

#RELATIONSHIPS &amp; FAMILY

# Why are your kids leaving Bangladesh? The answer is in your hands!



There are two things that happen very commonly around us. First, in almost any conversation about Bangladesh, be it at a family gathering or just the dinner table, we are quick to point out how unfavourable this country has always been and how other countries have done so much in the meantime. Second, when the children around us grow up hearing this and decide to leave "for a better life" in almost any country except the one they were born in, we are also quick to point out how they're "forgetting the roots."

#### Stop. Take a breath. Think again.

A child will not just wake up one day feeling connected to Bangladesh. They learn it from us. Children absorb the way adults talk long before they form opinions of their own. So, when they hear that Bangladesh is too messy, too chaotic, too hopeless, they internalise that feeling. At the same time, they are surrounded by the idea that "success" automatically means leaving home.

How do we raise children who love their country? Well, the answer is multidimensional and not quite simple.



#### Make history personal, not textbook heavy

Patriotism begins with knowing where we come from. And children connect a lot better when the stories feel human.

Instead of lecturing them about 1971, tell them about the teenage girl who smuggled grenades to freedom fighters, or the boy who carried secret messages across checkpoints. Watch documentaries together. Introduce books that make our history come alive. These help younger children connect visually without overwhelming them.

#### Bring culture into everyday life

Children feel rooted when culture becomes part of



their everyday rhythm. It does not have to be grand but consistent.

Play Bangla folk songs during drives. Make pitha together in winter. Visit Baishakhi fairs. Read stories by celebrated Bengali writers. Watch films like "Amar Bondhu Rashed" or short children's festivals films available on YouTube.

When Bangladeshi culture feels warm and joyful, children grow into adults who do not feel disconnected from their roots.

#### Let them see the country's strengths and struggles

There's no need to pretend that everything is perfect. Today's children are smart; they notice traffic, pollution, injustice, and inequality. Ignoring their questions only makes them see it in a negative light.

Be honest. Explain that Bangladesh has problems, just like every country in the world, but also explain that change happens when people stay committed, not when they give up.

Show them that patriotism is not blind pride. Rather, it's hope with responsibility.

#### Encourage small acts of service

Nothing roots a child more deeply than helping another Bangladeshi.

Take them to donate winter blankets. Let them help the hardships up close. Yes, it will be difficult. However, the moment they shed a drop of tear, is also the moment resilience finds a new place in their hearts.

Children who experience the joy of giving back develop a natural emotional connection to their country.

#### Teach them to stay connected to home

In many Bangladeshi households, there is an unspoken plan from early childhood: finish school, then go abroad. Obviously, they mean well by wanting opportunities, safety, and world-class education for their children.

There is nothing wrong with encouraging global ambition. In fact, studying abroad can expand a child's confidence and worldview in incredible ways. However, we often forget the second half of the message. Children also need to hear that bringing back what they learn is just as important. Every developed nation grew because its brightest minds returned home to contribute. They built industries, led research, improved systems, and pushed their countries forward.

If we want Bangladesh to grow, we must raise children who believe Bangladesh is worth coming back to, or at least worth investing in, collaborating with, and uplifting from wherever they are.

#### Raise children who believe they can help build the future

Patriotism is not about waving flags on one day of the year. It is about identity. It is about children believing that they are part of Bangladesh's future, not just observers of its problems.

When they know their history, enjoy their culture, hear balanced conversations at home, serve their community, and see themselves as future contributors — patriotism grows naturally.

If we want a Bangladesh to be proud of, we must raise a generation that believes this country is worth building.

By Nusrath Jahan

Photo: LS Archive / Sazzad Ibne Sayed/ Unsplash