



Young leaders from Bangladesh at Women Deliver 2023



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Tanjila Mazumder Drishti
The Regional Lead for Asia
at BRAC International

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Women Deliver 2023, one of the largest global multi-sectoral conferences devoted to advancing gender equality, was held in the city of Kigali, Rwanda, from July 17 to 20. The event's 6,300 in-person attendees and additional 200,000 online visitors demonstrated a global commitment to empowering women and achieving gender parity.

The conference provided a platform for young people all over the world to advocate for the policies and solutions they felt were most important. Remarkable young leaders from Bangladesh, who each hosted a panel and joined lively discussions representing the Global South, brought us accounts of their experiences from the conference.

Winner of a prize for social entrepreneurship and activism, Nowshin Mehzabin Chowdhury, reflected on the experience, saying, "It was incredibly empowering to stand in a global space and know that I was being heard."

She found the young leaders' charisma, commitment, and values to be motivating at

the 2016 conference, which she attended as a sponsored young delegate.

"It was like walking into a city full of possibilities where everyone has the same goal and is working from different angles to achieve equality, equity, and sustainability for all," said Nowshin upon returning from the conference this year.

Nowshin discussed youth-led labour market assessment and community mentoring for teen girls and young women at a USAID and FHI 360 HIV prevention session titled 'Shifting Power to Adolescent Girls and Young Women'. She felt empowered by bringing in Bangladeshi examples and advocating for local perspectives that emphasise youth involvement in policy-making.

Tanjila Mazumder Drishti, currently the Regional Lead for Asia at BRAC International, joined Women Deliver with a decade of experience in international development. She talked about the conference's dedication to emancipation through the co-creation of effective interventions with public and private partners, so the two were a natural fit. She presided over a panel on 'Transformative Education Approaches for Out-of-School Girls in the Global South', which discussed the obstacles to education that girls in the Global South face due to problems like childbirth, marriage, and poverty.

"The location of the conference in Rwanda allowed people of colour and representatives from the Global South to share their challenges without a colonised narrative attached to them," Tanjila pointed out.

MD Sohanur Rahman, another Bangladeshi who joined the conference, is a climate activist and advocate. He has played a significant role in the environmental justice movement in Bangladesh. The groundwork he laid with vulnerable youth and the intersex and transgender communities in rural Bangladesh prepared him to make a more significant contribution to the international effort to combat climate change and promote gender diversity.

Sohanur talked about local initiatives and policies at a panel called 'Spaces, Solidarity, and Solutions'. The goal of the panel was to talk about inequality in Bangladesh and how disasters affect communities that are already considered social outcasts. He said that giving

a voice to those who do not have one means helping them develop and encouraging them to help make policies and solutions. Sohanur said, "At the conference, we saw a political willingness that we want to see here in Bangladesh."

Talking about the theme of the conference, Sohanur and Nowshin placed a strong emphasis on "taking cultural and religious ethos, pathos, and logos into account", because it was centred on issues pertaining to gender, sexuality, and abortion rights this year. "These vital topics served as a springboard for bringing the discussion to political bodies, thereby kicking off progress and shattering both political and social taboos."

The conference's emphasis on innovative educational strategies for girls in the Global South inspired Tanjila. She thinks that reviving the momentum of Women Deliver in Bangladesh could lead to the empowerment of marginalised communities. She went on to say, "One conference may not solve everything, but Bangladesh is no longer a colonised basket case. It has broken out with its own stories of development and economic independence."

At the global exhibition that took place during Women Deliver 2023, Bangladesh was represented by Brac, a non-governmental organisation that is dedicated to empowering communities across Asia and Africa. Nowshin and Tanjila both praised the attendance and hoped for a larger Bangladeshi presence at future conferences to help boost Bangladesh's international profile and foster international partnerships.

Women Deliver 2023 was a groundbreaking event that promoted equal rights for men and women. It was a transformative experience that reaffirmed Bangladesh's young leaders' commitment to social change, and they believe these events could give Bangladeshi youth a voice and perspective.

Tanjila, Sohanur, and Nowshin serve as examples of why more young people should take part in policy dialogues to talk about their own problems, such as mental and physical health, education, and jobs, to advocate for meaningful change and create a rights-achieving nation on par with the global superpowers.

The importance of building strong parent-teacher relationships

A.M. FAHAD

Education requires a collaborative effort between students, teachers, parents, and educational institutions. As people whose concerns are interlaced with our academic lives, parents can be our closest support systems. Needless to say, a strong parent-teacher relationship can play a crucial role in providing the student with a positive learning experience.

"Often, students want to learn something new or experience new things outside of their regular educational environment," says Khadiza Begum, an Assistant Professor at Cambrian College. "Teachers can understand their students. Effective communication between a teacher and a parent and establishing a support system for the student can lead to positive results inside and outside of the academic sphere."

"Weekly or monthly meetings between students and parents help a teacher communicate a student's shortcomings to their parents or guardians. It helps the guardian work on the student's needs, helping them overcome any



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obstacles they might be facing," adds Khadiza.

Maintaining open lines of communication is necessary to build the foundations of a strong parent-teacher relationship. While some guardians don't communicate with their teachers often, many tend to over-communicate to the point that it disrespects the teacher's boundaries and causes more harm than good. Participating in conversations with the teacher while understanding and respecting their professional boundaries helps the teacher address their concerns better. It also creates a safe space for the student to grow.

"My mother helped me mentally cope with academic pressure and also provided me with a lot of support whenever it came to participating in extracurricular activities," says Nishat Rahman, an HSC Candidate from St. Joseph Higher Secondary School. "I think it's more difficult for students who don't get that amount of support from parents or teachers."

When parents actively participate in school activities, it allows them to witness the impact of education on their children while being an active part of their life. The more a guardian becomes a part of the school's community, the better they can understand the environment their child is growing up in. It helps them understand their child's interests and behaviour outside of the home.

"Our understanding of our children is never complete," says Khurshida Akter, the parent of a student who goes to Viqarunnisa Noon School and College. "A teacher works with many students. They understand their potential and can nurture them better than anyone else. As people who spend a significant amount of time with them, teachers also see their shortcomings and flaws better than most of us. A healthy relationship with your child's teacher can only contribute to the child's personal and academic growth."

A strong parent-teacher relationship is a collaborative effort that requires open communication, mutual respect, and active involvement. Building such a relationship takes time and understanding, so it's necessary to take it into consideration both the parent's and the teacher's perspective to develop a healthy, nurturing support system for the student.

A guide to your first visit to the gynaecologist

AZRA HUMAYRA

In the bustling chaos of 2020, amidst the pandemic's confinements, I found myself in the clutches of a puzzling predicament that sent shockwaves through my entire being - my period had gone inexplicably missing. As a woman with a trusty regular menstrual cycle, this was an unsettling surprise. Then, as if mocking my distress, when my period finally decided to make a reappearance, it chose to do so with a vengeance. A 28-day-long period - a peculiar form of irony that felt like a cruel taunt from the universe itself.

Navigating uncharted territory, I braved my first gynaecologist visit at 21, determined to escape the grips of self-diagnosis. Looking back, a few essential tips could have calmed my nerves and stilled the uncertainties. Today, I'll be sharing those tips with you.

Track your cycle

Menstrual cycle tracking is simple to handle using calendars or specialised apps. By using these tools, you can gain insights into your ovulation days and correctly count the time between each cycle, which can range from 28 to 35 or even 40 days for various people. If

it's anything different than this scenario you must speak to your doctor about it.

Trust your instincts

Nobody knows your body better than you do. If you see anything out of the ordinary, keep a close eye on it. It is critical to get counsel from your gynaecologist if you are experiencing symptoms like severe cramping out of nowhere, unusually large clots, or intermenstrual bleeding.

Tell everything to your gynaecologist

When presented with the potential of discussing private things with their healthcare professionals, many women experience anxiety, as society standards have long promoted silence on such subjects. But remember, your doctor is here to help you. They have heard it all and nothing that you say will faze them. The doctor will treat the situation according to the



diagnosis. If they are presented with fragmented information, you might not get the help you require. Tell them the details, your situations, and concerns.

Getting an ultrasound

Usually, doctors suggest an ultrasound whenever you're facing cycle irregularities. Ultrasound imaging is used to look for abnormalities, blockages, and other conditions that could be causing your menstrual irregularity. If an ultrasound exam reveals any problems, it can help determine where to focus for additional testing, eventual diagnosis, and management. You must have a full bladder when you're getting an ultrasound. To fasten the process, you can get an ultrasound before you visit the

gynaecologist, it will save you some time.

Issues with pills

The most common remedy given by gynaecologists is pills to regulate your hormones. However, sometimes the side effects of the pills can be so dire that they might hamper your daily activities. Communicate with your doctor about your experiences with hormonal medication. They might suggest you a different medication to accommodate your needs.

Do not lose sleep over it

In most cases, a missed period once in a while is no cause for concern. Drastic lifestyle changes, stress, gaining or losing significant weight, or vigorous exercising can cause your cycle to be irregular.

Just like visiting your doctor for a routine checkup, visiting your gynaecologist once in a while is just being safe. For me, it was to ease my mind and to stop myself from frantically googling what was wrong with me.

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