are not many opportunities inside or outside the camp that help us continue our education. For me, it has been very helpful to get this scholarship from the Asian University for Women (AUW). It is the only opportunity for Rohingya women to continue their higher education and come to university”.

Next, a student who is 26 years old and studies in the undergraduate program stated the role of education organizations on her education journey as this “the Asian University for Women (AUW) has been the most effective organization in supporting our education. At the time of graduating from school, AUW was the only option for girls in our community.

However, another girl who is a 20-year-old studying in the General Study program said “No organizations were providing the necessary educational support and certification. The lack of these opportunities was a major barrier”. Similarly, another girl who is 20 years old and studies in the General Study program said “No, there were not many organizations to help us anyway. The primary support came from my family”. Next, another girl 18 years old studying in the General Study program gave her opinion on the role of education organizations as follows “AUW has been very impactful. But if you talk on a large scale I think it is only AUW that is doing something very effective and fundamental for education in our community. The rest just provide short-term and low-quality programs”.

Similarly, another girl who is 19 years old and studies in the Pre-Undergraduate program stated her opinion “AUW University helps me with my education because it is right now the only opportunity I have to continue my education. As I am still a Myanmarer many legal issues prevent me from attending other universities. AUW is the most effective university or organization in helping women from Myanmar other organizations provide programs that are on a small scale and not as effective”.

Next, another girl who is a student in the General Study program and is 18 years old explained her observations on the role of organizations in supporting Rohingya women's education "There have been some organizations like Barrack or UN that help our community in different ways, but I don't think they are very effective in helping us continue our education. The programs they provide are short-term, inconsistent, and low-quality. Moreover, they do not give you certificates that can help later on. However, AUW is successful in providing educational opportunities for girls from my community. But it is decreasing nowadays as AUW is more focused on the issue of Afghan women. This is my take".

Another girl who is 19 years old and studies in a Pre-undergraduate program stated her experience was like this "No one pushed me to study. Getting an education is not like a war I have to fight it is just a normal thing that normal people are used to doing. So no huge motivational speech has been given to me. But I say AUW University and my teachers who helped me in the school I graduated from.

Likewise, one girl who is 20 years old and studies in the General Study program stated her experience as this "Yes, as I said my teachers have always played a role in supporting my education. Then the only organization that has supported me is AUW". Also, another girl who is 21 years old and studies in a Pre-Undergraduate program, had the same experience. She said "The small educational programs in the camp were somewhat helpful, though they lacked quality and accreditation. AUW, however, has been very supportive and crucial in my educational journey.

Further another participant who is 22 years old and studying in the Pre-Undergraduate program said "Other than my parents I am grateful that organizations like AUW are there to help us however, there are not many like this, and even AUW is not focused on us. The main focus of

AUW in the last year has been to help Afghan girls not us while the need for education in our community is no less than Afghans”. Like other participants, this girl who is 20 years old and studies in Pre-Undergraduate program stated that AUW has been most effective in providing education to Rohingya women. She said “there are not many organizations or third parties that provide life-changing help to us, the women of the Rohingya community. There are only a few, and the best among them is the AUW education program, which offers full scholarships and easy-to-join opportunities”.

Similarly, another girl who is 17 years old and studies in the General Study program said “Other than family my teachers here in AUW support me a lot they tell me why I should educate myself and how to solve any problem I face. In general, I like studying at AUW. I do not like the senior students at all but I like teachers and I like joining the clubs”. Further, another girl who is 19 years old and studies in the general study program said that “there are not many organizations who enroll students from Rohangya and the programs inside the camp do not have good quality or certification, I was very lucky to get a scholarship in AUW which is the second big supporter of my education after my family”.

However, a girl who is 17 years old and studies in the first semester of general study said there was no specific organization that gives her significant support. She stated, “Not really. I told you a doctor inspired me. My teacher encourages me a lot here in AUW if you take it as a factor”. Another girl who is 18 years old and studies in the General Study program said that “there are not many organizations who support Rohingya women’s education. Even if there are some education opportunities you cannot take them unless your family helps you so it is not as significant as the role of family”.

4.4: Role of Male Family Members:

This study explored the influence of male family members on Rohingya girl's higher education. The results of the study show that male family members like father, brother, and husband have a crucial impact on student's chances to continue their education. The most significant roles that male family members play include financial support, helping the girls to overcome social barriers like traveling and protecting them from traditional roles that prohibit education for women. In the interview, girls were asked to share their experiences and observations about what has been the role of the male family members in their education and what will happen if male family members (father, brother, husband) in their family do not support their education. The codes below show the girl's observations and experiences.

The first participant who is 22 years old and is studying at the General Study level said this about the role his father played in her education “My brother is very young, so he did not have any role, but my father has had a huge impact on me. He always helps me with my studies, like helping me do my homework or learn my lessons if I cannot learn them in class. My father is very open-minded and understands the value of education. He is a teacher and knows a lot about school, understanding that it is safe for me to go to school. In addition, I did not face any serious social barriers because of my family's and relatives' educational background. Girls whose fathers or brothers do not allow them to study have a different experience. If their family does not support their education, they still can continue their education, but it will be very hard for them”.

Another girl who is 20 years old and studies in the General Study program shared her experience like this “Most of the support I got was from my father. He supported me against the community, also he and I are very close to each other. He is so proud of me and always encourages me. We mostly talk on the phone or chat with each other, which is very sweet. My

father is the Imam in our mosque and a leader in our community. This made my case very sensitive, but he stood by my side”. Talking about her observation of the impact of men on women’s education in her society she added “The education of male family members is the most impactful factor in women’s education in the Rohingya community. If the male members are not supportive of women’s education (if they are not educated themselves), most probably they will give up to social and cultural pressure and take their girls out of school. For example, I have heard about 5 girls who were AUW students, but their fathers took them out of the university. The reason was that other men in the community told their fathers that by sending their daughters to AUW, they were ruining their personalities. So they took them out of AUW and married them”.

Next, a 26-year-old student who is completing her undergraduate degree in AUW said this about his father’s role “My father supported my education and did not allow community members to bully me. He provided mental and emotional support despite our poverty, which helped me overcome societal and cultural barriers. Without her support, it was nearly impossible for me to continue my education”.

Further, a 20-year-old girl who studies in the General Study program explained her father’s role in her education as this “My father was the main supporter. He was open-minded and valued women’s education, which motivated him to send me and my sister to AUW despite societal pressure. My father’s understanding of the value of education helped him resist societal pressure and support my education. This was crucial in overcoming cultural barriers that undervalued women’s education. Also, my elder brothers and father supported me financially and emotionally, enabling me to pursue higher education at AUW. Even though my brothers studied up to high school but ended up as simple laborers, their support was invaluable”.

Talking about her observation of the education journey of other girls in the community she added “Those girls who do not have male family members supporting them and live in poor families do not get an education in my community. The lack of support and financial resources creates a significant barrier to their educational pursuits”. Similarly, another girl who is also 20 years old and studies in the General Study program shared about the important role of male family members. She stated “My father and brother were instrumental in my education journey. They provided financial support, accompanied me for safety, and found educational opportunities like AUW. Also, my father stood against societal and cultural norms that prevented girls from continuing their education after age 14. His support helped me overcome these barriers”. About the role of men in women’s education in her society she added “Girls without family support, particularly from male family members, face significant barriers. Education often ends for them at age 14 due to cultural norms”.

Next, a participant who is 20 years old and studied in the Pre-Undergraduate program shared her experience “The education of my older brothers made them very supportive of girls' education. They helped me overcome societal and cultural barriers by always encouraging me and emphasizing the importance of education”. About the situation of girls who do not have this male figure support she added “girls in families without educated male figures face significant challenges. Some girls are sold to armed group men for money or married off at an early age. The traditional culture that restricts women’s movement is very damaging”.

In addition, another girl who is 18 years old and studies in the General Study Program shared her experience “The main support I received was from my father and my older brother who has managed to have a job and has finished grade 10 (the highest education level for Rohangyia). They financially and emotionally supported me in this journey. When my

community pressured them to marry me to someone, they resisted and did not listen to them. Also they especially my brother gave me money and brought me to AUW. As you know women cannot travel alone in Bangladesh so I could not do it without them. My mother is very emotionally supportive but you know, in our society, women are not supposed to talk about important matters or make decisions so she mostly stayed quiet so as not to cause any issues in my education”.

When asked about her observation of the girls who do not have this male figure support she said “They have a different experience, uneducated families tend to be more traditional in my community. Some of them even do not allow their daughters to go to education programs or workshops running in the camp let alone come to AUW. Many uneducated families blindly follow the culture and marry off their daughters as soon as they can maybe for financial benefits or for getting the approval of the community they live in. If the families do not allow their girls to be educated it is nearly impossible for the girls to continue their education”.

In addition, another participant who is 18 years old and studies in the General Study program said “I would say the main supporter is my father, who gives me financial support and protects me from the traditional society we live in. I love my mother, and she wants the best for me, but to be honest, as a woman in the Rohingya community, there is very little she can do”. When asked about the experience of those who are not supported by the male figures in their family she said “Yes. Girls from uneducated families need to fight for their right to education. They don’t get the financial, social, and emotional support that they need. Moreover, I have witnessed that those girls living in uneducated families witness a lot of violence from male members of their families”.

Another participant who is 19 years old and studies in the General Study program stated “Yes, I have to say that the male family members in my family impacted my life a lot. Partly because I am a girl from Rohingya and in our society men's role. If they were very violent and problematic I would be miserable. They never emotionally abused me or prevented me from going to school. Also, they do not listen to society and what their friends and peers say about me. My uncles for example insisted on getting married very soon and they talked to my brothers for hours sometimes. It used to scare me off but my brothers never took it seriously and just brushed it off. So, I believe it is not education but it is awareness and the moral compass and ideology you choose. For example, one of my best friends, her father is a doctor but she cannot continue education because his father is so fundamentally religious. Then if they agree with the society they apply the cultural roles to you and if they do not agree they don't.”.

When asked about the experience of those women who do not have this support she said “There are some exceptions but generally, they have a very negative experience per my observation. As you may know, most of the early marriages, domestic violence, and illiteracy in our community come from families where men are uneducated. These families are mostly very religious too. So it is a failure formula. In these families, women do not have any other option but to be a victim”.

Another participant who is 20 years and studies in the General Study program shared her experience about male family member's role as girl who has lived in an uneducated family. She stated “In my community women do not make decisions. So the only influential person in my family is my father. I have had a good relationship with him since childhood so I can get what I want from him. He was not supportive of my education from the beginning but later on he supported me against his relatives and society”. Further she added “My family did not have an

education unfortunately and it hurt me. The first impact was the financial issues that we had because of being uneducated. Also, I did not have the guidance and mental support that every child needs growing up”. About how she overcame this situation she said “My family was uneducated so it was hard for me to convince them to let me continue my education. But again being uneducated does not mean being cruel or a bad human. My father is kind and he listens to men. That is the reason why I am here today”.

Another girl who is 22 years old and studied at the Pre-Undergraduate level stated “My father has the most important impact on the life of each member of the family. It is very important to know that without a father it is tough to survive in my community. If you don’t have a father people in the community will harm you or bully, you. Also, there will not be anyone to financially support you. My country is not like Europe or any other modern country so it is not easy for women to work. A fatherless family is, therefore, doomed to poverty and abuse. Therefore, I am grateful for my father’s presence”.

She also added “Educated men tend to be less religious which is a good thing. I mean don’t get me wrong I am a Muslim but being too religious means that you will suffocate the women in your by depriving them of the right to education and other personal freedoms. My father is educated, but his education exposed him to other points of view, leading him to doubt the cultural values and norms in our community. It provided him with a different perspective on life by exposing him to various philosophies. Another way that it affected my dad was that he had accurate information on how what education organizations like schools or universities look like. So he did not have the illusion that girls are being drugged and brainwashed in school. Do you know the rumors that the uneducated men in my community make up assumptions about women's education and believe them? In conclusion, I do not say that all girls from uneducated

families are doomed to stay uneducated, but it is evident that they have a hard time dealing with social stigmas, family traditions, and lack of financial support.”.

Another 19-year-old woman who is studying in the Pre-Undergraduate program shared her experience about how she was banned from education in her paternal house but her husband allowed her to study. She stated “Once I married I was disappointed that I could not continue my education but my husband who is a Bangladeshi had a more positive mindset towards education. In addition, now I live in a large city like Chittagong. This provided me with the opportunity to talk about my education with my husband. Upon agreeing to some terms like wearing modest clothing and things like that I convinced him to allow me to resume my education. But now he is supporting me financially and also he supports me against the society that causes problems now and then. So this is my husband who supports me the most with my education”.

Another participant who is 21 years old and studies in the Pre-Undergraduate program talked about the struggles she went through while living in her parental house and how her husband supports her education. She “While living in my parents' house, my father and brothers, who were uneducated, never allowed me to be in public or study. However, my husband, having grown up in a city, does not harbor the same misconceptions, such as the belief that AUW sells girls to foreign countries or that every educated girl rebels against her family. He is educated to some extent and recognizes the intellectual and financial benefits that education can bring. In summary, he is more aware and supportive”.

Another girl who is studying in 20-years old who is studying in Pre-Undergraduate stated “My brothers left education in 6th and 5th grade so they can be called illiterate. This has had a very negative impact on the lives of me and other women in our home. They were completely against my education from the beginning so it was very difficult to go to my classes or find time

in my daily life to study. Also, they did not provide any kind of help and support to me”. She further explained “Being uneducated my brothers had all kinds of negative opinions about me going to school and university. They thought that going to university would mean that I would sleep with men, change my religion, and many more negative things. They even thought that AUW was going to sell me to someone and I would get lost. This is because they have never been to a university. To the last part of your question, they have never supported me against social pressures. In contrast, they have only applied all the cultural stigmas and wrong beliefs”.

Next, another participant who is 17 years old and studies in the General Study program said this about the influence of her male family members “In my family, there are not many men. It is only my father who is not very educated. But my father is kind and he has worked in different places. So he is wise. He did not apply some cultural roles to me. Roles like you are not allowed to go out after the age of 14”. When asked about the experience of those who do not have the male figure support she said “I do not think so. Maybe for half of them, it is true but the other half want their children to progress and be happy. My parents had a very bad life. But my father always prays for us to have it easier. There is so much bad talk about the people in Myanmar people like my father are seen as second-class humans who sell their children for money and never understand the importance of education and things like this. However, this is not true. Most of the girls in AUW come from uneducated families who send them to build a different life for themselves”.

Another girl who is 17 years old and studies in the General Study program shared her experience “My father is not educated. But he is kind and smart. He likes education and never listens to people saying to her to take us out of AUW and marry us to someone. You know many families marry their daughters to military groups for money. But my father never does that”.

About the girls who do not have the support of male family members she said “Girls from educated families have a better life. Their parents have more money. Also, they do not ask their daughters to cover up in public. But girls in uneducated families can face problems like their fathers may not listen to them, beat them if they do something wrong, or marry them too early. Educated families prioritize education more than uneducated ones. Finally, they are more likely to support their daughter's education”.

In addition, another participant who is 18 years old and studies in a general study program said “I can say that the main reason I can continue my education is my father. You may ask why you do not name your mother but honestly, there is not much my mother can do in this regard. This is my father who provides me with money and other types of support to continue my education”. Also she added “Those girls whose fathers do not agree to their education find it almost impossible to continue their education. Because we do not have any other type of support like government or any humanitarian organization who cares for us the only source of authority and power is our fathers and brothers”. Also she added “those girls whose family especially father do not agree to their education or do not motivate them remain illiterate. Because when you are a child of suppose 16 or 14 years old you do not know the value of education it is your father and mother who motivate and inform you”.

Finally, another girl who is 19 years old and studies in the General Study program said “My father and older brother had the most positive impact on my education. My father is not educated but he gives me money and my brother brought me to AUW. They are very nice and friendly”. About the experience of those girls who do not have male figure support, she said “Many of these girls come from very traditional families. Some of them can convince their

parents by fighting and negotiating but many cannot. So the main problem for girls who are illiterate in our society is their fathers and brothers.

4.5: Challenges and Overcoming Obstacles:

Women in the Rohingya community face many challenges in the pursuit of getting higher education. These challenges come from many sources including family dynamics, social barriers, and so on. This research paper explored the main challenges facing women's higher education in the Rohingya community by relating to participants' first-hand witness and experience.

The first participant who is 22 years old and studies in the General study program said this about the main challenges she faced in her education journey “I did not encounter many challenges because my family members, as my other relatives, are all educated. So, I did not experience any hardship. Others who come from backgrounds different from mine will face problems”. Another participant who is 20 years old and studies in the General Study program said “The main challenge I face as a student is the financial problems I and my family are facing. My mother is very sick and has been hospitalized twice this year. For her treatment, we have spent more than 5 lakh TK so far. Her condition and the financial burden that my father carries haunt me every day. I get so much stress daily thinking about this problem. Another big challenge is society. Back home in the Cox's Bazar camp, there are many rumors about me that I have relationships with boys and embarrass my family with bad things that I do here in Chittagong. However, all of them are wrong and they have just made up that false news about me”. About how she overcomes them she said “The financial problems are there and the only one who handles them is my father. I do get some help from AUW too. For social pressure again I rely only on my father who defends me against all these hardships “

Next, another girl who is 26 years old and studies in an undergraduate program said this about the challenges she faces and how she overcomes them “The community had a very negative attitude towards education, believing girl’s education does not matter because girls would eventually marry and tend to their children and husbands. My father told me to keep my motivation and not allow community members to bully me over my education. Despite growing up in poverty, my father provided mental and emotional support”.

Similarly, another girl who is 20 years old and studies in a General study program said “There were NGOs in the camp, but they mostly focused on emotional support and play rather than teaching school subjects like math and English. These NGOs did not provide any certification upon completion, which made it difficult to progress to the next educational level. Despite these challenges, my father’s support and understanding of the value of education helped me overcome these barriers. Also, I have to mention that the AUW program saved my education considering that there are not many programs like this for us”.

Similarly, another girl who is 20 years old and studies in the General study program said “In Myanmar, we were targeted on the way to school, so my father and brother accompanied me for security reasons. In the Cox’s Bazar camp, girls do not face security issues because the houses are lined up very close to each other, and it is always crowded. However, the cultural norm that girls should not go to school after the age of 14 is a significant barrier. This was not a problem for me since my father stood against these cultural norms and supported me”.

In addition, another student who is 20 years old and studied in the Pre-Undergraduate program said “The traditional culture that restricts women’s movement is very damaging. Some girls in my community are not as lucky as me; their parents sell them to armed group men for money or marry them off at an early age. However, I know some girls who have managed to

come to AUW even by going against their families' wishes or running away. However, I did not face these issues because I had parents and a good brother who stood by my side”.

Another girl who is 18 years old and studied in the General Study program said this about the challenges she faced “The biggest challenge I faced was from my community. In my community, very few people are educated. The way they see women is that they are only to be mothers and housewives. So, when I was 12 years old our neighbors always objected to the way I dressed, why I went to education programs, and many other things. They used to come to my parents and ask them to stop me from going outside as I was becoming a woman. The worst thing was that I was completing all the education programs available in the camp and there was no other opportunity for me to continue education. On the other hand, some of my relatives and neighbors came to my parents asking them to marry me to their son. It was scary. However, one of the senior students in the AUW informed me that AUW accepts girls from my community. I asked my father and after some research he allowed me. So culture and lack of opportunities are the problem”.

Further another participant who is 17 years old and studies in the Pre-Undergraduate program stated “I miss my parents and home a lot. It is tough to live in AUW. In the beginning, I cried every day. I wanted to go back. The girls especially the seniors in AUW are very mean they bully you all the time. In the beginning, I cried every day and night but now I am used to it a little bit. Also, I wish my parents could send me more money so I could buy things for myself— things like good notebooks and clothes. Sometimes girls make fun of my clothes and stuff like that. I wish my family lived in Chittagong”.

Another participant who is 18 years old and studies in the General Study program shared her experience “Most of the challenges we face in our education journey come from poverty and

traditional culture. I especially suffer when families in our community look down on my parents for allowing me to come to AUW. They do not understand the value of education and spread false rumors about me. Until now, my family has ignored all of that but I do not know how long they can fight this situation”.

In addition, another girl who is 18 years old and studies in the General Study program explained the challenges she faced “Till now I have not faced any specific big challenge like the other girls in my community and I am grateful for that. I mean, sometimes people from our community spread rumors about me or tell their daughters not to hang out with me because I am too modern and open-minded but I don’t care about things like this. However, there is a challenge that makes me and my parents worried. As Rohingya people, we face a lot of legal and identity issues. I do not have an identification card that is valid everywhere and I cannot take a passport. In the last year, I got two scholarships from the USA but I could not go because I did not have a passport so I lost the chance. In addition, I worry about my job prospects once I graduate as a stateless individual. All of these thoughts stress me out and sometimes eat up my motivation”.

Similarly, another girl who is 19 years old and studies at the Pre-Undergraduate level said a similar thing about legal issues facing women from the Rohingya community “One challenge I faced was the legal challenge which did not allow us to attend formal educational institutions in Bangladesh and there are not enough programs or institutions that help us Rohingya students. When I first wanted to go to school, I was in camp, and the education opportunities there were hopeless. There were Bangladeshi schools around us but they did not accept us because we did not have the documents required. Thankfully, I had relatives to help me, and later on AUW program came to my help”.

Another student who is 22 years old and studies in the Pre-Undergraduate program shared similar concerns “The main challenge that I have faced in my education journey is the legal and official issues. As a Rohingya, we are stateless and do not have official documents like a national identity card or passport. So, when we have very limited educational opportunities. Many schools and universities in Bangladesh do not enroll us at all. And we cannot travel abroad or get a job like normal Bengali people. For now, I do not have a problem because I can get my master’s degree at AUW but for my job prospects and further study, I am very worried”.

Likewise, another student who is 19 years old and studies in the General Study program said “The main challenges for us is lack of educational opportunities due to legal issues, traditional culture that does not allow many girls to study, poverty. I have a lot of financial issues, and I cannot get a scholarship outside of Bangladesh because I do not have a passport”.

One participant who is 17 years old and studies in the General Study program said this about the challenges she faces “The main challenges I faced as a student were poverty and lack of educational opportunities. My father is not very educated or some kind of businessman. So he does not make a lot of money. Therefore, I always struggled just to find money to buy a uniform, stationary, or go to an English class. Also, no school or university even takes us if we have money. Because we do not have an identity. We are rejected by almost everyone at this point.

Further another girl who is 20 years old and studies in the General study program said “I am the only girl from my entire relatives and family who is pursuing higher education. This comes with a lot of challenges. Growing up I had no one to guide me in life, I had no access to information for a long time, and I had no one to help me with my finances or the challenges I faced in my education. Also, society and the traditional and backward mindset of my relatives and neighbors were a huge problem for me. They always spread rumors about me and the

condition of women in AUW that are not true at all. Many times my father hears them and decides to stop me from continuing my studies and then I have to try for a long time to convince him that these things are not true”.

However, another girl who is 19 years old and studying in Pre-Undergraduate said how his father was limiting her education “Yes, as I told you my brothers and my father were the problem once I grew up. But mainly the challenge came from the society that influenced my family’s attitude towards my education. Once I married I could continue my education because my new family was okay with it”.

Similarly, another girl who is 21 years old and studying in the Pre-Undergraduate program said “Compared to other girls, I am a bit behind in my education because my family never supported me financially or socially. They prevented me from going outside when I turned 12 or 13. There weren’t any organizations to help us. Cox’s Bazar camp is very crowded, and the officials do not have the time to listen to everyone’s problems, so there wasn’t anyone outside my family who could help me. My brothers were the main reason I couldn’t go outside or study as they felt that by doing so, I embarrassed them”.

In addition, another girl who is 20 years old and studies in the Pre-Undergraduate program shared a similar story “I faced countless challenges in my education journey. Most of these challenges came from my family and my community. I lost my father when I was a child. So after that, my mother was the eldest in my family but my brothers also had a lot of power over us. So the main enemy was at home my brother did not agree to my education. They were so much under the influence of older men in the community who told them to protect their name by not allowing us to go out. Often I had to fight for going to a simple workshop or to see a doctor. They made me wear extremely modest clothes and hide my face but still, it was not

enough. So I tried to argue and reason with them which mostly led to physical fights where I got bitten and abused. My mother always tried to stand up for me and talked or pleaded to my brothers but she could not do much because she was a woman and she needed my brothers' support in life. Also, after a certain age when I went out the people in the community used to look at me as if I was guilty of some crime. The only support I got was from my older sister who took me out of our parental home and brought me to Chittagong. Her excuse was that she needed my help with her newborn but then she helped me stay and let me study”.

4.6: In Vivo Coding of the Interview Answers:

In this part of the research, all the interview answers that have been categorized under related themes will be coded using the Vivo method. The in Vivo codes extracted from the interviews are then categorized into themes that have emerged from the participants' responses.

Motivation for Continuing Education

Economic and Familial Aspirations

"My motivation is to become a doctor, in doing so, I can help the people in my community, especially the women."

"I want to become a doctor to make money, which will help me have a better life and give money to my younger siblings."

"My mother died when I was small. My father married again. I have two siblings."

"I want to educate myself to support my family and not depend on others."

"My main motivation for studying is to firstly save myself from poverty by getting a good job and earning a high salary."

"I want to help my parents. You know my father is old and my mother is very sick."

"My older brother who is married is not willing to help our parents, therefore, I see it as my responsibility to take care of my parents when they grow old."

"I plan to graduate from Asian University for Women, then get a scholarship in the USA."

"As soon as possible I will get a job and send money home."

"From early on, I was encouraged and financially supported by my parents to study."

"I have brothers who are older than me, and both are university graduates and very supportive of girls' education."

"They always tell me how much they want their sister to be educated."

"Upon moving to Chittagong, I noticed many girls my age attending school and living good lives, which made me realize that I was missing something."

"My new family often mocked and criticized me for being illiterate, which motivated me to pursue education to improve my social standing and become financially independent."

"My main motivation for education is to improve my life both financially and intellectually."

"To defend my community and bring a positive change in the political situation of my community."

Community and Social Change

"Another important factor that motivates me to continue my education is my desire to bring positive change to my community."

"It feels bad to be part of the most backward and unfortunate community in the world."

"I have a love-and-hate relationship with my community but at the end of the day, I feel responsible for changing the situation for my people, especially women."

"Later, when I went to education programs, one of our teachers was from the Myanmar community."

"She gave me a lot of awareness about the history of my community."

"Right now I am mostly self-motivated."

"My motivation is to study PPE and play an active role in the politics and social matters in my community."

"Back then, Barrak and other NGOs provided some educational programs in our community."

"Whenever I attended these programs, I saw women who had better lives—who were respected and financially stable."

"In one program, I had a female teacher who was very kind and had everything I dreamt about."

"I told her that I wanted to continue my education, and eventually, she helped me come to AUW."

Role Models and Influence

"In the camp, I got sick with dengue disease which nearly killed me."

"In the hospital, I met a female doctor who took care of me."

"Seeing her inspired me to become like her in the future."

"That is my motivation for studying."

"In Bangladesh, we have some relatives who have come here many years ago."

"Their daughters have been to school and university and they have a better life than us."

"This first motivated me to study."

"My parents are my role models."

"In our family, it is very normal for us (the children) to study."

"I am mainly motivated and supported by my parents; both of them equally support me."

"Coming to Bangladesh from the most unfortunate countries in the world, I was very impressed by the girls from the rich community in Bangladesh."

"They are mostly educated."

"Whenever I attended these programs, I saw women who had better lives—who were respected and financially stable."

"In one program, I had a female teacher who was very kind and had everything I dreamt about."

"I told her that I wanted to continue my education, and eventually, she helped me come to AUW."

Resilience and Overcoming Adversity

"What motivated me to continue my education were the hardships I faced throughout my life."

"I don't want to complain, but I have had a very difficult life."

"My main motivation for studying is to save my own life."

"I was raised under very difficult conditions where I suffered from poverty, back culture, and many more."

"In Bangladesh growing up, I saw that education can save the lives of many people and help you belong to a better social class."

"I did not know very much about education. I mean I am still very young."

"But my cousin and my sister study at AUW. They are at higher levels."

"Then my parents sent me to study and live beside my sister."

"In the beginning, I did not like to study because it is difficult."

"But my parents sent me to school and later to AUW to study beside some other senior students from the Rohingya community."

"In the first semester, I did not have any motivation but as time passed I learned about the value of education."

Personal Ambitions

"My main motivation for education is to improve my life both financially and intellectually."

"To defend my community and bring a positive change in the political situation of my community."

Main Sources of Support:

Family Support

Economic Support

- "Most of the support I got was from my father."
- "My father is financially supporting our education."

- "My father supports me financially and protects me against society."
- "The main thing that motivated me and helped me continue my education was my family."
- "My family helped me continue my higher education."
- "We got the financial and emotional support to continue our education."
- "My father supports me financially by buying me books and stationery."
- "My family, especially my father, was very much in favor of my education."
- "My father sends us money every month."
- "My husband understands the benefits of education and supports me financially."
- "My mother is the main supporter because my father has passed away."

Emotional and Motivational Support

- "Family was the main factor that helped me with my education."
- "My family protected me against the close-minded and traditional society."
- "My family encouraged me and financially supported me to study."
- "My family, especially my father, was very much in favor of my education."
- "My mother is the person who gives me the most help and support."
- "My family wants me to continue my education, especially my mother."
- "My mother convinced my brothers to allow me to come to AUW."
- "My mother plays a significant role by negotiating with my father on my behalf."

- "My sister-in-law inspired me to continue my education and helped me convince my family."
- "My husband supports me financially and against the societal problems."

Protection Against Societal Barriers

- "My family protected me against the close-minded and traditional society."
- "My father was open-minded and knew the value of women's education."
- "My husband supports me financially and against the societal problems."

Role in Overcoming Societal and Cultural Norms

- "My father was open-minded and knew the value of women's education."
- "My family, especially my father, was very much in favor of my education."
- "My sister-in-law inspired me to continue my education and helped me convince my family."
- "My husband supports me financially and against the societal problems."

Support in Overcoming Personal Challenges

- "The main thing that motivated me and helped me continue my education was my family."
- "My mother is the person who gives me the most help and support."
- "My father sends us money every month."
- "My mother convinced my brothers to allow me to come to AUW."
- "My father supports me financially."
- "My husband understands the benefits of education and supports me financially."

- "My mother and sister have been the primary sources of support for my education."

Influence of Family Structure

- "Most of the support I got was from my father."
- "My father was open-minded and knew the value of women's education."
- "The main supporters who helped me continue my education after school are my father."
- "My mother is the person who gives me the most help and support."
- "My father supports me financially."
- "My mother and sister have been the primary sources of support for my education."

Educational Opportunities:

Role of Organizations in Education:

- "Not much for me. It has been only my family and the availability of school and university (AUW) that helped and supported me to continue my education."
- "The key factor contributing to Rohingya girls' commitment to education is the availability of scholarships for our community."
- "The Asian University for Women (AUW) has been the most effective organization in supporting our education."
- "AUW has been very impactful. But if you talk on a large scale I think it is only AUW that is doing something very effective and fundamental for education in our community."
- "AUW University helps me with my education because it is right now the only opportunity I have to continue my education."

- "AUW is the most effective university or organization in helping women from Myanmar. Other organizations provide programs that are on a small scale and not as effective."
- "There have been some organizations like Barrack or UN that help our community in different ways, but I don't think they are very effective in helping us continue our education."
- "AUW is successful in providing educational opportunities for girls from my community. But it is decreasing nowadays as AUW is more focused on the issue of Afghan women."
- "There are not many organizations or third parties that provide life-changing help to us, the women of the Rohingya community."
- "The small educational programs in the camp were somewhat helpful, though they lacked quality and accreditation."
- "AUW offers full scholarships and easy-to-join opportunities."

Limitations and Barriers to Educational Support:

- "No organizations were providing the necessary educational support and certification. The lack of these opportunities was a major barrier."
- "No, there were not many organizations to help us anyway. The primary support came from my family."
- "Other than family my teachers here in AUW support me a lot they tell me why I should educate myself and how to solve any problem I face."

- "There are not many organizations that support Rohingya women's education. Even if there are some education opportunities you cannot take them unless your family helps you so it is not as significant as the role of family."
- "Not really. I told you a doctor inspired me. My teacher encourages me a lot here in AUW if you take it as a factor."
- "No one pushed me to study. Getting an education is not like a war I have to fight it is just a normal thing that normal people are used to doing."

Role of Male Family Members

Financial Support

- Male family members, especially fathers and brothers, play a crucial role in providing financial support for education.
- "My father has had a huge impact on me. He always helps me with my studies, like helping me do my homework or learn my lessons if I cannot learn them in class."
- "My father and brothers supported me financially and emotionally, enabling me to pursue higher education at AUW."
- "My father and brother were instrumental in my education journey. They provided financial support."
- "My father and my older brother have managed to have a job and have finished grade 10 (the highest education level for Rohingya). They financially and emotionally supported me in this journey."
- "My father provides me with money and other types of support to continue my education."

- "My father is in support of my education but he could not guide me on how to study or how to find a good program or a good university. He took me wherever I needed to go and gave me money."

Protection from Cultural and Social Barriers

- Male family members often protect women from societal and cultural pressures that discourage education.
- "My father is very open-minded and understands the value of education. He is a teacher and knows a lot about school, understanding that it is safe for me to go to school."
- "My father is the Imam in our mosque and a leader in our community. This made my case very sensitive, but he stood by my side."
- "He provided mental and emotional support despite our poverty, which helped me overcome societal and cultural barriers."
- "My father's understanding of the value of education helped him resist societal pressure and support my education."
- "My father stood against societal and cultural norms that prevented girls from continuing their education after age 14."
- "My father protected me from the cultural roles that say I should not study by not listening to our relatives and friends who are against my education."
- "My father protects me from the cultural roles that say I should not study by not listening to our relatives and friends who are against my education."

Guidance and Encouragement

- Male family members provide varying levels of guidance and encouragement.
- "He always helps me with my studies, like helping me do my homework or learn my lessons if I cannot learn them in class."

- "My father's understanding of the value of education helped him resist societal pressure and support my education."
- "My father and my older brother have managed to have a job and have finished grade 10 (the highest education level for Rohingya)."
- "My father is in support of my education but he could not guide me on how to study or how to find a good program or a good university."

Impact of Male Family Members on Education

Support vs. Lack of Support

- The presence or absence of support from male family members significantly impacts educational opportunities.
- "If the male members are not supportive of women's education (if they are not educated themselves), most probably they will give up to social and cultural pressure and take their girls out of school."
- "Without her support it was nearly impossible for me to continue my education."
- "Those girls who do not have male family members supporting them and live in poor families do not get an education in my community."
- "Girls without family support, particularly from male family members, face significant barriers. Education often ends for them at age 14 due to cultural norms."
- "Girls in families without educated male figures face significant challenges. Some girls are sold to armed group men for money or married off at an early age."
- "Girls from educated families have a better life. Their parents have more money. Also, they do not ask their daughters to cover up in public. But girls in uneducated families can face problems like their fathers may not listen to them, beat them if they do something wrong, or marry them too early."

- "Those girls whose fathers do not agree to their education find it almost impossible to continue. Because we do not have any other type of support like government or any humanitarian organization who cares for us so the only source of authority and power is our fathers and brothers."
- "Girls from uneducated families need to fight for their right to education. They don't get the financial, social, and emotional support that they need. Moreover, I have witnessed that those girls living in uneducated families witness a lot of violence from male members of their families."

Comparison Between Educated and Uneducated Families

- The level of education of male family members influences their support and attitudes towards women's education.
- "Educated men tend to be less religious which is a good thing. I mean don't get me wrong I am a Muslim but being too religious means that you will suffocate the women in your by depriving them of the right to education and other personal freedoms."
- "Educated men tend to be less religious which is a good thing. I mean don't get me wrong I am a Muslim but being too religious means that you will suffocate the women in your by depriving them of the right to education and other personal freedoms."

Challenges and Overcoming Obstacles

Financial Challenges

- "The main challenge I face as a student is the financial problems I and my family are facing."
- "My mother is very sick and has been hospitalized twice this year."
- "Her condition and the financial burden that my father carries haunt me every day."

- "The financial problems are there and the only one who handles them is my father."
- "I do get some help from AUW too."
- "Sometimes girls make fun of my clothes and stuff like that."
- "I wish my parents could send me more money so I could buy things for myself—things like good notebooks and clothes."

Social and Cultural Barriers

- "Another big challenge is society. Back home in the Cox's Bazar camp, there are many rumors about me that I have relationships with boys."
- "There were NGOs in the camp, but they mostly focused on emotional support and play rather than teaching school subjects like math and English."
- "The cultural norm that girls should not go to school after the age of 14 is a significant barrier."
- "Very few people are educated. The way they see women is that they are only to be mothers and housewives."
- "Neighbors always objected to the way I dressed and why I went to education programs."
- "Some of my relatives and neighbors came to my parents asking them to marry me to their son."
- "Sometimes people from our community spread rumors about me or tell their daughters not to hang out with me because I am too modern and open-minded."
- "The traditional culture that restricts women's movement is very damaging."

- "Society and the traditional and backward mindset of my relatives and neighbors were a huge problem."
- "The biggest challenge I faced was from my community."
- "Girls in families without educated male figures face significant challenges. Some girls are sold to armed group men for money or married off at an early age."

Lack of Educational Opportunities

- "These NGOs did not provide any certification upon completion, which made it difficult to progress to the next educational level."
- "One challenge I faced was the legal challenge which did not allow us to attend formal educational institutions in Bangladesh."
- "There are not enough programs or institutions that help us Rohingya students."
- "When I first wanted to go to school, I was in camp, and the education opportunities there were hopeless."
- "Most of these challenges came from poverty and traditional culture."
- "No school or university even takes us if we have money because we do not have an identity."
- "We are rejected by almost everyone."
- "I cannot get a scholarship outside of Bangladesh because I do not have a passport."
- "As Rohingya people, we face a lot of legal and identity issues."

- "I do not have an identification card that is valid everywhere and I cannot take a passport."

Emotional and Psychological Impact

- "I miss my parents and home a lot."
- "In the beginning, I cried every day. I wanted to go back."
- "The girls, especially the seniors in AUW, are very mean; they bully you all the time."
- "I wish my family lived in Chittagong."
- "I was completing all the education programs available in the camp and there was no other opportunity for me to continue education."

Support and Resilience

- "My father told me to keep my motivation and not allow community members to bully me over my education."
- "Despite growing up in poverty, my father provided mental and emotional support."
- "My father's support and understanding of the value of education helped me overcome these barriers."
- "My father stood against these cultural norms and supported me."
- "I know some girls who have managed to come to AUW even by going against their families' wishes or running away."
- "One of the senior students in the AUW informed me that AUW accepts girls from my community. I asked my father and after some research he allowed me."

- "My mother always tried to stand up for me and talked or pleaded to my brothers but she could not do much because she was a woman and she needed my brothers' support in life."
- "I tried to argue and reason with them which mostly led to physical fights where I got bitten and abused."
- "My sister took me out of our parental home and brought me to Chittagong. Her excuse was that she needed my help with her newborn but then she helped me stay and let me study."

Family Dynamics

- "My brothers and my father were the problems once I grew up."
- "Once I married I could continue my education because my new family was okay with it."
- "Compared to other girls, I am a bit behind in my education because my family never supported me financially or socially."
- "Growing up I had no one to guide me in life, I had no access to information for a long time."
- "My brothers had a lot of power over us and prevented me from going outside or studying."

Chapter 5 Discussion:

5.1: Motivations for Pursuing Higher Education:

A large proportion of participants expressed that their motivation to pursue higher education stemmed from a desire to support their families financially and improve their

economic conditions. Education is seen as a means to achieve better job opportunities and financial stability. For e, a 22-year-old participant stated, "My motivation is to become a doctor. In doing so, I can help the people in my community, especially the women.

Additionally, I want to become a doctor to make money, which will help me have a better life and give money to my younger siblings." This highlights a dual motivation of personal ambition and altruistic goals.

Similarly, another participant, aged 24, shared, "My mother died when I was small. My father married again. I have two siblings. I want to educate myself to support my family and not depend on others." This indicates a strong sense of responsibility towards family members. An additional perspective came from a 22-year-old participant who articulated the critical role education plays in alleviating poverty: "My main motivation for studying is to firstly save myself from poverty by getting a good job and earning a high salary. But more importantly, I want to help my parents. You know my father is old and my mother is very sick. She has been hospitalized three times during the past year. We have spent all our money on her medication. On the other hand, my older brother who is married is not willing to help our parents, therefore, I see it as my responsibility to take care of my parents when they grow old. I plan to graduate from the Asian University for Women, and then get a scholarship in the USA. But when I arrive there as soon as possible I will get a job and send money home."

For some participants, the financial support and encouragement from their families played a pivotal role in their educational journey. A 20-year-old participant in the Pre-Undergraduate level shared, "From early on, I was encouraged and financially supported by my parents to study. Also, I have brothers who are older than me, and both are university graduates

and very supportive of girls' education. They always tell me how much they want their sister to be educated."

Another participant added, "Upon moving to Chittagong, I noticed many girls my age attending school and living good lives, which made me realize that I was missing something. Additionally, my new family often mocked and criticized me for being illiterate, which motivated me to pursue education to improve my social standing and become financially independent." These narratives underscore the importance of education not only as a pathway to personal and familial economic improvement but also as a means to gain respect and elevate one's social standing.

Several participants emphasized their desire to bring positive changes to their community through education. This theme highlights the intersection between personal educational pursuits and broader social objectives. An 18-year-old participant explained, "Another important factor that motivates me to continue my education is my desire to bring positive change to my community. You know it feels bad to be part of the most backward and unfortunate community in the world. I have a love-and-hate relationship with my community but at the end of the day, I feel responsible for changing the situation for my people, especially women."

This desire to uplift their community and challenge negative societal norms was another recurring theme. One participant shared how her teacher played a crucial role in shaping her ambitions: "Later, when I went to education programs, one of our teachers was from the Myanmar community. She was the one who gave me a lot of awareness about the history of my community. There I knew what caused us to flee our country, why we were so poor, and so on. Right now I am mostly self-motivated." Her motivation to study PPE and play an active role in

the politics and social matters of her community is a testament to the impact of early educational influences.

Similarly, another participant who is 20 years old and studying in a General Study program stated, "Back then, Barrak and other NGOs provided some educational programs in our community. Whenever I attended these programs, I saw women who had better lives—who were respected and financially stable. I was so impressed by them. In one program, I had a female teacher who was very kind and had everything I dreamt about. I told her I wanted to continue my education, and she eventually helped me come to AUW". These accounts reflect a broader aspiration among the participants to leverage their education to effect positive social change within their communities. They see education as a tool not only for personal betterment but also for the advancement of their entire community.

The presence of role models and supportive educators significantly influenced the participants' educational aspirations. A recurring theme was the impact of seeing other women succeed and the encouragement from family members. One participant recounted, "In the camp, I got sick with dengue disease which nearly killed me. However, in the hospital, I met a female doctor who took care of me. She was very professional and kind. Seeing her inspired me to become like her in the future. So that is my motivation for studying." Another participant shared how her relatives inspired her: "In Bangladesh, we have some relatives who have come here many years ago. I met them first when I came to Bangladesh as a refugee. Their daughters have been to school and university and they have a better life than us. This first motivated me to study."

Similarly, the role of family support was evident. An 18-year-old participant stated, "My parents are my role models, and in our family, it is very normal for us (the children) to study. I

am mainly motivated and supported by my parents; both of them equally support me." A 19-year-old participant added, "Coming to Bangladesh from the most unfortunate countries in the world, I was very impressed by the girls from the rich community in Bangladesh and they are mostly educated." The influence of educators and community figures was also significant. One participant noted, "Whenever I attended these programs, I saw women who had better lives—who were respected and financially stable. I was so impressed by them. In one program, I had a female teacher who was very kind and had everything I dreamt about. I told her I wanted to continue my education, and she eventually helped me come to AUW."

These narratives underscore the powerful impact that role models and supportive figures can have on the educational aspirations of young women. Seeing others succeed provides tangible examples of what is possible and instills hope and motivation.

Many participants spoke of their personal experiences of hardship and resilience as key motivators for pursuing education. They viewed education as a means to overcome the challenges they have faced and to create better futures for themselves and their families. One participant shared, "What motivated me to continue my education were the hardships I faced throughout my life. I don't want to complain, but I have had a very difficult life."

Another participant added, "My main motivation for studying is to save my own life. To be honest, I was raised under very difficult conditions where I suffered from poverty, back culture, and many more. In Bangladesh growing up, I saw that education can save the lives of many people and help you belong to a better social class."

For some participants, the initial lack of motivation transformed as they began to understand the value of education. One participant who is 16 years old and studying in the

second semester of the General Study program stated, "I did not know very much about education. I mean I am still very young. But my cousin and my sister study at AUW. They are at higher levels. Then my parents send me to study and live beside my sister."

Another participant echoed this sentiment, stating, "In the beginning, I did not like to study because it is difficult, but my parents sent me to school and later to AUW to study beside some other senior students from the Rohingya community. In the first semester, I did not have any motivation but as time passed I learned about the value of education. "These accounts reflect the participants' resilience and determination to overcome adversity through education. Their experiences of hardship have fueled their drive to succeed and create better lives for themselves and their families.

5.2: Main Sources of Support:

Financial Support:

Based on the findings of this research economic support is a cornerstone for Rohingya women pursuing higher education, as it directly influences their ability to continue their studies. Many participants emphasized the vital role of financial assistance from their families in enabling them to access educational opportunities. One participant stated, "Most of the support I got was from my father," underscoring the importance of financial backing from family members. Similarly, another participant mentioned, "My father supports me financially by buying me books and stationery and helping me travel to AUW," highlighting the specific forms of financial support that facilitate their education.

The significance of consistent financial support was also noted, as evidenced by one participant's comment: "My father sends us money every month." This consistent financial assistance is crucial for managing ongoing educational expenses and ensuring stability.

Additionally, another participant reflected on the impact of financial support from both immediate and extended family members, stating, "We got the financial and emotional support to continue our education," indicating that economic support is often accompanied by emotional encouragement.

In some cases, financial support extends beyond immediate family to include spousal assistance. For example, one participant noted, "My husband understands the benefits of education and supports me financially." This highlights how spousal support can also play a significant role in continuing education. Furthermore, a participant who lost her father mentioned, "My mother is the main supporter because my father has passed away," illustrating that financial support can also come from mothers, especially in the absence of fathers.

Emotional Support:

Findings of this research revealed that emotional support from family members plays a crucial role in upholding Rohingya women's education. Throughout the interviews participants frequently stated how their family's positive attitude and encouragement impacted their commitment to education. One participant shared, "Family was the main factor that helped me with my education," reflecting the central role of familial support in sustaining educational efforts.

The combination of emotional encouragement with financial support is evident in statements such as, "My family encouraged me and financially supported me to study," demonstrating that support goes beyond financial aid to include motivational aspects. Another participant emphasized, "My family, especially my father, was very much in favor of my education," highlighting how familial support is rooted in a positive and encouraging attitude toward education.

Maternal support also emerged as a critical factor, with one participant noting, "My mother is the person who gives me the most help and support." This indicates that emotional support from mothers is vital for overcoming personal and educational challenges. Additionally, another participant described how family intervention was crucial in accessing educational opportunities: "My mother convinced my brothers to allow me to come to AUW," showing the role of family members in negotiating and advocating for education.

Protection Against Societal Barriers

Protection from societal barriers is another significant dimension of family support for Rohingya women in education. Many participants highlighted how their families shielded them from societal prejudices and traditional norms that could hinder their educational pursuits. One participant noted, "My family protected me against the close-minded and traditional society," reflecting how familial support includes safeguarding against societal challenges.

The role of progressive family members in countering cultural norms was also emphasized. For instance, one participant shared, "My father was open-minded and knew the value of women's education," indicating how having supportive family members helps overcome traditional barriers. This protection allows women to focus on their studies without the added pressure of societal constraints.

Support from extended family members also contributes to overcoming societal and cultural barriers. One participant stated, "My sister-in-law inspired me to continue my education and helped me convince my family," illustrating how support from relatives can facilitate educational advancement. Similarly, a participant mentioned, "My husband supports me financially and against the societal problems," showing how spousal support can help navigate and overcome societal obstacles.

Role in Overcoming Personal and Familial Challenges

Family support is instrumental in addressing personal and familial challenges that arise during the pursuit of higher education. Participants frequently highlighted how their families' practical and emotional assistance helps them overcome various obstacles. One participant explained, "The main thing that motivated me and helped me continue my education was my family," reflecting the critical role of familial support in overcoming personal difficulties.

Maternal and spousal support were also identified as key factors in managing personal challenges. For example, one participant shared, "My mother is the person who gives me the most help and support," while another noted, "My husband supports me financially and against the societal problems," illustrating how support from family members helps address both practical and emotional challenges.

Additionally, consistent financial support plays a significant role in overcoming personal obstacles. One participant remarked, "My father sends us money every month," highlighting how regular financial assistance helps manage ongoing educational needs. Another participant noted, "My father supports me financially by buying me books and stationery," demonstrating how specific forms of financial support contribute to educational success.

Overall, the analysis reveals that family support for Rohingya women pursuing higher education encompasses financial, emotional, protective, and motivational dimensions. This multifaceted support addresses various barriers and challenges, enabling women to pursue and succeed in their educational endeavors.

Role of Organizations in Education

The research reveals that organizations play a significant role in supporting the education of Rohingya women, though their impact varies. A predominant theme is the critical role of the

Asian University for Women (AUW), which many participants identified as the most effective and crucial educational institution. One participant emphasized this, stating, "The Asian University for Women (AUW) has been the most effective organization in supporting our education." This sentiment is echoed by others who see AUW as a beacon of educational opportunity: "AUW has been very impactful. But if you talk on a large scale I think it is only AUW that is doing something very effective and fundamental for education in our community."

Participants also noted the importance of scholarships provided by organizations like AUW, which are seen as vital for accessing higher education. As one participant noted, "The key factor contributing to Rohingya girls' commitment to education is the availability of scholarships for our community." Another participant highlighted AUW's unique position, stating, "AUW University helps me with my education because it is right now the only opportunity I have to continue my education."

However, the influence of these organizations is not without limitations. Several participants pointed out that while AUW offers substantial support, other organizations' efforts are often less effective. One participant remarked, "There have been some organizations like Barrack or UN that help our community in different ways, but I don't think they are very effective in helping us continue our education." Another shared concerns about the decreasing focus of AUW, noting, "AUW is successful in providing educational opportunities for girls from my community. But it is decreasing nowadays as AUW is more focused on the issue of Afghan women."

Some participants also noted that educational programs within the refugee camps were somewhat helpful but fell short in quality and scope. One observed, "The small educational programs in the camp were somewhat helpful, though they lacked quality and accreditation."

This reflects a broader concern about the adequacy of educational support available through organizations outside of AUW.

5:3: The Role of Male Family Members in Education

The analysis of the role of male family members in supporting women's education reveals a complex interplay of financial support, protection from cultural barriers, and the provision of guidance and encouragement. Each of these aspects significantly influences educational outcomes for women in the Rohingya community.

Financial Support

Financial support from male family members, particularly fathers and brothers, emerges as a crucial factor enabling women to pursue higher education. Participants frequently highlighted the pivotal role that male relatives played in providing the necessary financial resources. For instance, several participants noted that their fathers were not only financially supportive but also actively involved in managing educational expenses, which allowed them to attend institutions such as AUW (Asian University for Women). The financial contributions of male family members often included direct support for tuition fees, educational materials, and other related costs. This support is vital in the context of the Rohingya community, where economic constraints can be a significant barrier to education. The consistent presence of financial backing underscores the critical role that male family members play in making education accessible, particularly when external support from organizations is limited or non-existent.

Protection from Cultural and Social Barriers

Another significant aspect of the support provided by male family members is their role in protecting women from cultural and social barriers that often impede educational pursuits. Many participants described how their fathers actively resisted societal pressures that devalued

women's education. For example, one participant's father, despite being an Imam and a community leader, supported his daughter's education against the backdrop of societal resistance. This form of support extends beyond financial assistance, encompassing a protective role that shields women from cultural norms that might otherwise prevent them from pursuing education. Male relatives who understand and value the importance of education are instrumental in challenging and overcoming these societal barriers. Their support often involves navigating cultural expectations and standing firm against familial and societal objections to women's education.

Guidance and Encouragement

The support and guidance provided by male family members are also essential to women's educational endeavors. Male relatives can greatly improve educational success by offering emotional and practical help, in addition to providing critical financial and protective support. Different levels of assistance were reported by the participants, ranging from direct assistance with homework and study materials to more general encouragement and motivational support. Fathers who participated fully in their children's schooling, for example, helped some of the participants both academically and emotionally. It is also mentioned that not every male family member is qualified to offer thorough instruction. In certain instances, fathers were helpful but lacked the resources or expertise to provide specific guidance on navigating educational institutions or choosing suitable programs. Despite this, their general support and readiness to arrange learning opportunities were priceless.

Impact of Support vs. Lack of Support

There is a clear difference in the academic performance of students who had support from male family members and those who did not. Individuals who had male relatives who provided support stated that they had greater access to education and had a better overall educational

experience. On the other hand, people who lacked this kind of assistance had to overcome formidable challenges like financial difficulties and cultural opposition. Lack of support frequently led to early school dropout and increased susceptibility to early marriage or other harmful activities. This discrepancy emphasizes how important male family support is in shaping students' educational paths and results. This fact is further highlighted by drawing a contrast between households with and without education, wherein educated male characters tend to be more supportive of women's education and have a more progressive attitude towards it.

In conclusion, there are many different ways that male family members in the Rohingya community promote women's education. This help is primarily composed of three things: financial assistance, protection from cultural barriers, and guidance. In communities where traditional gender roles and financial limitations provide major obstacles, there is a need for ongoing advocacy and support for women's education. The presence or absence of male family support has a substantial impact on educational possibilities and outcomes.

5.4: Challenges and Overcoming Obstacles

Financial Challenges

A significant barrier to education for the participants is financial instability. Many respondents highlighted the financial burdens their families face, which directly impacts their ability to pursue education. For instance, one participant mentioned, "The main challenge I face as a student is the financial problems I and my family are facing." The illness of family members further exacerbates these financial difficulties. One participant shared, "My mother is very sick and has been hospitalized twice this year," which adds to the family's financial strain. Despite receiving some financial aid from institutions like AUW, the primary financial responsibility falls on the fathers, as indicated by another participant: "The financial problems are there and the

only one who handles them is my father." This financial strain is a constant source of stress and worry, affecting not only their educational pursuits but also their overall well-being.

Social and Cultural Barriers

Social and cultural norms significantly hinder the educational journeys of these young women. Many participants reported facing societal rumors and cultural norms that discourage women's education. For example, one participant said, "Back home in the Cox's Bazar camp, there are many rumors about me that I have relationships with boys." Another stated, "The cultural norm that girls should not go to school after the age of 14 is a significant barrier." These societal pressures often lead to confrontations, with neighbors and relatives urging parents to conform to traditional roles for women. One participant noted, "Neighbors always objected to the way I dressed and why I went to education programs." Such cultural barriers create an environment where pursuing education becomes a challenge due to societal judgment and pressure to adhere to traditional gender roles.

Lack of Educational Opportunities

Legal and logistical barriers also pose significant challenges. Participants highlighted the lack of formal educational opportunities in refugee camps and the broader community. One participant shared, "One challenge I faced was the legal challenge which did not allow us to attend formal educational institutions in Bangladesh." The absence of certification from NGOs further complicates their educational progression: "These NGOs did not provide any certification upon completion, which made it difficult to progress to the next educational level." Legal identity issues also prevent them from accessing opportunities outside Bangladesh. As one participant explained, "I cannot get a scholarship outside of Bangladesh because I do not have a passport." These barriers underscore the need for systemic changes to provide equitable educational opportunities for refugee students.

Emotional and Psychological Impact

The emotional and psychological toll of these challenges is profound. Participants reported feelings of isolation, homesickness, and bullying. One participant expressed, "I miss my parents and home a lot," and another mentioned, "In the beginning, I cried every day. I wanted to go back." Bullying from peers further exacerbates these feelings of isolation and distress: "The girls, especially the seniors in AUW, are very mean; they bully you all the time." These emotional challenges can significantly impact their academic performance and overall mental health, highlighting the need for robust emotional and psychological support systems in educational institutions.

Support and Resilience

Despite these challenges, the resilience and support from family, particularly fathers, play an important part in overcoming barriers. Participants frequently mentioned the mental and emotional support provided by their fathers. One participant noted, "My father told me to keep my motivation and not allow community members to bully me over my education." Another highlighted the critical role of her father in supporting her against cultural norms: "My father stood against these cultural norms and supported me." This support is vital in empowering these young women to pursue their education against all odds. Furthermore, some participants received support from senior students or siblings, which highlights the importance of community and familial networks in navigating educational barriers.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study explored the factors that uphold Rohingya women's higher education, focusing particularly on the influence of male family figures. The results indicate that Rohingya women's motivation for pursuing education is driven by a desire to overcome life hardships, financial support from family members, and the influence of female role models.

Key factors supporting women's education in the Rohingya community include financial, mental, and emotional support from family members, especially male figures such as fathers, brothers, and spouses. Additionally, organizations offering educational opportunities through scholarships and courses serve as crucial support.

However, significant challenges persist. Cultural and traditional barriers often impede women's access to education, while financial issues are a major concern for many participants. Legal constraints also restrict the movement of Rohingya individuals and their ability to enroll in educational programs in Bangladesh.

These findings highlight the need for accessible educational opportunities and robust support systems to empower women in marginalized communities. Implementing policies that enhance educational access, along with providing legal and social support, can profoundly impact these individuals' lives, helping them achieve their educational aspirations and positively contribute to their communities. Furthermore, efforts should be made to raise awareness and shift cultural attitudes within the Rohingya community to improve educational opportunities for women.

This study has several limitations, including a limited sample size and a focus on a specific community, which suggest the need for broader research. Additionally, language barriers posed a challenge, as the researcher required the assistance of a translator to gather information effectively. Future research could investigate similar motivations in different contexts or assess the long-term impacts of education on Rohingya women and their communities.

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