

## Audience Research

My communication project focuses on Bengali women in their early to mid-20s (ages 20-28) who struggle with cultural and social pressure to meet unrealistic beauty standards. These standards often include the expectation to have lighter skin, slim body shapes, and “perfect” features to improve their chances of getting married. This group deals with family expectations, patriarchy, and internalized colorism. Many young women in this age range face emotional distress and self-esteem issues because beauty is often seen as essential for marriage in Bangladeshi and other South Asian communities. Research shows that colorism, favoring lighter skin remains strong in South Asian culture. It affects marriage opportunities, job prospects, and social acceptance (Hunter, 2007). Because of this, young women might feel pressured to use skin whitening creams, stay out of the sun, limit their diet, or adopt unsafe beauty practices to seem “marriage ready.”

Young Bengali women in their 20s get information from both digital and physical sources, so a poster campaign works well. Posters are often found on university campuses, in women’s hostels, beauty parlors, shopping malls, coaching centers, and public transportation hubs. These are places where the target audience usually spends time. Research by Gell (2019) shows that visual public health and awareness campaigns are most effective when the message appears in familiar settings that viewers can see repeatedly and take in. For this group, posters provide visibility and emotional impact, especially when the visuals challenge harmful norms.

This audience responds strongly to emotional, empowering, and culturally relevant messaging. Young Bengali women often balance the desire for independence with family expectations. The tone must recognize their reality without placing blame. The communication should feel like support, not judgment. Therefore, the poster's tone will be empathetic, bold, and affirming. It will use language that validates the struggles of young women while inspiring confidence and self-worth. The wording will be clear, simple, and friendly to both languages, meaning the message should resonate whether the viewer primarily thinks in Bangla or English. Short phrases like “Your worth is not your skin tone” or “You define your beauty—not society” translate well across languages and emotional contexts.

These women are also highly engaged with digital media, especially Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, where beauty filters, influencer culture, and curated aesthetics amplify their insecurities. At the same time, these platforms are where they seek community, validation, and social commentary. For this reason, the project will use a poster campaign that exists both physically and digitally. Posters will appear in public spaces like universities and salons but will also be adapted into digital posters optimized for Instagram Reels, TikTok slideshows, and Instagram story shareables. Because the audience spends a significant portion of their day scrolling through short-form content, the campaign must be as visible online as it is in physical spaces.

In my poster campaign, it will incorporate minimalistic yet powerful visuals featuring diverse Bengali women with different skin tones, body shapes, and appearances. The goal is to normalize beauty diversity and counter the stereotype that only “fair” means beautiful or marriage-worthy.

Digitally, the posters will be adapted into social media versions formatted for TikTok, Instagram Reels, Instagram carousels, and Facebook posts and also can be placed in: University campuses (BRAC, DU, NSU, AIUB, etc.) Coaching centers for BCS, IELTS, or university admission Women's dormitories and hostels, Beauty salons and parlors shopping malls like Jamuna Future Park or Bashundhara City Metro stations, bus stands, and community centers Cafés and women’s coworking spaces. These locations are ideal because they represent independence, aspiration, community, and places where young women in their 20s interact daily. Seeing the posters regularly in their environment helps them remember the messages and encourages ongoing reflection.

Colorism directly affects South Asian women’s chances of marriage and influences their self-worth from their teenage years into adulthood. Hunter (2007) argues that colorism acts as a form of oppression based on gender, pushing women to conform to Eurocentric beauty standards. At the same time, Gell (2019) highlights that well-designed posters in public spaces can significantly change public attitudes by using social visibility and emotional appeal.

This poster campaign focuses on challenging harmful beauty standards. It aims to empower Bengali women in their 20s to reject the idea that they need to be fair or “perfect” to deserve marriage. By using relatable visuals, supportive language, and smart placement, the campaign wants to create a space where young women feel recognized, valued, and understood. The style is bold, empathetic, and clear, matching the audience’s communication preferences and the cultural depth of the issue.

## **References**

Gell, M. (2019). Designing visual awareness campaigns: The role of public space, repetition, and emotional messaging. *Journal of Visual Communication*, 18(2), 45–60.

Hunter, M. (2007). The persistent problem of colorism: Skin tone, status, and inequality. *Sociology Compass*, 1(1), 237–254.

