

# CHANGES THAT MAKE US #NOWINLIFESTYLE



## Twenty-something and broke!

**RAMISA HAQUE**

Getting sucked in by the glitz and the glamour of an alluring glam life is not a black-hole that forms overnight. Footing a small charge here and springing for another bill there, the rush you feel every time you can afford something is truly tempting. What is trying out yet another artisan coffee shop that



just opened up around the corner anyway? And for that matter, the fact that the latest makeup palette is more pigmented than any, you already own is reason enough to add it to the cart.

News flash: it really is not!

Just because you can, does not mean you should. And before you know it, it is these small expenses in the form of 'must-have purses' or adrenaline-

inducing video games that will recur again and again until you finally discover you are all out of cash to spend. And that is when you will find yourself staring down the deep, dark abyss of being broke.

It is funny that your 20s should be for you to enjoy yourself. A dose of reality will tell you that about 20 per cent of Bangladeshi households belong



to the middle-income group. With the national household earning of a regular Bangladeshi family at Tk 15,945 as of December 2016, and expenditures amounting to Tk 15,715 per month, making room for frivolous spending is quite impossible.

This is exactly why young adults in their early 20s depending on family support find themselves in a financial

fix. Tabling impulsive expenses by somehow getting a handle on them for now, a 20-year old might have more pressing matters at hand.

A fund manager by trade employed at Impress Capital Ltd., Muqit-Al-Rahman clarifies on the financial gap weighing down on the urban families of the country, "Families of urban Bangladesh have a certain level of

only so much you can ask of them due to their often conservative or even variable incomes. Instead of blindly depending on them, try taking matters into your own hands.

And the first step?

"To find opportunities where they are available," advises Muqit-Al-Rahman.

Working as a freelancer in a given field, defining your own work hours and having pay slips issued accordingly can be one way of making some quick cash. Saving up for a few semesters and footing your own expenses will, at the very least, have you walking tall and proud, and give you a taste of the working world. This has been the case for Mahtab Ahmed, a 22-year-old international student pursuing a degree in engineering at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada.

Splitting his time between Dhaka during the holidays and Vancouver, he offers his take on working multiple jobs to make ends meet, "You might not like everything about it but it is an experience which will only help you." And the idea is becoming more and more common in Dhaka city too, with multiple university students now beginning to embrace independence and opt for some part-time work.

Moreover, taking up part-time jobs or even providing private tuitions are the usual safe options to choose from.

However, if you are one to try going all the way and completely forego financial support from the family, your best approach might be to apply for a scholarship, which is exactly what Nahid Tabassum did.

The now-27-year-old hopeful graduate of North South University still remembers being in a fix with tuitions.

"My father was ill and with hospital bills piling up, my family was already in deep waters. How could I ask them for a private education then?" she resorts to a rhetorical question.

But, eventually, she found a way around it. "I finally applied for a scholarship and got my tuitions fully waived. I even took up private tuitions to stay solvent. And after a while, I did not have to ask my parents for money anymore," she proudly shares.

Things will eventually change, and you will find yourself a promising graduate with many opportunities ahead of you. Every dreamy pursuit to the stars might seem attainable with nothing standing in your way anymore.

Well. That may not be entirely true.

Graduation does not always ensure a job right away. And the 'waiting out before the callback period' might be the worst time of all, especially if you finished school under the looming cloud of bursaries and student debt. This is precisely why Muqit-Al-Rahman advises the savvy move of accumulating at least three months' worth of expenses, let them be for commutations or simply to look good at office!

Letting nerves get the better of you before your big debut as a working individual right out of college is all too familiar. Planning out the day ahead to a T, forming your own expectations of what might be is rather spontaneous with you not even fully realising it. That is, until your wild expectations meet a plummeting fall.

"I expected a lot out of life after graduation. Studying economics, I had hoped to work at World Bank, earning a very lucrative salary," reflects Rezwana

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