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ARE YOU DOING A MASTER'S FOR THE RIGHT REASONS?

AAQIB HASIB

In recent years, we hear of more and more people around us going abroad to undertake a masters' degree. While many will attribute this trend as an indicator for Bangladesh's development, the question is whether that's really the case?

While the accessibility to higher education, specifically higher education abroad, has definitely increased in the last couple of decades, there are still a few alternate reasons as to why the number of master holders from Bangladesh might be increasing.

JOB MARKET STANDARDS

Our job market is very archaic in its beliefs. I have seen openings for starting positions in organisations requiring a master's degree, for a minimum salary. Moreover, the job description will tell you that an undergraduate degree, let alone a master's degree, is definitely not required to execute the type of required tasks.

Having spoken to multiple HR experts over this issue, the reason seems to be the same in most cases. Using a master's degree to filter out potential candidates for the job is easier than conducting an in-depth evaluation test. As a result, some workplaces look for master's candidates even if the job does not require that level of knowledge.

A ROUTE OUT OF THE COUNTRY

We have all heard this: apply abroad for higher studies so you can "settle down" there. Many Bangladeshis believe that leaving the country is the smart thing to do, especially for future generations.

For many, life abroad is much better in comparison. We need to re-evaluate, as a country, whether educated people leaving the country is truly an indicator of long-term development. Are sufficient opportunities not available for these individuals

domestically, that they feel the need to emigrate?

MASTER'S OR MARRIAGE?

Many young women feel compelled to go for a master's degree right after their undergraduate degree, for fear of being forced into marriage. Our social and cultural issues have long put pressure on young women to be married by the time they are nearing the end of their studies.

The other side to this, is where women are not allowed to pursue a master's, specifically abroad, without being married first. These situations are unfair to the women in both scenarios and we need to re-evaluate our social norms to encourage women to freely choose what they want.

The consequences of an increasing number of master's degree holders can also be detrimental. If this becomes the standard requirement for entry-level jobs, the situation becomes unfair for those who do not have the luxury to afford a master's degree. At the same time, the value of these degrees will continue to fall, with employers seeing it as a minimum requirement, therefore salaries offered will be even lower. We should ideally ensure we are doing master's for the right reasons. Whether it's to become specialised in a certain field, or to branch out into different territories from your undergraduate studies, the degree can be extremely useful. That is exactly why we shouldn't just apply to one without considering what it adds to your individual academic and professional sides.

The Generation That Never Sleeps, and Why

ARYAH JAMIL

The early bird gets the worm. Work the longest hours and the hardest and you're bound to succeed. We've all heard these things from the generations preceding us, or at least seen posts about "grinding 25/8" on social media platforms.

While navigating the toxicity of hustle culture, pressures of late capitalism and the global shortcomings of implementing a true meritocracy, Gen Z just can't seem to sleep.

Averaging less than 7.5 hours of sleep, Gen Z is expected to perform at the highest levels with the least amount of energy. Millennials and Gen Z are just depressed, hypersensitive slobs who don't know the true meaning of hard work and waste their youth on their devices. Right?

Gen Z is perhaps the most affected by perfectionism and the pressures of productivity. Students are constantly struggling to push themselves into this idealised version of a "perfect teenager"; 8 hours at school, 8 hours for sleep and 8 hours of free time.

I, personally, go to an English medium school. Pre-pandemic, my day started at 6 AM for school, until 3:30 PM. Two hours of tuition, an hour of homework with an hour in frustrating Dhaka traffic. That's almost 14 hours of pure academics. Inadequacies of the education system dip into our free time.

Free time is an obsolete concept. For Gen Z, there is only time used and time wasted. They structure their lives around work, the only priority. Their youth is sacrificed for this notion of "a better future" that never seems to come. These stresses eat away at their meal and sleep. Worries of not doing enough, upcoming deadlines, the opportunity cost of resting is a constant source of stress and anxiety.

Our devices are an extension of our physical selves especially in a pandemic they're often our only connection to the outside world. The infinite scroll and hours on our Facebook feed take a toll on us. We consume so much more media on a daily basis. Compared to older generations, who had newspapers and TV for information, we have live minute-to-minute news. Logging off and digital detoxes are practically impossible. Global catastrophes, sexual violence, murder allegations are just things we consume every hour online. Even if it seems normal, on a subliminal level these stresses and worries seep into our minds. Blue light confuses the body with natural light and hampers the natural production of melatonin.

Some of us aren't built to wake up at 7 AM and work throughout the day, we'd much rather prefer putting in work at a later time in the day. People seem to assume early risers are higher achievers. We hear about CEOs waking up at 4 AM and internalise that as our only definition of success. Correlation isn't causation. Waking up early won't make you more successful and Gen Z is begging other generations to listen to them.

Aryah Jamil is mediocre at everything except laughing at her own jokes Tell her to stop talking at jamil.aryah@gmail.com



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