

EDUCATION

Juggling coursework and marriage

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Whilst many of us are excited about enjoying the *kacchi* from our friends' wedding ceremonies and the fun dance routines, many of us forget about the life that lies ahead of the couple on the stage. Under the lustrous appearances, they often have to face the complexities of emotional, academic, and social hurdles that can define perspectives in ways their unmarried peers rarely understand. Marriage adds additional dimensions of financial pressure, shifting identities in society, and academic constraints are often concealed under the delicate veil of romantic optimism.

Finances

Nearly every challenge young couples face is deeply rooted in finances. Firstly, they are mostly not employed. Even if they are, it is mostly part-time, which hardly covers their personal expenses. After you get married, though, the stakes become astronomically higher. Overnight, at least one of these spouses is suddenly responsible for "manning up" and finding work, regardless of where they are in their academic life.

Being forced into job-hunting early, some say, is a blow to academic interests. For others, the emotional pain goes deeper. Zahra Tashrif*, a third-year student of Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), states, "My husband felt pressured that he had to receive financial support from his family. He never expressed anything, but I could always sense it. Alhamdulillah, our parents were very supportive as we were both students, and we overcame it." Her reflection speaks to an experience of many couples, a discomfort that comes with dependence on a partner and family.

This early financial pressure blurs the notion of university as a time to grow and discover. Instead, students are walking a high wire between responsibility and aspiration, often feeling that they are failing in both directions.

A rushed wedding

For most student couples, weddings are quickly set during semester breaks, the only convenient window as far as families are concerned. The truth is though, that few weddings neatly fit into a brief academic break. The madness of preparation tumbles into ordinary school days, eating up study hours with phone calls, shopping trips, venue visits, family meetings, and endless decision-making. Many students are busy writing guest lists between lectures and popping out for dance rehearsals rather than group presentations. Then after the ceremony, post-wedding niceties and social duties leave them with little time for studying. What should be a joyful journey quickly becomes a juggling act, academic obligations dropped so that there are brains left for an elaborate wedding. If not, they are left to deal with the rushed necessities.

Deciding where home is

This is one of the earliest and most emotional dilemmas for young couples: deciding where to settle. Many students must decide whether to live with their own families, move in with in-laws, or rent a home off campus. Each option carries its own weight. Living at home can offer stability but little privacy. Living with in-laws might be accompanied by expectations and circumstances that a young student is not ready for emotionally or mentally. Alternatively, wishing to rent a separate apartment, which is considered ideal for many students, demands financial independence that only a few of them have.

This question of habitat is not simply

a question of logistics. It dictates their freedom, concentration on studies, and ease of finding a footing to adjust in the early days of marriage. For others, it dwindles a sentiment of being "in between worlds", not independent yet no longer a child with their parents taking care of them.

Managing a home while managing coursework

One of the most immediate challenges is dealing with domestic duties. Cooking, cleaning, shopping, and running a household are things most students have little or no experience with. When life in university, from the assignments and presentations and exams, comes crashing head-first with running a household, burnout is almost simply waiting to happen.

The adjustment, for many, has been jarring. "The biggest change in my life after getting married is that I have to handle all my household affairs like cooking, cleaning, and maintaining my academic life, along with handling things in my in-laws' house, which I had never done before. Whereas, in my parents' house I was fully dependent on my mother even for the smallest things," Zahra* says. Her situation mirrors a truth many such early-married students experience: you go quickly, almost suddenly, overnight, from depending on others for everything to carrying all the weight yourself.

Some students have support from their families, but many are on the hook for everything. The outcome is a continual tug of war between household duty and scholarly demands. A student might get up early to make breakfast before an 8 AM class, or spend study time doing errands, or cleaning. Some might have to give up a good grade in class attendance for other chores. This double punch eventually affects academic performance, mental health, and even personal ambition.

The unspoken academic pressure on a budding relationship

Perhaps one of the most significant challenges is the academic burdens exerted on the relationship itself. Coursework requires time, attention, and emotional energy, the same resources that married life also requires. Exam stress, study stress, and not having enough time for each other are reported as causing problems. Rather than a solidified domestic

conception of conjugal life, couples are often stumbling around in environments where frustration and miscommunication prevail.

Academic pressure is also critical in the formation of friendship. University life requires time, emotional energy, and mental presence, all of which relationships also need. Lots of married students struggle to balance taking care of their marriage while keeping up with homework, too. A student of Shaheed M Monsur Ali Medical College, Sabiha Karim* asserts, "My fiancé motivates me a lot regarding my studies. He tries his best to help me study well. But sometimes, when a conflict arises, I cannot concentrate on my studies. Since I live in a hostel, the issues don't get sorted out quickly either."

Social pressure to start a family

Another burdening factor is the pressure of having children. For some couples, it's a subtle nudge; for others, an explicit timeline cited by elders. The pressure to conceive is weighty for students grappling with the responsibilities of study and married life. Not to mention that starting a family at this point could necessitate an interruption in one's education, thoughts of abandoning career plans much earlier than they had envisioned, and even giving up personal dreams. Certain students are not ready for nor willing to make some such decisions.

Social isolation and restricted mobility

Many married students gradually become distant from their social circles after marriage. Friends might think they are "too lost in married life", with reduced invitations to hangouts, study, or university club gatherings. This unintended exclusion causes loneliness and disconnection, and this ironically occurs during the stressful academic seasons when peer support is needed most. As their social lives contract, married students lose not only companionship, but also the informal academic assistance and emotional release that come with close friendships. Even several faculties do not see spousal responsibilities as justifiable grounds to miss a class, turn in late work, or require flexibility.

This isolation grows when married students have restrictions placed on their mobility, especially women who may feel uneasy about going out for late-night group work or study tours and club events.

This also includes the discomfort to conduct research work under the watchful eyes of one's husband and in-laws. Some also have to give up the practice of being a private tutor along the way. Such limitations frequently make it difficult for students to fully engage with academic life or develop experiences necessary for personal growth. Eventually, these barriers lead to a silent disengagement from the youthful campus experience, leaving married students existing in body but living on the margins of university life.

Getting married in university is not inherently bad or universally doomed to fail, but it requires emotional maturity, time management, and resilience that most young adults are still developing. As they balance homes, finances, relationships, and academics, what these young adults show is that marriage isn't simply a romantic partnership; it's a structural union. Their stories are a reminder that for every smiling wedding picture, there is a hidden struggle to become grown-ups far too quickly and too soon. Marriage should be the start of a new journey, not another obstacle on the one they are already on.

*Names have been changed upon request.

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