



#WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

HC ruling acknowledges mothers as legal guardian

In a historic verdict, the High Court of Bangladesh has ruled that a mother can now be the sole legal guardian of her children. On 24 January 2023, the HC delivered the verdict on a writ petition saying all citizens have the right to get an education and job under the constitution. It will be sufficient if students mention their mothers' names when filling out a student information form (SIF) for examinations, and they cannot be forced to mention their father's names against their will. The High Court ruling says that forms with the name of the student's mother or any legal guardian instead of the father must be accepted.

It started in 2007. A young woman was denied a registration card for her SSC exam by the Rajshahi Education Board because she was unable to fill up her father's name in the relevant form. The Rajshahi Education Board deprived her of the chance to attend the SSC exam because back then, it was mandatory to write both their father's and mother's names in the form.

Following the incident, in 2009, a petition was started and rights organisations, namely — Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, and Naripokkho submitted the petition as public interest litigation to the HC challenging the refusals by boards of education to issue registration cards to the SSC and HSC candidates because of the lack of the father's names.

The HC verdict is a very important incident in our national dimension. For one thing, this ruling ensures that no student will be forced to use a guardian's name to identify that they do not wish to. For

another, and this holds more gravity, the ruling recognises that mothers can be as much of a guardian as a father. This is a right step towards the establishment of women's rights.

Calling our society a patriarchal one is an understatement. While it is true that women are getting more and more recognition; the prevalent dismissiveness towards them still remains at its core. Changing the entire social structure overnight is not possible but it is possible to take small steps toward positive changes. The HC ruling is one of those small steps. It's true that it took 14 years, but it's a start. From now on, one can enter the name of the mother or any other legal guardian in all kinds of government documents including passports and forms to get education certificates.

The HC ruling is being lauded for numerous reasons. Not only does it ensure constitutional rights but also paves a way for women's empowerment. It minimises the gap between parents' legal status as a guardian and hopefully will establish precedence for future cases.

Sadly, it has taken us this long as a nation to ensure that a mother's name is enough to express identity. But better late than never and a positive change should always be hailed. Now it's up to us, the very people who constitute the society to ensure the proper rights and recognition for women because society will not change unless we change.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro
Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed/
Rettu Sattar

#GUIDES

5 steps to avoid hours of wasted time

In today's fast-paced world, it can often feel like there are never enough hours in the day to get everything done. From work and family obligations to errands and leisure activities, our schedules are often jam-packed and it's no surprise that many of us feel overwhelmed, trying to juggle it all. But what if there were ways to reclaim some of that precious time and make the most of every day?

WORK ON AUTO-MODE

Decision fatigue is real and it adds up. Eliminating as many decisions from your life as possible can work wonders to boost your time and energy. Thankfully, most of the small decisions we make in the day, such as what clothes to wear or what to prepare for dinner can be automated. Dedicate a few hours to making a weekly or fortnightly plan for meals, clothing, and so on, and that's it. You're sorted for the next 2 weeks and can almost run on autopilot.

BATCH SIMILAR TASKS TOGETHER

A study by the University of California found that it can take up to 25 minutes to get back into the flow of work once you have been interrupted. Instead of switching between different tasks, a more efficient way to work is to group similar chores together. If you are answering emails, make sure you block off a chunk of your time to do just that, instead of jumping into something else in the middle. If you are researching, make sure you set aside time to finish all your research, even if you are working on multiple projects.

BEAT THE PARKINSON'S LAW

According to the Parkinson's Law, "work expands to fill the time available for its completion". This means that if you have one week to finish a project, chances are that it will take you that long. This

is generally due to procrastination and unnecessary distraction, whereas on a short deadline, you are forced to be more productive. Defy this law by setting yourself smaller goals — you will be amazed by how much more can be accomplished in a single hour than on a more liberal deadline.

THE RULE OF THREE

Not a lot can kill productivity like an overly-packed schedule. Instead of burdening yourself with everything at once, scope out three, or at most, four tasks that need your immediate attention and focus on those. This will ensure that you give your best to the chores on hand and are not too exhausted to enjoy your free time at the end of the day.

PRODUCTIVE, NOT BUSY

Most people confuse being busy with being productive, even if the two terms are worlds apart. If you are one of those who are always busy, maybe it is time to re-evaluate whether you are stuck finding instant gratification in the completion of small chores as opposed to getting the more important tasks, with crucial outcomes, out of the way. There's a lot that can be accomplished once you shift your mind set from being busy to being productive.

By Munira Fidai

