LEARNING TO LIVE: INQUIRING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LEISURE IN
THE LIVES OF FEMALE ACID ATTACK SURVIVORS

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ABSTRACT

The ethnographic study illustrated the significance of leisure in the lives of the acid attack survivors in Bangladesh. The study emanated from a series of interviews and prolonged contact with 13 young female survivors. Although the issue of violence and oppression of women has been observed across all cultures, the severity of the problem is higher in developing countries where gender inequality is far broader than in developed part of the world. Among various types of abuse and violent acts against them, the heinous act of acid attack has become another means to take away the freedom of living a normal life among many girls and young women. Although the Acid attack victims suffer from the pain of disfigurement, social discriminations and from a perception of loss of self-control and competence, they also learned to find ways to bring back some normalcy in their lives. In this context, the study found leisure to play a significant role in the lives of the survivors to provide them with a sense of normalcy and a sense of connection.

The study investigated the different types of leisure involvement among the survivors and tried to understand the emotions and motivations behind the participation amidst the cultural backdrops of Bangladesh. Thus the study explores the different perception of leisure among the survivors in different contexts that involved family, peers and friends, and the community. The barriers to participation were also analyzed to comprehend how the social, cultural, structural and personal barriers are impacting their leisure participation. This understanding also lead to explore the negotiation strategies used by some of the survivors to overcome the barriers to be involved in leisure activities of their choice and therefore able to enjoy the benefits from the participation. Overall, the study opens up new doors to understand the aspect of leisure in the lives of the female acid attack survivors in which social and individual leisure played a major role to help
them find meaning in life once again after their sense of freedom and security was lost from the tragic incident of acid attack.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Over the past few decades, women’s issues have held a special place in social science discourse. During this time, many research initiatives have been undertaken with an attempt to investigate trauma experienced by women who are victims of domestic and other abuses worldwide (Rashid, 2005). Although the issue of violence and oppression of women plagues many cultures and/or nations, the severity of the problem has gained attention in developing countries, where gender inequality is far broader than the developed part of the world. Bangladesh, a small developing nation in South East Asia, is one such country, where the problem of gender disparity and discrimination against women can be observed at large.

In Bangladesh, patriarchal cultural norms greatly influence women’s lives, creating a society in which women’s social subordination is pervasive and endemic. This social subordination makes them more vulnerable to oppression (Ahmed & Mohsin, 2005), and is captured in the Bengali observation that oppressions is like, “Having one’s back pushed against the wall.” Women, especially from rural areas and uneducated backgrounds, have very few rights and choices in terms of making personal decisions regarding education, marriage, child bearing, and participation in the labor market and to an extent on their choice of leisure activities.

Historical inequality has given rise to various gendered problems in the country, among which acid attack on young women has become an emerging concern. Among various types of abuse and violent acts against women and girls, the heinous act of acid attack has become another means of hijacking the freedom to live a normal life in Bangladesh. Not only do acid attacks have traumatic physical consequences, but they also affect individuals both
psychologically and socially. Despite being marginalized and controlled due to their gender, however, some survivors of acid attack are able to experience some level of normalcy in their daily lives. Leisure is one such segment of life, besides work, that may allow female acid attack survivors to experience freedom, spontaneity, control, joy and the true meaning of life.

To this end, I have conducted research to understand if and how leisure exists, and the role leisure plays, if any, in the lives of survivors. According to Henderson (1996), women can create their own leisure spaces and opportunities adjusted to their needs. Henderson found women to use the home and non-structured activities as the primary place and means for experiencing leisure. This also may be true for Bangladeshi women who may find a sense of freedom, pleasure, relaxation, and some level of control in certain activities at home, work and other social surroundings.

Based on a preliminary study, and my long-term exposure to Bangladeshi culture as a Bangladeshi woman, I found that even though women in Bangladesh are often disempowered and are targets of discrimination, the use of leisure to make choices and to find meaning in life does exist in Bangladeshi culture. Leisure is a part of everyone’s daily life. It is experienced while spending time with friends and families, festivals, and taking part in religious and social rituals.

A tourism site, Virtual Bangladesh (http://www.virtualbangladesh.com, 2011) also reported Bangladeshi’s daily life is exposed abundantly with celebrations and festivals that reflect the unique culture and tradition of Bangladeshis. There are more than 20 public holidays in Bangladesh that include festivals of harvesting, festivals celebrating the six seasons and extended religious holidays celebrated across all major religions (Muslim, Christian, Hinduism
and Buddhism). Even in Bengali literature and art the idea of leisure does exist and has a word associated directly with the term leisure, which is "Oboshor". I remember writing essays in both middle and high school on how we spent our leisure time as well as the value of leisure in my life.

This knowledge on the presence of leisure in Bangladeshi culture and in the lives of both Bangladeshi men and women thus encouraged me to further explore the role of leisure in the lives of the survivors. Thus, this dissertation describes my attempt to understand the role of leisure in the lives of Bangladeshi girls and women who have been victims of acid attack.

Understanding the impact of leisure required me to comprehend the human and social interrelationships within the culture that can impact one’s leisure behavior (Howe, 1985). Insight on the macro environment thus was necessary to pave the way towards a better understanding of the social-psychological aspects of an individual or group in terms of how leisure is perceived by them. This is why, apart from identifying the need for this study, a preamble to the social environment that marginalized many women was added. The research questions helped me to determine the paradigm for the research, which ended up as a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach.

**Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of this study was to understand whether, and in what ways, leisure has played a role in the lives of women and girls who were victims of acid attack. As a prerequisite to my inquiry, I also endeavored to understand the lives of Bangladeshi female acid
attack survivors after the attack and explore different mechanisms that helped the survivors to reconstruct their lives towards normalcy.

**Research Questions**

The initial research question focused on the overall lives of the acid attack survivors in general as it is crucial to gain an understanding on how the young women and girls perceive the different spheres of their lives based on their life experiences in Bangladeshi culture. Therefore, this question can pave the way towards the next important question focusing on the existence of leisure in life. Honing on this central theme, the second question addressed the different views on leisure related issues. The emphasis was only on their leisure that falls outside the realm of work and the area in which they feel like their true self.

My research questions included:

1. How do the girls and women who survived the experience of acid attack perceive their current lives?
   
   a. How have their lives changed after to the acid attack?
   
   b. What things do the survivors of acid attack believe to have helped or continuing to help them reconstruct their lives after the attack?
   
   c. Where do they see themselves in the future?

2. How is leisure experienced by the female victims of acid attack?

   a. Do the girls and women who have been victims of acid attack perceive that they have leisure in their lives? If yes, what forms of leisure do they engage in, why do they participate, and how do they experience leisure?
b. What kinds of constraints, if any, do they experience during leisure participation of their choice?

c. How are the constraints negotiated to increase their participation in leisure activities and benefiting the survivors after the acid attack?

**The Macro-environment: Understanding the Context**

This section will illuminate the general political, social and cultural phenomena that influence the daily lives of Bangladeshi girls and women, especially the women who became the victims of acid attack. This section will also provide an understanding of the different social forces that play a role in shaping up their lives and choices.

In terms of the Gender Development Index (GDI), Bangladesh is ranked 140 out of 177 countries (UNDP Human Development Report, 2008). The GDI is ordered such that 1 indicates the best performing country and 177 indicates the worst. At the same time, the constitution of Bangladesh ensures equal rights to all citizens and prohibits discrimination and inequality on the basis of sex and strives to promote social and economic equality. Especially, with respect to women, Article 28 states, “Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of state and public life.” Unfortunately in a patriarchic society, women enjoy fewer rights than men and the gap between women and men persists, resulting in continuous discrimination against women. The social customs, religious conservatism, lack of education and the attitude towards women in the society helps to widen the gap between men and women, creating more obstacles and miseries for women. This is particularly true for women who come from a disadvantaged population.
Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries in the world with a population of 160 million (The World Fact Book, 2011). According to the Bangladesh National Woman's Lawyers Association, among various crimes against women, 47 acid attacks were reported in 1996; 130 attacks in 1998 and by 2001 the number of acid attacks rose to 340. The year 2003 marked the first decrease in the annual number of reported attacks, from 485 in 2002 to 410 in 2003. With advocacy, awareness program and strong law enforcement such as death penalty to the violators, contributed to the decreased number of acid attack (Acid Survivors Foundation Annual Report, 2010). The victims in most cases are young girls and women coming from low income or lower middle-income families, who range in age from 13 to 25. Activists believe many of the attacks go unreported, especially in the rural areas where most villagers don't realize that acid burning is a crime and where women traditionally had fewer rights. Most of the attacks are at the hands of spurned suitors, jealous husbands, or even mothers-in-law angry over dowry payments. A glass of nitric or sulfuric acid can be bought for only 7 Taka (less than eighty four cents). The acid penetrates the skin, destroying the soft tissue and bone, and can lead to serious disfigurement, blindness and even death. The nitric or sulfuric acid can be bought from weavers, tanneries, auto shops or goldsmiths. Unfortunately, Bangladesh has insignificant numbers of privately run facilities to work with victims of acid attack, and the facilities are badly in need of trained physicians and operating equipments.

Bangladesh is predominantly an agricultural economy, with agricultural production making up 35 percent of the GDP (The Europa World Year Book, 2000). The population is 160 million (The CIA Factbook, 2011), and a majority (83 percent) of its population live in villages in rural areas. Approximately 78 percent of the population is said to live in absolute poverty, which is mainly concentrated in the rural areas (World Bank, 1999). About 95 percent of the
population speaks Bengali, the official language, while the rest speak tribal languages or other languages.

More than 87 percent of the people are Muslims, and Islam is the state religion. There are also small minorities of Hindus (12.1 percent), Buddhists (0.6 percent), and Christians (0.3 percent; The Europa World Year Book, 2000). Although a secular nation, religion plays a significant role in the lives of Bangladeshi people. All religions are given similar importance, which is reflected through the Bangladeshi constitution where public holidays are given at all major religious occasions. Despite the tolerance towards all religion, Islam is the dominant religion which guides the life style of the majority. Although Bangladesh does not follow strict Islamic laws such as having women cover their heads, there are strict rules concerning alcohol consumption, wearing short and revealing dresses for women, and public showing of affection between men and women.

Unlike many Middle Eastern Muslim countries, Bangladesh elected female heads of the country for the last three electoral terms showing its liberal and modern ideology. Unfortunately, in spite of this progressive attitude in politics and religion, different women’s issues such as women’s security, employment, and poverty are still taking the backseat in the overall development process. There is growing evidence in Bangladesh that the experience of acute poverty is gendered, and women and girls make up a majority number of the population who live in absolute poverty (UNDP, 1998). As discussed previously, women lack equal access to resources in Bangladesh and they are generally seen as having a lower status. Their livelihood is thus often poorer than their male counterparts. Most women have less power in the family
relative to their husbands, and in many matters, relative to their sons. In the household, it is the husband or head of the household who makes all the major decisions without any significant input from women. Especially in rural settings, from the beginning of their lives, girls receive poor health care, which results in ill health, malnutrition, and high mortality and morbidity rates.

**Kinship and marriage in Bangladeshi context.**

While making an effort to understand the social context of Bangladesh, it was also necessary to understand the structural and cultural dimensions of the kinship system and marriage. Being a developing society and mostly agrarian, Bangladesh seems to reflect the major characteristics of a Gemeinshaft society in which individuals are oriented towards the greater societal good and look beyond their own self-interest (Tönnies, 2001). According to Tönnies, in these types of society, most individuals are regulated by common values or beliefs about appropriate behavior and are value interdependency.

These ideologies seemed to influence the leisure of Bangladeshi women in which the women find happiness and meaning in life. The social aspect of South Asian culture, especially the family and kinship dynamics of Bangladeshi culture, has not been studied by social scientists to any significant level. This is why, for the most part, relevant connections on kinship have been made from my personal observation, experience and one particular article by Ashraful (1979). From my personal observation and growing up in the Bangladeshi culture, I found the role of kinship and marriage to play a significant role in the lifestyle and choices of Bangladeshi girls and women. This view of mine was not a new finding but was studied earlier by Ashraful (1979) in which he found family and kinship to be the core of social life in Bangladesh.
Bangladeshi culture also shares significant level of similarity with Indian culture. A study on family and kinship was conducted by Das and Kemp (1997) in which they found the term family was not limited to a single household but encompasses several households viewed as one big unit. Family in Bangladesh and in Indian culture therefore includes parents, older relatives, widowed uncle or aunt, cousins and some time even members of different households who become fictive kin (Janet, 2000). These members of an extended family share some common attributes with each other, such as coming from the same village or town, sharing similar life events, or being associated with each other for a long period of time (Janet, 2000). According to their research, family members and kin form a support system for each other, and play a role in all major decision makings from marriage, schooling, jobs and other aspects of one’s life. Therefore, a family South Asian cultures like India creates an interdependent group of people whose concerns are not for themselves as individuals, but for the family as a whole (Das & Kemp, 1997).

According to Ashraful (1979), in Bangladeshi culture, the family residing under the same roof would function as the basic unit of economic endeavor, landholding, and social identity. In his study, he found that not only the immediate family but also the cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents all tend to play a role in building one’s life due to the closely knitted kinship structure. This finding was similar to Das and Kemp’s study on South Asian families. Although kin in Bangladeshi culture provide a huge social support, in many cases, personal choices regarding marriage, friends, job and other aspects of life to a large extent are influenced by the family members and nearest kin. Unlike the western world, privacy is not given much
importance in Bangladeshi culture where everyone among kin and family members can have a say in one’s personal life. Spending time with relatives is also a big part of Bangladeshi culture and leisure, especially for girls and women who do not always have the freedom to take part in outdoor leisure pursuits. Therefore, a large part of their leisure time is spent with family members and relatives.

Ashraful (1979) also explored relationships built through marriage which are also significant part of the kinship structure in Bangladesh. Due to the patriarchal nature of the culture, it is customary for married sons to live at the parents' household while daughters have to leave the parents house after marriage. A large portion of woman’s independence is ruled by her husband and the husband’s family just after she gets married. Marriages are often preceded by extensive negotiations between the families of the prospective bride and groom. One of the functions of the marriage negotiations is to reduce any discrepancy in status through financial arrangements (Islamic law). The groom's family ordinarily pledges the traditional cash payment, or bride-price, part or all of which can be deferred in case of divorce initiated by the husband or in case the contract is otherwise broken.

As in many Muslim countries, the cash payment system provides women some security against the summary divorce permitted by Islam. But unfortunately, mostly in rural areas, the groom’s family adopts the Hindu custom of obtaining dowry from the bride’s family. Many cases of violence against women, like acid attack, occurred due to the dowry system where the woman is often tortured if her parents failed to pay the full amount. This dowry system still tends to be prevalent mostly among the illiterate population of the country where a girl is still
considered to be a burden and dependent on men. A woman, especially in rural setting, begins to gain respect and security in her husband's or father-in-law's household only after giving birth to a son. Mothers therefore cherish and indulge their sons, while daughters are frequently more strictly disciplined. This type of custom also results in many reported acid attacks by the in-laws on female children and the mother, when the daughter-in-law fails to give birth to a son.

Due to traditional and cultural norms, a girl’s life is considered to be complete only when she is married and has her own family. The age of marriage differs between social classes, whereas girls from educated and well-to-do families usually marry between ages 18 to 22 and the marriage age among lower income group could range from as early as 14 to 20. Although marriage is seen as a significant and one of the most important transitions in the lives of Bangladeshi women, it can often be a heavy burden for the parents of the daughter especially for lower and lower-middle income groups (Hossain, 2002). Hossain pointed out that, apart from the cost of the marriage ceremony, the father of the bride often has to give dowry to the groom’s family to get his daughter married off. Although Bangladeshi law has been passed making the dowry system illegal and punishable, unfortunately this practice is still very prevalent in the rural areas. In many cases, girls whose parents were unable to meet the full demand of dowry are often tortured, divorced and in the worst scenario killed. Such discrimination against women seemed to impact the lives of the girls and young women at various levels of their lives by constraining choices.
Education.

As discussed earlier, most South Asian women and girls face discrimination in access to health, education, and employment and in almost every other sector of their respective society. Difference also exists among women and girls from different income groups and also among urban and rural women. In rural Bangladesh, in addition to illiteracy, ignorance, and lack of awareness on human rights, structural barriers and cultural practices are two of the main impediments of women’s empowerment. Although education plays a significant role in shaping human behavior and also acts as one of the social indicators for identifying the stage of development (The Worlds Women, 2005), priority for women’s education is still not realized in the rural areas of Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, the adult literacy rate for women was 31 percent and for men it was 50 percent (UNESCO, 2004). The dropout rates from schools among female students are higher as opposed to their male counterparts as family members often give importance to their son’s education and thus discontinue daughter’s education due to the income constraint. Access to education facilities is also restricted and a root cause for such higher illiteracy among females.

In Bangladesh, education is seen as an investment especially, for male children, and viewed as an asset that will lead to income generation in the future. It is the rural cultural practice that the son in the household will stay with the parents and provide food, clothes and security for their elderly parents. This expectation encourages parents to invest in their son’s education instead of their daughter’s. Moreover, it is socially perceived that girls will remain at home as someone’s wife and a mother, and they will not be working outside their household premises to earn money (Sheikh, 2004). Another reason that motivates parents to remove their
daughters from schools is to have a helping hand in the household. Moreover, parents believe that education will not equip the girl child for taking care of her own household in the future. Marriage at early age is therefore another reason that results in putting end to the girl’s education before they reach the higher secondary level.

This gender gap in education is closing at primary and secondary levels, especially due to current leadership by women politicians, but it tends to persist at higher secondary and tertiary levels. Education, leisure and many other spheres of a girl’s life are largely influenced by a girl or a woman’s family and the society in Bangladesh.

**Preliminary Field Work**

I conducted a preliminary field work study prior to my dissertation research in order to gain deeper insight into the lives and conditions of the girls and women in which I was interested. My growing interest to get a better understanding on the phenomenon of acid attack on girls and young women and to know more about their situation led me to find two non-profit organizations in Bangladesh. These enterprises were involved in helping the girls and women on post-treatment, medication and to assist them with the legal issues. The two main organizations dedicated to these tasks are Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) and Naripokkho. Data suggests that participation in a Non-Government Organizations’ (NGO) or Non-Profit Organizations’ programs increase women’s self-confidence, self-esteem, and their ability to deal with the future (Giddens, 1994). Undoubtedly, these types of supports are making a difference in the girls and women’s lives, but issues regarding rehabilitation of the acid attacked survivors were poorly addressed in most cases. This understanding led me to conduct a qualitative study focused mainly on the current lifestyle of the acid attacked girls and women.
The preliminary study took place at Dhaka in June 2002, the capital city of Bangladesh. During this study, 15 participants from across Bangladesh were selected from the ASF to provide an overview on the survivors’ lifestyle and to understand whether leisure had any significance after the tragic incident in their lives. I took every opportunity to meet with the survivors in different settings and started to build a rapport during those visits and also observed the existence of leisure in their lives. Twelve participants from this preliminary study later became involved in the final study, which took place after a year. The common aspects among the participants were that although they came from different parts of Bangladesh, they were all involved with the non-profit organization ASF.

Although I wanted to include the second leading organization working with acid attack victims for the study, I was unable to get entry to the second organization as only direct affiliates and employees were allowed to have access to the information and to their connected survivors. I also came to know that the organization’s operation was limited within providing the initial treatment to the victims through different non-profit organizations located in different parts of Bangladesh and had limited activities on the rehabilitation process. This is why I decided to solely work with Acid Survivors Foundation.

Unstructured, face-to-face, in-depth interviewing with the participants was the main tool for collecting data. Apart from the interviews, I organized a day trip taking some of the girls to the National Monument that was situated outside the city and observed their reactions to this recreational activity. I also conducted informal interviews while returning back from the trip in
which the girls candidly talked about their outdoor experience. I was able to identify the change of attitude from this simple recreational opportunity that was rarely experienced by the survivors. In the recreational environment, instantaneously they seemed extremely relaxed and were enjoying themselves like any other normal girl would react. The survivors who showed a sense of loss in the closed environment of the institutes seemed to laugh and enjoy every moment of being close to the nature. Some of the survivors mentioned that the experience brought them close to normalcy that was a part of their distant past.

After transcribing their interviews and informal discussions, the data revealed the importance of spending time with family and friends as one of the significant part of their lives. Almost all respondents emphasized a heightened sense of belongingness during their time spent time with their respective family members, friends and fellow acid attack victims. Family and friends have always been an integral component of Bangladeshi culture where closeness with extended family members is very prominent. Those interviewed also talked about how they valued the friendships that grew among the acid attack survivors and how it helped them to cope better. These friendships helped them further to deal better with their lives as they comfort one another and shared comparable tragedies of life with each other. In doing so, they unconsciously became family members and helped one another to find confidence within them. Many girls also talked about how such peers were more effective to make them feel better. Friendships grew not only among the acid survivors, but also with individuals who stood beside them during their time of needs to lend them a hand of support. Some of them are doctors, counselors and also individuals who are voluntarily giving them singing and acting lesson for channeling out their sorrows through cultural activities.
Moving towards religion was identified as another method of accepting life after the attack. Involvement in religious practice or developing a sense of spirituality became a way to cope with their daily stress. During a discussion on spirituality, some of the girls explained that beliefs about religion helped them maintain normalcy, and also some of them also thought that this incident in their lives happened for a reason.

The short preliminary study was beneficial to my dissertation research because it provided some insight on the ways the survivors’ lives had changed after the tragic incident and on the aspects of their lives which did not. The study therefore helped me as an investigator to become more familiarized with Acid Survivors Foundation, which was the core organization for contacting the participants to initiate the actual research. This was also an opportunity for me to build rapport with the survivors, which was a crucial element for building trust before the actual interviews took place. The detailed process of gaining trust with the participants is discussed further within the reflection chapter. Thus, based on the information gained through the study, I was able to identify the significance of leisure and recreation in their lives that could bring back hope and happiness in their lives.

**Significance of the Research**

In spite of many ethnographic studies on women world-wide, no studies have been conducted to understand the lives of the victims of acid attack in terms of their relationships, work and other social aspects of their lives. Apart from some articles in magazines, newspapers and documentary films about the acid attacks, research on understanding the process of
reconstructing lives of the survivors after the attack has not yet been documented. This study therefore promises to substantially add to the knowledge on this underexplored topic. Knowledge attained from this study can also shed some light on understanding similar cases such as victims of violence, accidents, and other traumas. Therefore, a better understanding of this issue can have both theoretical and possible clinical implications, and can result in successful interventions to improve life.

Additionally, the study holds significance to the field of leisure, psychology, social-science, gender studies, counseling, and other areas of life-sciences by providing new perspective from a developing (Non-Western) country and on a very special group of population. Finally, this study has its significance for me personally, not only as a researcher but as an individual who was befriended by the acid attacked girls and women of the Acid Survivors Foundation. From a personal point of view, it was a small initiative for creating a medium for the survivors to voice out their thoughts and ideas, but also it felt gratifying to be able to play a role for developing positive attitude that can encourage the survivors to explore new ways to cope better with reality.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

This study has been delimited in a number of ways in order to ensure that it could be completed within the constraints of time, resources and finances. Although the study has the scope to explore various experiences and areas that affect the lives of the victims of acid attack, being the only investigator in the field, I did not have adequate resources and time to observe every significant aspect of their daily routine. Taking this constraint under consideration, the
ethnographic study was designed in a way that was dominated by interviewing the survivors in specific sites, which was convenient for the survivors especially during the day. The study was limited to the girls and women of acid attack who were within the age range of 18 to 25 and were already rehabilitated in some ways or completed counseling after the acid attack. All the girls and women chosen for the study are associated only with Acid Survivors Foundation in different capacities. For convenience purpose, both participants and I chose to conduct the interviews in Dhaka; the metropolitan city in which the foundations headquarter is located. This approach limited the study from retrieving detailed information that could have been attained from various settings in which they lived, played and worked.

Due to issues related to accessibility, convenience and various requirements for such field of study, the data analysis was narrowed down to find the significance of leisure during the process of reconstructing their lives after the acid attack. A study of this type could have been more informative if I had the chance to collect data through direct observation into the daily lives of the victims, but I decided against it, as it may have made some of the girls and women uncomfortable when they were struggling to bring back their lives close to normalcy. A further limitation of the study was the reliance on the responses of the girls and women assuming that they are reflecting the true attitudes based on their personal perceptions, experiences and observations. To overcome this limitation, I tried to incorporate three individuals who were not acid attack survivors, but were involved with the survivors in different capacities. Nevertheless, some degrees of inaccuracy may have existed during the interviews.
During the data collection process, three survivors from among the fifteen selected girls and women had to leave the study for further treatment and to attend a trial against their attackers at their home town. Another drawback for the study may have arisen from conducting the study within my own culture. Spradley (1980) found that while doing ethnography in one’s own society, one can sometime overlook language differences and thereby lose important clues to cultural meaning. Finally, the study cannot be generalized to all acid attack victims (e.g., male, children, women above the age range of 25), as life experienced by male and female population of different age groups may significantly differ from the sample group’s experience within this study. Further limitations may arise from not having a large enough sample size for the study as Acid Survivors Foundation recently initiated a policy that strongly discourages the survivors from taking part in interviews and does not allow access to any outsiders to collect information from the girls for research purpose.

**Definitions**

**Acid Violence or attack:** Acid violence is a particularly vicious and damaging form of violence in Bangladesh where acid is thrown in people’s faces. The overwhelming majority of the victims are women, and many of them are below 18 years of age. The victims are attacked for many reasons. In some cases it is because a young girl or women has spurned the sexual advances of a male or either she or her parents have rejected a proposal of marriage. Recently, however, there have been acid attacks on children, older women and also men. These attacks are often the result of family and land dispute, dowry demands or a desire for revenge.
**Culture:** One definition of culture describes it as "an integrated system of beliefs, of values, of customs, and of institutions which express those beliefs, values and customs, which binds a society together and gives it a sense of identity, dignity, security, and continuity" (World Bank Report, 1978:7 cited in Abecassis, 1990:1). This definition however can be disputed, and may be too general and not so suitable for the women respondents in the study area as they often get subordinated because of the cultural constraints, and thus culture can have obstructive and disempowering effects as well.

**Patriarchic Society:** Patriarchy can be defined as the structuring of society on the basis of family units, where fathers have primary responsibility for the welfare of, and authority over their respective families. The concept of patriarchy is often used by extension (in anthropology and feminism, for example) to refer to the expectation that men take primary responsibility for the welfare of the community as a whole (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2001).

**Kinship:** According to Oxford dictionary, kinship is a relationship between any entities that share a genealogical origin, through biological, cultural, or historical descent. In anthropology the kinship system includes people related both by descent and marriage, while usage in biology includes descent and mating.

**Fictive kinship:** According to Janet (2000), fictive kinship is a term used by anthropologists and ethnographers to describe forms of kinship or social ties that are based on neither blood ties nor by marriage ties, in contrast to true kinship ties. She found this kinship to appear among individuals who are brought together based of similar situation, age and other mutualistic nature.
Organization of the Dissertation

The first chapter provides a brief overview on the Bangladeshi socio-economic and cultural background to lay the foundation for understanding the overall context in which the study is taking place. The second chapter synthesizes the explored literature related to the study and thus places the study in its context within the field. The third chapter reports the methods and provides a detail description of all aspects of design and procedures that were used during the study. To further support the methods chapter, a fourth chapter was included to help the reader attain insight on the personal reflections of the researcher during her fieldwork. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, I realized the need to incorporate this chapter, which will allow the reader to understand the overall experiences from the researcher’s perspective. Therefore, this chapter enhances the credibility of the study and justifies the need for a qualitative approach. The fifth chapter attempts to answer the first research question that emphasizes understanding the current lives of the acid attack survivors in terms of their daily challenges, life experiences in work, society and the ways they were dealing with the change that occurred after the attack. This chapter is relevant to the overall study as it explores the significance of understanding the person and her environment that shaped her lifestyle and therefore, her leisure choices. This environment includes individuals’ characteristics and personal resources like social competence, optimism, commitments and aspirations. The understanding of the different social dimensions therefore laid the context to answer the second research question, addressed in the sixth chapter, which addresses the significance of leisure in the lives of the survivors in terms of finding the meaning of leisure in their lives after the tragic event. Therefore, chapter 6 explores the leisure activities that were meaningful to the survivors to bring them back to normalcy. While understanding the experiences, the chapter also tackled the idea of motivations and emotions.
attached to leisure participation. Major constraints to leisure experienced by the survivors and the way the constraints are negotiated also were discussed in this chapter. The fifth and sixth chapters thus portray an overall perspective on the findings from the study, while the final chapter concluded by stating the importance of the overall study and how it is contributing to expand the knowledge base in the field of leisure and recreation.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

The study sought to understand the significance of leisure in the lives of acid attack survivors in Bangladesh. The literature review for this study was a process that occurred prior to the study as well as during the final analysis and interpretation of the data. Literature reviewed prior to the study helped me frame my research and interview questions. Literature reviewed during data analysis and interpretation helped me enhance my conceptual understanding on experiences and meanings the survivors have on leisure. Research on acid attack on young women is a fairly new topic, especially in the West, and the topic related to leisure in the life of acid attack survivors has never been researched in the field of leisure and recreation.

This study explored the role of leisure experience, if any, to help bring the survivors back to normalcy. The research questions addressed three major areas to investigate the phenomenon. The initial research question aimed to identify the context in which the survivors are experiencing and perceiving their lives. The background information on Bangladeshi society therefore needed to be appraised to obtain a better understanding on the factors that might contribute to the formation of leisure meanings in the daily lives of the survivors. The second research question explored how the survivors experienced leisure through the different dimensions of their lives despite the existing challenges and barriers that had to be negotiated after the acid attack. The challenges and barriers to leisure in Bangladeshi society needed to be discerned in order to identify how leisure meanings were still formed in their lives despite impeding factors.
The foundation for deciphering the lives of the survivors in Bangladesh was built mostly on the annual reports from Acid Survivors Foundation (2005-2008), the World Fact book (2006), publications from Bangladesh National Women Lawyer’s Association (BNWLA), annual reports and newsletters published by the Acid Survivors Foundation, reports from UNICEF Bangladesh, and articles published in the leading Bangladeshi National Newspapers. As not much information was available on how leisure is perceived by the young women of Bangladesh and especially by the acid attack survivors, a critical review on the available literatures (peer reviewed article, conference papers and books) emphasizing issues and problem pertinent to women and marginalized population were used to build an understanding on the progression of this particular study on acid attack survivors.

The following themes, ideas and content were explored in progression through various literatures to develop the foundation of the study through extensive literature reviews:

- Meaning and definition of leisure
- Meaning of leisure for women
- Contexts and dimensions of leisure
- Leisure constraints and constraints negotiation
- Leisure participation and benefits
Meaning and Definition of Leisure

Because this study sought to understand if leisure exists among women and girls who were victims of acid attack and the potential role leisure may have played as the victims reconstructed their lives, I reviewed literature that defined and explored leisure and its meaning. The exploration of various leisure related studies was important to establish a coding framework that aided the data analysis process. Watkins (2000) examined four paradigms to study leisure meanings which were: behaviorism, cognitivism, individual constructivism and social constructivism. The paradigms helped me to develop a broader perspective on how and in what ways leisure meanings can be formed.

Leisure is a complex rather than a simple concept and phenomenon and it is part of the process of existence rather than a static and unchanging idea or phenomenon (Kelly, 1987). Researchers often categorize leisure as time, activity and experiences related to the quality of life (Henderson, 1990; Kelly, 1982; Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Mannell and Kleiber (1997) examined and measured leisure from two definitional vantage points to understand how leisure is identified or perceived by persons being studied. These two definitional vantage points are identified as external and internal to the person or people being studied. According to the authors, external definitions of leisure are based on what people in a social group or society actually agree to be leisure and the researcher reflects these beliefs if he or she is also a member of the same social group. The internal vantage point occurs when the definition of leisure is based on the perception of the behavior, setting or experiences by the individuals who are being studied.
While the external definitional approach fails to acknowledge these differences, the internal definitional vantage point embraces various perceptions of leisure from different angles that could have different meanings depending on gender, culture, socio-economic status, age, education, and employment status. Both definitional points of view seemed to agree on the definitions of leisure but according to the authors the views can vary as well. While tools like leisure behavior inventories, time diaries, and observation are frequently used to explain leisure, weaknesses in these approaches do exist. For example, the listed leisure activities in both leisure inventories and diaries were not reported to be inclusive for all settings and individuals. Inaccuracies often seemed to occur within these data collection strategies as individuals were not able to recall and report the time and length of their participation accurately. Therefore, due to various discrepancies in data reporting and inadequate reflection on the lives of others by the researchers, the external definitional vantage point often fails to reflect how individuals actually construed meanings of leisure in their lives. Internal definitional vantage points on the other hand emphasized the point of view of the participants (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Many researchers (e.g., Mannell & Reid, 1996; Zuzanek & Smale, 1992) adopted the idea of internal definitional vantage point to their studies and found the descriptions of leisure meanings to be more reflective of the participants’ views rather than the researchers’. The definition of leisure varies from person to person as well as within and across cultures.

Others have categorized leisure as time, activity, or experiences related to the quality of life (Henderson, 1990). Besides time, which is the discretionary period of one’s life that is available after one’s work and other daily maintenance activities, leisure has also been viewed as an activity, which is mostly participation-based. Leisure as activity typically refers to as
recreational pursuits such as sport, cultural activities, or volunteering (Stebbins, 1992) taking place during free time (Henderson, 1990; Godbey, 2008; Russell, 2009). According to Wearing and Wearing (1988) leisure defined as time or activity is not adequate to capture the meaning of leisure for women completely due to the far greater variation that exists among various life situations in which women experience leisure. This consideration therefore paved the way towards perceiving leisure as an experience, which also became a common way of conceptualizing leisure as freedom of choice that seems to be a prerequisite for leisure (Henderson, 1990).

Other contributions to understanding leisure also provided insight from which to develop a framework to understand leisure in this study. These contributions include flow experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Mannell, 1980; Stebbins, 1992; Tinsley & Tinsley, 1986), intrinsic motivation (Iso-Ahola, 1980), spontaneity (Gunter, 1987), and enjoyment (Lee, Dattilo & Howard, 1994; Gunter, 1987; Henderson, 1990, 1997; Samdahl & Kleiber, 1989; Shaw, 1985). Stebbins (2005) identified lack of coercion to engage in an activity to be the quintessential property of leisure. He further developed the idea that some types of work share such leisure characteristics and termed it ‘agreeable obligation’ (p. 351) in which participants form an attitude or behavior about work that is very similar to leisure. During these activities, participants can associate the experience with pleasant memories and instead of seeing work as an obligation; it is an activity that they would like to pursue anyway. Despite contradictions on this concept of whether work could be leisure or not, the idea was worth exploring due to its relevancy to the study.
Properties of leisure experiences.

Studies conducted on leisure meanings and definitions have uncovered a number of properties associated with leisure. Most common are: free choice or freedom from constraint, intrinsic motivation, enjoyment, relaxation, role interactions, personal involvement and self-expressions (Freysinger, 1988, Gunter & Gunter, 1980; Iso-Ahola, 1980; Neulinger, 1981). Watkins (1999) identified four dimensions of leisure which were passing time, exercising choice, escaping pressure and achieving fulfillment. Kleiber, Caldwell, and Shaw (1993) identified relaxing/doing nothing, free time, free choice, enjoyment and activities as leisure meaning categories after exploring what the word leisure meant to the respondents.

In another study, Lee, Dattilo and Howard (1994) interviewed participants to find out how leisure was defined and also asked the respondents to elaborate their views on the definition. They found pleasurable characteristics like enjoyment, relaxation and freedom to remain in their memories well after a leisure experience, while stressful meanings like nervousness, apprehension, disappointment and guilt faded over time.

Gunter (1987) studied essays written about memorable and routine leisure experiences and distinguished common properties of pure leisure. The eight properties were (Gunter, p. 119):

1. Freedom of choice in one’s action
2. A feeling of pleasure or pleasurable involvement in the event
3. A sense of separation
4. Spontaneity
5. Timelessness
6. Fantasy or creative imagination
7. A sense of exploration
8. Self-realization.

**Contexts and dimensions of leisure.**

As discussed, it is crucial to understand the social parameters and contexts in which women experience leisure in their daily lives. Henderson et al. (1996) stated that experience occurs in time and space, situated in a world that has form and shape. Thus, leisure is a phenomenon that cannot be easily separated from other aspects of women’s daily lives (Deem, 1986; Deem 1999; Kelly, 1993; Samdahl, 2005). In addition to perspectives already provided, Coalter (1999) criticized the various North American studies because they generalized most findings of women’s leisure from a perspective based on individualism, thus neglecting the premises of societies that are patriarchic or collective.

According to Samdahl, Jacobson & Hutchinson (1998) individuals are interactively engaged with their social worlds at various levels in their lives and therefore leisure is largely a social phenomenon (Kelly, 1987; Samdahl, 1992; Crandall, 1979). That is because it is impossible to remove the individual completely from the layers of social relationships provided through family, organizational, institutional, community, societal, and cultural mechanisms (Pargament, 1997). Companionship and friendship are other elements experienced through leisure (Iso-Ahola & Park, 1996).
Worldwide, families are still considered to be the fundamental units of every society and perhaps the oldest and most important of all human institutions (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Shaw (1997) and Kelly (1993) looked at family as a major social context for free time and leisure.

Not only positive but also negatives experiences were found to be associated with family (Samuel, 1996; Shaw, 1997). Overall, spending time in leisure activities with family members was reported to be a meaningful leisure experience (Harrington, 2006). Kelly (1982) illustrated different types of leisure that occurred within a relationship between level of freedom and meanings. The meanings were perceived from both intrinsic and social point of view in which relacional and role-determined leisure seemed to reflect how women experienced leisure under certain contexts in life. According to Kelly (1982), role-determined leisure helps to accomplish various social roles played by women on a daily basis while taking care of their families and relational leisure is expressed as women of all ages are involved in activities that allow them to build meaningful relationship with others. Both types of leisure meanings indicated that women experience leisure depending on different types of social motivation at different levels of freedom.

In summary, leisure is a phenomenon that needs to be studied in terms of individual, social and cultural perspectives, as no single approach is able to describe the meanings of leisure to its entirety. Different experiences in life can result in different ways of relating to leisure. Probably this is why Marton and Booth (1997) found meanings to be potentially multiple and inexhaustible as individuals never stop experiencing themselves and the world. The current study on acid attack survivors also demanded an understanding of meanings from multiple angles and
apart from addressing traditional meanings of leisure, the study had to explore how meanings of leisure is formed in the lives of women.

**Meaning of Leisure in Women’s Lives**

Although leisure is a right of all people, unfortunately not everyone has equal access to it. Furthermore, according to Watkins and Bond (2007), the meanings people ascribe to phenomena are understood by individuals in relation to their personal circumstances (e.g., capabilities, expectations and memories) and social-cultural contexts like social roles, cultural practices and historical conditions. Thus, the meaning of leisure can differ based on demography, environment, geography, politics, religion and other social aspects (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw & Freysinger, 1989) and therefore, explaining leisure in terms of time, and activity might not be generalized across all segment of the population.

The meaning of leisure as time did not seem to be a useful conceptualization for women’s leisure. Contexts in which the women’s live can impact how free-time or work (Wearing & Wearing, 1988) is perceived and thus could have different meanings from the traditional views. According to the authors, the premise for viewing leisure as an activity also does not prove to be sufficient to understand leisure in women’s lives, as the usual list of recreational activities is not inclusive of all types of activities that are generally considered as leisure by women. For example, women’s leisure includes experiences in family interactions, community service, social interactions, and work outside home and in taking time for oneself (Henderson, 1990). Thus, leisure is embedded in women’s everyday lives (Henderson & Shaw, 2006).
In one of the first studies to take this perspective, Shaw (1985) examined the distribution of self-defined leisure across different daily activities through the use of a time budget study. In this way, she could reflect on the distribution of leisure across various social settings. Women she studied indicated that family held a great deal of meaning for them. This is not surprising because women generally have been socialized to put family first (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw & Freysinger, 1996). After Shaw’s pioneering work a number of feminist researchers (Deem, 1986; Shaw, 1991; Henderson et. al., 1996) have addressed various perspectives of women’s leisure and found the importance of leisure to be connected with the quality of life.

Other studies explored how leisure is viewed by women in different life situations. Tirone and Shaw (1997) conducted a study among women who immigrated to Canada from India and found the women to value relationship to their family far more important for their sense of identity and satisfaction of life. The women in their study viewed family to be in the center of their lives and leisure was not seen to be important. Henderson and Rannels (1988) studied farm women who had difficulty explaining leisure but able to describe the feeling of well-being associated in their social environment such as family traditions, community and church involvement and meeting family responsibilities. A study on Sudanese women at a refugee camp by Russel and Stage (1996) also shared some similar ideas with Tirone and Shaw (1997) as they found leisure to be burden for the women at that certain time of crisis especially when they were in a pressure of caring for their children. These views also reflected Henderson and Bialeschki (1991) findings on women’s leisure in which women formed their ideas and attitudes on leisure believing not having the right to leisure and thus experienced limitations on their construction of time for leisure (p. 51). Some studies (Taylor & Toohey, 2002; Tyron & Shaw, 1997) indicated
the significance of family responsibilities impacting their choice of leisure and found women to choose activities keeping family at the center of their everyday lives. Although many women lacked private time for leisure, they didn’t seem to view it to be important. Not being able to think about leisure in a positive way was explained by Shaw (1997), in which she identified studies (Erickson, 1993; Shaw, 1992) that found women experiencing constraints within family activities and viewed their leisure with family members as added work that has been termed as “Emotion work” (pg.99). For example, if a women’s leisure is primarily role-determined or relational (Kelly, 1982) she may have fewer individual leisure choices. This situation may be even more prevalent for mothers and or women from oppressive, patriarchic cultures.

These collective ideas on leisure seemed to be relevant for understanding aspects of leisure among the female survivors of acid attack in Bangladesh, even though they represent a Western perspective. Henderson et al. (1989) succinctly stated that, “women as a group have certain attributes, conditions and experiences, which can differentiate them from men and require that they be studied separately if their behavior is to be understood” (p. 7).

A number of insights from these feminist scholars are important to consider for this study. According to Deem (1982), women lack “space” for leisure that includes limited temporal, physical, social and psychological opportunities to experience leisure. This is why it is crucial to understand how women’s leisure choices can be tempered by various situations or states surrounding their lives, which often constrain how they experience leisure participation.
Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw & Freysinger (1996) concluded that for women, leisure included time for self, affiliation and connection, and self-determination. Henderson also conducted three major integrative reviews to understand the formation of multiple meanings associated with women’s leisure. The first review (Henderson, 1990) found various literatures to share commonalities in explaining leisure meaning among women. Her review uncovered (a) an existence of a common world of women where inequality exists regarding the opportunities of leisure (Glyptis & Chambers, 1982), (b) that women tend to seek social relationships in leisure (Henderson & Rannells, 1988), (c) that women have fragmented leisure time and thus conceptualizing leisure as time may not be appropriate (Deem, 1982; Shaw, 1985; Wearing & Wearing, 1988), and (d) women choose leisure activities which are often an outgrowth of household activities and a function of family interaction (Henderson, et al.,1989).

The second integrative review (Henderson, 1996) addressed the growing literature that moved away from the idea of all women share a common world and embraced the notion of “One size doesn’t fit all” (p. 139). This review identified emerging themes such as (a) a continuum of meaning associated with leisure that were sometimes contradictory for different groups of women (Dattilo, Dattilo, Samdahl, & Kleiber, 1994; Shaw, 1994) and (b) a focus on diversity that existed among women who live in western cultures (Freysinger, 1994; Riddick & Stewart, 1994). Sense of belongingness through social network was another category of explaining leisure (Deem, 1986). Besides promoting a sense of belongingness, Deem also found leisure to offer opportunity to express individuality and creativeness.
A difference in leisure meaning based in different groups of women was also explored by Dattilo, Samdahl and Kleiber (1994). The authors studied African American women who had been disenfranchised from the mainstream of the society and examined their leisure orientations that were impacted by various factors of life. These included employment status, low income and health. The study reflected Henderson and colleagues’ (1989) view on women’s experience with leisure in which women reported to have less free choice in leisure and in their daily lives. While analyzing the participants’ definitional perspective on leisure, Dattilo, Samdahl and Kleiber (1994) found fun and enjoyment to be the most reported element while additional emotions on feeling exhausted, nervous, guilty, apprehension were also associated with then in terms of leisure. The presence of negative emotions while defining leisure among African American women therefore pointed out the need to understand the factors that shape and constrained leisure. Henderson and Hickerson (2007) in their integrative review on women’s leisure also found the relevance to address constraints that impacts the formation of leisure meanings by women.

**Leisure Motivation and Self-determination Theory**

According to Lee & Shafer (2002), the ultimate goal of leisure participation is to have an enjoyable experience. This is why, besides being motivated for social reasons (Kelly, 1993), women also participate in leisure activities for fun and pleasure. Motivation therefore seemed to be an important context for understanding or explaining leisure experience. According to Deci and Ryan (2008), “motivation concerns energy, directions, persistence, and equifinality – in all aspects of activity and intentions” (p. 69). The theory of self-determination (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985) explains what compels activities or behaviors across life domains. Deci and Ryan (2000)
describe three major motivational styles: amotivation, extrinsic, and intrinsic (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-determination theory posits a continuum from amotivation to intrinsic motivation.

Amotivation is the absence of any internal or external compulsion to engage in the behavior or activity. That is, even though an individual may be doing something, he or she is just going through the motions and has no reason for participation. According to Ryan (1995), amotivation results from not valuing an activity, not feeling competent (Deci, 1975), or not believing the activity to yield desired outcome (Seligman, 1975).

Extrinsic motivation means that behavior is compelled by some type of external reward and is the least autonomous form of motivation. Most extrinsically motivated behaviors are externally prompted and also valued by significant others, peers or society. Extrinsic motivation is divided into four types that vary in their relative autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These are external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation. External regulation is experienced when behaviors are performed to satisfy external demand or obtain an externally imposed reward contingency.

The second type of extrinsic motivation is introjected regulation, which is still quite controlling because people perform or take part in activities with the feeling of pressure in order to avoid guilt or anxiety or to attain ego enhancement or pride (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Thus people who are motivated by introjected reasons want to increase feelings of self-worth or maintain self-esteem.
The third type of extrinsic motivation is more autonomous and labeled identified motivation. Individuals who experience this motivation find the activity to be personally important, thus realizing the value of the activity and accepting its regulation as his or her own (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It is associated with participation to achieve a valued goal or for a purpose that is important to the individual.

Finally, integrated regulation is the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. In this form of motivation, one internalizes the reasons for an action and assimilates them to self and becomes more self-determined. While discussing extrinsic motivation, Deci and Ryan (1985) considered the process of internalization and integration of values and behaviors. According to Ryan and Deci, internalization is the process of taking in a value or regulation, and integration is the process by which individuals more fully transform the regulation into their own so that it will emanate from their sense of self. Although identified and integrated forms of extrinsic motivation share some qualities with intrinsic motivation in that it behavior is autonomous and un-conflicted, the behavior still has some instrumental value even though it is valued by itself.

An individual is said to be intrinsically motivated to participate in an activity when the activity provides opportunity for fun and pleasure and is viewed as an end to itself (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness all contribute to feelings of intrinsic motivation. There has been a great deal of research based on SDT. Sharp, Caldwell, Graham and Ridenour (2006) found both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to play major role in how adolescents experienced interest in free-time. They took a multidimensional approach to explain
motivation that gave rise to the action based on the underlying values, attitudes and goals of individuals.

Motivation was also addressed though a model developed by Losier, Bourque & Vallerand (1993) to understand leisure experience by older adults. In their model, the authors examined factors that influence leisure participation impacting motivation, which in turn determined leisure satisfaction for the participants. The four factors were: contextual factors, leisure motivation, leisure satisfaction and leisure participation, in which motivation was found to be the most important factor influencing overall leisure experience. Losier, et al. therefore reiterated the finding by Iso-Ahola (1979) and Neulinger (1981) in which they also found motivation to be an integral part of leisure experience. Losier et al. depicted leisure motivation as energy that initiates, directs and sustains leisure involvement. Motivation for leisure therefore seemed to be a significant area that I thought to enhance the understanding of leisure experience by the survivors and needed to be explored for this study.

Amidst the various dimensions of leisure, the issue of constraints has been identified as a part of the positive as well as negative context in women’s lives (Henderson & Hickerson, 2007). Jackson (2005) earlier described the importance of integrating the corpus of work to analyze concepts like constraints. Similarly, to understand the meaning of leisure, the concept of constraint cannot be neglected.
Experience of Leisure Constraints

For many women or people in disadvantaged contexts, leisure may not always be perceived positively due to existing constraints in terms of time (Deem, 1982), employment and income (Bialeschki & Henderson, 1986), family commitments (Searle & Jackson, 1985), socio-economic status (Henderson et al. 1989) and various other factors. In fact, Goodale (1992) suggested that women’s leisure is often discussed in terms of constraints such as socio-economic levels, marital status, sexual orientation, race, and physical ability, all of which may influence women’s leisure experiences. Feminist researcher Henderson (1994) agreed and suggested that the study of women’s leisure is about the study of leisure constraints.

Henderson, et.al., (1989) analyzed women’s leisure and found women to report having little choice on their leisure patterns and less free choice in their daily lives (Shaw, 1987). According to Deem (1999) and Samdahl (2005) leisure experience tends to exist within the context of an individual life that is related to people’s work, family, friends, school, religion and other social aspects. As discussed earlier in this chapter, these are various dimensions and contexts in life in which leisure is experienced. Thus to understand leisure meanings and experiences among the girls and women who participated in this study the construct of constraints must be addressed.

Jackson (1988) identified leisure constraints as a set of reasons for not engaging in a particular behavior. He suggested the constraints are anything that limits or inhibits an individual’s ultimate participation in a leisure activity, and limits the full positive experience of an activity (Jackson, 1988; Raymore, Godbey & Crawford, 1994). Some authors have referred to
constraint on leisure as “barriers” to leisure participation that intervene between preference for an activity and participation in it (Crawford, Jackson & Godbey, 1987). According to Jackson (1991), research on leisure constraints fulfills three important functions within leisure studies. These functions include: (a) it enhances our understanding of a phenomenon regarding the complex ways in which leisure is constrained; (b) can shed light on aspects of leisure, such as participation, motivations, and satisfaction; and (c) can serve as a device to assist in perceiving new connections among discrete facets of leisure.

The first two functions are relevant to this study as understanding leisure constraints can provide a better understanding on how survivors might be experiencing their leisure. Various theoretical models discuss the different categories of leisure constraints that prevent individuals from participating, reducing frequency of participation or reducing the quality of the experiences. Such factors have been categorized by Crawford, Jackson and Godbey (1991) three major types of constraints: intrapersonal constraints, interpersonal constraints, and structural constraints. Intrapersonal constraints are constraints related to psychological states and attributes which interact with leisure preferences and lead to lack of interest in particular leisure activity. This type of constraint is similar to antecedent constraints proposed by Henderson, Stalnaker, and Taylor (1998). Interpersonal constraints, according to Crawford, Jackson and Godbey (1991), are intervening constraints associated with relationships with other people. Structural constraints are factors which intervene between leisure preferences or choices and actual participation. Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991) further elaborated their idea on the model and suggested that the three leisure constraints are experienced in a hierarchical way. Initially intrapersonal constraints have to be overcome, followed by interpersonal constraints. At that point, individuals
will face structural constraints to their leisure. This model did not go uncontested as some researchers (Kay & Jackson, 1991) found the explanation for this model inadequate for generalizing to every population.

Over time there has been some criticism about the narrowness of the leisure constraints model (Samdahl, 2005; Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1993). The criticism is based on the perceptions that the current constraints models fail to locate the study of constraints within an understanding of cultural context. Culture as a constraint category was often overlooked until Chick & Dong (2005) identified its significance. They made an attempt to break away from the individualistic orientation of constraints analysis and conducted a cross-cultural study to find whether culture impacted leisure participation or non-participation. Chick and Dong concluded that the earlier models of leisure constraints need to be revisited and culture should be placed prior to the individual constraints (interpersonal and interpersonal).

This view is now also shared by Walker and Wang (2009), in which they also found it necessary to address how culture may affect leisure meanings in their research on Chinese/Canadians. Feminist researchers have also embraced the importance of broad cultural ideologies while discussing leisure constraints (Henderson, 1991; Shaw, 1994; Shaw, Bonen, & McCabe, 1991). Shaw and Henderson (2005) supported broader definitions of constraints that include not just immediate individual barriers (interpersonal and intrapersonal) but social security and cultural dimensions as well. Further research is required to understand the cultural aspect of leisure and how it either influences or build obstacles to leisure participation, especially for women and women who are marginalized. Arab-Moghaddam, Henderson, &
Sheikhholeslami (2007)’s research also supported the importance of cultural influence on leisure and highlighted the influence of religion and the impact of collectivist society of Iran on women’s leisure choices.

Most of the constraint studies relevant to this research have concluded that women face more intense leisure constraints than men, and these constraints result mainly from lack of time (Rocklynn, 1998). These studies tend to suggest that women’s place within society and their roles and responsibilities often limit women’s freedom of choice. Furthermore, lack of technical skills, lack of private transportation, lack of time, dependency on others (Henderson, et. al., 1995) and of financial resources is also experienced by women more intensely than men (Harrington & Dawson, 1995). For example, in two different constraints studies among South Asian youth in England, researchers (Stodolska, 1998; Carrington, Chivers & Williams, 1987) reported that female representatives from the study experienced constraints in their leisure pursuits more frequently and more intensely than their male counterparts in terms of out-of-home activities and sports.

Apart from gendered studies, research has been conducted on the meaning of constraints from individuals experiencing disabilities. For example, Henderson, Lynn, & Rosemary (1995) observed that leisure choices among women with disabilities were not necessarily disability determined, but the context of the disability did influence leisure choices. Along this line, Fine and Asch (1988) ascertained that even the amidst one’s disabilities, disability itself did not necessarily cause constraints, but the environment may be at fault. Despite the constraints according to Henderson, et al. (1996), women might not necessarily be prevented from
participating in leisure activities. Jackson, Crawford and Godbey (1993) also supported this view and found people negotiating around the constraints to continue or participate in the leisure activities of their choices.

**Constraint negotiation.**

There is evidence that supports the idea that individuals do participate in recreational activities in the presence of constraints (Elkins & Beggs, 2007; Kay & Jackson, 1991; Shaw, Bonen, & McCabe, 1991). These researchers found that individuals experiencing moderate constraints in their leisure activities were significantly more likely to change leisure aspirations, such as avoidance of competitive activities, than those who perceived low level of intrapersonal constraints. Hubbard and Mannell (2001) also found a similar result. They ascertained that when individuals perceived an increase in constraints, they were more likely to make an attempt to overcome the constraints through negotiation.

A number of other researchers have examined how individuals overcome constraints and barriers and participate in leisure activities. Crawford, Jackson and Godbey (1991) found leisure participation to be heavily dependent on negotiating through multiple factors to increase the likelihood of meaningful participation. A study conducted by Jackson and Rucks (1995) on high school students also explored the idea of negotiation. They found general categories of negotiation to include: modification of time, acquiring skills needed for an activity, changing interpersonal relations, improving one’s financial situation, use of physical therapy and changing one’s leisure aspirations.
Henderson, et al. (1995) enhanced the conceptual understanding of constraints by discussing leisure constraints and strategies for negotiation among women experiencing physical disabilities. In their research they also elaborated on the context of the women’s lives that played a significant role in the process of negotiation. Kay and Jackson (1991) and Jackson et al. (1993) also studied leisure constraints among women with disabilities and found them to negotiate leisure constraints by scheduling, intensity and frequency due to their perception of roles, responsibilities and disabilities.

Samdahl, Hutchinson, and Jacobson (1998) concluded that constraint negotiations are important for establishing meaning and purpose in people’s lives. Some constraints can be overcome easily while others require more planning; but despite extreme situations, people find ways to manage constraining situations to create circumstances offering options and possibilities (Henderson, Bedini & Schuler, 1995). Although an increasing number of studies are taking place regarding constraints and a growth in constraint related research on women seems to continue, more exploration considering various social, political and psychological factors should be brought under consideration. Overall, a better understanding on the concept of negotiation of leisure constraints can successfully assist individuals to navigate through the existing constraints towards meaningful participation that can accrue overall benefits to the participants.
Leisure Participation and Benefits

Participation in leisure activities has beneficial consequences for both physical and psychological well-being (Caldwell & Smith, 1994; Iso-Ahola, 1989; Iso-Ahola & Weissinger, 1984; Payne, Ainsworth, & Godbey, 2010; Tinsley & Tinsley, 1986). One reason for these benefits is due to a unique aspect of leisure; leisure tends to provide a variety of opportunities for people to exercise higher levels of freedom of choice and sense of control, in comparison to activities in more constrained domains of life, such as work (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997).

Tinsley and Tinsley (1986) provided early evidence of the positive impact of leisure, stating that leisure experiences have beneficial effects on individuals’ physical and mental health, life satisfaction, and psychological development. Driver, Brown and Peterson (1991a) also researched a whole range of psychological and social benefits of leisure. According to them a benefit resulting from leisure refers to “a change that is viewed to be advantageous—an improvement in condition, or gain to an individual, a group, to society, or to another entity.” (p.4).

These and other studies provided the foundation for exploring whether leisure is making a difference in the lives of the acid attack survivors. That is, I was interested in whether benefits from leisure were responsible for bringing change or improvement in the lives of the women and girls who had experienced an acid attack. Along this line, Mannell and Kleiber (1997) found leisure not only to be the source of fun, enjoyment and excitement, but also allowed individuals to cope with stressful life events.
A significant number of researchers have illustrated the beneficial effects of social support that emerges in leisure settings on helping victims of various life crises to cope with their situations (Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000; Weisman, 1976; Williams, Ware, & Donald, 1981). Wills & Shiffman (1985) are among those researchers who emphasized the importance of leisure during the coping process, as they advocated increasing positive resources such as enjoyable experiences, social support, positive hedonic tone, and relaxation to directly impact on the perception of stressors. A significant aspect of women’s leisure seemed to be related to the social and familial aspect of leisure. Leisure–generated social support and leisure generated self-determination disposition has been reported to have a buffering effect on daily or chronic stressors (e.g., Iso-Ahola & Park, 1996) and resulted in increased life satisfaction and well-being.

Further studies were conducted by Hutchinson, Loy, Kleiber, and Dattilo (2003), in which they found leisure to buffer from immediate stress and to be a source of motivation to sustain coping efforts. Under the buffering theme, they identified four categories which are: (a) mental distraction, (b) preserving a connection to the past, (c) escaping the confines of home/hospitalization and (d) escaping one’s disability or illness. The source of motivation to sustain coping effort addressed five main categories: (a) offering hope and optimism; (b) providing structure and a sense of purpose; (c) providing sense of belonging and acceptance (d) preserving a sense of competence, independence and continuity of self; and (e) maintaining physical and mental health.

Folkman (1997) defined positive meaningful events as events that touch on valued beliefs and goals, are appraised as beneficial, and evoke positive emotions. Their research found that
socialization and entertainment helped individuals with HIV/AIDS to cope better with their stressful life. Although it is recognized that there are some situations in which leisure may be perceived as threatening, problematic and therefore a source of stress, but the foreground of my study tried to explore the contexts in which the survivors seek enjoyable and personally relevant experiences to improve the quality of their lives (Hutchinson et al, 2003). This is why understanding the meanings of leisure among different groups of population in different life situations were significant to lay out the foundation of this study on acid attack survivors.

Summary

The integrative analysis of the literatures discussed above therefore attempted to outline various themes that are significant to understand the overall meaning of leisure in the lives of women and marginalized population. The studies showed the importance of leisure in people’s daily lives and how leisure impacts the overall well-being impacting the quality of life. The following statements summarize some major findings from the review:

- Major studies on the meaning of leisure among women indicated commonalities in leisure choices which were dominated by the importance of leisure activities based on social relationships.
- Leisure experience for women cannot be generalized for every woman as each individual perceives the world differently due to her different characteristics such as social status, demography, culture, personal traits and surroundings. Thus, individuals define leisure quite personally making the leisure constructs highly subjective.
- Leisure should not be explained only in terms of time, space and activity. In many collective cultures leisure is more about experience than participating in activities in particular time and space. Leisure experiences are also opportunities for expressing autonomy, self-definition and choice that often cannot be realized in other aspects of life.

- Studies need to move beyond the boundaries of individualistic ideologies and paradigms and integrate broader and holistic points of view to understand leisure across cultures and across genders. The influence of various domains of lives and the context in which one lives should also be brought under consideration for comprehensive understanding of leisure. This is why it is important to consider leisure from a cultural perspective.

- As leisure cannot be separated from culture and society, studies on leisure constraints should revisit the constraint models to incorporate the cultural and social aspects that can influence choice to leisure participation. Studies also supported the notion of individuals negotiating around constraints by using different strategies to ensure participation.

- Through leisure involvement women can experience various ranges of benefits that allow them to recover from stress and also increase self-esteem and life-satisfaction.

Undoubtedly literature on women’s leisure has evolved over the last few decades, but a gap still exists with regard to studies that focus on women from developing countries. Future studies are required to understand the meaning of leisure in the lives of marginalized female population in different cultures and the role of various social and political factors that shapes their life experiences.
Chapter 3
Methods and Procedure

The main purpose of this research study was to understand the lives of Bangladeshi female acid attack survivors after the event and explore the role of leisure during the process of reconstructing their lives towards normalcy. Two main research questions guided the study to investigate the different angles of leisure in the lives of the research population. The objective of the first question was to gain a better understanding of the survivors’ cultural and social environment, which seemed to shape their views toward life in different contexts. The second question focused on how leisure is experienced in their lives in terms of activities, constraints and the negotiating process that allows the survivors to take part in leisure activities despite the existing environmental and cultural barriers.

Due to the nature of the study, which focused on the lived experience of the acid attacked survivors, a qualitative research method seemed to be most appropriate for extracting relevant information on the topic. As the study required in-depth understanding of different meanings of situations in which the acid survivors experienced daily life after the acid attack, a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach seemed to be the best technique to attain the tacit knowledge from the cultural setting in Bangladesh.

According to Wolcott (2001), questionnaires and surveys used in quantitative methodologies are not always effective tools to reveal the nuances and subtleties that can be extracted through ethnographic research. Although quantitative methods have the advantage of
allowing one to mathematically calculate the validity or reliability of data and require little effort
to score, Folkman and Moskowitz (2000) found them to provide a superficial description of the
actual life experience. They agreed that a great deal can be learned using a qualitative method,
which incorporates asking people to provide narratives about their lives, the emotions they
experience, and their thought as the situations unfolded. Another reason to choose this particular
approach was the overall purpose of the study, which focused on a particular situation in the
lives of the acid attack survivors that has not been previously studied. Therefore, a quantitative
approach to analyze leisure experience and the stories of how the survivors perceived life after
acid attack would not have been the best approach to obtain an accurate holistic picture.

**Research Design**

Initially, I was prepared to follow a qualitative approach in which my research questions
were guided within the context of already established leisure related theories. Although the
theories appeared to be universally applicable, the preliminary field work helped me realize that
the theories were not able to subsume all aspects of Bangladeshi culture. I also found out that this
study demanded a detailed description of the culture that is shared by the acid attack survivors to
set up a context for understanding their leisure experience. Therefore, to do justice to the
phenomenon under study, I chose to become an ethnographer and immersed myself within the
particular setting to find the linkages among various data that are meaningful.

There seemed to be very little evidence of research on the positive use of leisure time by
girls and women representing third world countries. No research has been done on special
populations like female victims of acid attack from a developing country. Most research in the
field of leisure and coping has targeted populations from the Western world (for example, Kleiber, Hutchinson & Williams, 2002; Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). Thus, relevant concepts related to different cultures have remained unexplored. Under this consideration, the ethnographic approach seemed to be the best suitable method for this type of research as it can generate new knowledge on the subculture of acid attack survivors and can also be a precursor for further investigation to provide new angles to understand the role of leisure from a multicultural perspective. Based on this understanding, I took initiative to derive data that may not only support some of the established theories in the field of leisure but also may advance knowledge due to its focus on an unrepresented population. The research design therefore focused on the overall planning to conduct the study that comprises of researcher’s capability to collect data, the researcher’s entry and selection of the sample, data collection methods, data management and analysis and finally ensuring the trustworthiness of the study. Following are the significant components of the overall research design that are discussed in detail.

The researcher/informant relationship.

Being a woman from Bangladesh, I was in an ideal position to understand the cultural perspective of the acid attack survivors who shared ethnicity and gender with me. Preliminary field work was initiated in 2002 to explore the feasibility of and set the foundation for my dissertation study. During preliminary field work as well as during the dissertation, I stayed in close proximity to the phenomenon that was being studied and forged relationships with the participants. The building of relationships became imperative to the success of the study. I took care not to “research and run,” but rather developed relationships that allowed me to become a
friend and a confidant of many of the girls and women while maintaining my role as a researcher. I also paid attention to examine my own biases like a stereotypical view on marginalized population, income group and reflected upon them during data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Ethnographic processes, according to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), should have a characteristic “funnel” structure that becomes progressively focused over its course. From the preliminary study to the actual study, I experienced how the internal structure of the research evolved and funneled down from gaining a better understanding of the broader picture of the girls’ and women’s’ lives to specific experiences that were significant to the phenomenon I was studying to address the research questions. This would not have been possible if I narrowed my perception through a quantitative methodology in which my personal involvement would have been minimal.

An understanding of the significance of leisure in the lives of the acid attack survivors therefore was obtained through highly interactive and unstructured interviews, observation, and field visits to few key events that were important in the lives of the acid attack survivors. These methods of data collection required rapport building with the respondents, which was also a crucial element to ensure the credibility for this study. A detailed account of how the relationship between respondents and I evolved during the field study is further discussed in Chapter Four.
Gaining entry and sampling method.

Gaining access to the sample population who could provide accurate and relevant information was the most important task for initiating the study. During the preliminary fieldwork, I was introduced to three acid attack survivors who were involved with the Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) from the inception of the organization. Apart from being involved in counseling they were well informed about different operations that were run by the ASF. After being briefed on the purpose of the research, the young women helped me identify twelve other survivors who showed interest in taking part in the study. Although all the girls could speak Bengali, some of the girls came from different regions of Bangladesh where a different dialect is spoken. I experienced some difficulty while interviewing them during the preliminary field research study and found information not accurately being transmitted due to my inadequate skill to understand the young women. This knowledge later guided me to exclude participants from those regions when the actual research took place a year after.

Therefore, using purposive sampling, fifteen female acid attack survivors ranging from age 18 to 25 were chosen for the study. The final selection was based on the women’s availability during the time frame, their willingness to share their stories with me, and their ability to provide rich descriptions of their experiences that I could accurately understand.

According to Johnson (1990), sample validity depends not so much on the number of cases, but more on the proper specification of the informant in terms of their personal attributes: age, life-experience, situational relationships with the investigator and so forth. During the process of purposive sampling, the purpose of the study paved the way to choose the
participants. Therefore, I chose the sample population of acid attack survivors based on the available background information (Bernard, 2000), which identified the selected individuals as the key players for finding the answers to the research questions. Due to the nature of the study, which required in-depth information on how the victims of acid attack were utilizing their leisure choices for reconstructing their lives to normalcy, names of the participants were selected based on their availability and ability to communicate with the researcher.

The purpose of this particular study was not to achieve generalizability, but to understand the constructs (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) related to leisure experiences on this homogeneous sample of individuals (girls and women who have experienced acid attack). To determine this purposeful sample, fifteen girls and women were initially chosen from the list available through Acid Survivors Foundation in Dhaka. I felt that fifteen participants were an adequate sample for this qualitative study based on my pilot research in which I found that after 10 interviews, no additional information or relevant categories seemed to emerge. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) pointed out that the ideal sampling population is reached when the researcher will find that no new additional information is emerging from additional research samples to create better understanding on the different constructs of the study.

The names of the girls and women who participated in the study were provided by the program officer who worked them. As the research required spontaneous and meaningful views from the participants, all the participants needed to be in stable mental condition. To meet this criterion, participants who were included in the study had to have completed at least one year of counseling by a certified psychologist at Acid Survivors Foundation after the attack and had to
be evaluated as both physically and mentally fit to participate in the study. The program officer personally contacted the potential participants and appraised the girls’ and women’s openness and ability to communicate their experiences with me. Based on the findings, the program officer provided me with the names and contact addresses of the girls and women who would best serve the study.

Fifteen participants thus were finalized for the study whose ages ranged from 18 to 27 years and appeared to be a fair representation of the acid attacked female victims of the country. The girls and women were mostly from a lower income or lower-middle income group and were associated with the Foundation in different capacities like training, work and treatment. For this reason, all the girls and women who were interviewed stayed in Dhaka. The interviews took place according to the participant’s convenience regarding place and time. Unfortunately, two young women left the study as one of them had to return to her village to testify in a lawsuit against her violator and the other girl left for medical reason. For these unavoidable circumstances, the final sample for the study included thirteen participants.

While reconstructing their lives after the acid attack, the survivors developed close ties with individuals who were not acid attack victims but who played important roles in their lives showing support both financially and psychologically. Considering the importance of the social circle beyond other acid attack survivors that can shed some light on the lives of the survivors, I decided to include three individuals (instructor from the music class, a social activist and a counselor) in the study as significant people in the lives of the survivors. These key informants
became valuable sources of information and enhanced the overall credibility of the study. They also provided me with an overview on the survivors’ lives from a non-victim’s perspective.

**Data Collection Method**

Wainwright (1997) emphasized the importance of an ethnographer to see the participant’s world “through their eyes” (p. 2). Therefore, being immersed in the field, I attempted to understand the social world of the survivors through participant observation, interviews, and site visits. Site visits naturally were accompanied by observation. The following tables (Table 3.1 and Table 3.2) provide an overview of how the overall data collection took place during the two phases. Table 3.1 informs the reader of the different techniques that were employed during the study and Table 3.2 illustrates the different categories of participants from whom responses were collected. Phase one was a prerequisite for launching the main study, as it helped me to build rapport with the acid attack survivors through one-on-one informal interviews, visiting different sites to observe their interaction with others and observe segments of their lives that were significant to them.

I was able to exercise all three techniques of data collection with eight acid attack survivors during the first phase, while I had to be satisfied executing the three techniques with seven respondents during the main study. Interviews were conducted for all study participants. Site visits took place during two field trips, two cultural events organized by the Acid Survivors Foundation, at one social event and at the weekly singing classes within the span of two years and three months. Also, an unintended observation took place at one of the social activist’s
residence during a tragic accident in which one of the prominent social activists for Acid Survivors lost her life.

Table 3.1: Methods of Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aleya</td>
<td>O I V</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irina</td>
<td>O I V</td>
<td>O I V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asma</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shukti</td>
<td>O I V</td>
<td>O I V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahmina</td>
<td>O I V</td>
<td>O I V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubina</td>
<td>O I V</td>
<td>O I V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayesha</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aklima</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zila</td>
<td>O I V</td>
<td>O I V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharna</td>
<td>Not included</td>
<td>O I V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poppy</td>
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<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaniz</td>
<td>O I V</td>
<td>O I V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

O- Participant Observation; V- Site Visit, I – Interviewing

Table 3.2 supports Table 3.1 by providing an overview of the different types of data collection techniques that were used to obtain information from different sources of individuals who were relevant to the study. Apart from the core respondents who were the acid attack
survivors, the other sources were comprised of counselors, a singing instructor, a social activist and friends and family members.

Table 3.2 Data Collection Matrix: Type of Information by Source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Source</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acid attack Survivors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing instructors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social activist</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Members</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A detailed description of the three different techniques of data collection is further discussed next.

**Interviews.**

After selecting the sample, the data were gathered mainly through semi-structured face-to-face interviews. As one major purpose of this study was to understand how leisure activities are experienced by the acid attack survivors in Bangladesh, an interview guide was developed to steer the interviewing through topics that needed to be covered in particular order (Appendix A). This type of interviewing was appropriate for building rapport with the acid survivors who were not always comfortable in more formal structured interview settings. I had full respect for the survivors’ choice and made the respondents comfortable in a way so that they can tell me
anything without being afraid of being judged or pitied. The interviewing process was thus built on the ability to convey empathy and understanding without judgment.

Close ended questions to find the frequency of taking part in certain leisure activities and their demographic background were also asked to obtain a better picture about the participant’s level of involvement and interests. Accuracy of the information was ensured through verbatim recording of the interviews using a tape recorder. The interviews were recorded with the participants’ full consent. I kept the tape recorder away from the interviewee’s sight to create a relaxed environment during the interviews.

As interviewer, I had to take a non-threatening stance to elicit responses that came naturally to the respondents. Rapport building helped me to eliminate the distrust and lack of comfort between me as the interviewer and the interviewee. This is why the study progressed over three years during which I was able to develop a bond between the survivors and me, allowing the survivors to share their thoughts and views without any hesitation. I was no longer a stranger to them but became a friend. Each interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes, but if required, however, the interviews went longer up to 120 minutes depending on how much information the participant wanted to report. The semi-structured nature of the interviews seemed to be the most appropriate technique for the respondents as minimum control was exerted over the responses (Bernard, 2000). Apart from demographic information, in some instances, structured questions were asked to guide the interviewees back on track to extract information that was crucial for the study. For example, questions on how leisure time was spent by the acid attack survivors or how leisure constraints were negotiated by the survivors were
asked within the appropriate context. These questions were asked typically when the interviewee was describing some events or scenarios relevant to the topic. An example of this type of scenario was when the interviewee mentioned her trip to a movie theatre. While she was reminiscing about her experience, I took the opportunity to ask her a question about other leisure activities that may allow her to have fun and relaxation. I followed-up that query with a question on whether she experienced any constraints while participating in the leisure activities of her choice.

Probing was also required during the interviews for further elaboration of certain topics. Probing encouraged the respondents to provide additional information without injecting myself too much into the interaction. Silent probing, like nodding, saying “tell-me-more,” and long-question probing were used to get more in-depth information from the respondents.

Observation.

Observation took place during specific events that were meaningful to the acid attack survivors. The opportunity to visit and observe those events emerged while interviewing the young women. During the interview sessions, some of the acid attack survivors invited me to attend various social events that were meaningful to them. Events like the weekly singing classes (14 classes) comprising 10 survivors, the social activist and two instructors, a trip outside the city that included five survivors, two birthday parties (20 guests, among which 12 were survivors) and three special events organized by Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) turned out to be significant sites for observations. Mainly the observation assisted me to attain further
information that identified key experiences related to leisure that were important to the survivors for gaining back the sense of normalcy in life.

I used a contact form (Appendix B) for each interviewees and the Quick Note Sheet (see Figure 3.1) to identify key experiences that were core to the purpose of my study. The observation mainly helped me to reinforce my findings during the interviews and allowed me to discern different elements of the research questions in real settings that were significant to the survivors. During these visits, I was able to observe different emotions that were reported during the interviews. For example, I could see the women enjoying the time while they were in an outing. One could easily observe their delight and pleasure through their laughter, the enthusiasm, singing without feeling conscious about their surrounding and overall their desire to extend the experience by spending more time in that particular setting. Apart from Contact Form and Quick Notes, I also relied on my field notes to collect a holistic picture on the experience.

Field notes.

Hammerslay and Atkinson (1995) identified field notes to be an ideal way for recording observational data during ethnographic research. While observing the survivors in different settings (e.g., birthday party, home, special events and at an outing), I usually wrote down my field notes along with my own reflections immediately after the event. During my preliminary field work, I realized that taking field notes during an observation can intervene with the overall experience and also can result in the loss of spontaneity. Therefore, I captured the detailed description of my experiences in first person after returning from the setting in which my observation was taking place. While writing the field notes, I also jotted down my own
inadequacies, for example not being able to provide strong assurance to one of the victims when she asked me if I can help her father get a loan from a bank to run his small grocery shop. I did tell her I would try but I knew it would be difficult as they can show no collateral. This type of situation always left me feeling inadequate and helpless. Several extracts from my field notes are illustrated in Figure 3.2.

Documents.

Annual reports, articles, documentaries and books also played a significant role in my understanding the acid attack phenomenon from different angles. The annuals reports and newsletters also had various pictures, poems and event descriptions written by and for the acid attack survivors that provided me an idea about the active involvement in various leisure activities by the survivors. Also the documents provided evidence on the occurrences of different events and involvements that were mentioned by the survivors. For example, the survivors who were part of the singing class mentioned events in which they sang in public. Pictures, news and stories on their experiences and reflection on how the audiences experienced their performances were recorded in the quarterly newsletters that were published from the Acid Survivors Foundation. Newspaper stories on how some financial institutes are providing grants and funds for survivors who are interested to start a business were also supporting the statements of two survivors who showed their desire to start a boutique to be self-employed. They mentioned their optimism due to existence of such supportive organization. Different statistics on acid attack were also used from various journals and annual reports to aid the study. Case studies on some of the survivors I interviewed were also provided by the foundation that allowed me to get an understanding on how the attack happened and the experiences during the treatment period.
These case studies helped me to prepare for the actual interviews and also allowed me to avoid mentioning the tragic incident during the interview.

Figure 3.1 Quick Note on Rubina’s Birthday Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Detailed description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>She was happy to see the guests arriving and her big smile, warmth and laughter during the conversations showed that she was enjoying her party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of involvement</td>
<td>Rubina took the effort to dress nicely and also she had make-up on and jewelries. She along with her family went a great length to prepare the food for the dinner party. Apart from conversing with all six of us who were invited, she was also making sure that all of us are comfortable and engaged. She and her mother was continuously running to the kitchen and bringing in warm food to entertain us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive emotion</td>
<td>The whole environment was warm and filled with positive emotion as everyone was enjoying the time. Rubina’s mother and sisters were also happy to see her daughter having a nice time with her friends and her family members. Enthusiasm, laughter, sharing jokes and the music in the background was creating an overall positive emotion among everyone. She was laughing and thanking everyone while opening her gifts and enthusiastically calling her sisters and her mother to see what she got.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with others</td>
<td>Highly interactive as the small room was filled with conversation and laughter. Her friends from the singing class and also her cousins even made me feel comfortable as they were freely conversing with me and sharing their stories. Rubina along with her friends and family were engaged in spontaneous and open conversation where topics ranged from her childhood, her work, the singing class to national politics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing emotions</td>
<td>Everyone felt warmth and welcomed at her place. I was the second guest to arrive at the party and Rubina, her mother and her sisters expressed to me how happy I made them feel by accepting the invitation. Amidst hardship and pain, these events are the ones they all look forward to as they can all feel connected to the people who cares about them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of stress</td>
<td>Absence of stress. Only Rubina’s mother seemed to be a little stressed on whether everyone is enjoying the food or not. She was asking me whether I had enough to eat and whether I am feeling all-right in the small room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of camaraderie</td>
<td>High: Sharing stories, showing compassion while discussing their problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of Social support</td>
<td>High: I learned that apart from Rubina, all her friends and her family members helped her to organize the party. One of her friend who is also the instructor from the singing class brought the cake for the party while others came from far to be with their friend at this special event. Two of her friends arrived a little late as they had other engagements that day, but she told me that they would never miss Rubina’s birthday for anything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constraints</td>
<td>Rubina did not seem to experience any constraints during this event as it was taking place at her own house surrounded by the people who are close to her. She seemed to feel more secured than constrained. But one of her friends from the foundation did not manage to attend her party as she did not have anyone who lived near her place to drop her off after the party. Rubina was missing her.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Figure 3.2 Sample Field Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saturday, May 2004</th>
<th>Observation: Singing Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time 3:00 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the second class I am attending. Ms. N, arranged the class to be held at her house as the previous venue needed to be shifted to make the class more accessible to the survivors. Today, 10 survivors from the “Prothom Sur” are present apart from the two singing instructors and the 7 years old acid attacked girl along with her mother.

The room is 14 X 17 Sq feet. It is furnished by two comfortable couches, three chairs and a coffee table. The instructors and the girls sat on the floor on the carpet with the musical instruments and their notebooks in which the songs are written. As soon as I entered everyone welcomed me as an old friend and was introduced to Ms. N who had been a prominent social activist. Everyone was served with tea and cakes and I learned that today they are going to celebrate the wedding of one of the survivors. A dinner party and a musical night were planned for the evening. We all waited for the arrival of the newlyweds and finally after an hour they arrived. Everyone was singing welcoming songs when they entered and the newlyweds were surprised as well as emotional as they were only aware of a get together program in which the girl planned to introduce her husband to all.

### Analysis of data

Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. The challenge for this qualitative analysis was to make sense of the massive amount of data generated through interviews and observations during my field visits. This required reducing the volume of raw information attained from the interviews and observations into identifiable significant patterns and
constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal (Patton, 1990). Based on Kumar’s (2005) approach to analyze qualitative data, I followed a process similar to content analysis that involved coding techniques. This meant analyzing the content of the interview or observation in order to identify the main themes emerging from the responses of the participants of the study. The following steps provide an overview on how the overall analysis took place to make sense of all the data that were collected in the field.

Step 1: Transcription.

The text data that included verbatim transcription from the interviews and field notes from observations during site visits were transcribed and analyzed line-by-line to identify and formulate all general ideas, themes and issues. Agar (1996) stated that “Transcription is a chore” (p. 153) as the process demands many long hours to perform the task effectively. While transcribing the interviews, I left large margins to the right to allow ample room to code the printed text. Although transcribing is often seen as a behind-the-scenes task, I do agree with Oliver, et al. (2005) that transcription can be a powerful act of representation if done accurately.

Step 2: Generating Initial Themes.

After going through the rigorous process of transcribing, I went over every word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph to elicit “the what” that was told by the respondents. Condensation of what the participant said took place using the literal words of the participant as much as possible. I choose to hand-code the printed text and inserted line numbers beside each line with the aid of Microsoft Word Software. In such lines, I entertained all emerging concepts and themes as
much as possible. While some of the themes were generated and identified by the survivors themselves during the interviews, others were connected to the ideas discussed under literature review. The themes or concepts were color coded under specific categories for better visual identification. For example, the statements that indicated barriers, drawbacks or constraints were colored in red, while sentences reflecting different type of support were in purple. The codes therefore were based on the various categories encompassing social and personal contexts, experiences, social supports, events specific activities, relationships) that were significant to the study. Figure 3.3 provides an example from one of the analyzed transcripts that displays the different color for categorizing the emerging themes.

**Figure 3.3: Sample of Coded Transcript**

**Int:** When were you brought to Dhaka?

**Runa:** After I had the accident, I was brought to Dhaka. I came here for treatment purpose as Khustia lacked advanced medical facilities. Initially, the people of Naripokkho which is another NGO that work for girls like us helped me. Afterwards, I was transferred to Acid Survivors Foundation. At ASF everyone from the administration to other acid attack survivors who were there for treatment or counseling were very nice and friendly towards me. I also got a job here. This is my first job *(Smile).*
A similar process was followed for the large amount of unstructured data that were attained from interviews and field notes. This information was then categorized based on the different emerging themes and ideas. Careful reading of the text data more than once was crucial during the early step of my analysis, as it allowed me to become familiar with the overall experiences of each woman and thus identify interesting patterns. This step was also advocated by various ethnographic researchers (e.g., Hammerseley & Atkinson, 1995; Kumar, 2005).

**Step 3: Delineating units of meaning/focused themes relevant to research question.**

In the third step, I emphasized generating themes that were pertinent to find the answers to the research questions of the study. A codebook was developed after reading through two interviews that seemed to subsume most categories to answer the research questions. Rather than emphasizing every possible emerging theme from the study, Patton (1990) and Kumar (2005) suggested to keep the focus on specific related themes, avoiding the situation in which more differentiation in segments can result to loss of important contextual information. As I was personally involved in transcribing the interviews (instead of having them done by a transcriber) and was already familiar with the key concept and interest of my discipline through my extended involvement, I was quickly able to identify the data that were relevant to the purpose of the study and therefore reflected the different aspect of the research questions.

The development of the codebook was supported by different leisure related theories (Hutchinson. et. al. 2002; Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These themes were used as a tool rather than forming the focus of this research. The preliminary field work
study assisted the process of developing the themes that were not addressed within the premises of prominent leisure-related theories. For example, apart from the popular constructs on leisure constraints that was discussed in the theory of hierarchical leisure constraints (Crawford, Jackson & Godbey, 1991), the interviews brought out the influence of culture on leisure participation, which led me to explore further into the ideas of culture as a leisure constraint. This led me to rethink and incorporate the category cultural constraint as a major constraint in the main study, which was later explored in detail based on the ideas developed by Chick and Dong (2005) in their study of culture as a constraint to leisure.

The codebook therefore became a guiding tool for me in which I compiled significant themes based on the combination of predetermined (relevant literature and the preliminary fieldwork study) and emerging codes. The codebook was composed with the names of the codes in one column while stating a brief description in the second. A segment from the codebook that addresses the types of activities under leisure is illustrated in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Sample Segment of the Codebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leisure related Activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Activities</td>
<td>Activities participated solely by individuals. Example reading books,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>listening to music, writing, watching movies at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Activities</td>
<td>Activities that involves peers, friends and family member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalized activities</td>
<td>Leisure related activities organized by institutions or organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual leisure activities</td>
<td>Activities during leisure to enhance spiritual wellbeing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The codebook provided a guide to identify the statements that could be labeled under the specific codes to serve the purpose of the study. Table 3.4 provides insight on the statements from interviews that were recorded under each code for the ease of interpreting. Besides using the contact sheet and quick notes to record information for identifiable codes, I also made an effort to write down the key areas with the help of Table 3.5 that addressed the major research questions of the study. This process helped me to recollect my thought and directed me towards getting a better understanding of the vast amount of information. Afterwards, I again went over the table while transcribing the interviews to recheck what I have missed. Table 3.4 thus guided my development of the relevant codes for the overall study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>TYPES</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Related Activities</td>
<td>1.2 Individual Activities</td>
<td>Reading books, listening to music, watching movies: &quot;Actually, most of the time I do not enjoy leisure time that much mainly because I feel depressed when I do not have anything to do. But, I do enjoy listening to different type of music and also watch Hindi movies&quot; praying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 Social Activities</td>
<td>Spending time with friends, shopping with friends, going out with family and friends: &quot;I love it when Asma is also with us. Without her I wouldn’t have felt happy to go to those places. Time spent with Kins:&quot;Last year I spent the Eid here at ASF but this year I went to my sister’s place in Mirpur. We had nice food and my sister brought me a new dress. We watched TV and had a nice time with my nieces and nephew. &quot;Most of the time we stay at ASF and spend time talking or watch movies. It is good that we all stay together. It helps us to forget our loneliness and we feel we have someone with whom we can share our stories and who understand us. Companion’s Assistance in leisure: &quot;Actually, Asma read it to me as I am not a very good reader. &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4 Institutionalized activities</td>
<td>Organized leisure programs for Acid Attack Survivors’ Picnics, musical programs, attending theaters, cultural events during special occasions like women’s day, Independence day. &quot;ASF often arranges to take us to different places. Recently the sisters from ASF took us to the amusement park. They try to arrange these types of outings at every alternative month. Last week ASF took us to British Council to watch a drama. We all look forward to these trips in which we get to have a lot of fun together.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.5 Other things that bring joy and meaning in life</td>
<td>Work: &quot;While working, I do not think about depressing things in life and forget to see myself as an AA victim. I feel normal again and find reason to live&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>Sub-questions</td>
<td>Tahmina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How do the girls and women who survived the experience of acid attack</td>
<td>a. What are the most challenging aspects of their lives?</td>
<td>Overcoming the fear of men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perceive their current lives?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reintegrating into the society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To feel secured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interest in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To achieve a sense of independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning to live away from family and familiar environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusting life with disfigurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. How have their lives changed?</td>
<td>Forming new circle of friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Being employed for the first time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marriage is no more in the center to her life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Change in life views)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Became extrovert and carefree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wants to live for a cause which is now helping other survivors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. What things the survivors of acid attack believe to have helped or</td>
<td>Social Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>continuing to help them reconstruct their lives after the attack?</td>
<td>Institutional support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Financial Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Being involved in activities to help other victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning skills that gave her hope to pursuing her dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop strong Religious faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Where do they see themselves in the future?</td>
<td>Financially independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Start a boutique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More involved in advocacy and other philanthropic activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuation of Table 3.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Sub-questions</th>
<th>Tahmina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. How is leisure experienced by the female victims of acid attack?</td>
<td>a. Do the girls and women perceive themselves having leisure in their life? If yes, what and how do they experience leisure?</td>
<td>Yes she did perceive having leisure. Indoor activities like reading, watching movies or Television, talking with friends either in the phone or at her place. Social activities like attending different events, social events like birthday parties. Attending the singing class, going out with the friends from ASF. Helping others by giving mental support through conversation. Relaxing and sometime praying. Travelling During leisure she felt relaxed, happy, enthusiastic, stress free, involved, satisfying, a sense of belonging, becoming optimistic towards life, finding meaning to live, becoming more spiritual, confident, experience positive attitude, feel normal and free from obligation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. What kind of constraint, if any, are they experiencing during leisure participation of their choice?</td>
<td>Structural constraint like financial constraint, lack of security to travel, lack of facilities Cultural constraint- Staying out at night with friends, having male friends Travelling alone to places by herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. How are the constraints negotiated to increase their participation in leisure activities and benefiting the survivors after the acid attack?</td>
<td>Staying positive, accepting the existing constraints as cultural norms, avoid participating in certain leisure activities. Participating in accessible activities and easily available, modifying the frequency and the type of participation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major categories were thus developed while organizing the data at the initial step of the analysis. The task was focused on coming up with themes or categories that were central to my research questions and the overall purpose of the study. This next step included examining the initial themes and condensing them to meaningful focused themes. Figure 3.4 provides an example of my coding process in the development of themes.

During the process of reading the transcripts and field notes, I began to look for recurring regularities in the data. For example, I found that almost all participants reported social leisure activities with other survivors to be an important aspect of their lives that allowed them to release their stress and feel connected. This pattern therefore was categorized and labeled as social-leisure with acid attack survivors. These responses addressed the different facets of the second research question. Dissimilarity among the interviewees within the key areas was also recorded. Therefore, the overall analysis followed a funnel structure that was progressively focused on categories that met the need of the study and found out the experiences that were significant to reconstruct the lives of the acid attack survivors.
(Smile). Yes I do write during my free time. I love writing as it helps me to express what I have inside without any interference. I often write stories, articles for the local newspapers. They were published regularly. But recently I became so busy with work that I do not get much time to write. So…. although I do write, but not so frequently. Also you need that mood for writing. If I do not have that mood, I just cannot write anything. I become so tired after going home that instead of having that mood, I keep on thinking about when will I cook, or take some rest. So those tensions are keeping me away from writing.
Step 4: Integrate Themes and Responses to the Text of the Final Report.

To explicate the gathered information and to communicate the meaning from the processed data, I started to incorporate the extracts from the transcriptions corresponding to the categories that addressed the research questions. Two discussion chapters are dedicated to the survivors’ responses to the research questions. After identifying responses that fell under different themes, I sorted the different themes to construct two chapters that reflect the research questions. I counted how frequently the themes occurred during the interviews and also provided a few samples of the responses throughout all of the chapters. Isolated responses and codes that were unusual were also reported.

Judging a Qualitative Study

According to Lecompte and Goetz (1982), ethnographic research differs from positivistic research due to the nature of recording subjective experiences of both participants and investigator. Lecompte and Goetz (1982) also found an ethnographic research approach to provide more in-depth understanding of phenomena that is lacking in other types of research methods. The nature of this study, which is focused on understanding the significance of leisure in lives of the acid survivors after the tragic incident, also depicts subjective experience. Therefore, it required addressing the factors of validity and reliability differently from research that might be based on experimental design or other forms of quantitative data collection.

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), a qualitative study should be more concerned with precision, credibility and transferability rather than the issue of replicability. The lives and the experiences of the acid survivors are their very own and may not be generalized to different
populations. This approach is further justified below. In general, ‘validity’ refers to truth, the extent to which an account accurately represents the phenomena, while ‘reliability’ ensures the consistency of measurement (Hammerseley, 1992).

Traditionally, skepticism existed when it comes to the issue of validity and reliability in qualitative methods. Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that promotes understanding phenomena in a context-specific setting in the real world (Patton, 2002). This is why qualitative researchers seek illumination, understanding and extrapolation to situations instead of seeking causal determination, prediction and generalization of findings (Hoeflf, 1997). The nature of the study according to Seale (1999) therefore demands “trustworthiness” in which the heart of issues discussed in validity and reliability lies (p. 266). Since reliability is concerned with consistency in measurement (Stenbacka, 2001) there may be no relevance to this issue in a qualitative study like this one in which components of measurement (characteristics of the researcher, settings of interviews and observation, etc.) may and will vary overtime. Besides consistency in measurement, reliability in quantitative approach usually refer to results of the study being replicable if same measurement techniques are applied on similar type of population (Golafshani, 2003). For a qualitative study, reproduction of the same result cannot be ensured as the setting, situations, and characteristics of both the participants and the researcher cannot be duplicated. For example, an observation opportunity emerged for me when I was invited to an informal wedding reception for one of the survivors and therefore, the event, the people at the event, and their interactions can never be controlled or replicated for another study even with similar research questions.
Research on real world scenarios, therefore, is subject to change and this is why the issue of reliability was not significant for this particular study that encompassed various external forces beyond a researcher’s control. Regarding the researcher, who is one of the major instruments of measurement in a qualitative study, Lecompte and Goetz (1982) pointed out that the ethnographic process is personalized and no ethnographer can work just like any other. This is why they emphasized on the importance of incorporating personal reflection in a qualitative study in which the researcher attempts to express her/his own feelings, biases, and personal reactions to the study.

I also believed it was necessary to provide readers with an idea on how the research process was conducted since the stages of idea generation. Along this line, Marshall & Rossman, (1999) also supported the notion of reporting in-depth description that shows the complexities of the process and interactions occurring within the parameters of the setting, population and theoretical background and found it to be one of the strengthening factors in a qualitative study. Therefore, to indicate the strength of the study based on the level of my overall involvement, a chapter (Chapter 4) on my personal reflection was added to report the detailed picture on the in-depth journey of how the study materialized from the very beginning.

The literature on qualitative methods and my personal judgments thus guided me to portray the idea of reliability and validity in Table 3.7, which focused on four criteria to ensure trustworthiness of the qualitative study. The four alternative constructs to conventional paradigms (internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity) discussed were credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Each criterion is also discussed in detail to evaluate the overall quality of the study.
## Table 3.6: Criteria of Trustworthiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Criteria to be met in the study through:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Credibility** | - Training in qualitative research methods.  
                    - Extended engagement in the field:  
                      • Undertaking a pilot project prior to the main study. Involved in extensive interviews and observation during the research that ensured familiarity with the phenomenon and the setting.  
                      • Native language speaking investigator provided an advantageous position to gain trust from the participants  
                    - Variety of Data Types: interviews, field notes, observation, documents, and member checks:  
                      • Informal discussions of findings with the participants, interviewing individuals who are close to the survivors.                                                                                           |
| **Transferability** | Detailed description of structures and processes related to acculturation revealed by the data. Researcher’s reflection was recorded and reported during the study.  
                             Triangulation of data                                                                                                                                   |
| **Dependability** | Self-reflection was illustrated through personal memos and field notes, which was reported through Chapter 4.  
                             Participants’ confidentiality was protected.  
                             Transcriptions done by the researcher                                                                                                                          |
| **Conformability** | Meticulous data management and recording:  
                             • Verbatim transcription of interviews.  
                             • Peer Debriefing  
                             • Conscientious field notes  
                             • Clear memos on theoretical, methodological and personal decisions.  
                             • Exact records of contacts, interviews and other meetings with the participants and the counterparts.  
                             • Researcher’s strong conceptual interest  

Credibility.

Credibility is analogous to internal validity (Goetz & LeCompte, 1982) and is established through systematic identification and examination of all causal and consequential factors of the study. Guba and Lincoln (1981) proposed this criterion as an assessment of the believability of the research findings from the perspectives of the different actors of the study. Besides adding a chapter that records my personal reflection of the insights, biases and experiences during the research process, several other tactics were applied to ensure the study’s credibility. These tactics include the researcher’s qualifications, in-depth discussion and prolonged engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and member checking. The strategies to ensure overall trustworthiness of this study thus is further discussed below.

*Researcher’s qualification as an instrument.* Credibility in qualitative research largely depends on the ability and the effort of the researcher (Golafshani, 2003). Patton (2001) also emphasized the importance of the researcher in ensuring credibility in a qualitative research as he saw the researcher as the instrument. Embracing the role of a responsible and detailed researcher in my study, I took two qualitative research methods courses that introduced me to the different types and process of qualitative methods along with the knowledge to interpret collected data. To gain more knowledge about conducting qualitative research and to develop my skills, I also took the initiative to conduct a preliminary fieldwork study on the victims of acid attack two years prior to the actual study. The pilot research helped me gain momentum as a researcher as I was able to improve the shortfalls that I experienced in the early stage of the actual research. The preliminary field work also allowed me to get acquainted with some of the participants and assisted me to develop my skill as an effective interviewer. Apart from the preliminary field work, I also worked for the Prevention Research Center of the School of Health and Human
Development at Penn State as a coder to interpret audio and video recording for a qualitative study that analyzed the impact of family interaction. This opportunity allowed me to obtain the skills as a coder under the supervision of an experienced qualitative researcher.

Lecompte and Goetz (1982) found factors like age, gender, social class and professional identity of the researcher to have impact on the credibility of the research. In my case, being a Bangladeshi woman in her late twenties, speaking the native language, and befriended by one of the survivors’ closest friends helped me to overcome the initial distance between the interviewer and interviewee. The importance of gender of the researcher has been emphasized by feminist researchers (Phoneix, 1995; Wiremen, 1998) who expressed no doubt that this factor can shape research findings significantly. According to Honigmann (1970), age also has been observed to be important as it can either alienate or help one to befriend the participants. As most of the participants of this study were in their twenties, they felt comfortable to communicate with me (myself a young woman) and were not hesitant to discuss different aspects of their lives with me knowing that I could identify with their experiences. For example, they felt comfortable to talk about their choices of music, movies and books. In addition, they shared stories of their relationships with me as they perceived me as sharing the same interests and experiences due to my age and ethnicity.

Prolonged and varied field experiences. Understandably, an easy-going relationship of trust cannot be established in only one interview, but requires extended engagement in the field. The preliminary field work that was carried out prior to the final data collection facilitated my ability to build a close relationship with most of the participants. Frequent visits to Bangladesh for a significant amount of time helped me to gain the participants’ trust and understanding. Our
relationships developed further as I became very open to answering any questions they had regarding me. This idea had been supported by Phoenix (1995) who stated that establishing friendly relations and giving information about oneself by answering questions to the respondents can create an easy intimacy that can be felt as less exploitative and more equally balanced in power terms. My connection to the acid attack survivors did not recede while I was away as some of the survivors frequently emailed me or wrote letters about their wellbeing. As evidence of my relationships with the respondents, during the visits, I was also invited to some of their homes and to different events that were meaningful to them. These visits ensured further familiarization with the phenomenon and the setting and also gave me an opportunity to observe the survivors beyond the interview setting. This opportunity to observe the young women in real world settings supported what they were stating in the interviews.

Assuming the position of neutrality may not always be effective for all type of research. Detachment can destroy rapport and cause informants to infer indifference (Wax, 1971). Many of the informants explained how they felt when one researcher acted very friendly during the interviews but stopped communicating with them once the interviews were over. This attitude left them feeling exploited and even some of them developed strong resentment towards the researcher. Opposite to that experience, my close connection with the respondents for a long period of time allowed them to build faith and trust in me and thus motivated them to provide in-depth factual information ensuring the quality of the data. In many situations, the girls and women also asked for advice and suggestions that turned out to build a strong rapport between me and the respondents.
**Member Checking.** According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), researchers can cross check their work through member checking. Member checking also helps to equalize power relationships between the interviewer and the interviewee and therefore should be a part in the interview process to ensure validity of the researcher’s interpretations (Carsepecken, 1996). Therefore, taking the data and the tentative interpretation back to the informants ensures that the data collected are representing them and their ideas accurately (Glesne, 1999). In my study, I was able to use this technique for three acid attack survivors. After each interview, I asked all participants whether they would want me to replay the taped interviews for them in which I could also clarify my understandings on the issues and topic addressed during the interviews. Although three survivors wanted to hear their interviews, most of the participants declined the offer mainly due to lack of time and interest to hear themselves talk. Moreover, most of them indicated they had faith on my ability to understand what they were talking about even though I requested them for the extra session.

One of the survivors who agreed to listen to her taped interviews wanted to schedule a different date from the day of the actual interviewing. The other two survivors allowed playing the tape as soon as the interviews were over. This arrangement was also convenient for me to as I was able to revisit some statements which I had trouble comprehending due to their slightly different dialect from the usual spoken Bengali. The half an hour taped interviews during those extended sessions were played to the participants and we discussed the interpretation of the interviews for an extra forty five minutes. During this time, the participants were encouraged to comment on the material.
In addition to discussing the taped interviews and interpretations to the three survivors, I was also able to read transcriptions of interviews to five survivors two months after the actual interviews. These sessions took place either through a telephone call or personally when I met them during their singing classes. The third session with one of the survivors lasted for an hour and half with two breaks as her actual interview was for an hour. Afterward I asked whether she would like to add or change any viewpoints from the interview. The only thing she added was that the tape helped her to gain more insight on the different aspects of her life that are significant to her.

**Interview Technique.** Kirk and Miller (1986) emphasized the need to ask the right questions during interviews. According to them, asking the wrong question actually is the source of most validity errors. For my study, the preliminary fieldwork and an extended visit during a summer guided me to identify the areas that needed to be addressed. The visits also prepared me as a compassionate interviewer who had a better understanding of the respondents’ nature, the place they are came from and other current social and psychological conditions experienced by them. Oakley (1999) realized that interviewing is not simply a conversation; rather it is a pseudo conversation. In order to be successful, she emphasized the need for all the warmth and personality exchange of a conversation with clarity and guideline of scientific research. Phoenix (1995) advocated the importance of building rapport during interview sessions that can encourage respondents to be forthcoming and hence have positive outcome on the quality of data collected. The frequent visits and familiarization with most of the acid attack survivors prior to the interview session led me to build the rapport and thus created a comfort zone for girls and women in who became very open in sharing their thoughts and ideas. The non-hierarchical
relationship between the interviewer and interviewee also assisted to overcome all the inhibitions and facilitated the girls and women to give detailed description on their experiences.

Transferability.

Transferability refers to the degree that findings can be transferred or generalized to other settings, contexts or populations (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). This concept is similar to the idea of external validity that involves generalizing a study’s result to a population believed to be sufficiently similar to the first study. But in qualitative research, generalizing findings is contradictory, as was discussed earlier, and often problematic (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Various strategic choices can be undertaken to enhance a study’s generalizability in a qualitative study. Triangulating multiple sources of data that may include a nominated sample for the study (Wolcott, 1990) and recording dense or thick description can draw the parameters for the readers to make the decision on whether or not to make the transfer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Nominated sample. In the present study, based on the research goal and research questions, a purposeful sampling technique was followed to choose informants who were identified and who met the conditions of this study. For example, the selected sample was aware, informative, and able to articulate their stories and experiences and understood their situations. For this reason, transferability of the findings can be reasonably expected due to the quality of the informants and sample.

Provide thick description. Being a qualitative researcher, I was required to provide a clear idea and expression of parameters and description in which the study was unfolding (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Besides mentioning the drawbacks while conducting
the research, I also made detailed notes describing the places, informants, events and interactions that occurred with the respondents.

I also added short descriptions and a few stories in both Chapters 5 and 6. The reflection chapter also allows the reader to understand relationships and biases of both the participants and the researcher. Therefore, threats to reliability posed by informant bias are handled most commonly by careful description of those who provided the data. All records were thus accurately maintained in the form of detailed notes from observation and interviews. Repeated listening to tapes of interviews with the respondents also helped me to be more thorough and it helped me to write down the detailed description.

**Triangulation.** Another useful form of checking validity of the research is through triangulation. During the process of data collection or analysis different data sources can confirm one another, or illuminate discrepancies, through triangulation (Lecompte & Goetz, 1982). Field notes can have some level of distortion as one cannot always rely on his or her memory. But the collected audio recordings are usually more accurate and fuller than field notes.

Different data collection methods like on-site spontaneous observations, interviews with friends and associates of the participants, and three reflected letters written by the survivors of acid attack to me corroborated with the interviews and contributed to enhance validity of the research. During the research process, combinations of observation, interviewing and field notes assisted in revealing different aspects of empirical reality that could not have been obtained through one source only (Patton, 2002). Therefore, triangulations of different sources ensure consistency among the findings and can also identify the existence of any discrepancies.
Dependability.

Dependability is analogous to the concept of reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) which means that the findings of the research remain consistent under similar circumstances. According to Marshall and Rossman (1998), the researcher usually keeps all accounts for changing conditions of the phenomenon that is being studied to ensure the dependability of the research. In the field of social science and especially with ethnographic studies, the practice of ensuring reliability or replication can present a problem (Hammerseley, 1998). The concept of replicability therefore is not a major concern in a qualitative research but the idea of dependability on the other hand can be included to emphasize the researcher’s account on the ever changing context in which the research occurs.

Dependability can be enhanced by altering the research design as new findings emerge during data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The research design for this study also experienced alteration after I completed my preliminary fieldwork and found the study demanded an ethnographic angle instead of carrying on with the initial idea of grounded theory approach. I made this decision consulting with my chair and committee members who also realized the need to reconstruct the study’s research questions and design.

Conformability.

Conformability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Following are some strategies that were applied to address the issue of conformability for this study.
**Documentation of procedures.** I kept documents recording detailed information on how I gained entry into the respondents’ world, and also recorded my insights to demonstrate my understanding of the social world in which the study was taking place. Besides keeping detailed field notes on my experiences with the interviews, observation and site visits, I also included verbatim transcriptions of the informal interviews with few changes to remove grammatical errors. Contact sheets with information on exact time, date, place and key points were jotted down immediately after each interview to complement the field notes.

**Peer debriefing.** During the coding process, peer examination was employed in which two graduate students from different disciplines were invited to code five transcripts and their suggested codes were later matched to the codes assigned by the principal investigator. As the coders were not familiar with the background of my study, the codes were non-biased and represented the actual reflection of general perception. The few codes that were viewed differently were then discussed and coded according to everyone’s agreement. For example, I termed the statements in which respondents identified their leisure time being spent with family members as social leisure activities while one of the coder identified it with activities involved with families. Also some constraints that I identified as intrapersonal constraints were termed as “activity against traditional values,” which we all agreed to term as cultural constraint.

**Reflections and corroborations.** Because I personally collected and then transcribed the observational field notes, interviews and memos, I was more confident in the accuracy of the gathered data than I would have if the data was collected by other individuals. Personal reflections on biases, insights during the data collection were recorded and reported in chapter four to develop the understanding on how the study unfolded in the specific context. Besides
interviewing the participants; interviews with the friends and associates of the survivors, reflected letters written by few survivors of acid attack and newspaper articles helped to corroborate with my personal notes to enhance the trustworthiness of the study.
Chapter 4

Personal Reflection

Before I start reflecting on my experience as a researcher, a description of the process of conducting research on female acid attack survivors of Bangladesh is provided. Every step of the process during this study played a vital opportunity for obtaining information on the lived experiences of the survivors. The vast amount of information obtained during the span of three years could easily generate a number of papers; here I have focused on answering the research questions as previously stated. Initially, I did not think about including a chapter reflecting my experience as I drafted the outline for my dissertation based on the traditional five chapters layout. After many informal discussions with my committee members regarding my experiences in the field, everyone agreed that the experiences gathered during the process of data collection can be a valuable addition to my dissertation. I myself realized that the learning experiences and my thought process during the field work can enrich my dissertation as it sheds light on how the methods and understanding evolved while conducting this ethnographic study. Therefore, the following sections hopefully will provide the reader with information on how my role as a researcher was perceived and how my actions were influenced while conducting the study with a sensitive group of individuals like the victims of violence.

During the first stages of my study, I found out that, although I shared similar ethnicity and gender with the acid attack survivors, our life experiences and the social context of our lives were not at the same. This is why I was not in a position to generalize the views of the survivors’ lives with every girl and women from Bangladesh. I had to approach the study viewing it as an exploration of different subculture within the broader backdrop of Bangladeshi
inception. Table 4.1 provides an outline of the research schedule undertaken by me during the field visits which took place within the span of 3 years.

Table 4.1 The Schedule of Research Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Establishing Initial Contact and Conducting Preliminary Fieldwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Contacting and Selecting the Core Group of Respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Final Interviewing with the Core Group of Respondents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Inception

My first step in choosing a dissertation topic started with the decision to conduct preliminary fieldwork on the acid attack victims of Bangladesh. I became interested in understanding the lives of the acid attack victims while working in a project with UNICEF Bangladesh that involved young Bangladeshis from all segments of social and financial background. During that program, I was introduced to a wonderful and lively person who had been a victim of acid attack. The 16 year old girl Tina, despite suffering from severe disfigurement from the acid attack, exuded optimism and showed strong conviction to make a difference by sharing her life story. Since that time, I wanted to know her better, and wanted to understand more about the courageous girls and women who were moving forward with their lives despite experiencing a traumatic life event like acid attack.
The young girl’s conviction to make something out of her life lingered in my thoughts and made me think more about the lives of the girls and women who were victims of acid attack. Trying to live a normal life after such a tragedy was still not comprehensible to me when I tried to picture myself in their shoes. I wanted to know more about their lives and how they strived to find a normal life after the tragedy. In 2003, after discussing the topic with my supervisor, I took the initiative to contact Acid Survivors Foundation for conducting a preliminary fieldwork in Bangladesh.

**Gaining Entry**

My initial request for conducting a study at the Acid Survivors Foundation was thwarted in the beginning as the Director had some reservation permitting individuals from foreign universities to conduct interviews with the survivors. He was hesitant to allow a representative from a North American university conduct research on the vulnerable group of acid attack victims. Earlier the foundation had some negative experiences with North American researchers. These researchers misinterpreted the stories and portrayed all Bangladeshi men as conceited, uneducated and prone to violence against women. This negative portrayal of Bangladeshi men later created problems for the organization in receiving foreign funding. As I did not want to give up so easily, my second email correspondence with the director consisted a brief introduction in which I introduced myself clearly as a Bangladeshi female student who is studying at Penn State. I emphasized and elaborated my previous connection and work experience with one of the acid attack survivors and ensured him that being a Bangladeshi would provide me with clearer perspectives on the lives of the acid survivors. After going through my research proposal, CV and email, the director agreed to see me in person during my visit to Bangladesh in the summer
of 2004. With anticipation and eagerness to avail a chance to start my research, I embarked on my journey to Bangladesh. During that meeting, I was able to make my intentions clear. We had a long productive session in which, the director explained the role of the foundation in treatment and rehabilitation. I was introduced to two acid attacked victims who were working at ASF as counselors. It was brought to my knowledge that many acid attack survivors were interested to learn computers but had very little scope to do so as ASF did not have the financial ability to support them with a computer training class. This gave me an idea to search for opportunities to find computers for the survivors through which they could acquire a new skill. After contacting a few firms, I was able find a philanthropic private computer firm who was more than willing to donate fifteen computers to ASF and was also generous enough to provide a trainer twice a week in exchange for press coverage.

This initiative was warmly appreciated by both the management and the survivors. My heart was filled with happiness from seeing the smiles in the faces of the survivors who were eager to take computer lessons. Observing this initiative, the director’s suspicion on my interest was removed and finally; he consented to my conducting the interviews at the Acid Survivors Foundation’s premises. Beside the consent, he also informed all the stuff members of ASF to provide any kind of assistance that I would require supporting my research. Being a researcher in the field, it became clear to me that my research could not be completed without the support and assistance from the foundation. Therefore, this small initiative from my side helped me immensely to get entry into ASF, the leading organization that has the most resources on information regarding acid attack victims. Not only the director but also the staff members and other survivors warmly accepted me and were willing to help me in all capacities. They all
realized that my motive was not to exploit them but gain knowledge on some positive insights on a significant aspect of the lives of acid attack survivors, an aspect which had not been researched previously.

Later during my research, I came to know that the previous researchers and journalists who interviewed the survivors sensationalized their stories emphasizing on how the incident happened and the misery. Rarely did anyone want to publish anything focused on their courage and their lives after the attack. Most of the survivors were weary of repeatedly telling the same stories of their misery to different researchers and found the interviewing sessions pointless as they were not able to see any positive outcome coming out from them. That is why, after explaining my research, many survivors voluntarily gave their consent to take part in the study as they found the research to be meaningful and had a different goal. Knowing Tina also gave me further leverage on gaining the respondents’ trust as most of the survivors had faith in her opinion and respected her as a strong positive role model.

**Preliminary Field Work**

After submitting the IRB application and receiving the final approval, I had very little time left to conduct the interviews in the way I planned. I had to complete the impossible task of conducting fifteen interviews in less than twenty days, as I was worried about ensuring the quality of the interviews that would take place in such a short span of time. Nevertheless, with some reservations and worry, I prepared myself to start the interviewing process.
Although I planned to conduct fifteen interviews, I lost two interviewees who had to leave Dhaka to attend court hearings against their violators. This experience taught me about the uncertainties that I might expect in the field as a researcher and therefore made me aware of having back-up plans when unexpected circumstances occur. Finally, the anticipated day of my first interview arrived where I was prepared to conduct the interview being armed with a questionnaire and tape-recorder. Despite some worries on my capacities to deal with severe emotions from both the interviewee and myself, I was somewhat mentally ready to conduct a qualitative study feeling well equipped with all the qualitative courses taken during the course load of my Ph.D program. Although these courses provided me with the tools to undertake interviews effectively, nothing could prepare me more from gaining the insights that I was able to find by entering the field.

The purpose of my preliminary field work was to find out how leisure time is utilized by the survivors and to find out whether the activities helped them to cope better after the tragic incident. Although, information on how the attacks happen and all the data on the total numbers of acid attack in Bangladesh were easily available, I found inadequate number of literature on the life experiences of the acid attack survivors. Being a student of leisure studies and having a scholarly need to know more about the lives of the girls and women in terms of leisure, at first, I developed my research questions guided by leisure related coping theories. These questions revealed some specific information related to existing theories, however, the theories did not help me to understand how leisure is embedded in their culture. As these theories were all developed by Western researchers within the Western context, they also tend to guide the interview in a way in which the interviewee might lose her forthcoming attitude. Even though I
felt that these theories can be universally applicable, later I realized that it was not the case. This is why my findings from my preliminary field work led me to change the focus of the study from understanding coping to getting in-depth of understanding overall leisure experience of the survivors.

In spite of these shortcomings, I was able to develop the research and interview questions that reflected some demographic questions and questions that were based on the existing leisure related coping theories. At my first interview, I realized my limitation for following a paper filled with impersonal questions. I was prepared and memorized all the questions that I planned to ask, but I could feel that the questions were not answered with spontaneity and warmth. Also, I found out that the semi-structured questions were not able to subsume all aspects of the survivors’ lives and therefore, limited the young women from telling the stories of their lives in their own way which, I was sure, can be of great importance for the study. During the interviews, I became uncomfortable for asking leisure related questions to the survivor who experienced the most horrifying tragedy of her life. Although I explained the objective of my research initially, but still something was bothering me where I felt a need to explore more about the lives of the survivors first. Along that line of thinking, realization struck me for redesigning the study in which the aspect of leisure in their lives should be tackled from a different angle. Instead of asking cut and dry questions on how she spend her leisure time and how it is helping her to cope better, a need to find out the depth and existence of leisure within the context of their lives seemed to be a better approach.
Relational dynamics between researcher and the research population.

Learning from my first mistake, I decided to continue with my preliminary field work based on the pre-constructed research questions, but took the initiative to adjust my role as a researcher. To initiate a successful ethnographic research, many researches require that the cultural, social and emotional position of both the researcher and the target group be taken into account.

I was aware of the personal and social differences before entering the field and accepted the fact that I might not have an easy access to their world without understanding their surroundings adequately. This is why I initiated a process to know them better before I started with my actual interviews. From the few experiences I had while meeting the survivors in different settings, the significance of interpersonal dynamics between the researcher and the interviewee became much clearer to me. I had no doubt that a productive and meaningful outcome of the study largely depended on the emotional dynamics between the interviewees and me. Therefore, it was important to present myself as a Bangladeshi to the survivors as that allowed the young women and the girls to feel a sense of comfort even when I was a complete stranger to most of them. Along this line, the collective cultural makeup of Bangladeshis encouraged the survivors to communicate with me as a friend on their issues that had positively or negatively impacted their lives. Based on this understanding, I tried to eliminate the threat of being a detached and neutral interviewer who can exude the power difference within the researcher and interviewee relationship. Keeping this in mind, I initiated conversation with the interviewees on general issues that helped me to break the ice and include the survivors into a flow of conversation dealing with daily life issues, politics and weather. I also encouraged the
survivors to ask questions allowing them a scope to know me better and start trusting me with my intentions.

The first step to initiate data collection during the interview started with an introductory session followed by the respondent asking me questions about me on my locality, family and daily life. These were very typical questions for one Bangladeshi to ask another when they meet for the first time. During this type of conversation, everyone expects the name of the paternal ancestral resident that often led to forming relational connections. I also asked the same question to each interviewee and wanted to know more about their hometown. With this question, I could immediately observe how animated they became while describing their ancestral home, and I myself started a conversation on the different parts of Bangladesh. This free flowing conversation removed the tension and allowed the interviewee to relate to me as a Bangladeshi woman. According to Oaklay (1999), the goal of finding out about people through interview is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship. Based on this understanding, I tried my best to follow my instinct and common sense to lay the basic foundation for the interviews in which I also opened myself to the survivors answering their queries without any reservation. The girls and women were interested to know where I lived, studied, my experiences abroad and about my life at a personal level. In Bangladeshi culture it is not rude to ask someone about their family and marital status. Therefore, I happily talked to them about myself and shared thoughts about different aspects of life which helped me to become more human to them instead of being just an unattached researcher. They appreciated this candidness that helped them to be forthcoming and comfortable in my presence.
Slowly, I felt that I was able to create a non-threatening environment during the interviews where the interviewees seemed to enjoy talking to one another irrespective of their differences. Some of the girls and women informed me that they were unable to connect with many other female researchers during their respective interview sessions and were not able to open up due to the impersonal approach undertaken by those researchers. On the other hand, the personalized interviewing techniques I followed made the survivors more relaxed and approachable during their one-on-one interview sessions. This process also helped me to establish friendly relations and built a situation of easy intimacy which perhaps was less exploitive and more equally balanced in power terms. Thus, the initial step of rapport building within ethnographic research started to take place without me being aware of it.

While interviewing, I avoided asking questions directly from a questionnaire and allowed the topics of my interest to emerge from our conversation. The absence of a regulatory instrument, such as the questionnaire, allowed the survivors to converse with me freely without any anxiety or feeling threatened. Therefore, the preliminary fieldwork study with the thirteen acid attack survivors started to pave the way towards the main research for my dissertation. While conducting the interviews, I experienced a minor setback, as three survivors only spoke in a different Bengali dialect. Although I was able to grasp what they were saying my limited proficiency in such dialects hindered a lively interactive interview session. The interviews were also very difficult to transcribe as I was not familiar with many words which they used and had to ask others to translate the meaning for me. Thus, I felt that I lost the essence of the interviews during the translations.
On the contrary, interviews with the other ten survivors were very successful as most of them were very articulate, eloquent and informative on their environments and on different issues surrounding the lives of the acid attacked survivors. During this study, I realized how some respondents reacted to different topic and how each individual tends to be at different stages of willingness to discuss or disclose information on certain issues. For example, while asking question about the incident, some of the survivors discussed the event thoroughly without any hesitation, while some hesitated and felt uncomfortable to share their experiences.

I did realize the need to reformulate my approach for the actual research, and therefore geared myself to explicate more information during my second visit. The initial contact with the survivors proved to be fruitful as I found myself being more involved in their social spheres. I kept communicating with the survivors even after I left the country for Penn State. Some of the survivors were skeptic at the beginning on my promise to keep in touch and candidly told me that they never saw any researchers contacting them once the study was over. They felt exploited and found themselves as subjects of some sensationalized stories that only served the purpose of the researchers. So, I took a mental note to avoid this situation and attempted to ensure that the survivors do not go through similar experiences.

The second visit.

I found out that, a free flowing interaction was not achieved while conducting the primary interviews during the preliminary field work. Our interactions became more spontaneous and friendlier when I decided to put away my tape-recorder and decided to host interview sessions outside the ASF premise. During my second visit, I planned not to do any interviews but
spend time hanging around with the survivors to develop a better understanding outside the capacity of a researcher. The second summer when I went back to my home country, I found that my arrival was warmly anticipated by some of the girls and women. Our communication was not discontinued during my stay in USA due to the blessing of computer technology. Seven of the survivors whom I met during the preliminary fieldwork were already able to use computers and also got good jobs due to their computer skill. Three days after my arrival, one of the interviewees who acted as one of the key informants invited me to a program that was held for the international women’s day. At the event, they were performing in a drama and also singing songs. The media, and social activists all were present at the event and I was able to observe how confident they were while performing. The ethnographer in me thus started to observe, talk and listen during the event while the friend in me became proud of their exuberant performance. This experience opened my eyes further on the potential of these girls and young women who could rise to any occasion if given adequate opportunities and encouragement. Thus my study started to make more sense to me.

The survivors and I started to meet in different social gatherings such as birthday parties, wedding receptions, award-giving ceremonies, and cultural programs. These casual visits started to shed more light on their lives and played an immense role to make our relationship stronger. All these opportunities, therefore allowed the leisure aspects in their lives to emerge during conversation and more sense on the significance of these activities in their lives cropped out.
Transition to friendship.

The time spent on the field gave me the edge to get an insider’s perspective on the lives of the survivors in different spheres like home, workplace and other social events. After some time had passed, my openness and friendly nature helped me to secure my position as a good friend amidst them. I found myself warmly accepted within their circle of friends and saw myself being introduced as their close friend to everyone. This shift in our relationship allowed me to become an “ethnographer friend,” who was able to laugh and cry with them and at the same time be in a position to turn this social experience into knowledge. The revisit also helped to make my relationships stronger with the survivors and opened up new scope to build links with new actors like their family members, friends, and counselors. My personal involvement with them made the research process less intrusive and thus more natural. The time spent with them thus provided me with a better understanding, which I could not have achieved by being an outsider.

In terms of my experience with the female acid attack survivors, I found out that interviewees took frequent initiative to include me in their groups. According to them they liked my spontaneity and outgoing personality, and wanted to befriend me. Without any hesitation they invited me into their world that included their family, friends and co-workers. As time passed, some of the survivors voluntarily took me to places which they thought would provide me with better understanding on their lives. Their eagerness to help me out with the research touched me so deeply that the need to make the study worthwhile became more personal to me.

Initially, I was invited to attend their singing class, which also became their weekly retreat. The class was formed by one of Bangladesh’s leading social activists who was also very
close to all the acid attack survivors. Most of the young girls addressed her as their mother. She was the one who came up with the idea to start a singing class in which the girls can develop an interest and also create a scope through which she can meet them once a week at her home. I became interested on the class and went there with one of the survivors who introduced me to others. It amazed me to see how everyone from the other survivors in the class to the class instructor reacted to my presence. Everyone knew that I was coming and greeted me happily without any reservations. I could feel the genuine warmth inside the room and felt honored as everybody was coming up to me to get introduced. Among the small gathering of acid survivors, initially two of the girls seemed to be little shy. But once I joined all of them in singing, they overcame their shyness and started open up. They were all laughing at jokes and sharing personal information that happened during that week. None of them seemed to mind my presence in the class. The class ran for three hours in which they practiced singing for an hour and half. They used the remaining time mostly chatting to each other and me. The close relationship between the survivors and the instructors also fascinated me.

During my first visit in the class, I kept myself from asking any questions on their lives and simply enjoyed the interactions that took place. After the class, I invited all of girls to an ice-cream parlor nearby. The childlike attitude and happiness in their faces while ordering different flavors instantaneously touched my heart and showed me that it takes small things to bring happiness to the simple lives of these amazing girls and women. I was once again surprised on the warmth showed by some of the girls whom I had just met. Immediately they started to call me “Apu”, which is a Bangladeshi word of endearment for sister, and hugged me while saying good bye.
As my time came to return back to United States to complete my course work, I became very close friends with some of the survivors. I was sad to leave them and the feeling was mutual. We promised to keep in touch through letter, emails and phone. The bond that was created between some of my respondents and me became stronger as time passed and I could feel that a researcher within me is turning into an activist who is planning to send some message to make a difference in their lives. I realized that I was not doing this research with an aim to complete my dissertation only. I was working for something bigger than I had ever imagined. I was working to bring about a change in their lives. I craved to write about them to build a difference – one brick at a time.

Putting my own actions and intentions under scrutiny in retrospect has been a difficult process. I kept a contact sheet which helped me immediately to jot down the significant observations. While helping out the girls and women during their time of need, I was wondering whether I am doing it solely to get to my data or am I doing it as a friend helping out a friend. Initially, I was confused on my position as researcher and on my biasness. But soon, I realized that I can be both a researcher and a friend without having any impact on my findings and therefore, became accustomed to my role in which I did not have to isolate myself into two positions. The survivors also became used to my questions and they understood my need to understand their lives. They themselves were eager to share any new information they got. With their help, I was able to articulate my findings incorporating cross references.
The Final Interview

Finally, I felt confident to start the final interviews with the selected fifteen girls and women whom I knew were able to provide me with valuable and concrete information for my study. By this time, I redesigned my study, taking an ethnographic approach, as it seemed to be the most appropriate way after spending so much time in the field. With the level of friendship and acceptability formed within the Acid Survivors Foundation, I knew that I can create a cozy atmosphere for interviewing the survivors where they enjoyed talking intimately to me. This coziness thus rose from the shared nature and shared experiences we had during the last two years. The survivors told me that they were able to feel the warmth or genuine interest on their lives from me and based on this feeling they had no hesitation to help me with any information I needed.

My continuous involvement with the survivors through the last three years was thus rewarded as they sought me to be their confidant to whom they can talk about the aspects of lives which they could not share with anyone else. Some of them called me and asked me for advice and support, while some simply wanted to spend time talking to me.

Building on my already established friendship and rapport with the survivors, I started to plan for the final interviews during my third visit to Bangladesh. I took the interviews mostly in settings where the respondents felt comfortable to talk freely. Some of the interviews took place in their office rooms, creating a non-threatening environment that is crucial for successful interviews in which the girls and women enjoyed talking intimately. I gave the respondents full liberty to choose their venues for interviewing that showed them that I am not the one who will
dictate the process but it is their choice on how the interview process will proceed. Public places were not considered by them as they felt uncomfortable to be stared at. This is why most of the respondents decided to be interviewed within the Acid Survivors Foundation compound in which a closed meeting room was provided. In spite of the formal atmosphere, both the interviewees and I became comfortable to talk not only due to our shared gender and ethnicity, but also due to the previous familiarity which was formed in the last two years. Three other survivors were interviewed after the singing class was over. All the respondents had complete faith in me and were willing to help me with the study in all capacity. I was overwhelmed to see their eagerness to assist me in spite of the latest drawback that rose from the recent management changes at the foundation.

During the third visit, I found out that with a new Director, ASF changed their policies on allowing external researchers to conduct interviews with the survivors. But I was fortunate to have the existing relationship with some of the survivors who were now promoted and in charge of different responsibilities within ASF. In spite of the policy, the new director unofficially gave her consent to conduct interviews with the survivors with whom I have developed close relationship.

During the interviews, I had the knowledge and ability to be friendly, courteous, and unbiased but there were moments where my emotion was revealed. It had been hard to remain neutral during the conversation and show no anger towards the violators or hold my tears while listening to their physical and mental ordeals. But some human compassion and comments during the interview probably made me more human to them than a researcher. Already I knew
much about their lives and it became easier for me to address the leisure related issues. It made more sense to bring the topic of leisure as a way of coping as I knew and saw how friendship, hobbies and other social activities are influencing their lives to bring them closer to a normal life. Nevertheless, these interviews allowed me to strongly belief that sometime you can gain a lot more information by just immersing yourself as one of them and learn to see things through the respondent’s eyes.

Concluding the Fieldwork

Nearly all studies reach a point where additional understanding and insights gained through fieldwork do not justify the hours spent collecting and recording data. Even after the fieldwork ended, I kept in touch with some of the young women through email or mail. I also called them during occasions in which they keep me updated on their lives. To me, it is amazing how their lives evolved in three years and how I also became a part of their lives. Three of the girls got married, one got promotion and moved to a better position, and two of them fell in love.

My relationship thus went beyond the relationship of research subjects and researcher. We became friends and I was honored to be warmly accepted among them. Rather than asserting the primacy of any, I think it was effective to have a flexible position in which I was able to switch from a researcher to being their friend. During an event where they lost the social activist Ms. N who had become a center of their lives; the girls asked me to join them in the day of mourning. I became more involved with one part of their lives in which I crossed the limitations of being researcher to a shoulder to cry on. The prowess and responsibility of a researcher while being engaged in the field thus struck me. It was an eye opening and life changing experience for
me. I learned to cherish every moment of my time with them. The sense of pity which I previously had before entering the field was replaced with a greater sense of respect and understanding. The bond therefore grew stronger behind the interview sessions. The experience of this fieldwork deeply transformed me and my perception toward life. Although emotional involvement can be overwhelming during the study especially for a researcher, but emotions according to me played an important role to give meaning to the actual study. I sought data to understand the phenomenon of leisure in their lives but I also realized that one cannot obtain quality information without allowing oneself some time to let the data sink in. One cannot and should not rush to gather data especially when a researcher is conducting a research with a sensitive group of individuals like the acid attack survivors. Although, I had my strength as a Bangladeshi woman and did not have to spend much time familiarizing myself with the environment, language and culture; but time was needed to allow the survivors feel comfortable with me. It was a world within a world. Therefore, the difference in the depth of information I managed to gather from the preliminary fieldwork to the final interview was definitely significant. My fieldwork therefore allowed me to connect with a group of wonderful individuals who awarded me with an insight on their lives and also opened up scope for mutual collaboration.
Chapter 5

Perceptions of Life after Acid Attack

This study attempted to understand the meaning and existence of leisure in the lives of female acid attack survivors. My first research question, however, focused on the social context in which the girls and women were living their lives (Dixey, 1987) and experiencing leisure. Based on this understanding, this chapter is focused on the first research question that attempts to address some of the contexts relevant to the lives of the survivors. Following are the sub-research questions to better understand the lives of the survivors.

a. How have their lives changed after the acid attack?

b. What things do the survivors of acid attack believe to have helped or continuing to help them reconstruct their lives after the attack?

c. Where do they see themselves in the future?

Based on these findings, Chapter Six addresses the specific role of leisure in the lives of the female acid attack survivors.

During this part of the study, the acid attack survivors seemed to reflect on the contexts in terms of the following aspect of their lives which were: (a) the day to day challenges from their social and other interactional settings such as work, recreational places and home; (b) the activities and people who supported them to be closer to normalcy by making the survivors feel relaxed, happy and content; and finally, (c) the future expectations in their lives that help them...
to keep believe in themselves and become hopeful. All these elements can contribute to help the survivors cope with the trauma they experienced after the attack.

While studying victims of trauma and loss, Janoff-Bulman (2000) stated that, “in the aftermath of victimization, as survivors struggle to rebuild their world, the reactions of other people play a crucial role in the coping process” (p. 36). Thus, the coping process starts when the survivors take account of their social resources that provide them with a sense of where they belong. Experiencing leisure and recreation in life can be a buffer against stress that can help the survivors to cope better. Along this line, Henderson and Bialeschki (1991) found individual’s entitlement or right to leisure or anything else in life as highly situational and relative to their surroundings and own experiences. Likewise, Kelly (1987) pointed out that interactions and behavior can differ based on different social environments and these differences are central to understand the variety of leisure settings, forms and styles. After the attack, these are the environments in which the survivors learn to cope negotiating with the challenges of life. For the acid attack survivors, the acid attack resulted in a change in lifestyle as the girls and women were faced with various challenges and changes to both personal and social life. This change in lifestyle also seemed to influence their perception of leisure that plays an important part to regain the sense of normalcy.

Illustrative Examples of Life after the Acid Attack

Recognizing the need to understand the contexts in which the survivors experienced life and leisure, I present three brief narratives of acid attack survivors to illustrate how the tragedy fell upon them and how they were living life at the time of the study. Although none of these
young women are related, the stories of their attack and their way of life after the attack share many common attributes across various contexts (home, neighborhood, work, and recreational setting) and ways they learned to cope with their present condition. All three young women went through the traumatic experience of acid attack during their adolescence years at the hand of young men.

**Story of Ayesha**

Ayesha is an eighteen years old young woman from Chittagong. Once she had a normal life like any other Bangladeshi girls, but that was changed when she became a victim of acid attack. She was only sixteen years old when the tragic life changing incident happened to her. A neighbor’s son in an inhumanly act threw acid at her face while she was going to school like any other day. He used to pass rude remarks at her as she passed him and his friends on the road. This teasing and throwing letters at her made her very uncomfortable. One of the elders from the neighborhood caught him in his deviant act and informed her parents. Like any other parents, Ayesha’s father did not think twice to complain the boy’s misdemeanor to his father. The complaint made him angrier and he along with his friends planned to throw acid at her face. She suffered severe disfigurement, which destroyed most of her face.

In spite of experiencing the horrible incident that left her disfigured for life, she learned to live with the change. Presently, with the support and encouragement from a private organization called Acid Survivors Foundation, she is currently completing a training program on making pressure cloth that is used for burn victims. The training is not only a training through which she can earn her living but also a way through which she is finding her own identity. She
is glad to be able to take part in the training process, as she believes that she is now able to contribute something for the welfare of other acid attack victims. Apart from being involved in the process of making pressure cloth, she also plans to get enrolled in other types of vocational trainings that will assist her to be financially independent. Leisure to her is anticipated and enjoyable when she knows she can spend her leisure time with close friends or family members or take part in some fun activities with others. Otherwise, leisure time in which she has nothing to do makes her depressed and bored.

She also enjoys listening to popular Bengali music, watch movies and sometime reads books. But the activity she enjoys most is to spend time with her best friend.

**Story of Molly**

Molly Ahkter, 18, sometimes reminisces about days when she and her younger sisters would play with their hand-made dolls. She enjoyed a carefree life with her extended family of grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins in her village. Being a poor farmer, her father sold his land to raise money to go abroad in the hope for better earning. But things did not go as planned when her father lost almost everything to a fraud. So the family moved to another house, in the same village, where they struggled to make ends meet. Fortunately for Molly's family, when her older sister married, aged 14, her father didn't have to pay a dowry because she was so pretty. Molly is now an aunt to a baby nephew whom she hasn't yet seen but she wishes to hold her nephew and cuddle him.

It all started when Molly was in grade six at school. She began to be harassed by a gang of young boys on her way to classes. Hafizul, 25, was the leader of the gang. To avoid attention,
she bought an umbrella to hide her face from the boys who were teasing her. One day, while she was coming back from school the gang stopped her, but she somehow managed to escape and got home safely. She refrained herself from telling her family about the incident as she did not want to add more worries. Her family was aware that Hafizul was very interested in Molly and had asked her family for permission to marry her. His proposal was refused as Molly's parents were eager for her to continue with her studying. They didn't approve of Hafizul who was uneducated and whom they considered unsuitable.

That same day Molly stayed up late studying for her exams before joining her grandmother in bed. Suddenly, at around midnight, she felt boiling water being poured all over her face and body. She screamed, waking her whole family, to see Hafizul and his friends standing with a torch at the window beside her bed. The boys then made a hurried retreat. Molly thus became another victim of acid attack. After splashing water and putting antiseptic cream on her face to relieve the searing pain, she only succeeded in making matters worse. Molly was then taken by her family to the local hospital in the early hours of the morning, to be told to go to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where there was proper equipment to treat her burns. Molly says there were times when she just gave up hope: "Frankly, I never thought I would get back to normal life and be able to work or earn a living."

When she left the hospital, she was taken to Thikana, a home for acid survivors, where a plastic surgeon, brought in especially from abroad, operated on her. Before the surgery, she could not close her eyes but now she can partially move her eyelids. Although being a victim of a heinous crime which changed her life forever, she still wants to live her life like a normal person. She took three-day training in business management. At present she works with ASF,
earning approximately US$ 44 a month, as a tailor making pressure clothing, a special type of skin-tight garment used for post-operative acid survivors. Molly has not been back to her village since the attack as her parents fear for her security. She also thinks her face could scare the villagers. That would upset her. Molly raises her spirits by saying: "If they think by destroying my face and beauty they disabled me and made me dependent, they are completely wrong. I still have the strength and determination to show them that I can be an asset rather than a burden to society." Molly now plans to create a movement to lobby against acid violence and any form of violence against women. With a lot of emotion in her voice she says: "I might not dream of becoming a doctor any more, but I wish to serve other acid survivors by making appropriate pressure garments for them. I wasn't fortunate enough to get this kind of clothing in good time, which is why my scars swelled. I will ensure that others do not experience the same problem." Molly once again started to enjoy life again by listening to music, watching rural TV dramas and reading fairytales in her free time. With a sad smile, she adds, "Although I am a young woman, I still enjoy the comfort of playing with dolls."

**Story of Irina**

One fateful night four years prior to our interview, Irina experienced life’s most unimaginable tragedy in which her face was scarred for life. This incident happened when Irina's cousin, Munni, repeatedly refused the romantic advances of a young man. One night after the two young women had gone to bed; the perpetrator and his fellow gang members broke into the house and attacked Munni. When Irina tried to help her, the violators threw a stream of sulfuric acid at her, which immediately started to burn through her flesh. Her cousin was also attacked by acid but she experienced lesser damage as most of the acid was already poured on Irina. "My
dream was destroyed at that moment. As the acid hit, I first thought it was boiling water. But I grabbed my forehead only for my skin to crumble to pieces in my hand."

After nine months in a hospital and numerous operations to reconstruct her disfigured face, Irina traveled to the U.S. for further treatment and has begun to tell her story to the world. When she first glimpsed herself in a hospital mirror after the attack, Irina said she felt despair, which eventually grew into a desire to aid other women.

"The first time I looked at myself, I wanted to kill myself. But I learned that life is a precious gift from God, and that it was worth living even after this," she said. Despite a Bangladeshi law against domestic violence enacted in 2000, the government hasn't brought Irina’s attackers to justice. Although Irina said she has received death threats from their attackers, she is not going to give up her quest to find justice and will continue to fight for women's rights. “I have already sacrificed many things in my life. I will not also sacrifice my right to justice for my own sake and for others," Irina said. With strong conviction and positive attitude, Irina is now pursuing a nursing degree in Ohio and enjoying the freedom of being independent. Now, by taking a role as an activist, she hopes to change not only her life but also the life of other women who are victims to violence.

In summary, these similar stories provide a perspective on the survivors’ social structure, personnel struggles and triumphs in their respective lives and illustrate the dimensions of life that play important role in shaping their values and identity.
Demographic Information and Social Context

It was crucial for me as an interviewer and a researcher to comprehend the demographic and social background of the acid attack survivors, as leisure seemed to be experienced in variety of ways depending on age, gender, status and the social environment. Clark and Critcher (1985) shared the same view as they found class, ethnicity, age and gender to structure leisure experience. Therefore, in Table 5.1 I illustrate the demographic information, the current work or living condition, personal challenges, and some of their future aspiration to provide an understanding on the survivors’ way of life.

I believe that individuals are interactively engaging with their social world at various levels of their lives and this background information can serve as an important context for establishing meaning and purpose toward how leisure is viewed. For example, motherhood and disability have implications on how an individual experiences certain activities or chose one’s lifestyle (Samdahl, et al., 1998). Samdahl also explored the significance of understanding the context in which the individuals are interactively engaged with social worlds and that their interactions are important context for establishing meaning and purpose in people’s lives. While conducting interviews and analyzing data, the survivors wanted to share information on their hopes, challenges they face, family, and work. I found this information significant to get an idea on where each respondent is coming from on her views toward life.

Gender, age, marital status, family, education, employment status, and social status seemed to have influenced how female acid attack survivors formed meaning towards life as well as their leisure. For example, single young women preferred spending more time with friends,
while the married survivors or those who were mothers preferred leisure activities with their spouse or children.

Table 5.1: Demographic Profile and Contextual Information on Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Age at time of interview</th>
<th>Age at the time of attack</th>
<th>Education and Family Background</th>
<th>Future Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Irina</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>High-School Graduate, Graduated from the school of Nursing Family: Lives with her mother, three cousins, uncle and aunt. Father is deceased.</td>
<td>Develop her career in US as a nurse, continue advocating on violence against women world-wide and start a family with her fiancé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Shukti</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Completed higher secondary school exam which is equivalent to High-school Family: Lives with both her parents, two brothers, cousin and aunt.</td>
<td>She would like to start going to college, start a boutique as she already got fund from a local bank and sewing machine donated to them by a multinational company named Singer. Want to be financially independent. Continue advocacy on victims of acid attack and learn English perfectly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tahmina</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Secondary School Exam, completed diploma course to be a medical assistant Currently lives in a working women’s hostel with five other acid attack survivors.</td>
<td>Take her career further as a Medical Assistant, continue working as an advocate for women issues especially on victims of acid attack, learn a new language, and try to be a better singer. And would also like to have a family of her own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names</td>
<td>Age at time of interview</td>
<td>Age at the time of attack</td>
<td>Education and Family Background</td>
<td>Future Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4. Rubina | 21                       | 16                        | Completed Higher secondary School exam  
Three sisters and one brother. She is the eldest, followed by her 14 years old brother and two younger sisters aged 8 and 7. Everyone is living in Dhaka. | Find a better high-paid job or get promoted to support her sister’s education and help her dad in the grocery business; get enrolled in an extensive computer training program                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 5. Runa  | 23                       | 18                        | She completed her Higher Secondary School Exam  
Family: Living in Dhaka with her husband. Her in-laws live three hours away from the city and most of her sisters and brothers are living two hours from the city. Both her parents died. She has a step mother but she is not in touch with her | Wants to be a teacher and that is why would like to pursue a bachelor in Education. -Would like to learn English to communicate better with foreign people and can have access to greater information from all around the world.                                                                                                                                 |
<p>| 7. Aleya | 23                       | 18                        | She only completed her education up to fifth grade. | She aims to gain complete financial independence, educate her daughter and teach her to be independent. She wants a better life for her only daughter so that she never has to suffer for anything. To ensure a better life for her daughter she plans to have a permanently reside in Dhaka so that she can bring her daughter provide better education and living opportunities. She also plans to help her father to start a small shop in her home town. Want to live her life through her daughter’s success. Plans to take her daughter to the zoo. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Age at time of interview</th>
<th>Age at the time of attack</th>
<th>Education and Family Background</th>
<th>Future Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Jharna</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Completing High school. Three brothers and two sisters. Raised by a single parent, her mother.</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Poppy</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Completed 8th Grade One sister and a brother.</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Zila</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Completed Secondary School Exam and plan to complete her Higher Secondary exam</td>
<td>Plan to enroll herself into college for higher education, buy a computer and take further trainings on computer related areas, learn English or any other foreign language, help other victims through advocacy,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Asma</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Completed education till grade 5.</td>
<td>Completing her education through open university which will also bring her closer to normalcy in normal setting of educational environment. Participate in more training that will help her to be financially independent. Improve her self by learning new skills. Continue to support other acid attack victims through counseling Look forward to religious holidays in which she is able to spend more time with her family and friends from hometown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Molly</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sixth Grade</td>
<td>Complete her education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Ayesha</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Seventh Grade</td>
<td>She dreams on having her own place to live. Would like to participate in more vocational trainings that will help her to be financially independent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pseudonyms have been allocated, and some specific residential information has been altered to maintain anonymity

Continuation of Table 5.1 ends.
Impact of the Social Environment on the Lives of the Survivors

In this section, I describe the social environment in the lives of the participants in terms of family, friends, peers and work. During the interviews, I found the survivors discussing these social spheres in which they experience happiness, togetherness, supports and also challenges. This is why the following section describes the role of these social factors and also illustrates the challenges from them that are shaping their perception on life. Extracts from the interviews further delineates these perceptions by the survivors.

Family

*Positive source of support.* Kelly (1987) found family to be a significant institutional relationship or context for leisure, especially for individuals with fewer cultural resources and educational background. This finding was confirmed while interviewing the survivors who found family to be the core element that influenced their journey back to normal life. According to the value survey conducted by Inglehart, et al., (2002), most people across the world consider family to be the most important aspect of their lives, and more so in a traditional society like Bangladesh, where importance of family was ranked higher than that of work, education or money. Despite the modernization that is taking place worldwide, families are still considered to be the fundamental units of every society and perhaps the oldest and most important of all human institutions (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Especially in the time of need, people tend to fall back on families and friends who are in the center of support, courage and strength for coping with the negativities of life. The interviews in this study also reflected this fact, as most acid attack survivors identified their families and
friends to play crucial part in the process of keeping them connected to the real world and assisted to retain a sense of belongingness.

Family is a simple and universal concept (Inglehart et al., 2002). The term family defined in the dictionary as fundamental social group in society typically consisting parents and their children while the other definition views family as a group of two or more people who share goals and values, have long-term commitments to one another, and reside usually in the same dwelling place (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000). View of family seemed to shift after marriage for some survivors. Two married acid attack survivors in this study considered their husband’s family as the core family with whom they spend most of their times.

On the other hand, one divorced young woman considered her daughter and her parents to be at the centre of her family. The survivors who were single women mentioned their parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and siblings as significant members of their family. The following statements from the two unmarried acid attack survivors portray the significance of their families in the process of rebuilding their lives after the attack. One of the survivors mentioned that her father played a huge role in bringing her back to normalcy, while the other girl identified her female cousin as the source of encouragement to help her cope with her life after the attack. I also observed this interaction during two phone conversations with her cousin at a birthday party and in her home where she was asking for advice from her cousin on which song she would sing and sharing her day to day stories with her. I observed how relaxed and joyful she was when she answered the phone. In extract 5.3,
the young married woman identified her husband as a significant family member who made her feel content with her life after the attack. The following extracts from the interviews with the acid attack survivors will further illuminate the role of their family members in different capacities.

Extract 5.1: “Tina is my paternal cousin. Her father died when she was five months old and she and her mother who is my father’s youngest sister moved to stay with us. We are very close and did everything together. Although, she is only a year younger than me, but I feel like I am her older sister. But more than that, I am her closest friend. We share everything and we both know everything about each other. It is a nice feeling to know that I have someone so close to me. She helped me a lot in overcoming my problems. As our life continues, I am becoming more motivated to make myself better by seeing her thrive.”

Extract 5.2: “There can be no comparison to my family’s love and support for me; especially, my dad who is my anchor and biggest support. In spite of all the negative environment and discouragement around us, he was not scared to fight the case against my politically powerful violator. He is a wonderful human being. And it is his love that made me go through my life after the attack.”

Extract 5.3: “My husband is a man who is unlike any men I have seen. I lost my faith on men after the acid attack but it is my wonderful husband whom I met few years ago while working here in ASF who changed my views. He is one of the most caring,
understanding and honest man who love me for who I am and not for the way I look. This is one person whom I love with my heart and now is in the centre of my world. Not only does he respects me as his better half but also encourages me to be the best in whatever I am doing.”

These extracts illustrate the role played by the survivors’ families. It was the survivors’ families who made the girls and young women feel comfortable about themselves and provided them with courage to find meaning to their lives. The following extract depicts a cousin’s motivation to make one of the survivors feel more confident and strong to meet the challenges after the attack, which has been limiting her from leading a normal life. The cousin herself was an acid attack victim and was disfigured severely when she attempted to save her cousin during the fate-full night of the attack.

Extract 5.4: “This society really made me feel insignificant and guilty after the attack. Indirectly I have been blamed for the attack by false implications. Although I was not to be blamed for encouraging the man to fall in love with me, I was always feeling guilty. But Tina helped me to get out of this feeling. She had been so brave the whole time. If anybody taunted us or teased us while we were walking by ourselves, Tina would not hesitate to turn and walk to them and tell them if they would have teased their sister, mother or wife for being acid attacked victims? No sooner she told this to the guys they would lower their head. Later they apologized to us. Tina helped me a lot to overcome my problems. I get encouraged seeing her. Although, her pretty face was destroyed severely and in worse condition than mine, she always had the spirit to
move ahead. She never gave up on life and has the inner strength to make something out of herself. She continued with her education, finished the school exam and apart from that she became an activist for the acid survivors. She told me to be strong and encouraged me not to give up on life. Without any hesitation she would spend most of her free time with me and kept assuring me by telling me that it is not my fault.”

These extracts demonstrate how family members in different types of families can have positive influences on the survivors to deal with the sudden life-changing event. Most families in Bangladesh care and love their children irrespective of their genders, but a female child has always been raised differently from a male child based on the societal norms. These norms are discussed as barriers to some leisure choices in the next chapter. Luna’s (extract 5.5) family is a prime example of a conservative Bangladeshi family who expects a female child to limit her activities within the homestead and avoid taking part in outdoor activities.

**Extract 5.5:** “I am a female child and as I was brought up in a rural environment; different outdoor activities: girls going out to movies, working outside the house or taking part in outdoor sports are not seen as decent activities for girls from respectful families. It is mainly due to the conservative society of my village. In spite of being educated, my uncles, grandfather and my father who has been a schoolteacher never liked the girls of our family to go outside the house too much. Going to school for studying was fine with them. But they did not approve going out to have fun or go out shopping. They were afraid that the society would not see it in a good way and will reprimand them for allowing too much freedom to the
daughters. I became used to this type of lifestyle and didn’t feel that I am missing anything. You know, many girls do get spoiled when they are given too much freedom? So I never complained and knew what they are doing was only for my own welfare. Besides, I was very timid and introvert and I liked staying at home. I was also very obedient and for that I used to do whatever my parents wanted me to do.”

Exceptions can also be observed in families who encourage female children to think beyond the usual Bangladeshi norms of getting married to find meaning in life. Tina was one of those fortunate young women whose family stood beside her and encouraged her to fulfill her dreams. Despite growing up in a local town outside the capital city of Bangladesh, Tina’s mother and maternal uncle (currently her local guardian after her father’s death) provided support for pursuing her dream to be a prominent female sprinter in Bangladesh. Although her dream of competing at the Olympics never became a reality due to the unfortunate tragic incident of acid attack, with the love and encouragement of her family members, she has become one of the leading voices against violence against women. Presently, she has finished her high school graduation and pursuing a career in nursing abroad.

Other survivors also had positive and inspirational stories to share about their families. Despite their physical and social drawbacks, they described taking steps to make a difference not only to their own lives, but also to their families. The survivors no longer considered themselves as burden but saw themselves as individuals who have the ability to take responsibilities on their own and contribute to the family. Rubina is among the few survivors who had found a job outside Acid Survivors Foundation and the only earning
member of her family besides her father. She single handedly contributed to the education costs of her two younger sisters and her only brother. Without her contribution it would have been impossible for her younger siblings to receive an education. She dreamt of building a better future for her brother and sisters and declined a few marriage proposals knowing her family’s dependency on her. Her future plan and dream therefore was focused on the well-fare of her family, especially because her father was going through extreme hardship to keep his small grocery shop running.

I also had an opportunity to observe her interaction with her family when she invited me to her birthday party at her house. I arrived early and observed the warmth of her mother, father and her siblings where they were fussing on what she would like to eat and how they would entertain her friends. Although they were not financially solvent, her family cooked, decorated one room, and bought a cake for the celebration. I could see how happy they were to see her daughter and sister surrounded by friends who cared about her. The sisters were hanging around her and they were also pretty close to other survivors who were invited. Her mother also spent some time with me talking about how happy she was to see her daughter independent and having so many friends. She also thanked me for attending the party and told me that it meant a lot to have me among them.

Zila’s life is another motivational story. She is an example of how one’s self-confidence and faith from family members can contribute to a hopeful future. She explained how she was working hard in the office and planned to complete her studies to enjoy financial independence and live a life that was planned by no other but her. Because two of
her older brothers were addicted to drugs, she had to shoulder responsibility for her younger brother’s education. While transitioning from her small hometown to Dhaka, her family expressed some worry about the idea of her living on her own and away from her family (which is not usual for an unmarried women in Bangladeshi culture); but gradually they accepted and respected her decision.

Zila was also very close to her younger brother with whom he shared almost every stories of her life. I saw the warmth in their relationship in one of the visits to her house. Her brother was also visiting her and I saw how happy Zila was seeing her brother and how she was fussing over feeding him a good lunch. Though the brother seemed to be a little bit shy in my presence, he sat in close proximity to his sister, circling his hand around her shoulder showed the closeness among them.

While Zila’s family allowed her to leave her home town and live on her own to make the best of herself, Shukti’s family migrated to Dhaka for both Tina and Shukti’s better treatment, opportunities and resources, and to keep them away from the continuous threats from their violators. Shukti’s father, who is also Tina’s uncle, wrapped up his hometown business and took the courage to start his business in the city to keep the whole family together.

*Extract 5.6: “My family was continuously threatened by his family for withdrawing the case from the court but my family stood beside us and kept fighting. Fearing for*
our safety and ensuring better treatment, Tina and I had to be moved to Dhaka for better treatment and in few months the whole family moved here.”

Thus, realizing the need for their daughter and niece to migrate to an urban area, the head of the family didn’t hesitate twice to risk closing the already established business. The father and his family were brave enough to continue their economic and social exchange in a new setting, demonstrating an acceptance to change for ensuring welfare for the whole family.

Challenges experienced from family. Besides providing encouragement and support, families experiencing tragedy can often unintentionally add strain to an individual by causing depression or a sense of guilt. Swanson (2002) found acid attack survivors facing challenges during social integration after the attack. Three survivors whom I interviewed talked openly about depression that was caused by their parents and relatives immediately after the attack. Although the families never showed any negativity directly towards most of the survivors, some young women and girls experienced stress from their family members.

One such sentiment was shared by a young survivor who admits to experience stress from her family members after the attack. While she feels emotionally much stronger at present to meet the challenges from work, and conditions rising from physical disfigurement, she is also vulnerable to certain situation rising from her family members. According to Krasner, Meyer, and Carroll (1978), individuals who experienced extreme trauma like rape
might find one or few important persons in their lives to help them cope more successfully with stressful situations and vent their feelings. The person closest to them can either be parents, spouse or friends.

Lack of support from these individuals may otherwise create more anxiety or depression (Brown & Harris, 1978). According to their findings, although others from their social network may have provided support in times of need; they did not find contentment or happiness if support from their closest person is not received. This may explain the situation of one survivor who was experiencing a sense of isolation when she returned home from her work. She wanted to return to her home as she remembered it, which was once warm and inviting. Instead she returned to a home where her parents were suffering from severe depression as a result of financial hardship due to the cost of her treatments as well as her tragic incident, which shattered their hope to find her a suitable husband. Instead of providing her with their support by talking to her in a normal way and listening to her, their sadness made her feel uncomfortable and overwhelmed. Often this situation led her to believe herself as a burden for the family. Although she appreciated the support from her sisters and her brother, her parents’ conditions caused her anguish and stress.

Extract 5.7: “To tell you the truth! I didn’t experience huge mental support from my family and friends at the beginning. My parents supported me staying beside me all the time, but they too were shocked and needed both financial and emotional support themselves. They were all broken down into pieces. It became a huge mental pressure
for me. So instead of finding emotional support from them, I felt I needed to give them support.

Another survivor who experienced lack of mental support from her family after the tragic event also shared similar sentiment in which she suffered from severe guilt.

Extract 5.8: “My family was always beside me throughout my treatment. But even when they were supporting me by taking me for my treatments and sitting beside me day and night, I did miss the mental support from them. Because, they themselves were depressed and their depression and crying made me weak, instead of making me accept my condition. I felt like a burden for them and felt guilt. So I did not get much mental support from my family, but got it from Acid Survivors Foundation. I became mentally strong and started to have the will to fight because of the individuals from ASF who were giving me the courage to fight and be independent. To tell you the truth, after the acid attack my family members thought that I would not be able to do anything by myself. I have become invalid. They thought that I am totally finished and I won’t be having any life at all. But after coming to ASF, I found out that I could do so much. I realized that I can do something with my life and I am not a broken person. I felt as if that nothing has happened to me.”
It can be inferred from the above extracts that apart from being supportive, families in some instances can add stress, especially after an occurrence of a life changing negative event. Five out of thirteen acid attacked survivors who came from low-income backgrounds felt guilt and depression as they perceived themselves as burdens to their families. On the other hand, survivors who were fortunate enough to obtain financial assistance and counseling from local foundations like Acid Survivors Foundations and Naripokkho immediately after the attack found strength from their family members who stood beside them with courage. Therefore, depending on different attributes of family dynamics and degree of family cohesion, adaptability and communication, families in different settings can either facilitate or hinder growth and resiliency to cope with the adversities of life (Olsen, 1993).

**Social Network of Friends and Peers**

*Positive support.* After the attack, some families of the survivors were unable to provide the victim with a sense of comfort and hope. During this time, a sense of coherence and comfort was attained when the survivors befriended other survivors and counselors at ASF. The peers and friendships formed within ASF played an important role during the process of healing from both psychological and physical wounds. To some extent these peers and friends became fictive kin (non-familial or blood relations that are considered part of the family) for many victims of acid attack, similar to the fictive kinship that persists among groups of women who experienced extreme scenarios of medical uncertainty (Kennen, et al.,
The following extracts portray the sentiment of one of the survivor’s towards her friendship with her fellow acid attack victims.

Extract 5.9: “I have friends at ASF who care deeply about me and we understand each other. I might have not felt this way if I did not meet them. So yes... they helped me and we help each other to live a normal life and to keep each other from feeling depressed. Just spending some time to talk with each other makes a huge difference.”

In addition to the close circle of fellow acid attack survivors, the survivors also formed strong bonds with dedicated individuals who understood their plight and worked with them to ensure a better life for acid attack victims. The closeness among the survivors and their friends was observed in several occasions in which a camaraderie was reflected through their interaction with each other that took place with easiness and comfort. I had various opportunities to observe these interactions by attending two birthday parties, weekly singing classes during the span of five months and three other social occasions at the social activist’s residence. The social activist Mrs. H had open door policy where the survivors can drop in anytime at her house. Her conversation and interaction with the survivors showed warmth and motherly concern. She organized birthday parties and a small wedding reception for three survivors, to which I was invited. I found out that even her relatives knew all the survivors by name and knew about their family members. One of the interviewees during the interview session indicated her gratitude for her who was also a renowned women rights advocate. Most survivors considered her as a mother or an elder sister for the acid attacked girls and young women.
Extract 5.10: “Beside my family, Ms. H from Naripokkho had been a great support for me and Tina. She is the one who brought me back to a normal life after the attack. After the accident, I stopped talking for three months and could not communicate with anyone. I saw my life changed. I even stopped eating. H apa was the one who came to the hospital and afterwards to my house to rescue me from my misery. She talked about being strong and encouraged me to find the courage to stand up and meet the challenges of life. The mental support she provided me was huge and I believe that without her support I could not have been normal. She took me out to meet other girls who had the same experience as me and encouraged me to participate in workshops. H apa not only gave me the mental support but also gave me the support to be who I am and gave me the courage to speak up. She took me to seminars and held my hand while she taught me to speak up. I use to cry while telling my story, but she kept hugging me and encouraged me to tell the story to make a difference in others life. Now, I can speak very easily at conferences and in public, which has made me more confident about myself.”

During my field visit, I often went to Mrs. H’s house where the singing class was being held. The survivors moved freely at her place getting food from the refrigerator, making tea in her kitchen, playing with her daughter in her daughter’s room and warmly hugging Mrs. H when she sat with them to hear them singing. Mrs. H suggested some songs she would love to hear and everyone was enjoying the warm, informal environment in her house. Some of the survivors were asking advice with some office issues and also discussing
their day-to-day events with Mrs. H. She was also asking about their parents and family members and joking with one of the survivors on her recent marriage. The class at her house brought everyone together where the survivors seemed to find solace and kindred hearts that understand each other and find a sense of togetherness.

The positive power of acid survivors helping other girls who experienced similar traumatic experience is also reflected from the following extract.

Extract 5.11: “ASF’s counselors and other Acid survivors working at ASF helped me to face the world. They encouraged me to get out of wearing borkha and always tried to make me happy by coming to my house, taking me out, or taking me to some entertaining events that were organized either by ASF or Naripokkho. They never talked about sad things but emphasized on the happy things of life.”

In the following extract, one of the acid survivors explained how her peers became a collective force of encouragement and gave her the courage for participating at a national music competition. I was fortunate enough to observe this scenario in person when the girls, along with the instructor and the social activist, were encouraging one of the survivors to participate at the selection process of a Bangladeshi idol type singing contest. They were all enthusiastic about choosing the right songs for her at one of the singing classes and it seemed like they themselves are taking part through her.
Extract 5.12: In the singing class, everyone is choosing appropriate songs for me, the instructor is teaching me personally, while my sisters gladly sacrificed their singing time slot for me. They have so much faith in me and that is one of the most rewarding experiences for me to see so many people care for me. Even if I do not get selected, I have realized how much faith they have on me and how much they all love me.

During the day of my selection, Rebecca apa (one of the counselors) came to wish me good luck and even bought food and drinks for me at the venue. It was the most wonderful experience to have the support of so many people.”

These closely knitted groups of individuals tended to provide the much needed emotional and even tangible support that was crucial in bringing many of the survivors back to normalcy. The following extracts depict the sentiment of an acid attack survivor who acknowledged the importance of friendship between other acid attack survivors in her present life.

Extract 5.13: “My closest friends are the one from ASF. They are also acid attack survivors and went through similar experiences. They understand the changes in our lives and understand the feeling I feel inside me, the anger and everything else like no other. We all might not be from the same age group or same background, but our experiences made us equal. This is why; sharing things from my life is much easier with my friends from ASF and especially my friends with whom I attend the singing class. Other than my family, they are my main support unit here in Dhaka. We see each other as close friends and as sisters who understand each other.”
A sense of isolation thus tends to be removed through these circles of friends who are helping each other to gain a sense of community from these friendships. Kennen, et al. (2007) also found the importance of peers in the process of coping with medical uncertainty. The women they interviewed reported a need similar to the acid survivors to reach to someone who understood them even when they were surrounded by their family, relatives and doctors. Before the acid attack, the young women formed friendship with cohorts who shared similar interests. But after the attack, some survivors felt comfortable forming friendship either with other survivors or individuals who were knowledgeable about their situation.

Exceptions were observed with three young women who had extroverted personalities and felt comfortable with strangers, despite their physical appearance. These strong-minded individuals overcame seeing themselves as only acid survivors which earlier limited their interaction within certain groups of people. With a strong sense of self, these women formed strong bonds with different groups of individuals other than acid attack survivors and overcame the fear of not being understood by people around them. The following extract from one of these young women explains her openness and positive attitude towards forming friendship with people around her.

Extract 5.14: “I love life. I love all the people around me because most people whom I meet also love me. Probably it is my personality and my ability to draw people towards me. I never hesitated to be open to whom I meet and dislike
pondering on the attack. I am not ashamed of my look and although my face has changed, I am the same person inside. I enjoy meeting different people from different background and love to know about the different lives. This is why; I have so many close friends from different countries whom I met in conferences and also have friends who are much older than me. The major component is to touch people’s heart and everyone I met tells me that my enthusiasm on life is infectious. I am comfortable with almost everyone, except for my attacker (Laughing). Probably, I can never be friends with him as I despised the hatred and inhumanity in him.”

Challenges of social networks. The acid attack not only changed the appearance of the girls and young women, but also brought change to their social circle. Many survivors lost contact with their school friends from the past or with current friends from the neighborhood. A few of them were still in touch with some of their friends, however, who continued to support them during and after the ordeal. While asking about meeting old friends, Kaniz ‘s expression was revealed through the following extract.

Extract 5.15: “Many of my old friends hesitated to meet me after the attack as they did not know how to console me or accept my deformity. I also had to leave my hometown for treatment and wanted to avoid people. So slowly, our friendships started to fade. But, I made new friends after coming here (ASF) and feel more comfortable sharing my sadness and joys with my other survivor sisters.”
Work Environment

A source of positive support. Although work and leisure are often observed as opposite ends of the spectrum, the survivors who were employed and satisfied with their work environment envisaged and interpreted their work as a satisfying and enjoyable experience. The interviews suggested that the survivors’ working environment, other than the housework, played a significant role in shaping their leisure behavior. Considering the importance of work in the social sphere, this section provides an overview on what work meant to the survivors, especially in a country where women usually are typically categorized as home makers.

Among 13 respondents, only two survivors had previous work experience. Most of the girls and young women either had gone to school or stayed home. Many acid attack survivors working at the Acid Survivors Foundation formed strong bonding with their co-workers. The co-workers at the ASF are usually other acid attack survivors who are employed by ASF as counselors, record keepers and office assistants, other executives, or volunteers who work closely with the survivors. Apart from sharing similar life experiences, the relationships many of the survivors developed overtime were mostly due to the shared sense of their duties towards a greater cause. The working environment at ASF facilitated amicable and supportive relationships among co-workers that generated circumstances conducive to enjoyable experiences. This may be partly due to the fact that unlike many other organizations in which ranking and positions specifically determine how individuals should be addressed and treated, at ASF all co-workers were treated equally,
irrespective of their status or position. During my field visit at ASF, I observed this absence of hierarchical relations among employees. Usually, in the Bangladeshi working environment, addressing seniors as ‘Sir’ or ‘Madam’ is a common practice. But at ASF everyone tended to address each other as sisters and brothers, which turned the working place into a cordial and informal environment. One example of enjoying work, which can reflect leisure like experiences such as social connectedness, satisfaction, personal gratification is illustrated in Extract 5.16.

**Extract 5.16:** “I used to work at the rehabilitation unit while Shukti (acid attack survivor) was working there as a counselor. In the rehabilitation unit, I used to monitor and provide supports for acid attack victims who received assistance from BRAC for housing or setting up other businesses to make the victims self-sufficient. Businesses mostly comprised of setting up small shops, buying rickshaws for them and also providing educational support. My main work was to collect data on the participants progress, communicate collected data to BRAC officials and provide other administrative assistance especially for this unit. I used to love that job mostly because there was an aspect of bonding among all my colleagues and superiors. Many of my colleagues were also acid attack survivors and we used to share a strong bond between us. For this reason, I loved going to work and usually, I found out that all my works were efficiently finished even when the workload was huge. I think it happened because I enjoyed the working atmosphere there. In my present job, I find myself isolated, as everyone’s busy with his or her own work. My colleagues here are also not that friendly. I am just a receptionist here and sometime wonder on the importance of
my work. At ASF, I could feel that I am doing something constructive but here I am bored. And I make more mistakes in my work here even when the workload is small and not that much complicated. Probably this is happening because I am not enjoying my work. For instance, few days ago, I was supposed to receive a file from one person. I had to leave my room for few minutes and another person received it on behalf of me and misplaced it. Now as it was my responsibility, I am to blame and also my salary is being deducted. This is adding more to my stress level.”

As many survivors were either not interested to return to their hometown or villages or could not go back to the places they came from for various reasons, ASF tries to help them by providing jobs in Dhaka. This is why in addition to treatment and counseling, finding appropriate jobs for the survivors has been one of ASF’s objectives. Apart from supporting the girls aged 17 or under to continue their education after the attack, ASF also provides special training to many survivors who show interest to work for ASF. Training on operating computers, making pressure cloths, counseling, and lessons in the English language are conducted on a regular basis to provide the girls and young women with the necessary skills to earn a livelihood. According to the interviewees, these types of training helped them develop new skills for the job market and provided them with a platform for finding appropriate employment in the future. The following extract depicts one of the reasons behind choosing to work at ASF.

Extract 5.17: “After the accident, my aunt did not show much interest to have me stay with her. Judging my situation... Munira apa (Presently the Director) decided to
provide further assistant and selected me as one of the trainees for making the pressure cloth. I do not have adequate institutional education that can help me to have a career in offices. So, I think these types of trainings are most suitable for me. I would be able to earn some money with this knowledge and try to be somewhat independent.”

Although, per Bangladeshi norm, women are expected to be dependent on men (father and husbands) throughout their lives, girls and young women like Tina, Shukti, Rubina, Tahmina and many others acid attacked victims are breaking the trend by progressively taking charge of their own lives. With some institutional support, encouragement from friends and family, and their own will power, these young women have been breaking away from gender subordination and learning to earn their own living. Instead of subjugating to the societies’ discriminatory attitude, they have learned to survive and take control of their own lives. According to the respondents, instead of making the survivors feel worthless and insignificant, the acid attack changed their views towards life and taught them to be independent. In some ways, the incident helped the acid attack survivors to find significance to their lives through their works in different capacities. Both Ayesha and Aleya appreciated the training provided through ASF and were grateful for the support they received from the Director of ASF and other ASF personnel. It seemed to me that due to the nature of the organizational culture, ASF has become an exceptional organization that creates opportunity for young girls and women to become both emotionally and financially independent. The following two extracts reflect this sentiment in which the young girls and women acknowledged the assistance from ASF personnel who helped them to learn new
skills. These skill sets boosted the survivors’ self-confidence and eventually helped them to land respectable jobs towards financial freedom.

*Extract 5.18:* “Munira apa helped me to get this job and now I am able to work in an office with some trainings that was given to me by ASF. Now, I am able to help around the office. Whatever little money I earn, it helps me to get the necessities and I feel like I am doing something. Munira apa and some other personals from ASF also helped my father to start his own shop. It has been a great help.”

Most acid attacked survivors who had the skill to communicate were assigned as counselors at ASF. They were regularly involved in counseling the acid attack victims who were in the process of rehabilitation. This method of acid survivors helping other victims had been initiated by the foundation as the victims themselves were found to be capable of providing emotional support to the survivors in most effective way due to their similar personal experiences. Apart from counseling, many of them were actively involved in raising awareness about acid attack through different campaigns and programs. This type of involvement allowed many survivors to find their own meaning to life by giving them a chance to contribute both to their family and to the society. The following extract (5.19) indicates how working for a higher cause helped one of the survivors to see her life in a positive way even after experiencing the tragic incident.

*Extract 5.19:* “I feel that I am doing something to help others and my experience can help the girls to take charge of their own lives. The crucial time for any survivors is
the time immediately after the treatment ends and when they become vulnerable as they start to lose the meaning of life. I feel good to have the opportunity to be near them at their time of need and be the person to help them out. They can relate to me as I can to them. Before the accident we were ordinary Bangladeshi girls living a very ordinary life, but after the accident we changed into girls who know how to fight for a cause and also for ourselves. There is a saying;” every cloud has a silver lining.” So now …with hope and aspiration we are aiming towards a better and worthwhile life.”

The work at ASF has not only provided them with a platform to fight for a cause that is near to their hearts but also taught them to be self-confident and independent minded. Being able to help others through their work thus provided them with a sense of achievement, and the financial independence helped them to come out of the depressed state of finding themselves as the burden to the society. The following extracts shows how work helped one of the victims to gain her confidence to stand on her own.

Extract 5.20: Initially, through counseling they told me that although I do not have the face that I used to have, I still have my spirit and my inner beauty to be a productive human being. I also met some other survivors who were working here and heard their stories. I knew, they also suffered the same pain and still overcame all the problems and living, laughing, working. So I started to believe in myself mainly because many others from ASF and also Nasreen apa from Naripokkho had faith in me. They gave me a job, trained me and taught me to stand up on my two feet.
Although, I am not rich; but I am financially independent. So that is a huge mental support for me. I do not have to depend on others for money. So for all these changes in my life, I am grateful to ASF.”

Work therefore seemed to act as a distraction for most of the acid attack survivors by redirecting their focus from the negative experiences of their lives towards personal development and helping others. Most of the survivors I interviewed saw their work as a savior from the misery in which they might have drowned if they had to live on other’s pity for economic security. According to some of the survivors who worked at ASF, work is something they look forward to instead of spending time doing nothing and feeling depressed thinking about their past.

Challenges experienced from the working environment. Although working at ASF is a satisfying and fulfilling experience for many, two other young women who worked at a different organization found their jobs to be stressful and unsatisfying. As discussed earlier in Extract 5.16, Rubina compared her job experience at ASF with the present job in a different organization that mainly dealt with micro-credit financing. At her job, at the time of our interviews, she frequently felt isolated from other co-workers due to the existing dominant hierarchical relationships and the absence of camaraderie. “Things were different at ASF,” said Rubina. Apart from the differential treatment due to her position as a receptionist, she was also bored with her job as it did not offer any challenge for her. Despite these negative feelings towards her work, she planned to stay there until a better offer came her way and probably because she had supportive individuals who supported her in the other dimensions of
her life. The following extract provides an insight on the importance of financial stability that can balance out the stress she experience from work.

Extract 5.21: “Though the job sucks, the pay check is helping me to provide for my family and allowing me to support my sisters’ schooling. So I am not complaining.”

The following extract illustrates a situation in which she felt her co- workers often created an uncooperative environment and expressed hostility towards her due to her present condition.

Extract 5.22: “Many of us who are employed in organizations other than ASF experienced some hostility and lack of cooperation from our colleagues who strongly believed that we were hired out of sympathy and enjoy preferential treatment due to our physical condition. But this is so untrue! We work as hard as anyone else in the organization and expect to be treated the same as any other employees. Few days ago, some of my colleagues didn’t hand over a document in time and I was blamed for it.”

Community

A context of positive support. Communities can be of different kinds and can exist at different levels (Mason, 2000). Community includes the local community, the smaller geographic neighborhood, and friends who provide non-family interaction (Voydanoff, 2007). According to Rokach, Bacanli, and Ramberan (2000), individuals rely on their
communities for support, a sense of belonging, reciprocal sharing, and a sense of identity. Voydanoff (2007) found community to be a significant component of one’s life that can either produce strains for individuals or can provide resources through community organization, neighborhood cohesion, and informal support to ensure well-being in daily life. Furthermore, community bonding may be particularly helpful as a coping resource in times of need (Yeh, Arora, & We, 2006). Therefore, the different characteristics of the community can play potentially important roles in determining the choices people make (e.g., in leisure) and lead to a better understanding on the formation of shared-emotional connections (Hughey, Speer, & Peterson, 1999).

I have already described the existing sense of community among the survivors due to their common situation and work with ASF. In this section, I will present ways in which the participants described aspects of their neighborhood and the surrounding areas to better understand how the participant’s respective communities shaped the survivors’ values, norms, and ambitions, as well as participation in work and non-work activities.

The acid attack compelled many survivors like Zila and Shukti to move away from their local communities in which they grew up. Apart from lack of support, sense of security and additional stress from local people, the small-town communities also lacked appropriate facilities for treatment and rehabilitation. This is why many acid attack survivors moved to urban communities that offered various opportunities along with anonymity, which they sought desperately to live a normal life.
Extract 5.23: “Well…… Comilla is not a very big metropolitan city like Dhaka. Dhaka, being the capital, enjoys many good things. But in Comilla; we do not have good transportation and places where I can work. People in our communities are not very broad-minded and also conservative. In Dhaka, most people are busy with their own lives and do not bother too much about getting curious about others. But in Comilla, people always stared at me and asked questions which made me uncomfortable. That is why; I hardly visit my parents there. They come to visit me here in Dhaka instead, and I think that is better for me.”

The survivors I interviewed mostly migrated to the urban environment that provided acid attack victims with anonymity and privacy compared to what they had experienced in rural environments. Also, exposure to greater amounts of information and higher rate of literacy in big cities may contribute to a broader mindset, which can make people less judgmental. This sentiment was reflected by one of the interviewees in the following extract.

Extract 5.24: “But things did change after moving here in Dhaka. People are less critical. Probably because they are all busy with their own lives. In the city, I am not looked down. I believe gradually things are changing as people are getting more aware of why acid attack happens. I strongly believe that. Still, it will take some time for our society to change and to reach a position where they will look at women as equal to men.”
A few survivors who had the opportunity to travel abroad, either for their treatment or for attending conferences, discovered big cities of developed countries to be accommodating and warm towards them. The surrounding environment was able to generate a positive feeling and made the survivor feel comfortable.

*Extract 5.25: “I visited England and Germany. Everywhere I found people to be friendly. I only wish that the mindset of Bangladeshi people could be like that. I would not have mind the level of poverty in our country only if the people were friendly and broad minded. Who knows probably poverty transformed us and pushed us towards loosing humanity?”*

**Challenges from the community.** The previous extracts suggested that a secure and respectful environment can assist an individual to feel a sense of belongingness and a sense of freedom in which he or she is valued. Unfortunately, in a developing society like Bangladesh, individuals are still measured by physical attributes, gender and social standing that build artificial constraints towards enjoying freedom. As an example, during a trip to a park, I observed the five survivors being taunted by few young men in the streets. They were shouting at the survivors asking how and why they are so ugly. Although we turned around and reprimanded them for their behaviors, it was hurtful to see some of the survivors feeling frustrated with these unwanted attentions. The following extract (5.25) further indicates how she underwent scrutiny for her appearance even by a so called educated government official who works for the welfare of women.
Extract 5.26: “Even when I visit the ministry of women affairs, there are people who tell me that, “It takes two to Tango”, meaning that I am also responsible for what happened to me. In spite of being an educated individual in the terms of the real world, I can never identify him educated in the sense of a true human being. A person who works to run the country is saying such thing... so what can you say? It is so hard being a woman in this society Rehnuma apu. You do not know how tough the real world is. I would love to do so many things for my country and for me, but the society is not often accommodating to let me pursue my dreams. “

Sadly, the extract further depicts the gendered mentality of rural communities in which women are often judged as the main instigating factor to encourage the violence that happened to their lives. Akhter and Nahar (2003) found many acid attack survivors to be characterized as women who are “wayward and “disobedient” by their community.

Extract 5.27: “Uumm...... while I was in Bogura the environment around me was different. Neighbors were critical and judgmental. You know the Bangladeshi mentality. Many people judged me for what happened to me. They thought that probably I did something to bring this acid attack on me. In one way or other, the girl is always blamed in our society. It is really sad that the guys tend to get away with everything while the girl falls under scrutiny. This society really made me feel small after the attack and I felt that I might be at fault.”
This shows how the survivors sometime felt alienated even when they resided amidst their own social environment in Bangladesh. Considering the lack of solidarity and mutual respect in some communities, Mason (2000) connoted a moralized definition of community. In his conceptualization, community is not just a group of people who share a range of values, a way of life, and recognize each other as a member of a community, but also it has to meet the two following conditions: (a) solidarity among the members and (b) an absence of exploitation. Based on this idea, there was evidence in this study that some of the survivors did experience lack of solidarity from some of their community, although the absence of exploitation was experienced in larger, urban settings and in cities abroad.

**Future Plans**

In many communities, acid attacked female survivors are marked as “spoiled goods,” whereas before the attack they were symbolized as the honor and possession of the patriarchal family and society (Chowdhury, 2007, p. 862). Due to the change in life that occurred after acid attack, most survivors had to change their plans for future. The majority of the girls and women had planned and had been prepared to fulfill their expected social role as a wife and a mother before being a victim of acid attack. After the tragic incident, the survivors found themselves making new decisions about a different life path than the path that was expected of them.

The expectations of many survivors who were unmarried shifted from starting a family to completion of their education and developing skills that could help them become
both emotionally and financially independent. On the other hand, women who were married and had children of their own emphasized attaining economic independence to build a better future for their children and family without relying on the support from their male counterparts. The extracts 5.27 through 5.30 reflect some of the sentiments regarding the future planning by the acid attack survivors in which the survivors narrates their aspirations, dreams and hopes which are crucial for developing a positive perception on life.

Extract 5.28: “It is quite difficult for me now to say what I will be doing in the future, but I do want to complete my education. And according to my potential, I want to do something to bring some change to the society and on the lives of the Bangladeshi women. I want to be completely independent and be in a situation in which I would not need any help from others.”

Extract 5.29: “Naripokkho involved me in a counseling training focused on building me as a counselor for the acid attack survivors. This training helped me a lot as I found a new meaning in life by having the opportunity to help others. Some other girls and I did take training on operating computer. I did well in that training, which later helped me to get this job as a receptionist. Trainings like these really helped me to become independent.”

Extract 5.30: “Well……… I would like to learn English better. I know the basics but I would like to communicate better in English. One of the Foreign ASF officers has started a three months workshop on English Communication and I have signed
up for it. I am really enjoying it, and I think it will make me a more skillful communicator. For promotion and better jobs, I do need to have that skill. God willing, I would like to be a teacher in a school and that is why I am also planning to pursue a Bachelor degree in Education. So, let’s see what happens.”

Extract 5.3: “Already media like TV channels, Newspapers.. especially Daily star and Prothom Alo are helping acid survivors and creating awareness campaigns to prevent acid attacks. Jointly with ASF, these organizations continuously organize workshops, marches incorporating men and actively raise funds for the welfare of acid attack survivors. Me and another friend of mine were fortunate enough to receive two sewing machines after a private organization came to know about our interest to start a boutique shop. Both Me and T loved sewing and designing our dresses. So, both of us are starting a business that will be both fun and also create an opportunity to earn some money.”

While the unmarried women reported ambitions to improve their individual status, women with children focused their future planning around their children. The following extract 5.32 illustrates such aspiration of a mother.

Extract 5.32: “I want to earn a decent amount of money to support my daughter. I want to see her completing her education. She must be educated. I wish to see my daughter well educated and become independent. I know it can be difficult but anything is possible. But I am determined to do that for her. She must not live the life
I lived. I would like to raise my daughter in Dhaka where she will get more opportunities. That is my dream and my hope.”

In short, even amidst the nexus of uncertainty, the survivors were striving towards a better future for themselves and their family. Certainly, the institutional support from ASF played a significant role to aid the survivors to achieve their goals. With courage and resilience, the survivors are no longer relegated to the private spheres of their home, but learning to look beyond the internalize belief of maintaining the subordinate status in the society.

Summary and Conclusions

Henderson, et al., (1989) found that analysis of various aspects of women’s lives can provide a broader basis for understanding their leisure. Reflecting on this finding, the chapter sought to address the first research question that laid the backdrop in which the study on understanding the leisure of acid attack survivors took place. The chapter therefore emphasized on finding the significance of individual perception towards life after the attack in terms of their social surrounding. Various aspects of life affect people’s usage of time (Deem, 1986) and undoubtedly factors like age, social status, support from family, peers and community, work condition, challenges from the environment and even future planning seemed to play an important role in the lives of the survivors which can affect the opportunities for leisure.
According to Rapoport & Rapoport (1975), individual’s lives are defined by the weaving of three strands: work, family, and leisure. Acknowledging the importance of these components, the chapter, initially explored work, family and added peers, and community to set up the context in which experience of leisure would be delineated in the following chapter. Analyzing the data from the interviews and observations in different settings (singing classes, one trip, two birthday parties, a wedding reception and two social events at the foundation), the following major findings emerged, which reflected on the social context of the survivors.

i. The first part of the research question addressed the changes experienced after the attack within the social context. It was imperative to identify the challenges experienced from the survivors’ social circles as most girls and women seemed to form the meaning of life through acknowledging the challenges they faced in their daily lives. From the extracts discussed earlier, I observed that feeling a sense of security and enjoying both political and economical freedom in the Bangladeshi society was a challenging task, especially for female acid attack victims from lower income group. Some of the challenges experienced in their daily lives are further explored and identified as constraints to leisure experience in the following chapter. From my personal experience and observing non-acid attack victims in Bangladesh, these were some challenges experienced not only by the survivors but also by most Bangladeshi girls and women.

ii. Most survivors reported the importance of at least one person’s support in their lives as a crucial element to help them cope with the tragedy and to guide them through the crisis.
This one person in most cases was reported to be a male figure in their lives who could be their father, uncle, brother or spouse. Probably due to the patriarchic nature of the society, the survivors found the role of these individuals to play an important role to reintegrate them back into the society or enhance their sense of belonging.

iii. Many friends and family members treated them differently after the attack, which necessitated finding new sources of social activity and support. This finding was similar to Wesson (1999) who found some families of the survivors to be supporting, while some other families and communities were rejecting them. The acid attack thus impacted some of their previously existing social circles that in terms changed their leisure containers to some extent. Details on their changed leisure behavior will be discussed in the following chapter.

iv. Despite the patriarchic conservative society, some women who moved to live in a city typically were considered as less culturally conservative. The women who made this move seemed to experience some level of autonomy in their present life where they were not bounded by the rules previously imposed by their fathers or other family members at their home town.

v. Peers, especially the ones who shared common life experiences, seemed to play a significant role during the process of normalization for the acid attack survivors. This
may be why most acid attack survivors preferred a social environment shared by other survivors, and this could be either through leisure or a work setting.

vi. Undoubtedly, the survivors who were interviewed showed resiliency in their social environment and most of them were involved or wanted to get involved in growth enhancing activity that could provide them with a new meaning in their future. Many survivors who were not able to complete their formal education because of the tragic incident enrolled or planned to enroll in education or informal educational activities to build a better future, not only for themselves but also for their families. Most women showed excitement and enthusiasm to pursue various learning activities that included not only activities for self development but also included leisure like experiences in which they might made contacts and friends. This was a new development for some of the survivors who earlier were expected to get married and start a family like any normal young women. To some extent the acid attack made the survivors more stronger and courageous to break the usual cultural norms.
Chapter 6
Leisure Experience by the Survivors of Acid Attack

Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw and Freysinger (1989) found leisure to be perceived and experienced during events, activities, social interactions or brief fleeting moments in life. With this understanding, Chapter 5 paved the way to contextualize the environment in which the Bangladeshi women and girls lived and experienced leisure. The purpose of this chapter is to address research question 2, which explored how leisure was experienced by the female victims of acid attack. Related sub-questions were:

a. Do the girls and women who have been victims of acid attack perceive that they have leisure in their lives? If yes, what forms of leisure do they engage in, why do they participate, and how do they experience leisure?

b. What kinds of constraints, if any, do they experience during leisure participation of their choice?

c. How are the constraints negotiated to increase their participation in leisure activities and benefiting the survivors after the acid attack?

Leisure Activities, Motivations and Emotions

My approach to understand leisure experience among the survivors shared some similar ideas with Lee, Dattilo and Howard (1994) in which an understanding of a complex experience like leisure required the researchers to go beyond quantitative analysis. Qualitative methods, according to Patton (1980), allows the researcher to understand the “respondents’ levels of
emotion, the world view; their thought on what is happening around them, experiences and their basic perception (p. 28). As the study on acid attack survivors required me to sensitively explore the experience of leisure in the lives of the survivors, in-depth interviews and observations were major techniques that I used to elicit information. Therefore, the various aspects of leisure in the lives of the participants in terms of their preferred activities, the motivations behind their reason for participation and emotions felt during participation were articulated by the survivors in their own words during the data collection phase.

The concept of leisure is not absent in Bangladeshi culture. Leisure in Bengali language is directly translated into the word “Oboshor” that can be retranslated into “free time.” The interviewees therefore easily understood the meaning of free time in their daily lives and also were able to distinguish between leisure and non-leisure time. Based on the interview guide (Appendix A), I asked the interviewees a series of questions that allowed me to understand the role of leisure in their lives as well as their constraints to leisure and their constraint negotiation strategies. The questions I asked were not limited within the guide as the interviews often directed me towards asking questions that emerged from the discussion with the informants. Although I have covered many aspects of the respondents’ lives in Chapter 5, this section was delimited to focus only on activities that were identified with positive emotions in leisure, which shared some similar attributes to the dimensions of leisure proposed by Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, and Freysinger (1996). Similar to various studies on women’s leisure, the survivors tended to associate leisure experiences with positive emotions that evoked happiness, contentment, enjoyment, pleasure, sense of belongingness, excitement and provided them a
sense of normalcy. Activities that contributed to increased stress, anxiety, frustration or anger have not been termed as leisure.

To gain a better understanding and to obtain a brief overview on how leisure is experienced by the survivors, three tables were constructed that present the major elements of leisure experience in the lives of those I interviewed. These elements included identified leisure activities, motivation, and emotional experiences from participation.

Table 6.1 reports the total number of responses (out of 13) across different participated leisure activities and also illustrated the motives for being involved. For example, twelve survivors reported watching TV as one of their leisure activities. Of the twelve participants, five were motivated to choose the activity because it allowed them to exercise choice in which nobody is controlling their time. Based on the different types of motives among the survivors, TV viewing shared some of its motivational attributes with both intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation. A high level of intrinsic motivation usually demands both competence and autonomy to experience satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In this regard, though the survivors were not exercising competence while watching TV, all twelve survivors felt this activity to fulfill their need for enjoyment and an activity they chose on their own free will. These qualities therefore reflect the characteristics of an intrinsically motivated person who spontaneously moved to act for fun or challenge rather than being pressured or instrumentally rewarded (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Therefore, the motive for enjoyment was marked as intrinsic. The other two types of motivation discussed in this section are extrinsic motivation with identified regulation (ID-E) and extrinsic motivation with integrated regulation (IR-E) that represent intentional behavior but that varied in relative autonomy. For example, attending social events in
Bangladeshi culture is a leisure activity that is enjoyed, integrated into the fabrics of the culture and found to be meaningful. This is why the motivation towards the activity has been internalized to a large extent with the behavior allowing a certain degree of autonomy. Motivations sharing similar characteristics therefore were labeled as integrated regulation (IR-E) based on self-determination theory (SDT) discussed earlier in the literature review. On the other hand, passing time, releasing stress, coping with daily stress, avoiding boredom, being free from obligation, escaping from reality, relaxing, and achieving personal growth are all personally important to the survivors and appeared to be essential for their well-being after the tragedy. These motivations share the characteristics of identified regulation under extrinsic motivation and therefore depicted as (ID-E) in Table 6.1. Apart from the two more autonomous extrinsic motivations, few activities also projected the idea of extrinsic introjected motivation (INT-E) in which behaviors are performed to avoid guilt or anxiety or to attain ego enhancement.

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), people are motivated to demonstrate ability in order to maintain feelings of self-worth. In this study, the skill of bargaining was found to be an internally driven motivation for shopping in which the eight survivors experienced immense satisfaction of winning a deal and felt competent. Another example to illustrate the idea of labeling the motives to participate is through the activity of reading, which was not a very sought after leisure pursuit but nevertheless worth mentioning to explain how motivations were identified across activities. Five survivors among the thirteen interviewees mentioned that they read to seek enjoyment and to escape from reality. To seek enjoyment is an internally motivating feeling where an individual can enjoy the activity for the activity’s sake and
therefore marked as (I), as an intrinsic motivation. To escape from reality also indicates motivation to meet an innate psychological need, which can also be labeled as (I). Four survivors chose reading as a leisure pursuit and they wanted to be a part of this activity because it was an activity they chose for themselves without any external intervention. Three survivors were motivated to read in order to gain knowledge that can lead to personal growth, which was both of personal importance and met the innate need for competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The former motive to choose reading as a leisure activity thus can be labeled as intrinsically motivating while the latter one of having personal importance falls under extrinsic motivation with identified regulation (ID-E). Using this rationale, the following table depicts the reported motives for choosing particular leisure activities by the survivors.
TABLE 6.1: Motivation for Leisure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leisure Activity</th>
<th>Motives</th>
<th># of Respondent</th>
<th>Type of Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music (N=13)</td>
<td>To pass time</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exercising choice</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To reflect on life</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time with family (N=13)</td>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To feel connected</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To pass time</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>IR-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To find a sense of normalcy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>I/INR-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching movies (N=13)</td>
<td>Seek enjoyment</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Releasing stress</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoiding boredom</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To pass time</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek fantasy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Escape from reality</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To feel inspired</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I/IR-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending social events organized by ASF (N=12)</td>
<td>To be connected</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>I/IR-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To enjoy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To make new friends</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>I/ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To spend quality time</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time with friends (N=12)</td>
<td>To feel a sense of belonging</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>I/IR-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To enjoy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To cope with stress</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exercising choice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV (N=12)</td>
<td>To pass time</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To enjoy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To Escape from reality</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>I/INR-E</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoiding boredom</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To relax</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Releasing stress</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exercising choice</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending family events (N=11)</td>
<td>To enjoy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To feel normal</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>IR-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To relax</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To connect with past experience</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>IR-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To have stronger relationships</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freely chosen</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Activity</td>
<td>Motives</td>
<td># of Respondent</td>
<td>Type of Motivation</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shopping (N=10)</strong></td>
<td>Find enjoyment</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To escape</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connect to past</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To socialize</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To find a good bargain</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>INT-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exercising choice</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To find things they need</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>INT-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traveling outside the city or spending time outdoors (N=10)</strong></td>
<td>To enjoy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Escape from daily life</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To feel a sense of freedom</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be close to the nature</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To feel relaxed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To feel spirituality</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connecting with others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>I/ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteering (N=10)</strong></td>
<td>To enjoy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To find meaning in life</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To exercise one’s skill</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>INT-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To give back to the society</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connecting with others</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To feel competent</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>IND-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To make a difference</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practicing religion (N=8)</strong></td>
<td>Finding inner peace</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek sense of contentment with present condition</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To cope with stress</td>
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<td>ID-R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be a better Muslim</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>IR-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To seek spirituality</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exercising choice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singing (N=8)</strong></td>
<td>Sense of freedom</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make new friends</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To escape from reality</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learn a new skill</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To seek new experience</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To find a sense of achievement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To coping with negative feeling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>INR-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exercising choice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recollecting own thoughts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning a new language (N=5)</strong></td>
<td>Learn a new skill</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal growth</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To seek new experience</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>IR-E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.2 was developed identifying the significant types of motivations across different leisure activities by the acid attack survivors. The following table was derived from the responses based on Table 6.1 in which different motives to participate were addressed relating to the leisure choices. Thus, the links between major motives for participation and activities were illustrated and grouped under the different types of motivation ranging from intrinsic to extrinsic. For example, 13 survivors mentioned seeking enjoyment as one of their motives to participate in twelve different types of leisure activities (e.g., watching movies, attending social events sponsored by ASF, watching TV, attending family events, spending time with friends, travelling, volunteering, shopping, singing, reading books and playing in outdoors). In total, 94 responses were tied to the motive for seeking enjoyment making it the major motive for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leisure Activity</th>
<th>Motives</th>
<th># of Respondent</th>
<th>Type of Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading book (N=5)</td>
<td>Seek enjoyment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To escape from reality</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To pass time</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>ID-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freely chosen</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Growth/to gain knowledge</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>I or IR-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing outdoor sports (N=3)</td>
<td>To Enjoy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exercising choice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing skill</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ID-E/INT-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To experience a sense of challenge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative writing (poems, articles or story) (N=2)</td>
<td>Self-actualization</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieving a feeling of fulfillment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exercising choice/Sense of freedom</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To express emotions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal growth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>INT-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-reflection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
participation and were grouped under intrinsic motivation. This number was found after adding all the response on enjoyment across the activities from Table 6.1.

Among the significant motives for participation, three intrinsically motivated goals or motives with high responses are identified in Table 6: connect to others, to feel a sense of belonging, and exercising choice. Fifty three, forty three and thirty nine responses across various leisure activities were respectively mentioned under the three reasons for participation. Different levels of extrinsic motivations were identified across different activities as well, but extrinsic motivation with identified regulation seemed to lead with most responses. The major types of extrinsic motivation were explained earlier in this chapter. Motives to pass time, escape from reality and to relax had the maximum number of responses from the survivors as reasons to participate. These more autonomous forms of extrinsic motivation held personal importance and were consciously valued by most survivors. Therefore, ‘passing time’ labeled as extrinsic motivation with identified regulation was an important factor for participation in activities such as listening to music, watching movies and TV, spending time with family and reading books. Escape from reality was also valued by the survivors and this is why, escaping is what they sought while reading, watching movies and TV, travelling or spending time outdoors and tow few through singing. Extracts from the interviews reflecting these activities will further highlight the importance of the motives and emotions in the following section. Motives that had fewer than 6 responses in total were not included in the table.
**TABLE 6.2: Major Motives for Participation across Leisure Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motive (Total number of responses)</th>
<th>Related Activities (Number of respondents reporting motive/Number of respondents doing activity)</th>
<th>Type of Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Seek enjoyment (94)                | Watching movies (13/13)  
Attending social event sponsored by ASF (12/12)  
Watching TV (11/12)  
Attending family events (11/11)  
Spending time with friends (10/12)  
Traveling outside the city or spending time outdoors (10/10)  
Volunteering (10/10)  
Shopping (10/10)  
Singing (8/8)  
Reading books (5/5)  
Playing outdoors (3/3) | Intrinsic |
| Connecting to others (53)          | Spending time with family (13/13)  
Attending social events by ASF (12/12)  
Volunteering (9/10)  
Shopping (8/10)  
Singing (8/8)  
Traveling outside the city or spending time outdoors (3/10) | Intrinsic |
| To pass time (51)                  | Listening to music (13/13)  
Watching movies (12/13)  
Watching TV (12/12)  
Spending time with family (10/13)  
Reading books (4/5) | Identified (Extrinsic) |
| Sense of belonging (43)            | Spending time with family (13/13)  
Spending time with friends (12/12)  
Singing (8/8)  
Volunteering (3/10) | Intrinsic |
| Escape from reality (42)           | Reading book (5/5)  
Watching movies (13/13)  
Watching TV (11/12)  
Traveling outside the city or spending time outdoors (7/10)  
Singing (6/8) | Identified (Extrinsic) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motive (Total number of responses)</th>
<th>Related Activities (Number of respondents reporting motive/Number of respondents doing activity)</th>
<th>Type of Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To relax (46)</td>
<td>Listening to music (12/13)</td>
<td>Identified (Extrinsic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watching TV (10/12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attending family events (9/11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spending time with friends (9/12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travelling outside the city or spending time outdoor (6/10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercising Choice (39)</td>
<td>Listening to music (12/13)</td>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping (7/10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watching TV (5/12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding boredom (23)</td>
<td>Watching movies (12/13)</td>
<td>Identified (Extrinsic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watching TV (11/12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect to past experiences (21)</td>
<td>Attending family event (9/11)</td>
<td>Identified (Extrinsic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping (8/10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Releasing stress (21)</td>
<td>Watching movies (13/13)</td>
<td>Identified (Extrinsic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watching TV (8/8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel competent (21)</td>
<td>Volunteering (8/10)</td>
<td>Introjected Regulation (Extrinsic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping (8/10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singing (3/5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning a new language (2/5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To cope with stress (20)</td>
<td>Spending time with friends (9/12)</td>
<td>Identified (Extrinsic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice religion (8/8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To find a sense of normalcy (20)</td>
<td>Spending time with family (10/13)</td>
<td>Integrated Regulation (Extrinsic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attend family event (10/11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Growth (18)</td>
<td>Volunteering (10/10)</td>
<td>Identified (Extrinsic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning a new language (5/5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel a sense of freedom (17)</td>
<td>Singing (8/8)</td>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travelling outside the city or spending time outdoor (7/10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creative writing (2/2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2 continues in next page........
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motive (Total number of responses)</th>
<th>Related Activities (Number of respondents reporting motive/Number of respondents doing activity)</th>
<th>Type of Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To reflect on life (12)</td>
<td>Listening to music (12/12)</td>
<td>Identified (Extrinsic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn new skill (11)</td>
<td>Learning a new language (5/5)</td>
<td>Identified (Extrinsic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singing (6/8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To seek new experiences (9)</td>
<td>Singing (5/8)</td>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning a new language (4/5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To seek a sense of contentment (8)</td>
<td>Practice religion (8/8)</td>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To find inner peace (8)</td>
<td>Practice religion (8/8)</td>
<td>Integrated Regulation (Extrinsic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make new friends (6)</td>
<td>Attending social event by ASF (6/7)</td>
<td>Identified (Extrinsic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leisure experience often has been operationalized with emotion or mood. Studies done by Hull and Stewart (1995) and Lee, Dattilo, and Howard (1994), found emotion and mood of leisure participants change based on the situations they are in. Reflecting on these ideas and on Tinsley and Tinsley’s (1986) findings, leisure experience was investigated through different types of emotions associated with each leisure activity in Table 6.3. Different subjective aspects of leisure experience like enjoyment, happiness, feeling peaceful, free and relaxed, sense of contentment, and feeling a sense of belonging were associated with various leisure activities of their choice. The survivors mentioned experiencing these emotions across different leisure activities. They seem to report these emotions especially when they experienced satisfaction with these activities. Although the study could have reported the different level of emotions marked as good, pleasant, mild, but, I limited the exploration identifying the types only.
While studying women’s leisure, Henderson et al. (1989) found different type of situations prompted positive emotions, meanings and varied sources of pleasure. Considering the idea of positive emotion, I found the survivors to choose activities that held possibilities to evoke such emotions. The activities and motives were identified earlier under Table 6.1 and Table 6.2, and the positive emotions rising from the leisure activities are illustrated in Table 6.3.

While coding the transcriptions, I found the need to highlight the significant activities mentioned by the survivors. The popular leisure choices thus were grouped under individual and social context in which the survivors identified for whom they participated at certain leisure activities. The major contexts for leisure participation thus were identified as for self and for affiliation.

The following table therefore delineates the leisure activities that were found to be significant among the majority of the participants. Activities that have been mentioned by less than five survivors were not added to the list. It was interesting to find that the activities requiring some level of self-determination and chosen entirely for self for example- sports, creative writing, and reading were meaningful to a very insignificant numbers of survivors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Categories of Emotion</th>
<th>Emotion reported by # of respondents</th>
<th>With whom</th>
<th>Leisure focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music (N=13)</td>
<td>Enjoyment and pleasure</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Leisure for self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel free</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel relaxed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music connecting to life</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time with family (N=13)</td>
<td>Feel a sense of belongingness</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Leisure as affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel sense of connectedness</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel normal</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel a sense of comfort</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching Movies (N=13)</td>
<td>Feeling stress free</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Self and with others</td>
<td>Leisure for self and affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel excitement</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel free</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entertained/fun/enjoyment</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experience timelessness</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel inspired</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending social events organized by ASF (N=12)</td>
<td>Enjoyment/fun</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>With others</td>
<td>Leisure for affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel a sense of connectedness</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel a sense of belongingness</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel a sense of excitement</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time with friends (N=12)</td>
<td>Feel normal</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>Leisure as affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of connectedness</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel happy and cheerful</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel stress free</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel relaxed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV (N=12)</td>
<td>Feel happy and cheerful</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Individual and with others</td>
<td>Leisure for self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel disengaged from reality</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel comfortable</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experience Timelessness</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel normal</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel relaxed</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel in control</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending family events (N=11)</td>
<td>Feel happy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>With others</td>
<td>Leisure for affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel a sense of belongingness</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel a sense of connectedness</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel relaxed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel normal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although most survivors had positive experiences while participating in leisure activities of their choices, the experience of enjoyment were not always felt unanimously by everyone in activities like shopping, and taking a trip outside the city or going out. A few survivors reported experiencing negative feeling like being anxious, stressed, self-conscious, lack of commitment.
and being indifferent to some of the activities. For example, shopping was viewed as a stressful activity for three survivors as they reported feeling self-conscious amidst those places. While probing further, the survivors explained shopping in public places made them more aware of their disfigurement as people kept staring at them causing further discomfort. Under these circumstances, the inherent motivations towards participation were not rewarded through positive emotion. This is why, some of the survivors kept themselves away from certain leisure activities that failed to provide a sense of satisfaction through positive emotions. These negative experiences were later discussed and identified under constraints to leisure participation. Despite the negative feeling associated with some leisure pursuits; the following section explains some of the positive experiences under the three specific aspects based on the reason behind their participation.

**Leisure as time for self.**

Among twelve largely reported leisure activities by the survivors, three activities were identified to be participated solely for self, while four other activities were participated both for self and for others. The need to take some time for one’s self has been identified as a positive leisure experience by many leisure researchers (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1991; Freysinger, 1988; Shaw, 1985). Although Bangladesh shares its characteristics with a collective society in which individual welfare is not among the top priority, a few survivors did pursue leisure activities to satisfy their individual need to certain extent. While asking how they spent their leisure time, some of the survivors of acid attack acknowledged activities like singing, listening to music, watching TV, and praying as their top leisure preferences. Watching movies and TV,
listening to music, and travelling outside the city or spending time outdoors were activities that were found to be in the top priority list for the survivors evoking positive emotions like a sense of freedom, enjoyment, relaxation, timelessness, comfort and sense of excitement. These activities were followed by shopping, practicing religion and singing in which they felt happiness, pleasure, a sense of contentment and a sense of restoration. Overall, the time spent on these activities is the time when they can separate themselves from obligations and spend time either in contemplation or enjoy the freedom to participate in activities for themselves only. While expressing the importance of participating in leisure activity for self, one of the survivors stated, “During the day, I do need some time alone. This is the time when I listen to music and find hope within to continue with my life. Some music seems to absorb my pain, which is a very strong feeling”.

Following are some extracts from the interviews that support the importance of leisure for self. The extract below is from a joint interview with two survivors who also became best friends after arriving at the Acid Survivors Foundation. The two friends agreed to the interview only if they were interviewed together and seemed to feel more comfortable and relaxed in this setting. The following extract is from the part when both interviewees started to discuss watching movies as their leisure activity. Although they usually watched movies together, it was an activity they enjoyed for themselves allowing them to escape from the reality and gave them a chance to fantasize.

Extract 6.1: Both of us like to watch movies in the video. And also we have easy access to it and do not have to pay for anything. Munira Apa has many radios, and a video
recorder here at ASF. She told us that we can use it whenever we like. I love watching Hindi movies. Those movies are fun to watch. We get to listen to many nice songs and watch dances. I love movies with happy endings and sometime like imagining myself inside the movie (Shyly). Best things about watching a good movie is that we seem to forget all our daily problems for a while and get ourselves lost in that world. Oh... sometime we also imagine ourselves to be acting opposite the actors. We even fight on who is going to be the main heroine.

As discussed earlier in this section, listening to music was a common leisure activity among the survivors. More than half of the respondents also participated in singing not only for affiliation but also self. This was an activity that allowed the survivors to experience freedom, a sense of normalcy, relaxation, a sense of restoration and timelessness. The extract below reflects such personal sentiments from one of the survivors.

Extract 6.2: “Singing is like a medicine for me that rescues me from my sadness and pain. The time when Tina (her cousin who was also a victim of acid attack) was in Bangladesh, both of us used to sing different songs to make ourselves happy. And it really works! There is one special song that we both loved to sing. It is a Tagore song titled, “Amar Hiyar Majhey Lukiye Acho” (You were hiding inside my heart but I failed to see you). I love that song. It reflects my thoughts. Well... (Thinking) the song says that love is hidden inside the heart and the poet was not able to see it earlier. Love too is hidden inside my heart and that love for life is making us feel better each day. Before the accident we were normal Bangladeshi girls living a very ordinary life, but after the
accident we changed into girls who know how to fight for a cause and also for ourselves. There is a saying; every cloud has a silver lining. So now ...with hope and aspiration we are both aiming towards a better and meaningful life. Singing is a way I channel my positive energy and I also try to motivate others. After the death of Nasreen apa, I wanted to give up singing as she was the one who encouraged me to continue with the lesson. But while singing one of her favorite songs at a program, I was able to feel her presence again. So singing is helping me to overcome her loss through a deeper connection to my soul which I cannot explain. “

The above extract showed how singing helped the young woman regain her lost self-confidence and encouraged her to find meaning in life. Besides reading and singing during one’s own time, some of the survivors also found religion to help them relax, feel content and to find peace. Praying usually took place during the “me time”, even when they were at their working place. While praying, the girls found peacefulness, contentment and strength to hope for a better future. The following extract reflects the significance of praying which helped one of the survivors to become relaxed and rejuvenated.

Extract 6.3: “I am a Muslim woman and have strong faith on my religion. I pray five times a day. I wake up at 5am to pray and after praying I go about my daily chores. During the time of praying, I feel myself focused and connected to my creator and find the strength to start the day. It is like a meditation. I pray regularly and encourage others around me to pray. Praying to me is not an obligation but a way to be close to God in search of peace and contentment. I also read religious books and speak to others on how religion heals our heart and soul. Islam is our religion and Allah told us to practice what
we preach. Therefore, we have to follow the right path. What we are getting out of it should not be our concern now. To me praying is something spiritual in which we cannot always observe the outcome. Personally, praying helps me to accept my situation without questioning. It is my belief. Praying to me is not just a duty as a Muslim but also a process to keep my mind at peace. I feel relaxed, calmer, more prepared to face the day.”

Although reading is a favorite pastime among the educated Bangladeshis, only five survivors reported to pursue this activity during their leisure. One of the reasons for insignificant number of survivors finding reading as a pleasurable leisure activity may be due to their lack of education. As this activity was not significant among majority of the survivors, reading as a leisure activity for self was excluded from Table 6.2. But as the information may hold some possibilities to enhance satisfaction through future interventions, I added an extract from one of the survivors who enjoyed reading for herself.

Extract 6.4: “Mostly I love to read books. I still do read a lot whenever I get some free time. It is something I also enjoyed to do before the acid attack. I do like listening to music too but not all the time. Reading has always been my preferable leisure activity when I am by myself. I love books as I can learn so much from reading. Not just about life but also about different parts of the world, different culture, and different people. When I read a book, I experience being a part of it and become one of those characters from the book. Reading book is a habit for me and every night I cannot go to sleep without reading at least few pages (smile). I wish I had more time to read books of my own choices...which are mostly biographical books. Reading about how individuals
struggled and fought to voice out their beliefs and change their lives inspires me. These stories really encourage me to move ahead and make something out of myself.”

The extract above reflected the survivor’s penchant for reading. As she had been working full-time, and had very little time to pursue her personal leisure interest of reading more books of her choice, she seemed to value this activity most. This idea was also reflected by Cyba (1992) where the researcher found employed women having the least leisure, but valued it most.

The four extracts above portrayed different outcomes from leisure participation for self with few or no concerns for others. The leisure activities like watching movies, singing, traveling, praying and the least significant activity of reading seemed to share different leisure like qualities that allowed the survivors to find positive emotions that are contributing to shape their lives after the tragic incident. Some survivors also cherished the time they spent watching different soaps in Television. They felt completely absorbed with the shows and enjoyed the programs as they reflected situations clustered around family, motherhood and romance. These findings were consistent with various other leisure studies on women participants that found enjoyment can be attained from activities that allow one to relax or be themselves (Freysinger, 1988; Henderson & Bialeschki, 1991).

Beside the activities mentioned above, some activities during their leisure were pursued for personal growth and development. Motivations towards achieving personal growth from the activities were reported by some of the survivors in volunteering, reading, learning a new language, playing sport and in creative writing. The idea of autonomy (Samuel, 1995) is thus
reflected through these activities where few survivors were able to act according for their own interest. The survivors especially who were married and mothers hesitated to identify leisure activities that satisfied their personal need only. But with further probing, except for two individuals, everyone managed to identify few autonomous leisure activities that provided them enjoyment and opportunities to express themselves. This finding was consistent with Freysinger (1985) and Henderson et al., (1996) in which they identified autonomous or self-determined leisure activities to provide experiences that can free women from socially imposed roles and allowed them to pursue leisure activities based on personal interests. But comparing the motives discussed earlier in the tables, participating in activities for personal interest was not significantly ranked high among most survivors.

Following are few extracts from young women who were involved in leisure activities that allowed them show competence and control. One of the girls at ASF enjoyed writing short stories and articles whenever she found some free time. She even published few of her articles and stories in local newspapers and discovered the experience to be rewarding. It was an activity she enjoyed for herself and she knows that she has the skill for it. According to Stebbins (1992), activities with such level of commitment and involving special skills or knowledge show certain characteristics of serious leisure. The following extracts thus illustrate some examples of self-determined or autonomous leisure activities that seemed to be at the center of defining who they are.

*Extract 6.5:* “Yes I do write. I often write stories, articles for the local newspapers. They were published regularly. It is a different kind of enjoyment seeing my name in the
printed media and knowing others are reading my writings. I wish I had more time to write as my writings reflect the true me. I am glad and thankful to God for giving me this skill to express my thought in words and will continue to do so as it is a part of who I am.”

Another survivor involved religiously participates in the singing class and loves to sing at programs and whenever she has some free-time to herself. She too finds this activity to match her skill and as an activity that has become central to her core existence building her identity as a singer. She participates in this activity not for the sake of others but for herself in which she feels empowered and free from societal pressures. The following extract illustrated her level of commitment to the activity where she willingly invested not only money but also her time and effort. The singing instructor also identified her passion towards this activity acknowledging her dedication. According to him, whereas other survivors are mostly pursuing singing as a casual leisure activity and to find an opportunity to spend time with other, Shukti possesses a special sense of music and rhythm that drives her to master the skill.

Extract 6.6: “I bought a Harmonium (Musical Instrument) with my savings and with the help from Nasreen apa. I am paying back the money through installment to her, so that I know that my Harmonium is not a charity but a thing of my passion. Now I can practice singing at my home and do not have to wait till Saturday. It is a wonderful feeling being able to play the music and singing along with it. I feel so free and happy that I do not have to depend on Sadi (Instructor) for playing the music for me.”
Another survivor I interviewed took the opportunity to enroll herself in a foreign language class to master the English language. This class is not only building her skill in a foreign language but also she is having fun during the learning process.

*Extract 6.7:* “Recently a foreign colleague of ours has initiated to hold a communication training class in which she is teaching us on how to communicate in English. I think learning to speak English is very important, especially now-a-days for any profession. Not only for profession, but also I am having access to so much information either through the net or through books. I can enjoy English movies as well. I am really enjoying those classes and like to learn new things and learning the ways to converse in English is really both interesting and helpful. I feel that scopes can open from me when I can understand the world better. Previously, I hesitated to communicate with foreign delegates, but now I am getting comfortable and also confident to converse. I am able to make new friends from different countries. I really like the way she is teaching us through pictures, activities and videos. It is a very animated and fun class where we get to see, talk and freely converse despite our weaknesses. The class is really fun and the time of our lessons fly so quickly.”

Although the extracts only represent the responses of very few survivors, I believed these extracts highlighted the importance of these leisure and leisure-like activities that can lead to psychological development and personal well-being. The activities mentioned by the survivors promoted or encouraged sense of freedom, autonomy, relatedness, and competence; which are all
necessary elements to experience leisure through self-determined behavior addressed by various researchers (Freysinger, 1988, Gunter & Gunter, 1980; Iso-Ahola, 1999; Neulinger, 1982).

**Leisure as affiliation.**

Cheek & Burch (1976) found leisure to occur in social spaces where primary relationships are developed. Based on this understanding; dimensions on work, family, friends and community were brought into focus as significant spheres of life in which interactions take place and relationships are formed. As personal value of leisure may not necessarily be applicable to all culture (Fox and Trillo, 1994), it was imperative for this study to emphasize on the different social dimensions surrounding the acid attack survivors that gave meaning to their leisure. Leisure as affiliation seemed to play an important role in the lives of the survivors after the attack. Most survivors in one way or another preferred leisure activities that involved others and also identified those activities as satisfying and enjoyable.

Researchers found affiliation or relationality to be a significant source of enjoyment (Henderson, et al., 2007; Hunter & Whitson, 1991) and table 6.3 supported this notion for the survivors as well. 100% respondents enjoyed spending time with their families and found a sense of connectedness and belongingness through the family affiliations. Kelly and Kelly (1994) too found women; especially mothers, placing high value on leisure activities with family. The following extracts made an attempt to provide a brief picture on the value given to time spent with family by a survivor who is a mother of a five years old daughter.
Extracts 6.8: “I don’t think about my happiness now. My happiness lies with my
daughter’s happiness. It is amazing how my daughter treats me. The children are never
scared to see my face and love me the way I am. My facial distortion does not bother
them at all. I feel normal again when I am with my daughter. I enjoy the way she hugs me
and misses me. I especially like reading comics and watching cartoons in TV with my
daughter. We talk and laugh together while watching the cartoons. Both of us like the
Mina cartoon and also Tom and Jerry. I cannot explain how happy and full-filled I feel
when I am with my daughter who loves me without any condition.”

The emotions felt by the young mother can be supported with the view by Karsten (1995)
in which she found most homemakers viewing families to be most important in their lives and
did not distinguish family time from leisure time. Similarly, leisure experiences to most women
were identified as a means to enjoyment of valued relationship, which involved another family
member (Hunter & Whitson, 1991). These emotions were similar among most survivors despite
their marital status. Following are few more extracts that illuminated the importance of leisure
experience as affiliation for the survivors in Bangladeshi society across activities related to the
social aspects of leisure like spending time with family members, attending family events and
spending time with friends.

Extract 6.9: “I enjoy helping my mom at the kitchen before dinner time. If my brothers
are home, we enjoy spending time in long conversations. I really enjoy talking to my
brothers. Simply talking about different things at work or about friends can be very
relaxing. To tell you the truth, I look forward to this time after work in which we can get
together and talk. Unlike many brothers and sisters, we are pretty close and share
everything. And of course the feeling of having a family who understands me is a huge
mental support for me especially during the days when I am feeling down.”

Extract 6.10: “I don’t get to spend much time with my peers and friends. After office or
during weekends, I prefer to stay home or go out with my husband either to catch a movie
or visit our relatives. I enjoy spending time with my husband’s family. Whenever both of
us can manage a time, we visit them. My in-laws are wonderful people and appreciate me
all the time. I do love to cook for my husband and he joins to help me often. I enjoy the
holidays when I get to entertain both our families and have fun time. I am really happy
now with my life as I think I am lucky to find a husband who understand me and think the
way I do”.

The above extract showed how a married young woman’s social life in Bangladesh tends
to be focused on her husband’s and find enjoyment spending considerable amount of time with
her in-laws and husband. Green and Hepburn (1988) also found this to be a fact among most
married women, as they often tend to develop interest surrounding her husband. But it was
interesting to find that both survivors valued their leisure activities as they chose it based on their
preference and enjoyment and not through obligation. Special religious and national holidays
were also reported to be the time and place for celebrating the bonds between friends and family.
The following extracts portray the fun aspect of shopping for the special occasion with friends
and the later extracts allows us to see how a national holiday created a venue to experience
pleasure from the component of leisure through affiliation.
Extract 6.11: “Oh! I really love those breaks. Although we do not go to our home town as most of my families are now staying in Dhaka, but it is fun here. We get to do so many things. During the Eid celebrations, after my father and brothers return from their morning Eid Prayer, we have breakfast together and then go out all together to my relative’s places. You know how fun it is to buy new cloths for Eid with your sisters and friends. Selecting cloths, design, and buying accessories to match the dress. I can spend hours after hours doing shopping. Of course, I do with my friends and sisters and surely not with my brothers (Laughing). You know how guys are!!”

The extract indicates that relational leisure or leisure as affiliation is not only limited within family members but can be developed or experienced with peers, friends and neighbors (Henderson et al., 1996). The above extracts showed how spending time with friends and other relatives brought joy and happiness to the survivor. These are moments that are anticipated by most survivors as they seemed to build happy memories. The following extracts highlighted some of those experiences in which spending time with friends was anticipated and became a moment of satisfying fun-filled pursuits.

Extract 6.12: “I enjoy celebrating the Bengali New Year as I get to spend wonderful time with my friends. Every year, the girls from Acid Survivors Foundation perform songs, drama, poetry recitation and plays at ASF to welcome the New Year. We all rehearse for the program and wear the traditional white and red bordered Sari. It is an exhilarating feeling to be able to sing the song, “Esho hei Baishakh.. Esho Esho” (A song welcoming
the Bengali New Year) especially with my close friends. My mother knows how I love entertaining my friends in our house. That is why; she always cooks all traditional Bengali food during that day and we invite my friends to my place. I really love that day. And the atmosphere is so uplifting with all the concerts going on and vendors selling tasty Bengali food everywhere. Laughing and smiling people all around."

One of the singing instructors also pointed out the importance of affiliation among the survivors. Realizing this need, one of the female social advocates who worked for deprived women of Bangladesh took personal initiative to start a music class at her own house. Besides learning a new skill, the girls also found an opportunity to connect with each other through a shared activity during this class. All the girls and young women enrolled in the class made the effort to be in the class, which was usually held in Saturdays. No matter what plan they had, the singing class became a central hub for some of the survivors in which they were able to unwind themselves and encouraged each other to move ahead with life. The interactions and relationships build through the singing class became central to their leisure experience and as Henderson et al., (1996) earlier found in their study that some of these experiences of affiliation can deemed to be more important that the activities themselves. Twelve respondents out of thirteen reported the social events organized by ASF allowed them to feel a sense of connectedness with the other survivors. ASF also organized various cultural events showcasing “Prothom Sur” the singing class and all eight survivors who belonged to the class experienced a sense of connection and belongingness through these activities. They also seemed to cope better as a group who shares a common leisure pursuit. The following extract portrays the observation
of the singing instructor who succinctly addressed the importance of this particular experience which helped the survivors to bond with each other.

Extract 6.13: ”Listening to music and being able to sing have strong healing power apu (Addressed me as a sister). It allows one to grow and find one’s self. Even if one may not become a singer, just having the scope to sing can provide great enjoyment. It is so beautiful when they all sing together, smile at each other while singing. One important thing is that the girls became more close to each other as a unit and they know that they belong here surrounded by loving people. They are proud to be introduced as the girls from “Prothom Sur”. They bonded so well and became friends and sisters who provide strength to each other. If someone is sad, than we all make the effort to make her feel better by singing her favorite songs or by chatting. So it is a place they all come when they are down or when they need some mental support from people who understand them.”

The extract below further highlights the significance of relational leisure activities that provided a sense of community for the survivors in which one of the survivors found camaraderie through her leisure pursuits. The following extract also indicated the importance of gaining positive feeling from the appreciation by the people around her and the sense of caring rather than competing against each other. Deem (1986) also found women’s leisure needs to be appreciated within their social context that resulted in solidarity and enhanced spirit of friendship and cooperation.
Extract 6.14: “At first I was shocked to see my name as a participant. But with the encouragement from my family and friends, I decided to take part in the contest. At the singing class, everyone chose appropriate songs for me, the instructor is giving private lessons while the girls gladly sacrificed their singing time slot for me. They had so much faith in me and that is one of the most rewarding experiences for me to see so many people cared for me. Even if I do not get selected, I have realized how much faith they have on me and how much they all love me. During the day of my selection, Rebecca apa came to wish me good luck and even bought food and drinks for me. It was the most wonderful experience. I was very nervous and the judges tried to make it easy for me. They gave me five chances and even though I was not selected for this term, they told me that I would be ready for the 2007 contest with few more practice and they did tell me that I do have the potential to become a singer. So I am happy with that.”

Certain leisure activities like social events, holidays and other social gathering were therefore identified by most survivors as enjoyable, worthwhile, and highly anticipated leisure pursuits that allowed them to gain a sense of normalcy. Along this line, Fox and Trillo (1994) also identified some cultures in the world to value such types of collective or relational leisure more than personal leisure. This idea was reflected within the Bangladeshi culture as well and especially among the survivors of Acid attack who placed higher valued on the time spent with friends and family more than the time spent for personal pleasure and enjoyment. Thus, significance of relational leisure was reflected on Table 6.3 in which the majority of the participants reported to find positive emotions within activities that included others. Detail discussion on how participation in relational leisure type activities benefitted the survivors to
collectively cope with their daily stress will be addressed later in this chapter under benefits of leisure.

Although the survivors despite their appearance and disabilities managed to experience leisure within certain activities of their choices; like most Bangladeshi women they too experienced barriers to participate in activities of their choices. The conservative and traditional nature of Bangladeshi culture limited the participation in leisure activities mostly to home or within their circle of friends and family members. Most survivors had to either limit their participation or were unable to participate due to various social, personal and environmental barriers. Keeping this information under consideration, the following section made an attempt to understand leisure experience in respect to the survivors’ perception of constraints to participate.

**Leisure Constraints**

The previous section of this chapter addressed how the acid attack survivors from Bangladesh experienced various types of leisure activities and their motives for participating. As discussed in the chapter five, besides the cultural context dominating their choice of participation, the activities they chose to participate were based on the available knowledge, convenience, affordability or skills they have. In order to better understand their experience in leisure participation, it was crucial to identify the existing leisure constraints that may play a significant role during their selection of leisure activities (e.g., Jackson, 1991).

The following section therefore addresses the second part of the second research question focusing on leisure constraints experienced by the Acid Attack Survivors in Bangladesh. I found
it easier to analyze the constraints to leisure participation considering two viewpoints. The first section addressed leisure constraints not only based on the three traditional constraints (interpersonal, intrapersonal, structural constraints) proposed by Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991), but also addresses the cultural constraints that was added later by Chick and Dong (2005). The concluding section on constraints analysis illustrated how some of these constraints are negotiated by the survivors for their leisure involvement (part 3 of the second research question). Apart from the three types of constraints, I found the need to add the concept of cultural constraints within the study that emerged as a significant constraint in Bangladeshi context and discussed under cross-cultural studies conducted by Chick and Dong (2005). The negotiation of leisure constraints cannot be ignored as it paved the way for the final section of this chapter on how the survivors experiencing benefits of leisure despite the experienced constraints.

**Types of constraints.**

Every individual experiences constraints to leisure participation to some extent and at some aspects of life. The study made an attempt to identify some of the constraints experienced by the acid survivors of Bangladesh and found interpersonal, intrapersonal, structural, and cultural types of constraints to influence their leisure behavior and choices. Although the constraints are discussed separately, some of the constraints seemed to be interconnected to each other and were subsumed within the categories.
**Intrapersonal.** Intrapersonal types of constraints involve psychological conditions such as personality factors, attitudes or mood that are internal to the individual (Crawford, et al., 1991). The acid attack victims survived a traumatic life experience, which impacted their overall perception towards life and perception on themselves. Participating in activities that were taken for granted before the attack either became limited or ended up in non-participation that resulted from post-event stress, depression, alienation, lack of self-esteem and often a sense of loss. These characteristic of constraints were also termed as a static characteristic associated with the minority status of individual within the general population (Stodoloska, 1998). The physical disfigurement caused by the attack left most survivors self conscious about their appearance in public and kept them away from various social leisure pursuits. The following two extract depicts such scenario:

**Extract 6.15:** “I do not like going out, especially in public places. Although many survivors do go shopping at various shopping complexes or sometime plan a trip to the parks from after or before the singing lessons; I feel uncomfortable doing those things. Whenever we go out, people stare at us and even though it has been three years since my attack; I still feel uncomfortable.”

**Extract 6.16:** ” I would love to go to the parlor like so many normal young women, but I feel I don’t deserve to go there where women enjoy making themselves look beautiful. I don’t have my beauty anymore and would feel out of place in a beauty parlor. What will they say when I ask them to make me beautiful? Either it will be pitiful or a joke. So why bother...”
The social environment and circumstances thus can sometime add stress to their lives and act as intrapersonal constraint that can limit the survivors’ from enjoying normal pleasures of life. The following extract also shows how the society’s attitude towards disfigured individual exacerbated the psychological distress and impacted one of the survivors from freely participating at a social activity in her community.

Extract 6.17: “When I returned to my village after my initial treatment....I was often shunned by neighbors, feared by kids, pregnant mothers avoided me believing that they might have deformed kids if I am around. So I avoided taking part in any social gatherings or occasion. I felt that my only identity my face is lost... I felt I have lost myself and lost all privileges to go back to my normal life”.

In Bangladesh, most leisure activities for women centers around social activities like spending time with friends and family, visiting relatives and neighbors for social occasions. This is why; the negative and uninformed attitudes shown by people towards the survivors’ impact leisure participation by creating discomfort, self-consciousness and anxiety. Besides initiating negative emotion among the survivors under the category of intrapersonal constraint, the community’s negative attitude towards disfigured individuals can be observed as an example of cultural constraint that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Interpersonal constraint: As discussed earlier in this chapter, the social dimension in the lives of the acid attack survivors plays a significant role in facilitating leisure experience. Not only can these relational elements act as conduit to leisure, but also they can sometime restrain or
limit leisure participation. These interpersonal constraints are experienced through interaction with others such as family members, friends, coworkers and neighbors (Crawford et al., 1991). Therefore, the following extracts depict some of these leisure constraints that emerged from lack of company, or companion’s influence on leisure participation that impacts the decision making process in leisure participation.

Extract 6.18: “I do enjoy going out for a change that can keep me away from the daily hectic life. I like nature and everything about it, which I do not get to appreciate within the city which is now nothing more than a concrete jungle. But unfortunately, I am unable to go out by myself as I often do not find friends or family members available to go out with me. In a rainy or cloudy day, sometime I wish to go to the park for a walk. But again can’t do it as it would not look proper for a girl to take a walk in the park all by herself.”

The statement above indicates the existence of interpersonal constraint accompanied by the cultural norms in which society expects a women or a girl to be accompanied when she is going out. The extract below provides another example of interpersonal constraint where the survivor was unable to pursue an outdoor leisure activity because of social prejudices placed on how a young woman should act and do.

Extract 6.19: “I loved cycling when I was young and I still would enjoy the activity, but as I grew up, cycling publicly was no longer possible as people would stare at me. My
parents also advised me against it. As I had been the only girl cycling in the neighborhood, I didn’t have much to say for it. So I don’t cycle anymore.”

In the male dominated society, most girls and women do not feel comfortable participating at an outdoor activity like cycling and this is why; even when the survivor had preference towards certain outdoor activity, she was unable to continue participating due to social pressure and lack of company. The social elements surrounding the survivors therefore seemed to impose socially constructed, stereotyped gendered view that bars a woman from taking part in activity of her choice.

Structural constraints. Stokols (1992) found both the physical and the social environment to influence wellbeing. Interpersonal constraints discussed earlier showed the importance of social environment in which lack of companion or support from the social environment can discourage or prohibit certain leisure activities. Along this line, structural constraints emerging from the physical environment were also found to influence leisure participation. According to Crawford, et al. (1991), structural barriers are factors that intervene between leisure preferences or choices and actual participation. For example, these factors could be lack of opportunities, time, and lack of security, inadequate facilities or the cost of activities. In Bangladesh, women experience these types of constraints in their daily lives and the survivors of acid attack seemed to report similar forms of constraints, which are sometime magnified due to their disfigurement. One of the survivors stated the following while answering to my question on participating in outdoor leisure activities.
Extract 6.20: “One year ago, after many requests, I finally managed to get ASF to buy Badminton sets and arranged game day once a week at an empty ground near our office. With my effort, a temporary court was built and many survivors showed interest to play the game and were happy that I initiated this program. But we had to stop playing as we lost that place due to real estate development and afterwards not much encouragement was provided from the administration to initiate these types of activities.”

The above extract indicates how lack of infrastructure for the specific outdoor game became a constraint to participation even when the interest and skill were present among the survivors. Unfortunately, not much has been done to overcome this obstacle to participate. The following extract further highlights the presence of structural constraints that impacts other types of leisure involvement among the survivors.

Extract 6.21: “We do need one stationary place where we can hold the singing class without any interruptions. Sometime when Nasreen Apa’s husband is away or have programs at home; either we have to hold the class somewhere else or cancel it. This creates problems as many girls might not be able to get to the place due to the distance or convenience. Sometime we are unable to inform the girls in advance about these changes. Another problem is the time of the class. During Saturdays the class starts at 3pm and ends at 5 or 6:00pm as the instructor is only available during that time of the day. In winter time, this is a problem as it gets darker earlier and some of us have problem going home at night all by ourselves. Our parents get worried if we are late as we are girls, and travelling at night in public transportation for women is not safe due to
the possibilities of unwanted attentions. This is why; few of our friends had to drop the class. One of our friends also dropped the class last year when she got married and had other responsibilities toward her family.”

The extract above shows that the survivors not only experience structural constraints emerging from inadequate infrastructural support for recreation and leisure, but also face constraints due to lack of time, money and sense of security. The extract also supports the finding by Shaw and Henderson (2005) in which they noted the categories of structural, interpersonal and intrapersonal sometime tend to overlap each other. For example, interpersonal constraint (support from family), intrapersonal constraint of feeling insecure and inconvenience were all tied together within the structural constraint of having access to certain activities and thus can be difficult to distinguish. While addressing structural constraints the factor of cultural constraint cannot be ignored. Culture seemed to play an overarching role in this extract, as the issue of gender and appropriateness or expectations from women in Bangladesh was intertwined in most statements regarding constraints. All three major constraints mentioned above tend to be influenced by culture, especially within collectivist societies. According to Arab-Moghaddam et al., (2007) social prejudices seem to restrict women’s freedom to participate in certain leisure activities. This is why, the following segment on cultural constraint was added to this study to explained constraints which were difficult to label under the categories mentioned in the hierarchical model of leisure constraints (Crawford, et al., 1991).

Cultural constraints. The preceding discussion indicates how the gendered society of Bangladesh often constrains women’s experience to enjoy leisure to its fullest. Especially, these constraints can be greater for women who are often marginalized by society due to physical
disability or disfigurement. Britt (1988) reflected similar thoughts where he found that being a female and having disability in some cultures can place stigma upon stigma. Therefore, while addressing the different types of leisure constraints, Chick and Dong’s (2005) acknowledgement of cultural constraint helped me to explain the presence of cultural influence on leisure participation for the Bangladeshi female survivors of acid attack.

Culture refers to customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious or social group (Henderson & Ainsworth, 2003). Others have identified cultural constraints to include taboos, differing time perspectives, attitudes toward change, beliefs toward certain perspectives and people, decision-making styles and social disapproval on certain activities (Arab-Moghaddam, et al., 2007; Brightman, 1981). Elements of Bangladeshi culture have been discussed earlier in chapters one and five that can help readers to understand the significance of culture influencing the other three types of constraints discussed earlier.

The socially constructed ideas on gender in Bangladesh hence were observed to create such constraints that play significant role on the overall leisure experience. This is why, upon reflecting on Chick and Dong’s (2005) study on Asian culture, being born a female in Bangladesh may not only serve as an independent constraint but may result in influencing intrapersonal, interpersonal constraints and structural constraints for the survivors as discussed earlier. Therefore, considering the importance of culture on leisure participation especially in Bangladesh, the following extracts will portray its significance as a major constraint among the survivors. The first extract illustrates a constraint that emerged from the culturally imposed idea on gender. The interviews also found that viewpoints on gender fueled by religious beliefs did
play a role in constraining leisure participation of women and girls mostly within rural settings. One of the survivors stated the following when I asked her about her participation in outdoor games and sports.

Extract 6.22: "NO Apu. In villages after a certain age we girls are not allowed to play in the fields anymore. According to our parents, we are too grown up to indulge ourselves in sports and games. We cannot even go outside the house and spend time with our friends as people might say something bad against us. My parents are also religious minded and our religion does not permit mixing with boys other than one’s own family members after certain age. We are also not allowed to expose certain body parts in public while playing. This is why; we stopped playing with our neighbor’s sons as we became older. Now, we don’t have any places for us girls to hang out. So you can see that we were not in the liberty to enjoy playing outside like the boys did. It was a problem for me, but as all my girlfriends were experiencing the same thing growing up, it didn’t bother me as much. Afterwards, I was married early at the age of 18 and didn’t worry too much on playing outside anyway."

It became evident that the experience mentioned above was not an isolated phenomenon but very common among other survivors I interviewed. This response was similar to the findings of Fine and Asch (1988) who found women in general tend to experience more leisure constraints in societies under patriarchal culture. In this study, the survivors not only experienced the constraint because of their gender, but the dominance of cultural and religious views on women might have resulted into lack of places for the girls and women to experience leisure activities like sports and games. Structural constraints might have emerged due to the
existing cultural norms in which most women and girls are expected to stay at home or get involved in activities that discourage gender integrated interactions. It was also interesting to observe how the survivor internalized the constraint watching her girlfriends going through the similar experience while growing up. This fact made her accept the phenomenon to be a norm, which didn’t bother her even after acknowledging the existing difference between the treatment of boys and girls. Extracts below will further illustrate the presence of cultural constraint in Bangladesh.

Extract 6.23: “I loved cycling before I had the accident. Even before disfigurement, people stared at a girl cycling and found this to be an activity beyond a girl’s capacity, somewhat indecent and out of ordinary. I only cycled in front of our house. I do not have the scope, or the environment to do so anymore. If I ever decide to cycle now, people will stare at me as if they are accusing me of something or find my cycling as an amusement. The way the men, especially, stare, makes me uncomfortable. This is why; I have completely stopped cycling.”

The above extract therefore shows how the survivor restrained herself from participating in a leisure activity of her choice due to the fear of being judged or criticized by the society, especially by men. Besides identifying this constraint as cultural constraint, the culture also influenced the social aspect that resulted in interpersonal constraints that was discussed before. The following extract further proves how the stereotypical cultural values and ideas are creating further barrier to participation.
Extract 6.24: “Most activities offered here are for boys. Besides that..., when I grew up, all our games where labeled as girls’ game, while the boys had their own. Also we were never encouraged to mix freely with the boys. One part of me thinks that this traditional outlook may be good while another side of me thinks that it should not be like that. (Laughing). I still haven’t found the right answer. Maybe things could have been different if both boys and girls were seen as equal, but again Allah did build us differently. So, I do accept those traditional views.”

Extract 6.24 further supports how culture inhibited and sometime prohibited leisure participation and seemed to be a major constraint category affecting leisure choices among the survivors. Dong and Chick (2005) found culture to proscribe and prescribe human behaviors and indicated they influence both intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints. Not only did culture impact the social and psychological aspects that influenced the perception and participation in leisure activities but it also somewhat influenced the enactment of structural constraints barring the female population from actively participating in certain leisure activities. The data from this study also uncovered a similar phenomenon as Dong and Chick (2005) did by finding culture to be a constraint that is not easily subsumed by the intrapersonal, interpersonal or structural constraints and therefore, must be addressed separately.

**Constraints experienced by activities.**

During the extensive interviews, various types of constraints were discussed. Based on the findings from the study, the following diagram attempted to summarize only the major types
of constraints mentioned by the survivors among mostly participated leisure activities.

Previously, in this chapter, the different types of leisure preferences were discussed under the two major themes which were leisure for self and leisure for others.

Various types of activities ranging from home-based to cultural activities can be identified under these contexts. Categorizing the various types of leisure activities based on the settings, the following Table 6.4 encapsulates the perceived constraints experienced by the survivors within the activities. The numbers represents the responses on reporting constraints under each type of activities. The variations in constraint experienced within different types of leisure pursuits by Jackson (1994) seemed to be a simple way to provide a general overview of some major constraints experienced by the survivors in general setting. Time, lack of facility, money or transport, sense of security, lack of knowledge, lack of comfort, companionship, inadequate skills to take part at certain activities and the overall cultural influence were some of the major constraints that were reported by most survivors. Some activities such as playing team sports, hiking, riding bicycle was not at all considered as they were not seen as appropriate or suitable for a Bangladeshi girl.

Following is a list of activities identified by the survivors under each criterion:

a. **Home based:** spending time with family members, cooking or helping out at home, watching TV or video, listening to music, playing board games, reading, decorating home, relaxing, praying.

b. **Outdoors:** Going out for a trip or picnic, vacationing amidst natural setting, other activities outside home

c. **Physical activity/Sports:** team sports, athletics, swimming, bicycling
d. **Social:** Leisure time spent with family, relatives, friends and peers during social occasions inside or outside home (going to the movies together, eating out)

e. **Cultural:** Participating in cultural activities like festivals, practicing cultural activities of singing, writing, and art; attending musical concerts, art or photo exhibits.

Table 6.4: Variations in Constraint Dimensions by Type of Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Type of Constraints</th>
<th>Facility/Transport</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Security</th>
<th>Culture/Tradition</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Comfort</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural/Creative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homebased</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(N=13) The numbers indicate constraints experienced across different types of leisure activities.

Participation in physical and sports activities among Bangladeshi girls and women usually do not fall under popular leisure choices. With further probing, I found that only those girls and women who previously took part in sports before the attack experienced constraints to participation while most survivors had little or no interest to pursue sports as a leisure activity due to their learned gender role (Henderson, et al., 1991) prescribed by the society. Most survivors seemed to be more interested in home-based or social activities rather than physical activity and therefore participation in this activity indicated the least number of constraints. The majority of the survivors considered participation in sports as a male dominated area. Participation in physical recreational activities such as team sports and athletics thus decreased as girls, especially from rural areas, tend to reach their puberty. From a very young age, they had
to face other social expectations focused on taking care of the household and gaining skills that prepares a girl to be a better wife and mother. This societal norm seems to impact the overall participation in outdoor and physical activities as the survivors reported to experience the most number of constraints across these categories. Due to the explanation on how facility/transportation, time, culture, tradition, cost, level of comfort, skills and knowledge acted as barriers to participation, the culture seemed to influence both the interpersonal, intrapersonal and structural constraints in their life.

Therefore, Table 6.4 illustrates outdoor activities to be one of the major constraints in which most survivors experienced almost all types of constraints except lack of skills. I observed the excitement in taking part in an outdoor activity during a trip outside Dhaka city in which I took five survivors for an outdoor experience at one of the popular picnic spots. This was an experience many of had not had the opportunity to enjoy for some time due to lack of time, infrastructural support, companionship, lack of time and sense of security. Lack of comfort was also mentioned by the survivors as they felt stressed from the unwanted attention they got from people in public. Many parents, especially the male figures in Bangladeshi family like brothers, father and uncles, discourage girls and women to enjoy leisure time outside of home fearing the society’s condemnation on their female family members. During the trip, the survivors anticipated the day as it was preplanned and were discussed among themselves what to wear and what they would do. They also asked me to bring my camera for taking pictures. They were calling me to check whether the plan unchanged and I was able to sense the excitement in their voices. At the spot, despite the staring and uninvited remarks from young men and boys, the survivors were laughing, singing together and enjoying nature. This shows that creating
opportunities like these by addressing the major constraints could play a significant role to bring some aspects of normalcy and happiness in their lives.

Along this line, three survivors who previously travelled abroad after the acid attack for conferences and their reconstructive surgery mentioned finding fewer constraints whenever they chose to participate in certain leisure activities like shopping, visiting parks and other places in Europe. The constraints they experienced in those environments mostly emerged from cost of participating at certain activities (transportation, visit to museums, eating out and stay at hotels); and from inadequate knowledge and skills on certain leisure activities (swimming, dancing in parties). They enjoyed the comfort of walking freely in streets and in parks by themselves without feeling self-conscious. They felt compassion and support from the people who hosted their visits and didn’t feel discriminated against. Easy accessibility to various social places like movie theatre and parks were greatly appreciated by the survivors. Some of them wished Bangladesh to have similar environment that would have made them feel normal again. The following extract reflects one of the survivors experience in leisure while she stayed in a foreign country for three months.

Extract 6.25: “Three of us were walking down the streets of Spain by ourselves and not a single individual asked us awkward questions or continued to stare at us as we found people to do that in Bangladesh. We found most people to be very friendly and helpful. We didn’t feel judged or felt any discomfort there and felt safe walking alone even in the evening.”
Fewer constraints were experienced at home-based activities in which the survivors didn’t have to worry too much about having adequate skills, knowledge, infrastructural support, scrutiny from the society and feeling uncomfortable. The only constraints reported by some of the survivors were lack of time and to some extent money. As most survivors I interviewed worked full time, they wished to have more time available for family members and to catch on their readings. One young mother had to wait for the weekend to meet her daughter who lives outside Dhaka city and preferred to spend most of her leisure time with her daughter who was four years old at that time. Lack of partners was another insignificant constraint as two survivors were not able to play their usual board games after moving away from their family and leaving by themselves. Although home-based activities were highly preferred among most survivors because of convenience and accessibility, two young women did not rate home-based activity as a high priority. According to them, staying at home reminds them of the night when the incident took place. Instead of feeling comfort and security, the home environment evoked anxiety.

On the other hand, as discussed earlier under leisure for affiliation, most survivors preferred different social activities in which they felt a sense of belonging and enjoyment from connecting to others. Despite wanting to participate in various social leisure activities, the women tended to experience constraints rising from lack of transportation, time, and money (e.g., feeling the need to buy gifts at certain social occasions) and public scrutiny that create psychological discomfort and stress. Some survivors were also discouraged to participate in social occasions such as celebration of child birth and pre-marriage programs mainly because of the existing rural prejudices against disfigured individuals. Statements on such social prejudices that barred many survivors from attending various social occasions can also be labeled as
cultural constraints. Lack of security and safe transportation to attend social occasions in the evenings were also some of their major concern.

Most survivors showed interest to participate in cultural activities like playing or learning music, taking part in a play, art or dancing; attending art museums, plays or concerts. Activities like singing although was pursued informally by eight survivors I interviewed, nevertheless, the quality of the experience was reduced due to lack of time, money, transport, and inadequate security while commuting after dark. According to the participants, if they had enough time to practice or had the ability to own musical instruments, they could have been more focused on their singing. Some activities like dancing were not encouraged by some families due to their conservative background. Lack of time was once again a major constraint for one of the survivors who enjoyed writing articles, short stories and poems. Her commitment toward work, training and house-hold chores take away most time and leave her exhausted to pursue her writings. Lack of knowledge was identified by few survivors as a constraint to participate in cultural activity when they explained themselves as unaware of places to visit for concerts and art exhibits. A few survivors felt conscious about their appearance and hesitated to take part on stage plays. Some of the survivors are also struggling to enjoy such activities in the presence of male actors and male audience.

Overall, the survivors seemed to experience least number of constraints within home-based activities, while sports and outdoor activities had the most. Hence, the overall constraints seemed to be rising from the patriarchal culture, lack of time, lack of money, lack of security and from experiencing low sense of comfort across various leisure settings. Samdahl and Jekubovich (1993) also shared somewhat similar results in which they derived four main
categories of leisure constraints: time, money, health, and social relationships. But for the Bangladeshi women, social relationships didn’t seem to be a significant constraint.

Reinforcing what Stokols (1992) pointed out, once again, culture seemed to be the most constraining factor for the survivors as it can directly or indirectly impact both the physical and social environment in which an individual seeks to improve the quality of life. From the study, a pattern of identifying constraints among the survivors emerged in which the survivors were only able to report constraints to participation in particular leisure activity if she had preference towards it. For example; inadequate skills within certain leisure activities was not brought under consideration while addressing participation in sports and outdoor activities. As most interviewees have little or no interest in sports, they were not aware of the skills required to participate in those activities. Lack of skills was only mentioned while some of the survivors wished they had some skills for cultural activities like embroidering, singing or acting. This tends to be a major problem with most leisure constraints research in which constraints are usually examined as if they are generic rather than specific to particular activities.

Age appropriate behavior could also be another cultural issue as constraints might fluctuate depending on the life stages. Although age and different stages in life were not included in the Table 6.4, most interviewees did bring the issue of age appropriate behaviors within the Bangladeshi culture. Usually, a young woman after certain age or after marriage is not encouraged to participate in physical recreational activities. Unfortunately, except for few expensive all female exclusive clubs in the major cities of Bangladesh, facilities exclusively for woman are hard to find in rural environments. Besides physical recreation activities, casual
leisure activity like hanging out with friends or spending time outside home usually ceased with marriage and motherhood. This has been observed not only within the young women whom I studied but also found to be a fact by Henderson (1996). Although marriage did create some constraints to participate at certain leisure activities, it was interesting to see how one young woman reported marriage to provide her with a sense of freedom. Being a married women, she was allowed to enjoy the freedom of attending various occasions and places without being escorted by someone. Therefore, the cultural constraints marginalizing them earlier as single and undesired were eliminated. In conclusion, the overarching cultural constraints, which were termed as either prescriptive (people should do certain things) or proscriptive (people should not do certain things) by Chick and Dong (2005) seemed to influence the level of participation in leisure activities by the survivors. Cultural constraint not only seemed to be a separate type of constraint but the data showed it to influence the creation or exacerbation of the other three types of constraints (Intrapersonal, Interpersonal and structural) noted earlier.

**Negotiation of Leisure Constraints**

The survivors I interviewed undoubtedly experienced different types of constraints to leisure participation. Nevertheless, they still seemed to find meaningful leisure time for activities of their choice to enjoy life. Acid attack may have resulted in non-participation to certain activities for some survivors, but they also managed to find alternatives or modified their leisure preferences to suit their needs. Jackson & Ruck (1995) also shared similar thoughts in their studies in which they found individuals to find ways to become involved in leisure activities despite experiencing constraints. On this basis, they stated that some people may negotiate
through constraints and thus succeed in initiating or continuing leisure participation instead of reacting passively.

Similarly, the survivors also seemed to take part in activities by negotiating around the constraints. Henderson et al. (1997) found the idea of negotiating with leisure constraints to be significant for understanding how women with certain disabilities experience leisure in their lives (Henderson et al., 1997). Considering that fact, this section attempts to answer the third part of the second research question that addresses how the survivors of acid attack are participating or choosing leisure activities despite the existing constraints. While analyzing the data, Jackson and Ruck’s (1995) explanation on the negotiation to participate in leisure activities through cognitive and behavioral strategies seemed to explain the negotiation process by the survivors. These approaches initially were mentioned by Jackson, Crawford and Godbey (1993) in which they suggested that, in the presence of constraints, individuals would adopt strategy that would depend partly, if not entirely, on the problem encountered. During the interviews, the survivors were asked how or in what ways their leisure had changed after the attack and whether they still can participate in the activities of their choices. Although some activities ceased to exist after the attack for some survivors (e.g., attending neighborhood social programs: wedding, childbirth), most girls and women reported changing their level of participation by adjusting place, time, setting, companionship, costs, developing new skills or by simply choosing a new leisure activity. The range of activities participated by the survivors were shown earlier in Tables 6.1 and 6.2. The survivors than discussed how they overcame or continued to participate in leisure activities despite the existing constraints grouped under the four major types of constraints -structural, interpersonal, intrapersonal and cultural. Different ways of negotiation
were illustrated as the statements of negotiation in the table below. Such tactics of maneuvering through the constraints seemed to share the attributes with the strategies that could be either labeled as cognitive (reduction of cognitive dissonance), or behavioral (an observable change in behavior) proposed by Jackson and Ruck (1995). The following table therefore provides an overview on the different types of negotiation statement reported by the survivors and were categorized under the two strategies.

Table 6.5: Negotiation strategies during constraints experienced by the survivors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements of Negotiation</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Negotiated Constraints</th>
<th>Behavior Strategy</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find new companion/partner</td>
<td>“I made new friends at ASF”</td>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find an alternative setting or place</td>
<td>“We met at Nasreen Apa’s house for the singing class”</td>
<td>Structural/cultural</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursue activities in groups instead being alone</td>
<td>“We now go shopping with a group of friends, or other survivors to overcome our the insecurity of being taunted”.</td>
<td>Interpersonal, structural</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alter time/day for activity</td>
<td>“The singing class starts at 3am, so that we can leave before dark”</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find male escort or companions for participating in activities after dark</td>
<td>“Our male instructor often drops some of us at home after dark.”</td>
<td>Structural/cultural</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the frequency of participation</td>
<td>“I usually go to the books shops once a month now.”</td>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find alternative activities</td>
<td>“We play more indoor activities like board games”</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.5 continued….

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements of Negotiation</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Negotiated Constraints</th>
<th>Behavior Strategy</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build courage to learn a new skill to overcome the constraint</td>
<td>“I made the decision to learn singing to overcome my shyness”</td>
<td>Intrapersonal, structural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignore the constraint</td>
<td>“I am not afraid to show my face anymore while going out”</td>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut back on cost</td>
<td>“Instead of buying a new musical instrument, I bought a second hand one”</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept the constraint from an optimistic/spiritual ideology</td>
<td>“Everything happened for a reason and I have to accept it and move forward”</td>
<td>Intrapersonal/cultural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find affordable activities</td>
<td>“Spend more time with the survivors”</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move to a new place to reduce the level of constraint</td>
<td>“We moved to the capital city as more people are open-minded here and doesn’t seem to bother us”</td>
<td>Structural, cultural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4 earlier illustrated the major constraints under each type of activities. After the attack, almost all the respondents sought new and meaningful companionship for overcoming the intrapersonal constraint, which varied from feeling self-conscious to lack of compassion and understanding during one’s leisure. Structural constraint was also predominant among the participants and had to be negotiated by finding alternative setting or place for their leisure.
According to Table 6.5, behavioral strategies were mostly exercised and adopted by the survivors across the different types of constraints, while cognitive strategies were also utilized. The majority of the survivors were found to negotiate constraints behaviorally, which was consistent with the finding of Jackson and Ruck (1995). The following section further elaborates the negotiation process based on the two strategies through extracts that supports the statements identified in the Table.

**Cognitive strategy.**

According to Jackson and Ruck (1995), cognitive strategies result in ignoring the problems, accepting them or trying to stay positive. One of the survivors, who had a very positive and optimistic outlook towards life, didn’t see her disfigurement as a problem to experience happiness. She was not afraid to go out in public despite her severe disfigurement and wanted to inspire other victims of acid attack to feel strong against all odds. Many survivors being ashamed of their physical appearance chose to hide themselves under the veil; but she advocated ignoring the cultural prejudices that might discourage them to participate in certain leisure activities of their choices. She boldly stated that:

Extract 6.26: “Why should we hide ourselves because of few vicious, animals like men who decided to destroy our lives by destroying our look? If we hide ourselves from the society and keep ourselves from everything we want to do, than we will lose the fight and let the evil force prevail.”
The statement above was the reflection of a survivor who seemed to share her characteristics with the qualities of an achiever. According to Kay and Jackson (1991), women who experience certain disabilities can be placed on three broad typologies (achievers, passive responders, attempters) when it comes to negotiating with constraint. These typologies seemed to reflect the basic ideas of cognitive strategies. Kay and Jackson (1991) further described achievers to be women who did not change their participation despite perceiving constraints.

The young woman who fell under this typology not only took initiative to actively participate in volunteer activities but also initiated to take part in various cultural and television programs allowing her to exercise her freedom to participate. She also took a big decision to build her life in a foreign country where she experienced less cultural constraints. This is an example of negotiation with constraints through an extreme measure like leaving the home country to overcome cultural and structural barriers both in leisure and work.

The following extract illustrated the practice of cognitive strategy during negotiation as one of the survivors accepted the changes in her life and instead of lamenting on what she was missing. She learned to appreciate what she had and found contentment through spirituality.

Extract 6.27: “I believe Allah has plan for everyone. If this incident didn’t happen, I wouldn’t have known how so many women suffer in our country. Now I know, and I try to help others who were also victims of violence with whatever capacity I have. I also became a strong believer and pray to Allah to have the strength to fight all odds. And I
believe he’s listening to me as, I have become more tolerant, patient and able to cherish all the good things that has happened to me.”

Although there were constraints which were negotiated after the survivors experienced the acid attack but some constraints to leisure had to be negotiated by the survivors even before they had the acid attack. Such constraints were also reported by Henderson (1991) who suggested that women in general may share certain constraints to leisure due to their gender as entitlement to leisure, the ethic of care and health/safety issues. Therefore, supporting this idea, the extract below indicates how one of the survivors negotiated and learned to accept the constraints emerging from her lack of freedom to pursue activities outside her home while she was growing up as a female child in her household.

*Extract 6.28:*  I didn’t go out a lot. Mostly I stayed at home as my parents did not allow me to go out with friends so often. Sometime I did attend some birthday parties and family gatherings. But that’s it! Although I didn’t have much freedom to do what I like, but I also didn’t have any objection as I knew what is expected of me being a girl. So you see... the acid attack didn’t make any huge difference within my leisure lifestyle.”

The above extract is an example of a survivor who shows the characteristics of a passive responder (Kay & Jackson, 1991) who did not participate in leisure activities of her choice due to the constraint but accepted the constraints without complaint.
Behavioral strategy.

Some behavioral strategies might involve modifications to the non-leisure aspects of life in order to accommodate leisure needs (e.g., re-scheduling other activities, cutting back on other expenses); others could encompass modifications to leisure itself (e.g., efforts to enhance awareness of opportunities, alterations in the timing or frequency of participation, including delayed or reduced participation, and changes in the level of specialization (Jackson & Ruck, 1995). The following two extracts reinforced the idea of behavioral strategy to negotiate constraints as some of the survivors modified their leisure participation by either choosing different options or modifying their actions while participating. These extracts also supported Kay and Jackson’s (1991) typologies where the survivors can be categorized as ‘attempters’ who are participating in leisure activities through modification of the activity and the companionship.

Extract 6.29: “I used to go out shopping with one of my cousins who recently got married. After her marriage, she is not available to spend so much time with me anymore as she has her own family to look after. Now, I ask my aunt to accompany me for shopping. Although it’s not the same but I get to go shopping as I don’t feel doing it alone. Most of the time I go to her place after office and then we go shopping”.

Extract 6.30: “I don’t feel comfortable in public places by myself, but love to go shopping or go out to watch movies. Some of us always plan to do something together after the singing class and go out shopping or at the park. We feel stronger when we are all together and if anyone makes any rude comment, all of us stand up against those
comments together. I feel very safe and comfortable when I am out with my girl friends from ASF”.

Extracts 6.29 and 6.30 demonstrate how the survivors were participating in leisure activities of their choices by choosing options to take part in activities in a group rather than doing it alone and thus overcoming both structural and intrapersonal constraints. This strategy allowed them to enjoy the leisure activity of their choices without being self conscious as they were able to overcome the sense of insecurity from being in a group. To support the idea of behavioral strategy further, the following extract illustrates how one of the survivors negotiated visiting her aunt’s house, which had nice open areas to compensate her need for enjoying the outdoors. She chose to visit the place as she was allowed to visit relative’s place and was not required to find somebody to accompany her to ensure her safety and security.

Extract 6.31: “I really enjoy spending time at my aunt’s place. I feel so free and tension free (Smile). It is the only outdoor place where I can go that frees me from the hassles and crowd of the city life. It’s just forty minutes away from the city but it has some out of town atmosphere. As I do not have anyone to take me out of the city for an outing, aunt’s house is the only place for me to go”.

Negotiation with constraints was also observed while some of the survivors decided to learn singing. Although there were several places in the city where the survivors could pay for singing lessons, their self-consciousness rising from the physical disfigurement discouraged them to participate in those classes. This is why, instead of giving up on their preference, some of the
survivors decided to work around the constraints of time, space and their own discomfort. Along with the encouragement and support from their social network, the survivor managed to find venue for the class and two singing instructors who were willing to give them lesson at minimum cost. The accommodating setting around other survivors comforted them and made the whole experience pleasurable. As one of the survivors stated,

*Extract 6.32:* “We didn’t have a place to hold the singing class once we lost a office space. Knowing how important this class was to us, Nasreen apa made her house available for the class and even made provisions for us to have tea, and snacks. We all looked forward to this class where we not only learned how to sing but also spend quality time sharing stories or planning to go out for some snacks with my other survivor sisters. It was a class where we belonged.”

While coding the transcriptions, I found most young women negotiated their constraint of money, companionship, lack of security, facility and transport with alternative experiences, modifying them or through accepting the prevailing condition to make most of what they have. Along this line; Henderson et al., (1997) stated, “despite different evidence of successful negotiation strategies, some people are likely to have more personal resources to help them with the negotiation process, and some types of constraint are probably more easily negotiated than others” (p. 207). For example, lack of friends, peers or family member who participated in leisure activities with the survivors before the attack in their hometown. This constraint in most cases was either negotiated through findings peers and friends who became a part of the survivors’ extended family while they were away from home. Blasure and Allen (1995) further
identified some personal and social resources, which were strong social support, independent income, education, self-confidence and exposure. The survivors who reported to have these resources coped and negotiated far better with the existing constraints than the survivors who lacked them. Following is an extract from an interview where one of the survivors supported the significance of social support that assisted her to navigate through the constraints and thus allowed her to enjoy an experience that was important to her.

Extract 6.33: I used to be a victim of bad remarks, and young boys used to comment on my disfigured face earlier when I visited my village after the attack. You can see how badly my face was destroyed. But with the passing of time, people started to acknowledge my indifference and seeing the support I got from my brothers and cousins; people stopped acting that way. Now many of them even apologized to me and most villagers have started to respect me for the way I have built my life after the attack. Now I am working. I have a place of my own and I no longer feel anxious visiting my hometown.”

Education was another significant personal resource which helped one of the survivors to overcome some of her constraints through increased awareness on leisure pursuits. After the attack, she completed her schooling and continued with her love for reading by expanding her readings to non-fiction. Although she experienced financial constraint to buy new books, she compensated this constraint by taking an initiative to take trips to the used bookstores. Also reading books provided her with the skill to write well, which is also one of her favorite past time activity. On the other hand, three survivors who lacked proper schooling and education, experienced difficulty in finding new enjoyable leisure activities and felt bored during leisure
They dreaded weekends and preferred working which provided them with a sense of escape and belongingness. This is why it was important for the survivors to successfully negotiate with the existing leisure constraints with the help of their personal and social resources so that they can improve the quality of their leisure lives as well as the quality of life.

**Benefits from Leisure Participation**

According to Henderson et al. (1997), most women’s lives are not devoid of leisure despite all the barriers they face, and engage in the process of negotiation to find some satisfaction during leisure participation. For the survivors, participation in various types of leisure activities both at home and outside not only brought enjoyment and satisfaction in life, but also helped them to return to normalcy after the attack. Thus, participating in leisure activities amidst the constraints allowed the survivors to gain positive attitude in their lives from various angles that may be categorized but not limited to four types of benefits which were: health, relational, personal and societal benefits. These benefits were based on studies conducted by Henderson et al. (1996) on women and seemed to subsume the significant benefits that were experienced by the survivors from their participation in leisure.

**Health benefits.**

As discussed earlier in this section, although the girls and women experience various pressures and constraints from their surroundings, many of them are resilient and learned to adjust to change happened due to the acid attack. Hence, the survivors have learned to cope with
the negativities in their own ways and many of them found hope and happiness amidst the
problems of the daily lives. Hopefulness and ability to smile amidst stress and all the adversities
of life was one striking attitude that was observed by me among the acid attack survivors during
my preliminary fieldwork conducted in 2002.

The female victims of acid attack in Bangladesh undoubtedly fall under the high risk
group of people who are vulnerable to multiple stressors due to poverty, and other drawbacks
that surface from being marginalized and impact them both psychologically and physically. But,
as previously discussed, many acid attack survivors hold on to a positive attitude and learn to
cope with their lives where leisure act as a buffer to stressful events in life (Iso-Ahola & Park,
1996). According to Iwasaki, MacKay, & Mactavish (2005), leisure was found to play a key role
to cope with stress. Therefore, once a survivor successfully negotiated with the leisure constraint;
she might be able to enjoy leisure activities of her choices, which might reduce the adverse effect
of stress on their overall health. Some of the survivors reported that participation in leisure
activities also brought them back from surrendering to suicidal tendencies.

Earlier in this chapter, perception towards leisure experience was addressed through two
social contexts which were leisure for affiliation, and leisure for self. Leisure activities under
these categories were activities of their choice which brought happiness and enjoyment in the
lives of the survivors and the following extracts will support this idea by showing how
participation in leisure-related activities provided them with ways to deal with stress. The
importance of leisure in fighting negative life-events was not only reflected within this study but
also supported by other researchers (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993b). Following are two such
extract depicting the positive feeling emerging from friendship that was formed through the
music class held once a week. The first extract is illustrates the benefit of singing for one of the survivors while the second extract is from one of the singing instructors who reaffirms the importance of social support for increasing well-being from such leisure pursuits.

Extract 6.34: “I love going out with my friends from our music class and from ASF. We often take trips outside Dhaka to hold awareness programs at different NGOs on behalf of our music class, “The Prothom Sur”. We have so much fun singing all the way and then staying late at night talking with my girlfriends. Just a month ago, five of us went to Faridpur for a training workshop and we stayed at a village where the NGO personal were soooo hospitable. They cooked for us, took us to the old castle and we on the way and at night we all sang the popular Bangla songs. These memories and moments are very precious as they free us from all the worries of life.”

Extract 6.35: “All of us look forward each week to the day where they not only learn singing but also have fun sharing stories, going out together after the class to grab something to eat or just walk by the lake. I do understand the need for these opportunities in life. The survivors had many problems in their lives and this class gives them a break from all their tensions and an escape route from all the problems of the real world.

The extracts therefore portray and support the earlier finding by Caldwell and Smith (1995) that indicated the positive aspect of leisure involvement that contributes to overall health and well-being.
Relational benefit.

Abundant evidences were gathered from the data that found social support to be one of the crucial helping agents for the survivors to bring them back to normalcy. Many researchers have described the beneficial effects of social support where victims of various life crises appeared to adjust better when they perceived others as being supportive (Weisman, 1976; Williams, Ware & Donald, 1981).

The idea of exploring the power of friendship by Larson, et al., (1986) also supported this finding. According to the authors, “the power of friends to generate positive feelings is partly a result from a greater rate of active leisure with them (p 122).” Although in Bangladeshi context, women do not have much scope for active leisure, but few moments spent with their friends through activities of their choices or simply going out together brought positive feeling and decreased the sense of loss from the acid attack. The singing class was an excellent example where the survivors not only learned new skills but also built a social network that helped them to deal with daily stress also built a social network that helped them to deal with daily stress.

Apart from friends and peers, family members also play a significant role to bring the survivors closer to normalcy. As a large portion of leisure time is spent at home by most Bangladeshi women, social support generated from family members can be crucial for overall well-being of the survivors. This is why, spending quality time with family members helped the survivors to build and maintain their relationships. The three extracts below highlight the importance of family members for bringing happiness and a sense of normalcy to the lives of the acid attack survivors.
Extract 6.36: I really enjoy talking with my brothers. Simply talking about different things at work or about friends can be very relaxing. To tell you the truth, I look forward to this time after work in which we can get together and talk. Unlike many brothers and sisters, we are pretty close and share everything. And of course the feeling of having a family who understands me can be a huge mental support for me especially during the days when I am feeling down.

Extract 6.37: Those days (Religious Occasion: Eid) are very special to me. First of all, the two Eids bring big vacations in which I get to go home or my family visits me here in Dhaka. Wearing new dresses, getting gift, going out to eat or visiting relatives, are activities that brings my childhood memories back. I have no worries during that time. It is just pure feeling of happiness. Those holidays are very important to me as they make me connect to all the happy days and bring me closer to all my family members. Even my step mother welcomes me at their home during Eid and cooks food for me”.

Research by Bialeschki, Pearce, and Ellliot (1994), showed how mothers valued family leisure, time with each other and time with their children. The following extract illustrates such experience in which one of the acid attacked mother preferred to spend most of her leisure time with her daughter as she saw her as the center of her life. She was one of the three survivors who was not part of the singing class and wanted to spend most of her leisure time with her daughter.

Extract 6.38: “It is still hard for me to look into the mirror and see myself. But it is amazing how my daughter treats me and also other small children. They are never scared
to see my face and love me the way I am. My facial distortion does not bother them at all. I feel normal again when I am with my daughter. I love the way she hugs me and misses me. One thing that is right in my life is my daughter. She is the only thing that matters to me now and I like nothing else but to spend as much of my time with her. My happiness now only lies with her.”

Harrington (2006) also explored the positive aspects of relational leisure in which leisure interaction plays a major role for building companionship and trust among family members that can contribute to the overall relationship that includes various support across life course. This bonding was found not only among mothers and their children, but also among the two other survivors who enjoyed spending time with their husbands and in-laws. Although relational benefits of leisure were mostly described in terms of marriage and family, a strong relational benefit seemed to emerge among the survivors who became a family and bonded strongly with each other. The following extract from one of the singing instructor explains the significance of such connectedness among the survivors who became friends through the singing class.

Extract 6.39: “Listening to music and being able to sing have strong healing power apu. It allows one to grow and find one’s self. Even if one may not become a singer, just finding the scope to sing can give great enjoyment. It is so beautiful when they all sing together, smile at each other while singing. One important thing is that the girls became more close to each other as a unit and they know that they belong here surrounded by loving people. They are proud to be introduced as the girls from “Prothom Sur”. They bonded so well and became friends and sisters who give strength to each other”.
While many families and relatives reminded some of the survivors on the tragic incident or added stress to their lives, it was the strong friendship and understanding among the survivors built through the class that provided each other with satisfaction and confidence.

**Personal benefit.**

According to Iso-Ahola (1980), important avenues to develop one’s sense of self-determination can be achieved through leisure participation. Along this line, the data for this study also supported the finding by Iso-Ahola and Mannell (1985) in which they reflected the similar sentiments as the survivors participated in leisure activities for self and felt empowered. The study revealed that some of their leisure activities promoted self-confidence and self-esteem as leisure experiences encouraged them to develop, maintain and enhance their belief that they posses certain levels of freedom to choose activities that makes them happy, content, free them from boredom and gain valuable perspectives on life.

Activities that ranged from creative writing, singing or volunteering to help others during free time thus were, provided opportunities to exercise personal control and acted as buffering agent against stressful life-events (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993). The following extract further supports this idea by reflecting the music instructor’s view on the positive changes happening through active involvement in a leisure activity of the survivors’ choice. He seemed to reiterate what Folkman (1997) assumed that participating at an activity of one’s own choice can create positive psychological states, and allow individuals to experience some personal control and sense of accomplishment, even in stressful situations.
Extract 6.40: “It was wonderful when they are invited to perform during the International Women’s Day event in which they selected the song of their choice. It was a big hit and I saw tears of joys in their eyes. Now they are confident to perform at any program, which they were not in the beginning. One of my girls was selected to take part in the first round of Bangladeshi Idol type singing competition. She was so committed that she saved to buy a Harmonium and it made her so happy. It was like getting the greatest treasure. She can play some songs on it and determined to learn more about music. For the other girls, singing also helps, as they have become more confident about themselves, which they lacked earlier. I can immediately see them filled with big smile when they hit the right note. They constructively criticize each other; confidently practice the songs before the events and becoming more interested in singing in public as days go by. One of them even found her own niche in singing local folk songs. She is very good at it while she is not so good at modern songs.”

Some leisure activities can provide a sense of escape from the daily stress, which can be identified as a way of coping. The following extract indicates watching movie with a friend or by one’s self as a cathartic experience.

Extract 6.41: “Best things about watching a good movie is that we seem to forget all our daily problems for a while and get ourselves lost in that world.”
While discussing the benefits of leisure, Henderson et al. (1996) also identified leisure activities to provide the girls and women with a sense of identity, self-confidence and increased self-esteem. And in this study, one of the survivors strongly identified herself as a singer. Besides being confident and increasing their self-esteem through their leisure, the following extract reflects how a passion for designing and making dresses turned into a boutique business for two acid attack survivors. These types of activities provided the survivors with a feeling of independence and empowerment.

Extract 6.42: “Both of us loved sewing and designing our dresses. So, both of us thought to start a business that will be both fun and also earn some money. So we applied for a grant in a local bank to start our business.”

Desire to participate in leisure activities amidst constraints also allowed some survivors to develop leadership skills as illustrated in the extract below.

Extract 6.43: “One year ago, after a lot of request, I managed to get ASF to buy Badminton set and arranged game day once a week on an empty ground near our office. With my effort, it was developed and many survivors started to play the game and were happy that I initiated this program”.

It was found that events which create positive feelings like laughter, enjoyment, belongingness in life can sustain coping effectively (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). For many survivors, leisure is at least one area of their lives that allow them to be in control and experience
a sense of independence. As discussed earlier, the motivations to take part in leisure activities like singing, pursuing a hobby, watching movies or Television or reading a book seemed to provide satisfaction and enjoyment that is crucial for their personal well-being. The extracts above identified such events in the lives of the acid attack survivors that brought enjoyment and happiness and shared characteristics with leisure activities that seemed to be important context for such transformative experiences (Kleiber et al., 2002). Among other personal benefits, the study did support the findings by various other researchers (Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000; Kleiber et al., 2002) who showed that enjoyable activities are valued by people who experienced negative life events as they serve as a mental distraction, escapism from one’s disability and to preserve connection to their past.

**Societal benefit.**

The survivors who were part of Acid Survivors’ Foundation (ASF) seemed to build consciousness and awareness through various leisure-related activities: street plays, mini drama, cultural events. The girls and women who belonged to the “Prothom Sur” –the singing class played a major role in advocacy through their songs in various social events. Their songs not only helped them to heal but also encouraged other survivors to find more to life after the attack. While documenting and observing various events attended by the survivors, I had an opportunity to visit one of the street plays performed and directed by the acid attack survivors and their patrons.
During these occasions societal benefit seemed to occur by creating awareness on the issues related to acid attack and opened up scopes challenging various socially constructed ideas that marginalized the acid attack survivors in Bangladesh. Some survivors were also intrinsically motivated to volunteer their time to help other victims of acid attack and discovered pleasure during the process. The following extract depicts a statement from one of the survivors who actively provides emotional support to the survivors.

*Extract 6.44: I work with the girls who are victims of acid attack. But to tell you the truth, I do not see this as work but an honor and pleasure to have the chance to help another sister of mine. The initial period just after the attack is the toughest time of our lives where we lose all hope and go through both mental and physical pain. This is when girls like us who were also victims like them try to provide some mental support to bring them out of that mental state. It is rewarding when you are able to watch them come out of that state and learning to smile again.*

The survivors who were actively involved in activities that incorporated social exchange were found to develop or enhance social skills in different settings and in many situations overcame shyness to communicate. Thus, leisure settings lead many survivors to be personally empowered and as Henderson, et al. (1996) found the sense of empowerment to spill over into other aspects of life. In the case of the survivors, the other aspects involved work, building family and even being able to find a new life in a foreign country.
According to Calman (1984) a, good quality of life is usually expressed in terms of satisfaction, contentment, happiness, fulfillment of choices and ability to cope. In spite of the catastrophic life experience that changed their lives, some girls and women thus learned to strive with all adversity to live better than others and find contentment.

Summary

Reflecting on the final research question, several major statements can be offered in summary that provides an understanding how leisure is experienced by the survivors considering the existing constraints:

- Leisure in the lives of the survivors cannot be separated from the social factors that influence their choices of participation. Sense of belongingness, connecting to others seemed to be two major motivations for the survivors in choosing activities that allowed them to be with friends, family and peer. This is why most survivors reported to prefer relational or affiliation oriented leisure activities over individualized leisure pursuits. This is a common desire and need for any Bangladeshi men and women as Bangladesh represents a collective society. But during this social interaction most survivors reported experiencing comfort and sense of belongingness with the other survivors who had similar life experiences. This is why I found most survivors to plan leisure activities that included other survivors or individuals who were involved with the survivors to different capacities. They seemed to choose spending time with their selected groups rather than spending time with friends they had before the attack.
• No matter what emotions were felt, freedom in some form seemed to be the essential component for experiencing leisure among most of the survivors. The sense of freedom thus was experienced in various forms of leisure pursuits mentioned above by the survivors. While activities like writing, learning something new are self-determined and add personal values to the individual; most women expressed to find a sense of identity and satisfaction with life through relational or affiliation related activities. This finding reinforces what Fox and Trillo (1994) found in their research which described personal value of leisure may not always be a first priority in many cultures. The survivors also experienced varied emotions during their leisure participation and some of the similar emotions were encountered by the survivors across their leisure choices.

• While identifying the type of motivations, intrinsically motivated behavior for leisure participation had the highest number of responses across different types of activities followed by extrinsic motivation with identified regulation. The findings thus suggest that one of the major motivations for participation was the reward in the activity itself. Although, intrinsic motivation was clearly important for the survivors, but the extrinsic motivation with identified regulation closely followed with significant number of responses.

• Participating in leisure activities seemed to empower some of the survivors who found their lives meaningful once again through their singing, designing or writing abilities, and ability to help others through volunteering. Some of these autonomous or self-determined leisure activities shared the characteristics with the concept of ‘serious leisure’ by
Stebbins (1992) indicating a higher level of commitment, knowledge and skills dedicated towards the activity. Further to the previous discussion point in which marriage is seen as one of the life’s major achievements for most Bangladeshi young women, most survivors started to view life differently after the attack and the disfigurement might have allowed them to explore other areas of their lives in which they can make a difference and achieve a sense of growth.

- Due to the societal and cultural background, physical leisure activities and structured leisure activities like institutionalized leisure activities are not highly valued or participated by most Bangladeshi acid attack survivors. The lack of interest and insignificant participation in sports and athletic activities thus were illustrated Table 6.3. This phenomenon is true not only for the survivors but also likely true for the majority of Bangladeshi girls and women due to the existing cultural, structural, interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints.

- Cultural constraint seemed to be the most significant constraint that influences the leisure behavior and the lifestyle of the acid attack survivors. And it is one of the major constraints that were negotiated by most of the survivors. The survivors reported to negotiate with the inherent cultural constraints long before they had the attack. Constraints to various outdoor pursuits were already limited or ceased due to their gender. Therefore, the data suggested that the acid attack itself did not necessarily create all constraints but it tends to be the environment that limited the leisure choices and participation among women in general. The acid attack survivors thus experienced
constraints that were common to most Bangladeshi women in a patriarchic society, the only difference is that some of these constraints seemed to magnify due to their physical deformation and few disabilities like blindness, breathing problem that were result of the attack.

- Although, the survivors experienced various types of constraints emerging from their surrounding and from within, the extracts indicated that most of the survivors managed to overcome or negotiate some of the constraints to find activities that are meaningful to them, provide a sense of freedom and, above all, enjoyment and relatedness. Along these lines, the study tends to agree more with Scott’s (1991) view on leisure constraints which were identified as forces in people’s lives that must be negotiated successfully for leisure to occur.

- Geographical location was another aspect of experiencing leisure, as the data found constraints to vary from country to country as well as urban and rural locations. For example, the structural (recreational sites, transportation, safety) and cultural constraints (ex: perception on woman travelling alone) to some extent were experienced in a lesser degree when the survivors travelled abroad.

The findings from this chapter suggest that the survivors can enjoy leisure when their reason to participate generates positive emotion to enhance overall satisfaction from the activity. Despite their appearance which earlier contributed to life choices and also to some extent on their leisure, most survivors learned to overcome the aspect of physical beauty and emphasized
their inner beauty. Most girls and women of their age spend a significant portion of their leisure time on appearances by grooming, spending time at the increasing number of beauty parlors and talking about beauty products (A Brave Face, 2009). For most survivors spending leisure time on beautification and worrying about body image has little meaning due to their disfigurement but similar to any young women in the world they do enjoy dressing up in trendy cloths and also shopping for clothes with their friends.

Henderson (1996) found out the quality of particular experiences and the nature of that experience is important to people and result in their perceptions of leisure meaning. Constraints to leisure do play a major role in formulating the overall meaning of leisure and how leisure can be experienced. This is why the statements above provided a brief understanding on how the leisure is experienced through negotiation and how the survivors are experiencing benefits despite constraints.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

The study has sought to answer the two major research questions that aimed to understand how leisure was experienced by the victims of acid attacks in Bangladesh. From an external point of view, the significance of leisure might be unimaginable when the acid attack survivors had to fight with the change that happened in their lives after the acid attack. The survivors had to experience and cope with the changes in their socio-cultural environment in terms of relationships, work, education, and play. Although, for most survivors, changes were experienced in their leisure sphere as well, but leisure was found to be an aspect of their lives that brought out positive emotions that were crucial for their happiness and hopes.

To understand leisure in the lives of the acid attack survivors, the formation of leisure meaning was explored from a broader social and cultural context. According to Wearing and Wearing (1998), the concept of women is not universally the same, and the concept of women is experienced differently from culture to culture. The respondents of the study, although female, reflected on this idea indicating how leisure can be experienced and understood beyond structured activities and can be enjoyed from a more collective perspective. Thus the meaning of leisure for the survivors mostly emerged from non-structured activities unlike many others developed and individualized societies. Although western researchers emphasize more on leisure for self, collective leisure seemed to be more significant in the lives of the survivors.

Apart from experiencing leisure differently within different social contexts, the survivors also seemed to share similarities in leisure experiences with the women from the rest of the world in the aspects of care, emphasizing on family leisure, and choosing activities to deal with
stress. But culture seemed to be the overarching influence in their lives impacting their leisure lifestyle. This is why the study addressed the cultural and social aspects of their lives to lay the foundation for understanding the survivors’ leisure experience. A few survivors reported the need to be creative, to be free, and to enhance personal growth and development through leisure activities, as motives for participation but, for most respondents, collective activities that allowed them to connect and build relationships were important. For this reason, the collective leisure activities such as social events, time spent with family and friends seemed to bring out positive emotions among the survivors.

The study also examined different motivations for participation that ranged from intrinsic to extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation leads the list with the most responses from the survivors, who valued the intrinsic aspects of their involvement, and extrinsic motivation with autonomous qualities followed closely. Various emotions were also captured across leisure activities of their choices. It was interesting to find out that most emotions seemed to match the motivations for participation. This insight might help explain the satisfaction that was derived from the activities in which the motives matched with the emotion.

Besides disfigurement, a major physical constraint, the survivors also commented experiencing structural, intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints that seemed to magnify after the acid attack. Among various types of constraints, experienced daily in their lives, the patriarchal and traditional culture seemed to most influence their life choices along with leisure. The study supported the notion of Chick and Dong (2004) as participants identified culture to be the dominant factor for a meaningful leisure experience. Some survivors also internalized the element of culture within them and accepted the inability to choose some activities as the cultural
norm and were not able to acknowledge it as constraint. It was interesting to observe that when a leisure activity is not a priority, constraint may not be reported. Therefore, the survivors tend to negotiate with the existing constraints to experience leisure. Leisure thus seemed to be a significant part of their lives in which they connect, find a sense of belongingness, connect to their past, find a sense of normalcy, learn to cope with the changes and as a result learn to live again finding hope and happiness. This is why it was crucial to understand the roles leisure played in their lives which could pave the way towards constructive leisure-related intervention.

**Limitations**

Besides evoking positive emotion, leisure can also generate negative emotions like stress, boredom and alienation. But the study mostly focused on analyzing leisure activities that generated positive rather than the negative emotions. The survivors also identified leisure activities as activities that were associated with positive feelings such as enjoyment, happiness, rejuvenation, relaxation, and connectedness. Although the study discussed the notion of positive emotion during leisure participation, but various realms of emotions like the impact of emotions to reflect the quality of leisure experience or different levels or degrees of emotion across different leisure activities were also not addressed elaborately due to the limited scope of the study.

Another potential area that could have been a part of this study was to analyze the relationship between personality and leisure. While observing the participants in various social settings, I did find individual personalities to influence how one may perceive the world or choose their leisure activities. From my observations, I was able to deduce that personalities
could play a huge role impacting leisure choices, but I was not able to explore this element further due to the limitations of my study depending on time, methods and scope. The study could have added various dimensions regarding spatial positioning of the survivors that can influence availability and the types of leisure activities that were experienced in different settings. As the study took place within the capital city, Dhaka, these dimensions were also not added to the study.

The study could have analyzed and interviewed few non-acid attacked young women to find a comparison leisure experience between the two groups but the focus of the study limited my interviews to the survivors only.

Acid attack is not only limited to women of certain ages but female children aged 2 years to 15 also fell victim to this heinous crime. Due to the sensitivity of this age group, I decided to exclude girls below the age of eighteen. The leisure like experiences such as flow, timelessness, enjoyment, commitment and connectedness were viewed in some of the work environments for the survivors where work seemed to spill over to leisure. At least four survivors reported to experience the elements of leisure within their work sphere which was not discussed in the tables. Work, according to some of the survivors is enjoyable and brought hope for the future. Despite reflecting some leisure like qualities, the survivors did experience constraint in work as they were not completely free to do what they wanted during work, and sometime work related
stress was evident. This is why; in this study, I decided not to include work as a leisure experience as it was not completely free from obligations.

**Future Research**

According to Wearing (1998), leisure not only provides a social space for expressivity and role enforcement, but also it is a place for learning new roles, playing and developing individual identities. With this understanding, more research on leisure related intervention on marginalized population could be further explored. Leisure activities that promote self-determination can be an area of study as well. Based on the information on constraints and what motivates the survivors to feel positive emotion, studies on therapeutic intervention programs can be undertaken. The study will not only reinforce positive behavior and meaningful life, but can also empower the survivors through leisure activities amidst negative or stressful life events.

Correlation between different types of personalities and the way individual cope with or without leisure during stress-full time can also be an area for future research. Comparative analysis on marginalized women across the world comparing the levels of emotions associated with the motivation can be studied as well. The impact of serious leisure on the lives of the survivors can be studied in detail to explore how giving back to others contributed to their overall personal development.

Clearly, more research is required to explore how especially women in disadvantageous positions negotiate leisure constraints to find enjoyment and happiness once again after the tragic incident that changed their lives. The significance of collective leisure in the lives of the survivors was also discussed within the realm of this study which can be applied to population
who experienced severe negative life events. Building social capital through collective leisure activities thus could be analyzed further for greater social change.

Based on the present study, comparative analysis on the experience of leisure between acid attack victims and non victims could be pursued in detail in the future.

Everybody has the right to leisure, and based on this universal truth, the challenges could be comprehended to find ways to overcome the barriers that may allow every human being to enjoy their leisure to the fullest. More studies should be conducted to analyze the implications and connections of leisure in other aspects of lives. For example, one of the survivors described gaining confidence from her leisure pursuits and overcoming her fear of men through her singing instructor. This realization could also transform her work and social life from various angles which could be an area for future research. This study thus recognizes the importance of leisure in the lives of the survivors and explores how the positive influences derived from leisure experience made some differences in the lives of the acid attack survivors.
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Appendix A

Interview Guide

[Thank you for agreeing to talk with me. I am going to conduct the interview emphasizing three areas. In the first part, I will be asking some questions to get some background information on your education, your family, age and other issues that will help me to understand you better. I would then like to ask you about how you are experiencing life after the tragic incident. This section will ask questions to understand whether you are experiencing stress in your daily life and if so, then how you are coping with it. Then I want to ask you about how you used to spend your leisure time before your acid attack and how you spend it now. At any point during the interview if you feel uncomfortable, do not hesitate to tell me and I will stop the interview immediately. You have the right not to answer questions, which would make you uncomfortable. For convenience, I would like to tape the interview if you do not have any objection to it. Nobody except for me will be listening to the tapes.]

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. How old are you?
   a. How old were you when you received the acid attack?
2. Are you originally from Dhaka?
   a. If not, than where are you from and how did you come do live here?
   b. How long have you been living here in Dhaka?
3. Tell me about your family and the environment in which you grew up?
4. What is your educational background?
THE ACID ATTACK

1. Can you tell me about the circumstances in which you received the acid attack? 
   Can you describe your life after the acid attack and about the adjustments, if any, has to 
   be made by you? 
   
   Probes 
   a. What family or cultural celebrations, traditions, or rituals were important in your 
      life? 
   b. How much are you influenced by your cultural background and in what ways? 
      i. Are those beliefs helping you to guide in your life? 
      ii. Have your beliefs changed since the attack? 
      iii. Can you tell me about an experience that has given you the greatest joy? 

2. What aspect of the activity made it important to you over others? 

3. How did you manage to get through the whole experience of acid attack? 

USE OF LEISURE TIME

1) How do you spend your leisure time now? 
   
   Probes 
   a. Are you involved in any recreational activities? 
   b. How do you spend your leisure time with your friends/family? 
   c. Do you have any hobbies? 

2) Has your leisure changed a lot since the acid attack? 
   a. If yes, in what ways? 
   b. If no, then why not? 

3) What is your favorite leisure activity now? 
   
   Probes 
   a. How much time do you spend on it and what do you like about it? 
   b. How did you get involved in this activity? 
   c. How do you feel being a part of this activity? 

SOCIAL FACTORS AND FUTURE VISIONS

1. Who most helped you to develop your current understanding of your life?
**Probes**

a. In terms of friends, other survivors, family members

2. How ASF (Acid Survivors Foundation) and other organizations helped you during your crisis and do you have any other suggestions on what ways more initiatives can be taken to reduce the rate of acid attacks in Bangladesh?

3. How do you want yourself to be seen by the others?

4. What gives you the most hope?

5. What is your biggest worry now?

6. How do you see yourself in the future? What will your life be like (social, economic, health, friendships, family, etc?)

7. Is there anything else you want to add that would help me to understand your experience further?

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (FOR FAMILY MEMBERS, FRIENDS AND COUNSELLOR)**

[You have known the girls and women for sometime. I would like to ask you few questions that will help me to understand your perception on the lives of the survivors as a friend, counselor and family member.]

1. Tell me something about your educational and personal background?

2. How did you come to know the girls and women?

3. What is your role in their lives?

4. How long have you known the survivors?

5. Have you observed any changes from then to now? If yes, than what kind of changes? According to you what might have contributed to this changes?

6. Did you play any role to initiate change in their lives? If yes, than please elaborate how?

7. Have you learned anything from being involved with them?

8. How do you think you are perceived to them?

9. Can you tell me some experiences with the survivors that touched you most?

10. From your perspective what are their greatest strength and weakness?

11. Do you like to add anything else that can help me to understand the relationship between you and the survivors?
Appendix B

Contact Summary Form

Contact Type:
Visit 2nd_________________ Site: At her office
With Whom _Rubina 103____________
Contact Date:_15th July,2006____________

1. What were the main issues and themes that struck me in this contact?

   Family sometime can add to stress through their depression. High stress can be accumulated through family members and also neighbors. People tend to blame her for the accident. The pressure from the society sometime led her to suicidal thoughts. She sometime losses faith in God as sometime she feels God is testing her too much by taking her close family member away from her, the accident, and the financial crisis of their shop. Parents are always depressed. Friends supported most. Ms. Haq: A renown social activist supported her both psychologically and financially. Job gave her confidence. But her job environment is not very warm and friendly, so in spite of the financial freedom, she feels bored and depressed in the work environment. Class segregation is still observed in the office environment but it was not present at ASF. She maintains her calmness by talking to friends in the phone.

2. Summary of the information I got (or failed to get) on the target questions.

   Information

   Background

   Situations that create stress: Lack of financial support is the main problem in her family. Her father wants to move to the village which will hamper her sister’s education and also her job. She can’t live in a hostel in Dhaka as she needs to be with her family. Although happy with his marriage recently, misunderstanding with her husband regarding financing her family with her own money creates some problem.
Types of stress: The attacker and his family, Finance, family and neighbors, loss of brother, feeling guilty thinking she is one of the reason for her parents unhappiness.

Leisure’s in life: TV, singing, spending time with friends and two sisters,
Constraints: Not being able to travel alone or after dark, money,

Future expectation: To have a stable job, see her sisters educated and mother and father happy.

3. Anything else that was interesting, illuminating or important in this contact?

Religion may not play a huge role in coping especially when she went through a lot of crisis. Friends were the most important source of coping.

4. Any new target questions which could be asked?

Concern: None

Using the result:

The filled out sheet can be used in several ways: a. to guide planning for the next contact, b. to suggest new or revised codes c. to help with the coordination when more than one field worker is involved in the study d. to reorient myself to the contact when returning to the write-up
Appendix C

Sample Informed Consent Form
The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Leisure as a coping strategy: A qualitative analysis on the victims of acid attack.

Principal Investigator: Rehnuna Karim,

, rzk110@psu.edu in USA

40/4 Al-Amin Road, Green-road, Dhaka- 1205, 8802-8631617,

karimrehnuma@hotmail.com in Bangladesh

1. Purpose of the Study: The primary purpose of this study is to find out whether involvement in leisure or activities that share the characteristics of leisure (e.g; spiritual activities) are helping the female victims of acid attack to cope better with stress.

2. Procedures to be followed: If you chose to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an unstructured interview with me. The individual interview will last approximately 45 to 120 minutes and I will ask questions on how your leisure time is spent now and how it was spent before you went through this tragic experience. I will also be asking you whether you think that leisure is helping you to cope up with the current situation, and if so, in what ways? This interview will be conducted in any location in which you feel comfortable to talk.

3. Discomforts and Risks: There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. However, if any discomfort does occur, you are free to decline answering any question and may terminate participation at any time.

4. Benefits: You might learn more about yourself and get an in-depth on what roles leisure time is playing in your life. Also by getting an understanding of the constraints you face, you may realize ways of overcoming them to enhance your current life-style. The whole study can also allow the society to get a perspective on how the acid attacked victims are coping with the day to day life and can take steps to eliminate the constraints the victims are facing in their daily lives.
5. **Duration:** It will take about 45-120 minutes to complete the interview.

6. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Only I will know your identity and listen to the tapes. Your identity will not be revealed. Pseudonyms will be used in all notes, interview transcripts, or other written materials. Only myself and my academic advisor will see the transcripts of the interview, which will use your pseudonym.

7. **Right to Ask Questions:** Feel free to ask questions about this research and the principal investigator will answer your questions. Do not hesitate to contact me at the address mentioned above if you have any questions or clarifications to be made.

8. **Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in this research is strictly voluntary. You do not have to participate in this research. You can end your participation at any time by telling the principal investigator. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you consent to participate in this research study and to the terms above, please sign your name and indicate the date below. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

____________________________________   ______________________
Participant Signature                      Date

The informed consent procedure has been followed.

____________________________________   ______________________
Investigator Signature                    Date
VITA

Rehnuma Karim

Education

Doctor of Philosophy
College of Health and Human Development
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Spring, 2012

Publications and Presentations


Professional Experiences

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