



Breaking the retirement myth: Embracing a second innings

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

A BOLD OUTLOOK ON LIFE

This beautiful, all-encompassing city should cash in on the experience and magic its seniors have to offer. An increasing number of businesses are hiring seniors, who have much to contribute to the workplace, in terms of experience, expertise, industry knowledge, or business relationships. This is quite common abroad.

Dhaka should have options to recruit its seniors, at least for soft jobs. It is becoming a strategic consideration for many companies and can also be a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) project.

"I believe my years of experience and institutional knowledge are just a waste of the fruitful years because, now that I have retired, I am not being able to share my knowledge with others. Retiring does not mean I forgot my skills," says Rosie Rashid, a former teacher with 40

a board of directors in a bank and a consultant in a consulting firm, I see immense potential in leveraging the expertise and wisdom of senior retired professionals.

While challenges like cultural perceptions and technology adaptation are a reality, the city's evolving work dynamics and need for experienced guidance make it a promising shift. With the right policies and awareness, Dhaka can fully embrace this trend. Nothing can replace experience and knowledge. Therefore, the value of retired/semi-retired workforce should be tested within our country.



plus years of experience.

Rashid adds that the pay scale is not her only reason to seek re-employment.

"I just want to be occupied and feel worthy because lack of work or stimulation is dull. Old age should not be about ailments only or that feeling of being a burden to their family and society," she adds.

On the contrary, banker Nasreen Sattar, who retired from Standard Chartered Bank in 2009 continues to have been working since retirement. She currently serves as an independent director of Mutual Trust Bank PLC, chairman, Consumark LTD (Consultancy Firm), and an independent director at IPDC.

She said, "The trend of hiring retired and semi-retired professionals is slowly emerging in Dhaka. As someone embarking on my second innings as

SENIOR CITIZENS IN THE WORKFORCE

Farhana Mahbub, a Human Resource Professional for the last 18 years, finds the trend of hiring retired professionals gaining momentum globally. She thinks that the phenomenon is worth considering here in Bangladesh.

Traditionally, retirement is seen as a time for rest, with less emphasis on returning to the workforce. Changing this mindset may take time but organisations are taking that step to include the experience of retired professionals in their workforce.

"These individuals bring years of experience, industry knowledge, and mentorship skills, which can greatly benefit companies, especially in leadership and specialised roles. Many retired individuals are keen on



continuing work to stay active and supplement their income," Mahbub feels.

She feels the need to address potential barriers like technology adaptation, generational differences in work style, and also in creating a supportive, inclusive work environment to add in the retired professionals. However, this

shock of not having a job was or still is, too taxing for many like him.

Our parents are always sick in our eyes because they are lonely and isolated from the active social and work life we lead. This loneliness translates into sadness that in turn grows as an ailment.

Tamima Tanjin, consultant clinical psychologist, Ph. D fellow in Neuropsychology, feels that old age is no more a disease than childhood — some would describe it rather as the penultimate stage of development.



considered when dealing with a senior person.

Most elderly people have experienced several losses in their lifetime — retiring from work, weakening of health and the sensory systems, death of family members like siblings and spouses. Perhaps, the worst is losing your home to your children and being a guest in your own house; this is the saddest and most difficult adjustment of all.

In assessing depression for the elderly, it is important to consider the impact of these losses the person has experienced, and how the person has attempted to cope with them.

They tend to withdraw from their social circle and lose life's purpose. As hard as it may sound, seeking a therapist for depressed elders is never an option for their family members to consider, mostly because they think it is part of the normal ageing process to be dispirited. Added to that is the society's negative stereotypes regarding seeking a therapist, such issues outweigh the importance of keeping the elders happy.

"Psychological treatment for depression seems to be offered less to older people than to younger adults. Anticipatory grief may do more harm than good. Each grief reaction is different; what you may experience, and feel is different from your friend of the same age," Tamima Tanjin explains.

Ageing is all about your perception of it. If you consider yourself helpless then you are, but if you want to chase your dreams, obsessions, and crazes that you always secretly held close to your heart and never had the time to realise, then now is the time to. A "little crazy" is what the doctors have prescribed for us!

By Rafiat Binte Rashid
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed; Prabir Das



option, of opting for a second inning in life regarding work, is yet to gain momentum in our society. That's a big shift in our workplace that can shape the future.

A SHIFTING MINDSET

My father, who was a banker all his life, passed away only 14 days after his retirement. He could not mentally adjust to the fact that he would not have a monthly income or that he might be financially dependent on others. The

"Depression is closely linked to ill health in older people. Bodily symptoms are common in depressed elderly people and depression may present as a physical illness. Conversely, physical illness may present as, or precipitate depression.

"Sensory impairments are also relevant, loss of vision, loss of hearing, etc. Cognitive changes and decline in elderly people make it more difficult," the experienced psychologist explains, and says that all these issues must be