

The way to show respect

NO STRINGS ATTACHED



AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

HERE is no respect these days, say the old folks – no respect for the elderly, for teachers, for your older siblings, just no respect. If you are among

these whining, disgruntled naysayers please be informed: Respect is not something to be earned, it is something to be extracted.

Is this a little too cryptic for your overtaxed brain? Well here's how it goes. Contrary to conventional

of honesty, integrity, humility and generosity. These are old, archaic ideas that have no value in today's reality. RESPECT is directly proportional to POSITION. In other words how much respect you will get depends on how close you are to the highest seat of power or to those who own half the town.

That's not all. Sometimes, even though you have the right credentials – you are the nephew of the sister of the local MP but so what, not every Kamal, Jamal and Damal knows what you look like so you must have what is known in Bengali a *bhaab* – an attitude that exudes enough scorn and arrogance to make people think you must be someone important and hence worthy of respect. Puffed up hair seems to work as it gives the impression of tallness as well as affluence. The latter can be enhanced with gold chains around the neck and rings on every finger with stones one's favourite fortuneteller has provided through paranormal means. Of course, the usual accessories are prerequisites – SUVs, a retinue of thuggish looking –ahem – 'associates' preferably wearing ominous bandanas and dirty grins while speeding along motorbikes harassing the local womenfolk.

But wait, aren't we forgetting the main point of this thesis – the extracting respect part? You see that's the most intriguing aspect. When all the paraphernalia linked with power and status fail to get lowly commoners to show respect – say they forget to *salam* or shower you with petals when you enter the vicinity of the primary school you are to visit – there is only one thing to do – give 'em a few blows. Let them know who's Boss.

If you are looking for real life



examples, look no more. Only a few days ago a UNO (Upazila Nirbahi Officer) was beaten up by the goons (sorry 'associates') of a local leader because he had not responded when a local MP asked him to pay his respects to the local leader. He had made a major boo boo: he had not

shown respect. Hence the severe head injuries he was rewarded with.

In another incident, a traffic police was slapped by a member of one of the most respected echelons of society (one refrains from giving out details lest it's interpreted as 'showing lack of respect') because he

had been going on the wrong side, and the fool tried to be the goody two shoes type of protector of the law. He actually had the nerve to stop the person who must be respected 'at all times under any circumstance', and asked him to refrain from breaking the law.

So here are some new lessons we must learn and unfortunately impart to our children.

Behave in a thuggish way at all times – rude, uncaring, brash and irreverent.

Master the art of shouting like a death metal vocalist with the traditional refrain "DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?"

Sport your material possessions as loudly and crudely as possible – like driving a Hummer around the dug up roads of Banani and Gulshan, with blaring Bhangra music, and followed by a microbus full of mean looking men in dark glasses, bandying their rifles for everyone to see.

Randomly break rules – get your cronies (you must have a whole bunch of them to ensure you get uninterrupted 'respect' 24-7) to go to various individuals to teach them how to respect you. A small fee may also be extracted while 'persuading' the person to show proper respect.

You may be thinking these are just the usual tactics employed by gangsters of the underworld that we watch with such relish in movies where someone gets shot or knived every 37 seconds. Here's an FYI – this is how it works in the real world. These are strategies adopted by those who hold the most respectable positions in society. Hey, hey do I detect a yawn? Being disrespectful, eh? Just you wait.

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wisdom, gaining respect is not something that comes after you have done amazing good for humanity, say teaching underprivileged kids how to use a computer, or discovering a solution for village folk to get safe, drinking water. It is not about having a squeaky clean record

Healthier mothers for a brighter future

COPENHAGEN CONSENSUS



BJORN LOMBERG

BANGLA DESH has had incredible success fighting hunger. In 1990, almost two-thirds of children younger than five were

underweight, but less than one-third are today. Recently, Bangladesh even received a "special recognition" award from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation for outstanding progress in fighting hunger and poverty.

National rates of malnutrition, however, are still very high, and stunting is a particular concern. When children are chronically undernourished or have to fight many infections early in life, they can become shorter than normal for their age. Stunting decreases cognitive development, leads to worse health outcomes and school performance, and lowers productivity throughout adult life. It is especially harmful to Bangladesh, because about 6 million children under age five are stunted.

What are the best strategies to combat malnutrition and its dangerous effects? New research by Jonathan Rose, a research advisor with the South Asian Institute of Advanced Legal and Human Rights Studies, examines programmes to fight malnutrition by delivering nutrients and micronutrients to young children and pregnant mothers.

The proposals analyse various strategies that target these vulnerable populations, including education about breast-feeding, energy-packed and high-protein foods, iodised salt, and supplements of vitamin A, zinc, or other micronutrients. The majority of these are already included in Bangladesh's National Nutrition Service strategic plan but have not been fully implemented due to capacity and staffing constraints.



When you take care of mom, you take care of her child. PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HUQ

Delivering the nutrition-focused improvements costs roughly Tk. 9,800 per child. If delivered to everyone, the greatest effect from the bundle of education, nutrients, and micronutrients would be on the rate of stunting, which would fall from 36 percent to an estimated 29 percent –

averting stunting in roughly 450,000 children. Stunting has many deleterious effects: it hinders mental development, lowers school performance, and leads to worse health outcomes and more diseases later in life. But one of the most well documented outcomes is that stunted children have lower lifetime earnings because of these problems. Thus, a

significant measure of the impact of better nutrition is the higher incomes these children will likely have. In total, this amounts to about Tk. 20 million over the course of their working careers (According to Rose's paper, this is with the 5.13 percent growth scenario; if we use the 3 percent growth scenario then

the lifetime benefits per child are over Tk. 8 million).

The research shows that each taka spent on the nutrition efforts would do about 19 takas of social good.

In a related analysis, Rose looks at how nutrition could also help pregnant women. In Bangladesh, we have seen great improvement in maternal health – the maternal mortality rate has fallen by more than 40 percent over the past decade. But there is still much to be done, especially because a mother's nutrition carries over to her newborn. Providing nutrients to the mother can be a very advantageous proposition.

Energy and protein supplements decrease the chances of stillbirth and undersized-infants. Calcium reduces pre-eclampsia during birth, which can be fatal for mothers. And iron and folic acid can lower anemia for mothers, a cause of maternal deaths, and also reduce infant birth defects. In addition, all three supplements fight a troubling issue: low birth weight. Newborns with low birth weight face significantly higher rates of infant mortality, are more likely to suffer complications or chronic disease later in life, and are predisposed to stunting. The analysis conservatively estimates that 15 percent of births in Bangladesh are low birth weight.

Giving pregnant women energy and protein could yield great benefits, especially for fighting low birth weight. But the supplement is logistically challenging and costly to deliver – it's more than four times more expensive than the iron-folate supplement. It is estimated that each taka spent will do

17 takas worth of good.

Calcium supplements, on the other hand, are less effective at preventing low birth weight infants, but they can reduce pre-eclampsia by more than 50 percent. In total, each taka spent will do 12 takas worth of good.

Iron-folate supplementation turns out to be most promising, particularly because significant benefits come from costs of just 591 takas per pregnancy. Providing all pregnant Bangladeshi women with iron and folic acid would decrease the risk of anaemia in mothers by 69 percent and reduce low-weight births by nearly 3 percent. The majority of the benefits would come from avoiding lifelong productivity losses that arise from low birth weight. But it would also reduce infant and maternal mortality and lower healthcare costs for children later in life. One taka of spending toward this effort does a striking 27 takas of good.

Each of these supplements could benefit pregnant women, but the analysis shows that iron and folic acid is by far the most cost-effective strategy, allowing more people to be helped, given limited resources. Where would you choose to spend valuable resources if you were in charge and wanted to do the most good for Bangladesh? Contact us at <https://copenhagen.fbapp.io/nutritionpriorities>. Let's continue the conversation about how to do the most social good for Bangladesh with every taka spent.

The writer is president of the Copenhagen Consensus Center, ranking the smartest solutions to the world's biggest problems by cost-benefit. He was named one of the world's 100 most influential people by Time magazine.

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QUOTABLE Quote

Fidel Castro

Sorry, I'm still a dialectical materialist.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

Across	Down
1 Blasting stuff	1 Catch some z's
6 Release	2 Injury soother
11 Rued a workout	3 Terence Rattigan play
12 Different	4 Variety show
13 Irritate	5 Keats poems
14 Question of place	6 De-pressed
15 Gutless wonder	7 Moral
17 Midmonth day	8 Eddie Redmayne film
18 Mayberry kid	9 "American Gigolo" star
20 Print unit	10 Valuable rocks
22 Writer Follett	16 Bond, for one
23 Dictators	18 Gumbo veggie
26 Dreadlocks wearer	19 Ring
28 "Adam Bede" author	21 Angers
29 Charms	23 Scarlett's home
31 Relaxing site	24 Hit the bottle
32 Spoken	25 Order to Spot
33 Lactose source	27 Exciting things
34 Lowly chessman	30 High trains
36 Booty	33 Squander
38 Shady spot	34 Cronies
40 Stage comment	35 Open space
43 Director sergio	37 Laundry
44 Swagger	39 Old auto
45 Authority	41 Really liked
46 Hagar's wife	42 Seventh letter

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

S	O	F	A	E	S	P	A	N	A
O	P	U	S	C	O	O	L	E	D
F	I	L	L	H	U	R	L	E	D
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