

# The Current Hardships of Exam Preparation

## ABHOY HRIDDO

Covid-19 isn't getting any better and educational institutes are far from opening. On-line classes are a big downgrade to regular classes. Teachers cannot monitor students properly which gives students a chance to slack off and skip classes. Furthermore, bad internet connections are a big interruption. Thus, many students around the world are struggling to understand concepts and theories.

Maahi Chowdhury of Sunbeams School says, "I'm facing tremendous problems while preparing for my exams since understanding certain parts of the syllabus has been painful. I'm way behind my syllabus and still struggling and hustling to actually prepare to give the exam."

The internet connection is not the only problem that students have to face. Zubair Rahman Chowdhury, an A Level student of South Breeze School, says he had not received the proper environment to study in, "Online classes do not provide the same environment for studying as physical classes since there are lots of distractions around the house. I had to re-watch videos of online classes and it was difficult to get



the motivation to study every day."

There is still a growing uncertainty about whether exams will be held or not as the UK has cancelled all exams. This has demotivated a lot of students. According to Sadia Tasnim, student of Mastermind, "Unless you're passionate about something, you genuinely don't find motivation to do it without a sense of accomplishment. My friends and I have lost our productivity due

to the uncertainty of the exams being held and the grading system of curriculums."

Now the main question should be, how do we get out of this situation? The obvious choice would be to suck it up and make the best use of what we have. As mentioned before, Covid-19 is not getting any better. This is the only option we have and we have to do what is necessary for us to get good grades. Hopefully the

grade boundaries will be lower this year as it was for the October/November 2020 candidates.

Take the words of a Physics teacher who asked to remain anonymous. He claims, "With a few months left, the best approach now would be to solve past papers (provided the course material is finished) and referring to the book and notes when a student gets stuck. A few recent papers should be taken 'exam style', keeping track of the timing, and then later checking the answers from the mark scheme. This helps the student learn how to pace themselves during an actual exam."

We can go back and forth with the whole situation but the bottom line will be that the only way you can prepare yourself is with the motivation to practise and a stable internet connection. Exams are closer than ever so stay safe, study hard and give extra effort to catch up on what you have missed.

*Abhoy Hriddo is currently in his room and very concerned about what he will do about the Physics classes he slacked off on. Help him out at [abhoyhriddo@gmail.com](mailto:abhoyhriddo@gmail.com)*

# To All the Fashion Non-Fans

## SYEDA ERUM NOOR

Yes, I said non-fans. This one is for all the people who find that they never truly know what to wear when to wear. For those of us, no matter how much we try, just can't seem to understand all the fuss about wearing the same outfit as someone else. Or the importance of an outfit as a whole.

### OCCASIONS ARE STRESSFUL

I'm not referring to social anxiety being the problem. You just don't know what's appropriate to wear.

Here's the kicker. You're not even the one bothered by it. But for some reason, EVERYONE else is. The only reason you're thinking about this is to keep people from gasping, from asking you if you need to borrow something of theirs the next time you need to go out.

So you refer to good ol' Pinterest, trying to find if there's anything on there you can find that you can imitate. But let's be honest, you'll end up wearing the same thing you wore to the last important event. And the one before that. And the one before that.

Maybe that's the only outfit you have for important events. Who cares?

### JEANS ARE YOUR BEST FRIEND

Your wardrobe has every shade of blue. For jeans are the easiest thing to wear. You stand by it and you will die with it.

It's convenient and you can rock it with anything. Shirt, T-shirt... And any other top that's out there. Fight me. I dare you.

### INSULTS IN THE FORM OF COMPLIMENTS

"You'd look really good if you tried!" Ever heard that one before? Or maybe "You need a makeover!" or "You have so much potential. What you need is to go shopping."

Yes. Thank you. To all those reminding us of how great we'd look only if we had a fashion sense. And how awful we look now. Thanks. Really.

### GRACE IS FOREIGN TO YOU (BUT YOU KINDA WISH YOU HAD IT)

It'd be a lie if we didn't admit to the fact that from time to time, we look at ourselves in the mirror, standing in the oversized sweater and sweatpants, and fantasise about what it would be like to look like the picture of grace and



elegance that all women seem to have been born with.

A gene we must be missing.

What it might be like to rock a sundress in the summer and to know how to put clothes together to make them look your best.

### COMFORT TRUMPS STYLE, EVERY TIME

But it'd also be a lie to say the feeling lasted more than five minutes.

With the sudden urge to put in more of an effort, you pull on the one fancy dress you purchased centuries ago. You appreciate yourself in the mirror before you realise one

major flaw. A deal-breaker.

It's awfully uncomfortable. And it's not you.

One thing we non-fans have to remind ourselves from time to time and those around us is that we're wearing what we're wearing. That we like ourselves in it. And that people need to back off. What's in an outfit? I suppose we'll never know. But don't you ever feel bad about rocking whatever it is you're comfortable in. It's you and you own it.

*Syeda Erum Noor is dangerously oblivious and has no sense of time. Send help at [erum.noor1998@gmail.com](mailto:erum.noor1998@gmail.com)*

# SWITCHING SCHOOLS

*In a classroom, everyone has their own niche; designated seats, exclusive cliques, marked best friends, teacher's loyal army of pets and possessive class ranks. And then there's the newcomer who everyone eyes as an invasive species, a threat to the status quo. They are here to start anew. But everything meant to pull them through is labelled as taken. How would they survive, let alone thrive?*

## HIYA ISLAM & ADHORA AHMED

There is a frenzy of feelings that goes behind picking the next school. The vast majority of which is the parents' job to deal with. But you can only tell so much from an outsider's point of view. Moving from one school to another is comparable to uprooting one's life and sowing the remains in untrodden ground that is yet to prove its fertility.

While switching schools is necessary for many reasons, it does come with its bittersweet moments and deathless challenges. Moving schools means loss of old friendships, and strife in upkeeping the ones that survive the split followed by the cruel adaptation to a new life.

There are a myriad reasons that lead parents to change schools. Better quality of education, financial restraints, house relocation, school reputation, choice of curriculum, accommodation for special needs and so on.

For Nadim\*, 12, now a fifth grader with special needs, changing schools was an experience mostly out of his control. He transferred from a top English medium school in Dhaka to a less-renowned school of the same curriculum, since academics was not his forte and the old school was being a financial burden. However, it was not until he began studying in his new school that he started to show signs of being on the spectrum.

"My parents did not look for a specialised school as we noticed his symptoms much later, when he was in second grade and had to repeat that year," Nabila\*, his older sister, adds.

Sisters Azwa Al Islam, 16, and Awana Al Islam, 14, have spent most of their lives moving across different schools like ships passing through ports. Azwa has changed schools five times, while Awana has gone through the same experience thrice, each time for different reasons. "My first school had to shut down temporarily due to unavoidable circum-



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

stances. Even after it reopened, my parents deemed it was no longer safe for me to attend there. They tried to transfer my sister and I to our current schools, but at that time there were no seats available in our respective classes. So, for the time being, we had to transfer to a smaller school before finally settling into the school we are in now," explains Azwa.

The struggles essentially begin with social life. It is natural to feel like a fish out of water. It is a time in life where newcomers are especially pressurised to make new friends all the while feeling intimidated, nervous or shy. Then there is the added trouble of recalling names and matching faces to said names. And, sometimes they all just look the same. You don't want to call someone by the name of a person they hate. Or worse, ask them where they are.

Unfortunately, changing schools for Nadim has been unpleasant for the most part. According to Nabila, although his former school was unaware of his situation, the teachers were more caring unlike the ones in his current

school, where he receives no accommodation for his needs.

"They don't care that Nadim needs special care for learning, even after we showed reports supporting the fact," Nabila vents, "I think he's even bullied by both his teachers and classmates for not being a good student. But he has too much pride or is very shy to tell us about it. On top of that, he's also antisocial."

As seen in Nadim's case, as you transfer from one school to another, you witness changes in student culture and camaraderie. You receive an unjustifiable amount of attention and unnecessary judgement. Azwa recalls the time when a few students made fun of her poor Bangla at one of her schools.

Finding your way on the campus is nothing compared to dodging unsolicited advice from your new classmates. They will tell you who to be friends with and who to watch out for, with no substantial explanation. And you ask yourself how trustworthy is this kind soul who may or may not have hidden motives.

However, not everyone's experience is the same. Awana says, "Making friends in my second school was easy. It was in my third school where I realised how introverted I am. I hung out with two or three girls. And now, at present, I have friends who feel like family to me."

Oftentimes, switching schools means losing a year which adds to the growing anxiety. And if you are lucky, you skip a class. But this comes at a cost. Getting on the same page as your peers is no piece of cake, especially if you have made the bold decision of changing the curriculum.

Marshad Mostafa, 17, who has shifted from British curriculum under Cambridge to the national curriculum, found Mathematics being "very different" compared to what he had learned and Bangla being taught "at a much more advanced stage". However, according to him, acing the new curriculum comes with "a lot of practice, patience and time".

It is especially harder when you have moved to Bangladesh from a different country altogether. Marshad transferred from a school in the Middle East when he was in seventh grade. He says that he has had bouts of sickness before adjusting to the country's weather.

It is mind-boggling how differently various British curricula work. Azwa says, "Switching from Edexcel to Cambridge in Grade 8 was most likely one of the worst decisions I've made." She adds that the books and question papers were entirely different and that she struggled with Bangla owing to a completely foreign syllabus. Nevertheless, like Marshad, she persevered with copious amounts of practice. On the other hand, Awana, who also made the same switch, says, "I did not see any difference. Maybe it's because I switched earlier, when I was in Grade 5."

Changing schools is no easy feat in itself. Most students are thrown into this battle headfirst, with no prior knowledge or advice to lean back on. If you're someone who is biting your nails at the thought of changing schools, don't fret.

It's easy to disappear in a crowd by going with the flow of your new school, but it's far more important to stay true to yourself. Eventually, you'll find people with similar interests as yours, and your new school will feel less foreign. Speaking of your new school, try not to compare it to your old one, because chances are you'll pay more attention to its faults than its merits.

If you're reading this and are about to switch schools, best of luck!

*\*Names have been changed to protect privacy.*

*Hiya loves food that you hate by norm – broccoli, pineapple pizza and Bounty bars. Find her at [hiyaislam.11@gmail.com](mailto:hiyaislam.11@gmail.com)*

*Adhora Ahmed tries to make her two cats befriend each other, but in vain. Tell her to give up at [adhora.ahmed@gmail.com](mailto:adhora.ahmed@gmail.com)*