



Adolescent Motivations Research

A report on understanding human
motivations among Bangladeshi
adolescents

25th June 2018



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Section I

Life of Bangladeshi Adolescents



We find that the Bangladeshi adolescent is in the midst of several modes of 'expansion' outside of her/his context:

1. From closely enmeshed family networks to broader collectives
2. From a narrow definition of education & growth to multiple opportunities and multi-modal learning
3. From a singular sociocultural narrative to greater exposure to international media

From closely enmeshed family networks to broader collectives

The family context is changing as joint and extended family living gives way to nuclear setups with more ties to public collectives

Noakhali

The disintegration of the joint family as the boys marry is becoming more acute in semi-urban areas as older adolescent boys stop contributing to the joint unit, and strike out on their own.



Dhaka

In urban Bangladesh, there is a clearer shift away from the centrality of family networks as support is sought via extended networks: neighbours, colleagues, etc.

NOTE: The average household size in Bangladesh has been steadily declining from 4.90 in 2000, to 4.44 in 2011, and now 4.06 in 2016

From a narrow definition of education & growth to multiple opportunities and multi-modal learning

The dominant narrative around education is still limited to building a basic foundation for the future, and not higher education. Strengthening education at the primary and high school level (including aid and scholarship) has encouraged girls to flourish in the school set-up. On the flip side older boys experience the limitations of the education system as they fail to secure college seats and drop out of formal education.



NEW TEACHING TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED

Teachers are engaging in innovative teaching methodology, taking inspiration from online sources and foreign institutes (British Council). Teachers support students to attend multimedia classes to engage digitally and develop computer skills.



STRONG GOVERNMENT INFLUENCE DRIVES UPTAKE OF INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES

Education ministry has a long reach, it heavily supports and influences education across the country. Greater influence of government in schools, helping in hiring teachers and paying for their fees.



RISE IN PRIVATE CLASSES

Tuition centres/ private classes becoming a norm. Teens go to their school teachers in order to have an edge over others in their exams.

From a singular sociocultural narrative to greater exposure to international media

Teens are avidly exploring and consuming content wherever they can find it. Access to personal phones serves as a temporary barrier for younger adolescents, and TV remains the primary mode of media consumption (especially for girls). Even on television, there is a marked preference for Indian content (Bollywood, soaps, IPL, etc.).



INTERNET ACCESS INCREASES WITH AGE

Older teens have more access as they have their own phone. Younger teens share phones with mothers/brothers/ sisters someone from the locality. Some schools have computer labs that facilitate access even earlier.



BOLLYWOOD AS ASPIRATIONAL YET RELATABLE:

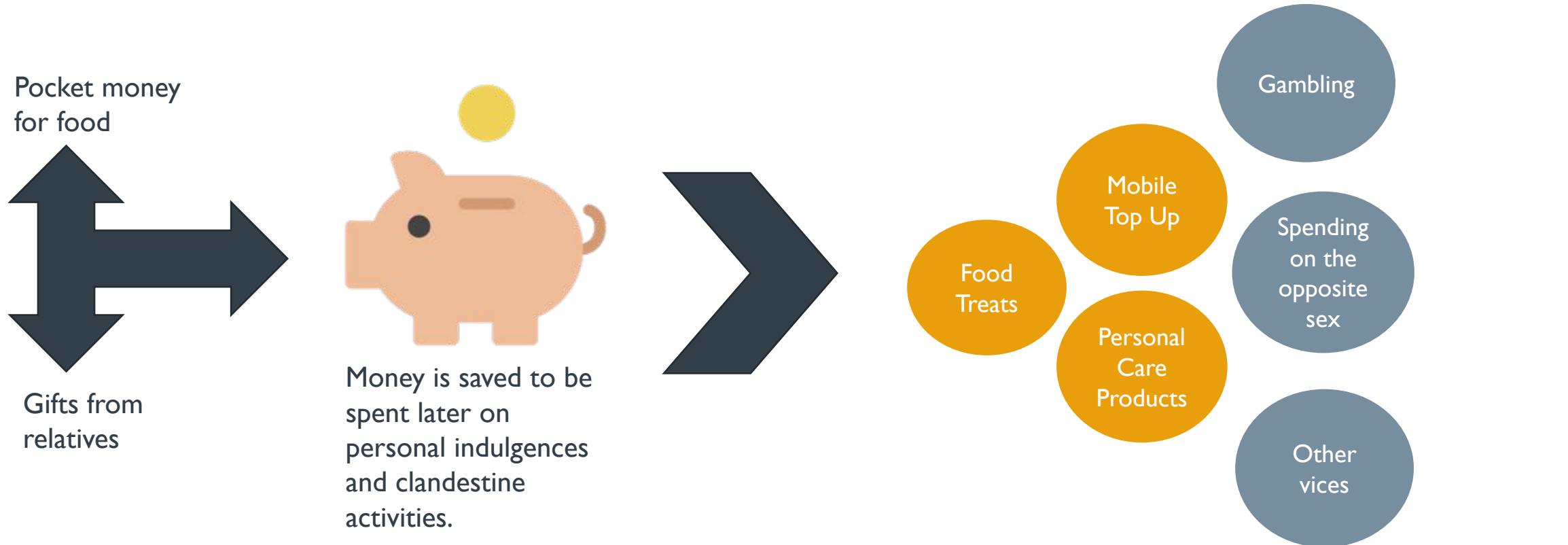
High preference for Indian shows and movies. They watch reruns of popular soaps. Boys consumption is limited to sports, cartoons and seldom south Indian films.



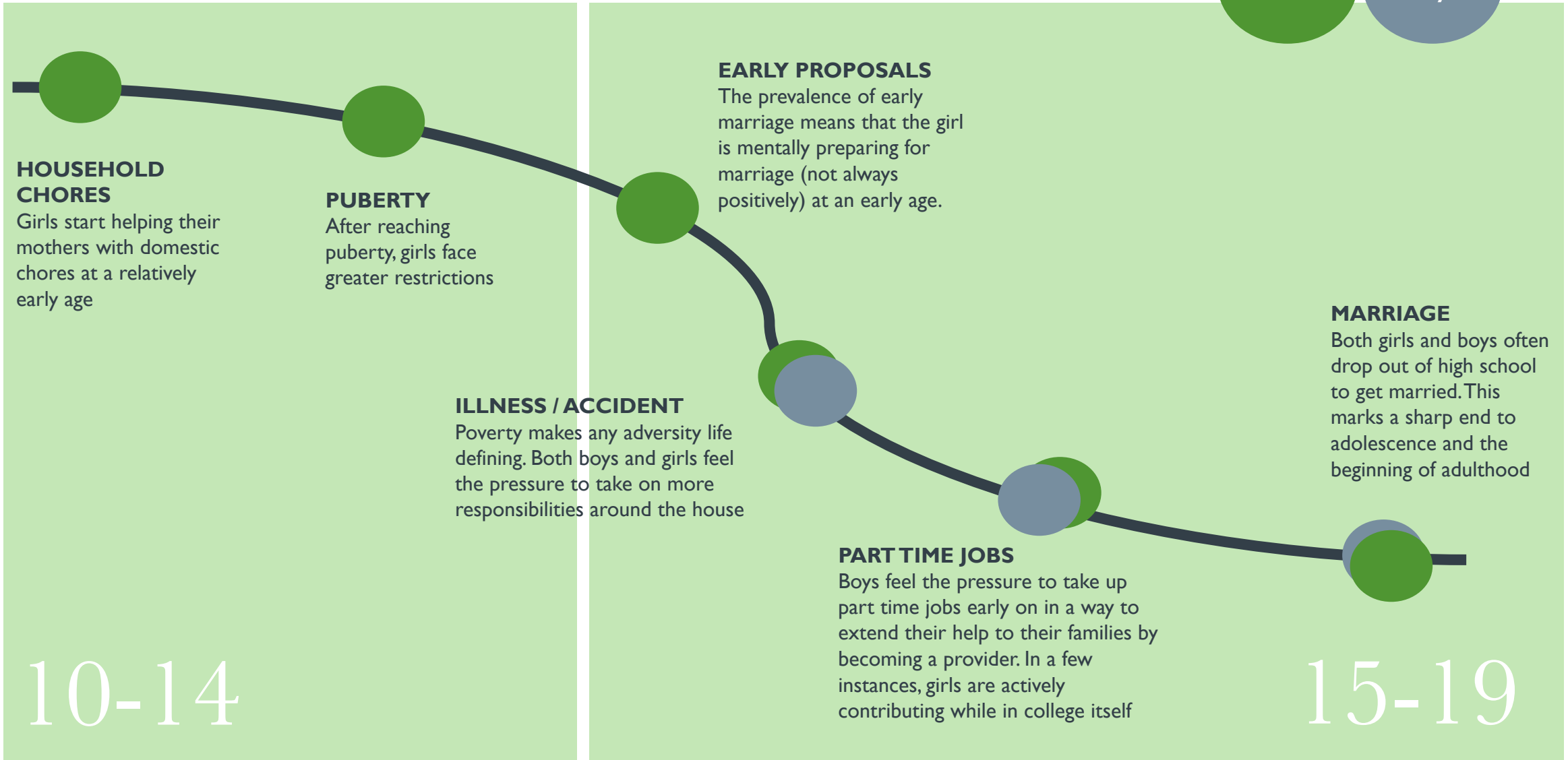
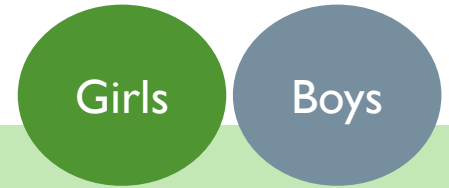
SOCIAL NETWORKING TO EXPAND ONE'S EXPOSURE & EXPRESS NEW IDENTITIES

Older adolescents have accounts on Facebook, some of them post pictures experimenting with new beauty filters.

Greater access to personal money and savings ensures continued engagement with the world outside



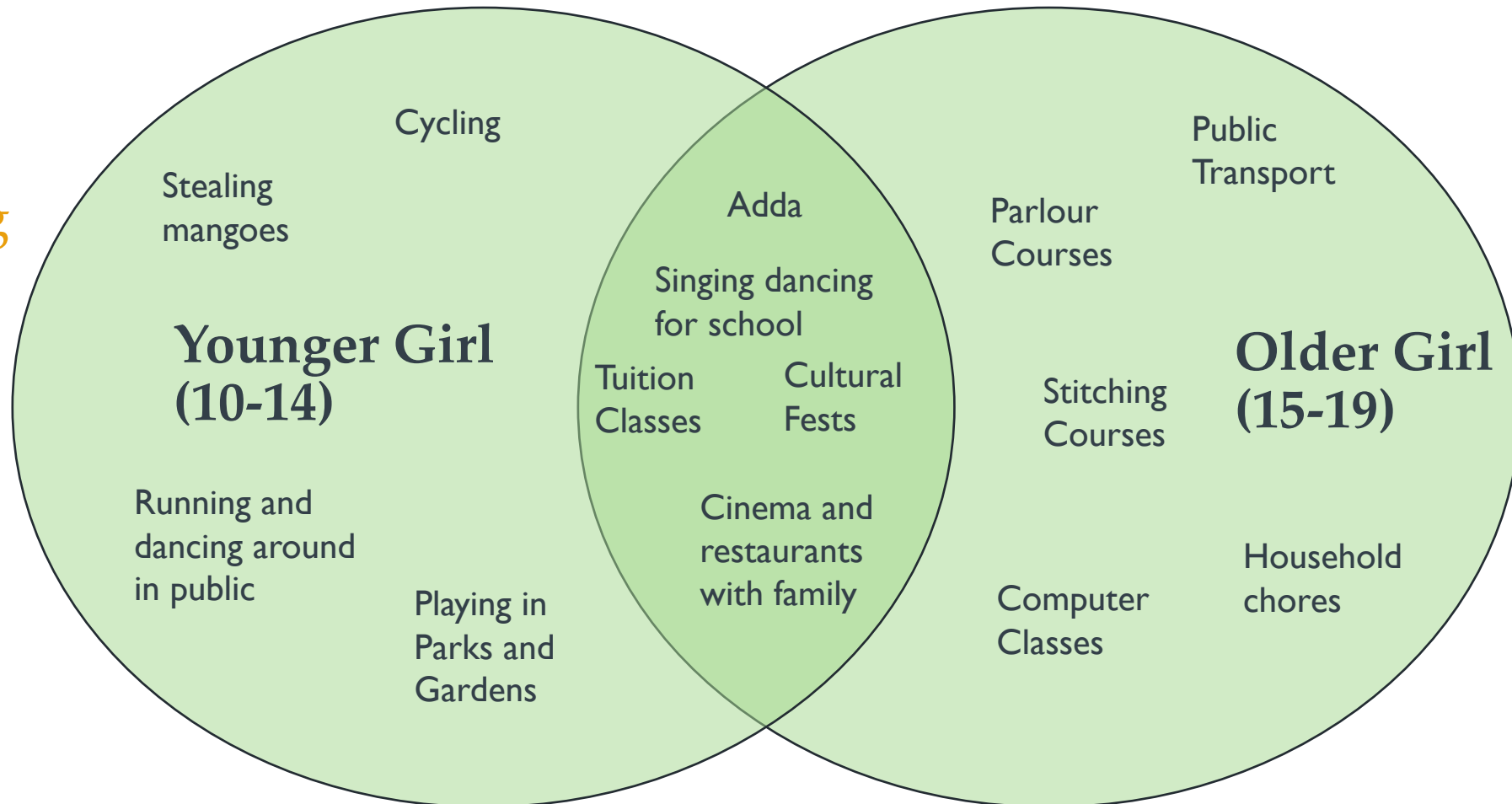
The adolescent journey and key inflection points



Day in the life of an Adolescent Girl:

As the girl hits puberty she becomes more home-bound and isn't allowed to venture out of home unless it is purposeful. The threat of morality is more pronounced for the older girls, the younger girls are allowed to be erratic and brash.

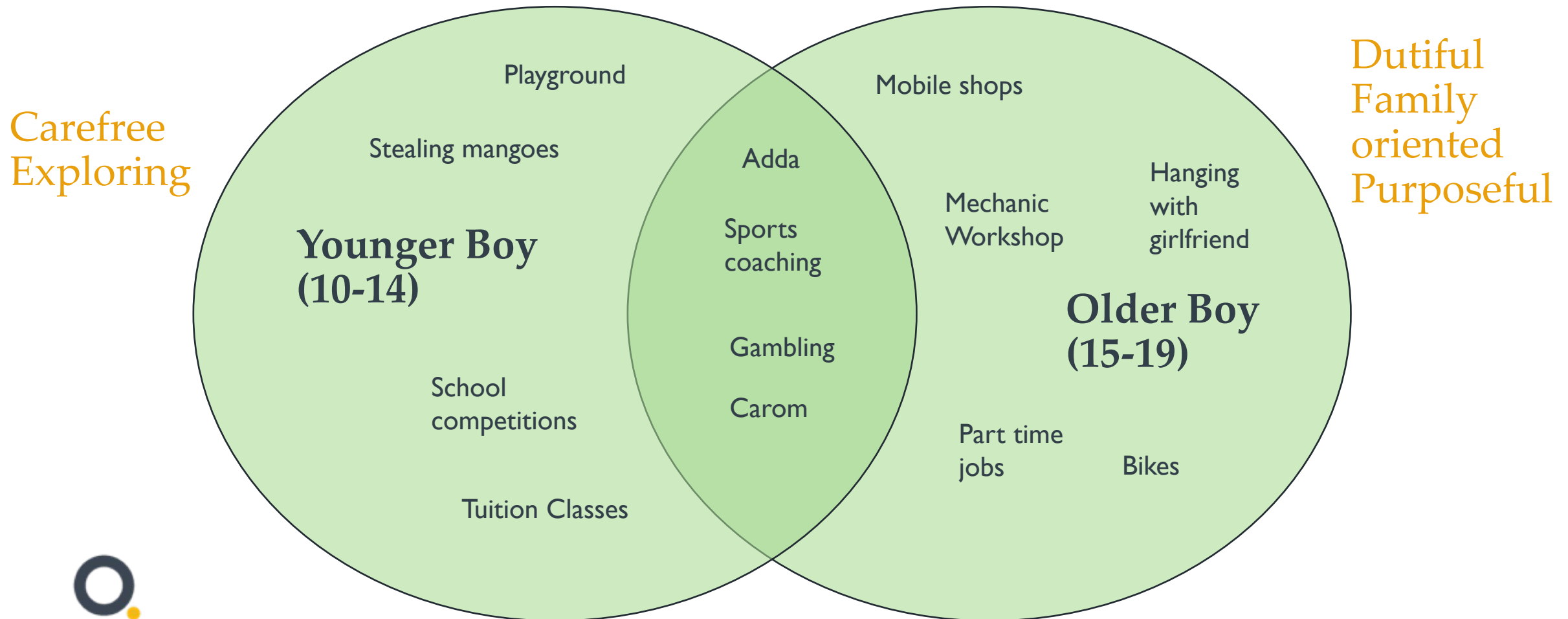
Carefree
Exploring



Dutiful
Family oriented
Purposeful

Day in the life of an Adolescent Boy:

Boys start off with a larger sphere of mobility outside the home (except in urban). As they grow older, they start to take up greater responsibilities, there is a gradual move from a life full of indulgence and fun to earning for the family.



Section II

Human Motivations for Bangladeshi Adolescents



We identified 10 key motivations for the Bangladeshi adolescent.

Each of these can be used as the cornerstone of a social movement or as an additional facet that can improve the effectiveness of a campaign or movement.

ONE: Achieving and Experiencing Upward Mobility

SIX: Powerless Alone, Empowered Together

TWO: Gaining Power and Authority

SEVEN: Crusaders for Reform

THREE: Gaining trust to make decisions independently

EIGHT: Expressing their Romantic Fantasies

FOUR: Serving others sanctions my agency and ambition

NINE: Earning Respect and Reputation for Self, Community and Nation

FIVE: Navigating the New World

TEN: Self discipline as a route to personal growth and development

MOTIVATION ONE

Achieving and Experiencing Upward Mobility

“I am more than the context that I was born into”

The poor-rich divide is an inescapable element of life in Bangladesh.

The poor are stigmatized as being uneducated, backward in thought, and unambitious, although this is often far from reality.

This inequity is perpetuated through unequal access to opportunity – even fundamental levelers like education and employment come easier to those who can pay for it.

The need to rise out of poverty is an individual and family goal.



Community Kitchen in a Dhaka neighborhood

Poverty frames their lives: their lifestyles, their place in society, acceptable modes of behavior, and the opportunities that they can access



Mother uses her brother's cow to feed her daughter when she hasn't made enough food at home [Kurigram]

For the adolescents the home space carries constant reminders of poverty, hardship, restriction and a limited world.



The lack of personal space within the home means that the adolescent finds herself increasingly defined by her ascribed identity when she is there



Teens compromise on their personal space to accommodate space for other family members.

[L] In the slums in Dhaka, families use school bags to store their kids' personal things, from clothes, books to toys.

[R] In Noakhali, our young respondent had to walk from room to room to find his clothes to show us his favorites.

Parents increasingly attempt to 'inbound' the teens because of heightened insecurities about threats in the external environment: drugs, smoking, gambling, abduction.

"For the longest time I used to follow my son when he used to head out. I wanted to make sure is safe and isn't getting into any trouble. I don't trust the outside world."

-Mother of a 10-14 year old boy, Dhaka



Adolescents actively seek out any opportunity to be out of home. When out of home these teens are able to orchestrate their worlds through their choice of spaces to hang out. The context altering effect of being out of home is most often achieved when the teen can journey outside the known community/community spaces.



When I'm at home I'm reminded that I'm poor, when I'm out of home I am physically in the 'higher' world I wish to inhabit.

Even school and college and their inherent opportunities and experiences represent an elevation above what the home delivers.

Tools of mobility [like the cycle] as well as OOH spaces enable access to a lifestyle and imagination beyond their current context



The cycle gives girls unsupervised access to more parts of their environment, and also find spaces and moments of privacy such as parks and hangouts



When my elder daughter got a scholarship from school then we bought her a cycle. She used to go to 'private' [tuition] riding her cycle. Before that either he used to take her to 'private' or I used to drop her there. We wanted her to be able to go on her own.

After we bought her a cycle, she then would go around the village and we wouldn't have a problem as we know she could handle herself.

-Mother of 15-19 year old girl, Kurigram.

Cycling around the village and on their way to their hangout, Kurigram.

Private tuition classes are another zone of relative freedom for girls, where the rules are less strict, and there is also relaxed intermingling between individuals

*We love tuition classes, we don't have to behave in any particular way, we find different ways to have fun without parents being around. That day we threw ice cream at each other and laughed so much.
-15-19 girls, Kurigram.*



All-girl spaces instantly provide sanction for the mobility of the adolescent girl. This safe and non-judgmental space then serves a variety of different needs, and facilitates the creation and expression of new aspirations and identities

Support
Groups

Allow to
express and
rehearse

New
Imagination



Learn new
strategies
and skills

Build
Confidence
and Social
Autonomy

Adopt and
Imitate a
new lifestyle

For boys, tea shops and carom dens become *addas*, places for peers and boys across ages to meet and talk



Carom dens and tea shops where boys engage with each other. This environment is full of banter, fun and teasing. They use these spaces to also tease authority figures (like teachers, elders in the neighbourhood) while hanging out together.

For both boys and girls, this relative mobility allows for some transgression of the rigid codes and norms that they otherwise live according to



Girls stealing mangoes from the neighbour's tree [Kurigram]



Selfie taken the day they went to the children's park. She decided to wear her favourite lipstick for better pictures. [Dhaka]

My parents don't give us too much money, but this one time me and a friend of my saved up money so we could go to a park far away from home. We lied to our families saying we are going for our classes and end up going to the children's park. That whole day we did everything we always wanted to do! Spent so much on ourselves, bought biryani, hung out and spoke for so long! We had no limitations that day. -10-14 year old girl, Dhaka, Slum.

For both boys and girls, this relative mobility allows for some transgression of the rigid codes and norms that they otherwise live according to



Superior skills in carrom is highly desired skill across the country; not only a way to be cool and popular, but also a way to make quick money through gambling.



A 'No Gambling' sign in one of the addas. Gambling is so rampant that spaces need to prove that they're not engaging in or promoting such activities.

As they have greater mobility, boys have access to a wider range of spaces & activities



We know how to have fun! We go to the mechanics and take the bikes from there. The bikes are actually his clients bikes! But he rents them out without his clients' knowledge. When we are able to save enough money, we take these bikes and go far away from our neighborhoods.

Once we went to the sea, and while we were swimming there, one of my friends was swimming so close to a speedboat! It could've easily chopped his head off!
-12-15 years old, Noakhali

Both boys and girls increasingly access popular retail spaces and food outlets where they are exposed to upper class lifestyles. These create new aspirational models and ideals for adolescents.



Mall near the slum in Dhaka.

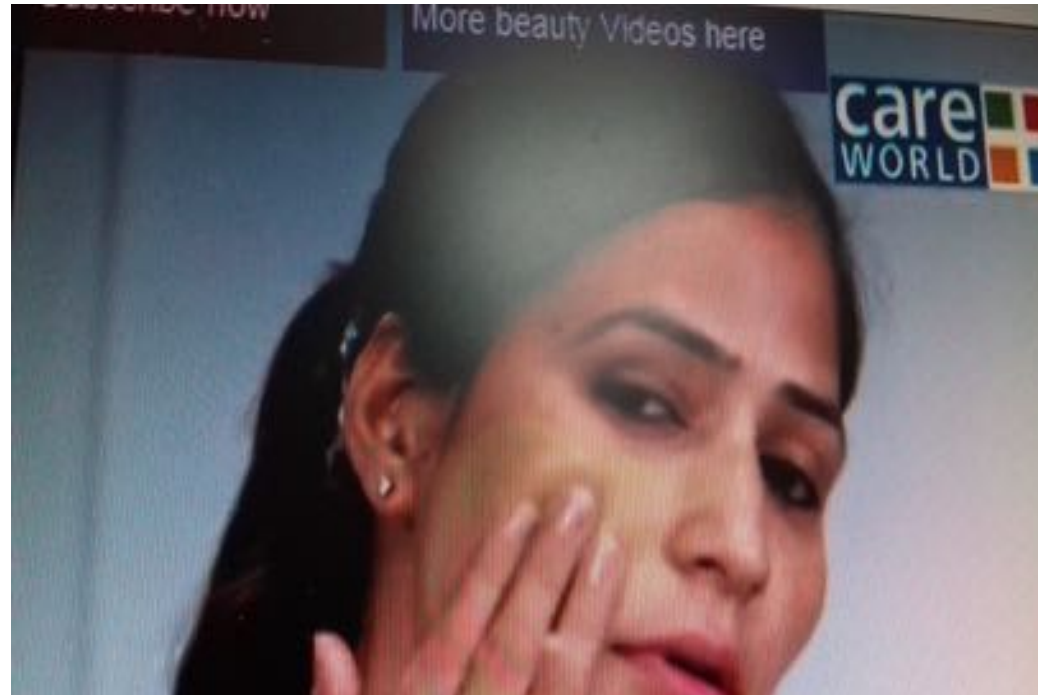


Hotels near their neighbourhood become image markers for the teens, even if they cant afford a meal, they like hanging out with their other friends when they eat.

The exposure and the resultant aspiration/desire marks their move from a restricted 'need' based scenario to 'want' based behavior. This is a potent and symbolic move away from a poverty context.



M and W with their favourite fashion icon from the village. 'She always dresses up so modern, with new styles every single time and looks better than anyone else in the village.'



Watching beauty tips and videos on YouTube. Which in turn makes them buy more beauty products.

*She wants new clothes all the time, during puja this year we could not buy new clothes for her, she kept insisting on that! Even though sometimes she understands most of the time she wants to change the way she looks and wear new clothes, we can't afford to do this every single time!
-Mother of 15-19 year old, Kurigram.*

Appropriating upper class mannerisms and beauty ideals



Skin lightening products were found in several houses of adolescent girls, as fairness is seen as a marker of being upper class. They save money to be able to buy these personal care products which are shared with the mothers.

Mirroring new poses and taking selfies as they see online. During the research, the girls insisted that we take 'photoshoot' like photos of them, as they wanted to model for us.

Upper class markers are also adopted from media – especially Indian media



*We watch Hindi serials to see how they dress up and what they wear. They always have such pretty jewellery. Sometimes we look at the styles and try and imitate the styles in our parlour classes.
-10-14 year old girls, Dhaka*



*I love that Shivay character, he is so stylish and has such a cool way of holding the phone. I love the way he talks and the way he dresses up.
-10-14 year old girls, Dhaka*

They begin to use these material markers to not only conceal their impoverished backgrounds but also to craft a new identity for themselves



As many markers of class mobility (clothes, sneakers, cell phones etc) are financially inaccessible, hairstyle becomes a prominent form of personal expression.

They try new hairstyles of popular sportsmen like Gareth Bale and Virat Kohli. They try ways to stand apart and make a unique identity for themselves.

Girls innovate with their hijabs, hair and school uniforms as a way to express their new identity



The body itself becomes a marker of identity and status



Younger adolescent shows us how he does pull-ups in order to grow taller. [Noakhali]



Elder boys who play football and go to the gym. Diets are introduced by gym instructors and coaches: bananas and eggs for muscle building, ginger and lemon diet for better 'oxygen flow'. Having a fit, muscular body is seen as dominance on the field. [Dhaka]



Katrina Kaif was mentioned by young girls as their inspiration and someone they think is 'healthy'. They think of a slim, toned body as signs of good health and wealth.

MOTIVATION 1: Achieving and Experiencing Upward Mobility

Societal Pressure

The state of the home is a stark reminder of a restricted existence for the teens (financially and creatively).

From the parents perspective out of home is increasingly dangerous and corrupting- teens must be restricted within the home as far as possible.

The outside gives access to new lifestyles that the parents cant afford to sustain.

Adolescent Response

Find ways and means to maximise time out of home – legitimate and illegitimate.

Teens use these spaces and experiences to reinforce a sense of self that is bigger and higher than the physical home allows.

They actively seek outing opportunities that take them out of their local communities.

Spending on oneself is an act of new image creation, and separation from a poverty context..

Resultant Life Motivation

I want to surround myself with contexts and experiences that reflect where I am going rather than where I am coming from.

I want to take back mementoes from these experiences into my home either as a reminder of my true status or as modes to elevate my home status to match my own.

UPGRADED
ME

Using class aspiration as a means to instill positive attitudes and behaviour

MOTIVATION PRINCIPLE: Using class aspirations as a means to instill positive attitudes and behaviours

NUTRITION PRINCIPLE: Equate health (food) with class, it is not just about performance

Embed healthy nutrition practices in aspirational foods and food outlets

Establish the (healthy) food behaviour of upper class role models like celebrities and TV icons as integral parts of their aspirational lifestyles

Create a strong link between healthy nutrition practices and aspirational physiques, again in the context of appearance rather than performance

Examples:

- *Influence in-store literature and menu options to propagate better nutrition choices*
- *Identifying, rewarding and fostering fast-health food that rivals fast food: Leon (London) vs McDonalds.*

BOYS

MOTIVATION TWO

Gaining Power and Authority

“I am an adult, treat me like one”

Parents find ways to conceal their limitations from their younger adolescents, they use indulgence as a compensation to create a world of 'treats' for their kids



[L] In the younger adolescent girls home in Kurigram, the mother had made decorations all around the room for her. They spent money buying chips packets to be able to finish the whole chandelier.

[R] Younger boy seen in Kurigram enjoying his ice cream treat after school.

Deprivation is abruptly made evident to the children as they hit adolescence. They are expected to adopt an austere & responsible mindset, but this causes enormous stress because they have been cocooned & pampered till now.

We have made her realise that if she wants to become a doctor eventually, she will have to work hard now. She needs to get a scholarship or else we won't be able to afford it. We keep telling her so that she understands and works hard for it.

-Mother of 15-19 year old girl, Kurigram

They [adolescents] have a lot of pressure from home..The dreams that the parents cannot fulfill themselves, they try to do through these kids. If you look at the news of the suicide of sons, it is because these boys cannot [live up to these expectations]..

-Teacher, Kurigram School



Father in Kurigram keeps telling his daughter to focus on her exams and get a scholarship for her higher studies. He has forbidden her from participating in cultural events in school, because he feels it is a distraction.

Mothers use a narrative of poverty and hardship to control the adolescents, keep them away from indulgences

“Whenever my son misbehaves or is disobedient, I tell him he is no longer my son. My son wouldn’t do something like that. He wouldn’t disregard the struggles that his parents undergo to raise him.”

-Mother of 10-14 year old boy, Noakhali



X and his mother – a relationship where the mother is too afraid to let her son to go too far from her sight, and a son who does his best to not hurt/ displease his mother because of the family hardship they went through.

There are many kids who throw a tantrum, fight with their parents, break stuff to protest. I don’t want to be like them.

-15-19 year old boy, Dhaka

If I do not study and get good marks, then society will say that I am not caring about my hardworking and poor parents.

-10-14 boy, Noakhali

This clamping down on their freedom makes the adolescents seek for indulgences outside of their homes. As they get older and more independent, they start disassociating from the family unit to attain freedom



K feels sorry for his father who needs work all day long in his shop but still can not earn much to lead a decent life, whereas his elder brother is earning well and even bought a motorcycle for himself. He feels that it's his brothers' responsibility to contribute money in their family. His elder brother stopped contributing/ listening to his parents once he started a job (and then eventually got married).

[Noakhali]

In order to regain control, parents subscribe to corporal punishment as a way to curb the boys. Which has further created conflicts in their dynamics.



S is expected to come home directly after school. Once in school he took part in a Qawwali competition without letting his parents know...when he got back 30 mins later than usual, his mum was waiting there for him. She beat him up and didn't even allow him to explain himself.. Later when he got a chance to speak, she realised that he had won the competition!

MOTIVATION 2: Gaining Power and Authority

Societal Pressure

Abrupt exposure to the real extent of poverty and no more choice to indulge.

Loss of innocence as one is exposed to the harshness of adult realities

Internalization of guilt as one is

1. adding to the burden
2. and not living up to one's parents expectations as a student

Adolescent Response

FOR BOYS ONLY:

Even though the parental expectation is that they will equip themselves for success in the long run [education], adolescents prematurely enter the earning arena.

FOR BOTH:

There is both a desire to fulfill their personal desires, as well as a concerted effort to reduce the financial burden on their parents.

Resultant Life Motivation

Society expects me to act like a teenager, but I need to be an adult and I need to demonstrate my capabilities like an adult.

I need a space where I can safely test drive adult activities – both productive and indulgent.

YOUNG ADULTS

Recognize the fact that they are already functioning, in parts, as capable and responsible adults; and steer them towards positive and constructive activities.

MOTIVATION PRINCIPLE: Recognise and treat them as young adults.

NUTRITION PRINCIPLE: Nutrition is an 'adult' matter and problem, one that adolescents can help fix.

Rather than simply being recipients of better nutrition advice and habits we make adolescents maven in service of better nutrition.

Through the act of delivering and teaching better nutrition to their elders, they will internalize the importance of this practice.

The approach to nutrition is one of an adult, it is not limited to the act of eating alone but encompasses knowledge of ingredients, purchase preparation and consumption.

Align nutrition with what is considered to be an 'adult' action.

This varies by gender: For boys it is economic agency and for girls it is social agency (networking).

Underpinning the entire act is the idea that food serves a very real and serious role in their lives beyond taste and appearance of the food.

Example:

Teens made to recognise that food is:

- *A big part of family expenditure.*
- *The basis for health therefore income stability.*
- *A source of energy therefore progress.*

GIRLS

MOTIVATION THREE

Gaining trust to make decisions independently

“I know what’s right for me”

There are strong notions of girls empowerment and education that have taken root across Bangladesh.

This generation of mothers has had to scrimp and scrounge to supplement the husband's income in order to run the household in a desirable way.

They want to ensure that their daughters do not have to face similar situations where their income and way of living is out of their control, i.e. solely dependent on the abilities of their husbands.

But this progressive bent of mind has its limits. If the girls are seen as doing things for their own end and not the benefit of the family, they are judged and reprimanded, and stripped of their liberties.



Poverty in the parent's generation signals a failure of the male provider. This has left the mothers feeling stranded



A mother waits for the power (electricity) to come on so that she can feed her grandson and her husband. [Dhaka]



In rural areas, mothers are seen cultivating vegetables and fruits in their backyard for emergencies.

My husband was so ill, everything started swelling up, he couldn't move at all. None of us knew what to do. For a rickshaw puller this is the worst that could happen. I was so helpless I didn't even know how to save him or the family. I was just so distressed when this suddenly changed the fate of our family.
—Mother of 15-19 year old girl, Dhaka non-slum

One is always so uncertain of what will happen. We cant really plan for the future but only hope that we can still provide for our children.
—Mother of 10-14 year old girl, Noakhali

They try to ensure that their daughters do not find themselves in the same predicament as they are in now

“I was married young and what did I get in life?? I got nothing, no happiness, I could not talk freely with my in laws, I could not share ideas with my husband, I used to remain quiet. If anyone used to abuse me still I would have kept quiet.

But this generation, they will learn, they will understood lot of things, they will know how to and what to say to others. They will be able to stand up for themselves.”

-Mother 15-19 year old girl, Kurigram.

“Nowadays society is changing and if you are not educated now, you have no value. Girls have tolerated too much and if you don't study, then these tortures will never stop. So education is must.

If my daughter will study, then she will be able to get some job and earn her living. If you will be educated, then others will give you respect. You will earn a position in life.”

–Mother of 15-19 year old girl, Dhaka non-slum

Mothers endeavor to equip their daughters for a better future. Apart from formal education, priority is given to skills that can also provide part-time income before and post marriage



A mother in Dhaka learnt about a stitching course by an NGO nearby and asked her daughter to join. She bought a sewing machine for her to start stitching at home. These are the patterns the daughter has learnt so far, she will try and sell them once she has mastered more designs.

Mothers also encourage their daughters to build positive personality traits like the ability to articulate and express one's opinions, as well as being independent in thought and action



I feel so proud when I walk outside with her and see her travel on her own, the way she conducts herself in public, I am not scared anymore. I don't have to walk with her even, now she is the one who reassures me. She knows what is right and she continues to make me proud. -Mother of a 10-14 year old girl, Noakhali

The effects of this positive change in the mindsets towards gender roles and capabilities are already showing. All around her, the adolescent girl finds positive role models in elder sisters, aunts and neighbors



My father had heart problem and an operation was needed. We belong to a middle class family and the cost of the operation was around 3-4 lakh taka. Where we will get that much money! As my sister is studying in varsity, that is why she got help from there, she sent money from there and treated him. I feel if my sister can do so much for my father, maybe one day I will grow up like my sister and do something like this for my family!

-16-19 year old, Kurigram

My uncle lost his job recently. They stay in Dhaka and you know the cost of living there, they had to pay the rent and run the family, in all they need 13000 taka. Then my cousin sister started taking tuition and paid all the bills with that money. She was studying BBA and she used to teach a BBA student. I want to be like her, I want to see a sudden change in me. I liked her effort!

- 10-15 year old girl, Noakhali

These role models then enable younger adolescent girls to actualize their talents and interests. They become credible champions of an alternate reality for girls in their context.



When I started my parlour course, I never told anyone at home except my elder sister. My mother was furious because she didn't want me to go to the classes! She said that make-up is immodest, and it is not appropriate for a 'good' woman to wear it, or even help someone else wear it.

*My elder sister was the one who came to my rescue. She told them that at least I am doing something useful, and not like the other girls who try to meet boys and talk to them. She told them that all I wish to do is learn something new for the family. She reassured them that I too will end up becoming just like her!
-10-14 year old girl, Dhaka slum*

Elder sister flaunting the hairstyle her younger sister learnt in the parlour course. She was instrumental in getting her sanction to study something that contravenes conservative Islamic norms (make-up).

Teachers accelerate this transition to new gender norms as they provide legitimacy to a girl's potential and talent. They give confidence to even stand up to societal censure



W loves to dance, she feels like she is carefree and alive when she dances. 'Nothing else matters to me then, I feel like it is just me and the music!'

Her mother hated her dancing, she once even stopped her from dancing at a relative's wedding! This changed until her teacher told her about how W has real talent and how she could win certificates and prizes with her moves.

Her mother now collects her prizes (plates and bowls) that she wins in her competitions.

During the school visit, the girls we met wanted to show us their dancing skills. W chose a Bollywood track. While she was dancing, we noticed a lot of villagers who were gawking from outside the school campus. But W and her friend didn't care, they said, "They don't know about anything and judge us, we don't take care."

While mothers mean well and have high hopes for their children, they understand the realities of the society that they live in. They shield their daughters by teaching them how to use traditional codes to deflect judgment.



I taught my daughter to wear burkha on the roads so that no one disturbs her. I made her understand the real power of the burkha that will protect her from the outside world. I don't want her to fall into trouble or ever feel bad about going out. There will be no objectification and she will be able to focus on her future, nobody can stop her from achieving what she wants then.
-Mother of a 10-14 year old girl, Noakhali

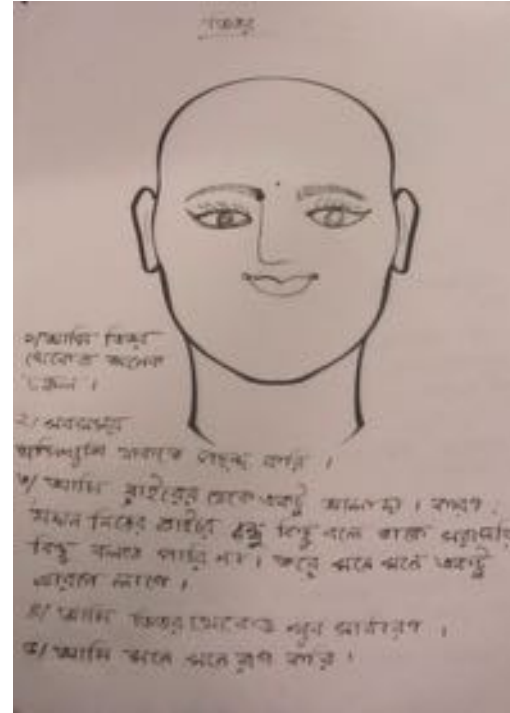
However, the need to both conform to traditional codes and roles, as well as expand on gender roles, makes for a dichotomous existence. She yearns to be free of judgment and choose her actions without external interference.



Despite the onus on girl child education, a disproportionate amount of their time still goes towards household chores



S claims to have stopped talking to her male friends in school after her puberty. 'I don't want to upset my family in any way, I will always be respectful, I will not get distracted'. While going to school she ensures that her dupatta is tucked in her belt.



I don't express my anger at home, I always remain calm and happy. I also want to get angry sometimes but I know I can't upset my parents. I have to continue being their good daughter.
-15-19 year old girl, Kurigram

I am very strong and can fight my own battles, I once slapped this boy as he came too close to me! He kept telling me he was interested in me, I wasn't going to listen to him.

I'm so glad nobody from my neighbourhood saw me do this they would've never recognized me! They know me as someone who is so calm and composed. They would've been in for a rude shock!

- 10-14 year old girl, Dhaka

MOTIVATION 3: Gaining trust to make decisions independently

Societal Pressure

Overburdened mothers who want to prepare their daughters better for male provider failure, but at the same time abide by general mores and gender codes.

Girls cannot relinquish traditional role spaces, but must continuously expand into erstwhile male roles.

Adolescent Response

Try and live up to this massive pressure of being both the provider yet the traditional woman.

Constantly expanding one's role by constantly performing, conforming and achieving.

There is a need to constantly legitimize one's role expansion by reassuring society that familial roles will not be compromised.

Resultant Life Motivation

I want to be trusted to make my own choices and decisions. I do not want to seek permission for what I do.

I want to elicit pride rather than suspicion, every time I expand my life. I have my own moral compass.

I want to expand my role and increase my influence.

**GIRL
POWER**

Legitimizing and encouraging participation of girls in new spaces and activities.

MOTIVATION PRINCIPLE: Enable girls to make their own choices and create real impact for family & society.

NUTRITION PRINCIPLE: Girls as consumers of food to sustain their achievements, not producers to support the performance of others .

Girls as leaders and not followers.

Movement outcomes that are extensions and enhancements of their traditional gender role of being the nurturer – health, nursing, nutrition, etc.

Ensure that the activity has tangible impact and value, possibly one that even impacts the community, so that it is framed as an achievement and gets due respect

Shift the food paradigm from indulgence and pamper to achievement and reward.

Example:

Make cooking a means of mastery and skill rather than simply a support function for the family.

Example:

Beyond simple indulgence, teen girls need to look at snacking as rewards for achievements especially those that represent enhanced autonomy and power. For example, a snack after tuition classes as a reward for one's efforts.

GIRLS

MOTIVATION FOUR

Serving others sanctions my agency and ambition

“I prioritize my personal growth so that I can better serve my family and community”

Economic opportunities in Bangladesh favor the young and the educated. Modern professions and trades require fundamental skills [English fluency, computer literacy, etc.] that parents believe are beyond their grasp.

Parents seek to facilitate the growth and development of their children to access these opportunities. But the path to these new ways of living is long and unfamiliar.

Adolescents who are able to showcase their development in tangible ways, that immediately contribute back to their families, find avid supporters in their parents and an increased momentum that can propel them closer to their goals.

Parents are hopeful that their children will grow and access a better life, for themselves and for the family.



With the exposure that comes from school, and general engagement with the outside world, adolescents quickly become purveyors of the new to the household. We find that girls especially are able to showcase their newly learned skills in a variety of ways that are relevant to the household.



One of the homes we visited, the daughter was the one to tell the family about the need to locate the bathroom away from their drinking water source. They then made a concrete bathroom outside (away from the tap).



A new toilet established by Water Aid in Kurigram: 'School Sanitation Complex', has separate toilets that focus on sanitation and menstrual health, including areas to dispose used sanitary napkins. Initiatives like this are instrumental in ensuring the new generation of young girls adopt modern & scientific approaches to menstrual health, that they bring back to their families and homes. (School Visit)

Seeing this, their mothers recognize in their daughters, the potential to actualize their own unfulfilled desires and ambitions. The adolescent girl becomes an extension of the mother- her window to the world. Her mother vicariously seeks to self-actualize through her.



I love it when I see my daughter express herself in front of people. She has learnt so many things from school and comes home and teaches me about all of it too. Whenever she is studying I sit next to her so that I can also learn new things and keep up with the world.

*-Mother of 15-19 year old,
Kurigram*

The daughter thrives from her connection with her mother and the ensuing support: in her own growth lies her mother's growth. She uses new knowledge to elevate moments of closeness and bonding with her mother that breaks structure and any judgment. She ends up changing the mother-daughter dynamic into a team unit.



Mother and daughter in Dhaka make these special meals watching YouTube videos. They enjoyed the time making pizza and fried chicken for the family. They ensure that the plating is also done perfectly as it makes for a better picture.

Fried noodles was something that the daughter bought for the first time in the house and now has become a family favourite.

It is different for sons where they are encouraged to be independent and exploring, forcing distance between them and the family. Their desire to contribute causes a dilemma – as the need to be a provider immediately stands in opposition to gaining a full education and then starting to contribute



The father-son relationship is more formal and rigid, built on traditional obedience and power codes.

Because of their routines, there are less moments of relaxed intimacy and play, which are critical for transference of 'soft' knowledge to take place.

Instead, as the son grows, he becomes closer to his peers and slightly older 'brothers' in his neighborhood and school.

MOTIVATION 4: Serving others sanctions my agency & ambition

Societal Pressure

Mothers view girls as extensions of themselves. The onus is on the teen girls to be their mothers' windows to the world.

Don't be a daughter, be my teammate.

But mothers' adherence to old norms and parenting ideals can surface unexpectedly at any time.

Sons currently miss out on this intimacy and support with their fathers

Adolescent Response

Bring new experiences and knowledge into her relationship with her mother.

Engineer these sharing moments as partnered learning and practice – thereby creating an open and receptive energy in which judgment, criticism and tradition rules are suspended.

Conceal elements of her life/ learning which she knows are too edgy currently.

Resultant Life Motivation

Gradually remolding the home as per her own developing ideas and beliefs.

Using her peer relationship with her mother to create space for her growing influence and genuinely uplift her mother.

Exhibiting upper class exposure and codes for the benefit of both the parents, she becomes a source of great parental pride.

CUSTODIANSHIP

Fostering intimacy and partnerships in the mother-daughter unit in order to simultaneously enable the girl and impact her mother

MOTIVATION PRINCIPLE: Fostering intimacy and partnerships in the mother-daughter unit

NUTRITION PRINCIPLE: Co-crafting food norms through partnered learning and play between mother & daughter.

Ensure that the activity is designed as communication, collaboration, and play rather than something instructional/ serious.

Learning needs to be in novel spaces for the mother and daughter unit so that there's a spirit of curiosity rather than one of competition and defensiveness.

Incorporate advanced culinary skills into the notion of healthy nutrition to make it inspirational

Example:

Culinary skills like- cutting, presentation that underpins the activity and emphasizes its value

MOTIVATION FIVE

Navigating the New World

“I want to explore new templates to pave my own path”

The parents want to see their children prosper but they are in a state of paralysis as they don't know how to be relevant in the changing times.



They continue to subscribe to the old world order of autocratic control

While parents might have their children's best interests at heart, they do not always bother to explain the same to the child when they are setting acceptable rules of behaviour.

In Noakhali, we separately met and interviewed a 12 year old boy who loves playing cricket, and his father who tells him not to play or watch cricket.

While his father voiced legitimate concerns about his son's safety [he is prone to accidents], his son felt trapped at home and chose to play clandestinely.

When K is around his family he is taught to keep his eyes lower as a sign of his 'respect and obedience'. [DHAKA, younger]



Teens therefore seek guidance outside the parental construct to find a space for themselves

F was so excited to tell us about her talent - poetry, she felt it was only possible because of her teachers encouragement and support.

'She always made us believe that every individual has a unique ability, we don't have to follow the same path to success as success is different for different people.'

This thoroughly motivated F and during her math class discovered her love for poetry.

'There was a chapter on debt and as I heard my teacher speak, the more the words were flowing in my head. So I ended up writing on debt...'

[KURIGRAM]



Our parents are outdated, we are modern. Our thoughts and opinions don't match. We don't feel comfortable when we interact with them. But with our teachers we feel better, because they are updated.

*-15-19 year old boy,
Kurigram*

Teens take inspiration from elder bhais (brothers) and appus (sisters) in their neighbourhood. They are the ones who know the realities of the outside world

“We have some elder boys in the neighbourhood we can count on to come help us when we’re in trouble!”

*I have not always been so bold and outspoken. Once I saw this appu in our neighbourhood, she was so fierce! She wanted to buy some clothes from a hawker but she didn’t have money on her at that time...she wanted him to keep her chosen clothes aside...he refused to do so. Instead of being ignored and just moving on, she made sure that not only did he hear her request but also waited for her to be back! When I saw this, I realized that I too need to stand up for myself! I need to be more assertive.
-10-15 year old girl, Dhaka*

As adolescents gain more exposure, they question and challenge teachers, showing dissatisfaction with being lectured. Young teachers are embracing this opportunity to move away from old methods of rote learning to more participatory pedagogical approaches

The teachers we met also spoke about how it is getting more difficult to manage a classroom full of students. They are increasingly questioned about their knowledge of the subject – as children access knowledge from other sources, especially the Internet.

The successful teachers are those that are able to challenge this energy into a constructive participatory setting: quizzes, debates, ‘discussion sabhas’ and projects.

These skills are increasingly in demand for teachers who are hired for these schools.

At the same time, we also find remnants of the old pedagogical approach as ‘multimedia’ classes and the use of ‘projectors’ are hailed as ways of capturing and retaining the children’s attention, and establishing the teacher’s authority.



‘Favourite teacher’ uses unconventional techniques which he learnt during his training at the British Council to teach the girls in Kurigram.

‘I play catch with them and when I throw the ball I say a word and the one who has to catch needs to say the adverb/verb form of the word. This keeps them thoroughly engrossed.’ (School Visit)

Digital therefore becomes an important platform to communicate and explore new ideas with the students



Computer lab is located in the school buildings, the adolescents often chat there and roam around to use computers, they learn and also spend time chatting on Facebook and listen to music together.



Even though the computer labs are yet to be set up in Keranigang, the headmaster's room displays the computers as a way to communicate their pride and success in establishing computer centres and going digital.

So many schools now look at technical skills and knowhow as part of their recruitment criteria for teachers and faculty members.

It is really important to change with time, everything is online now, we need teachers who can cascade this knowledge to kids .

*We have 7 projectors and are utilized by the teachers who know how to. Everyone really admires them for it. –
Headmaster, Noakhali School*

As adolescents gain exposure from multiple sources beyond school, the ones who are most adept and comfortable with the new world beyond

Girls are avid fans of Bollywood and love watching music videos that show new forms of dance moves.

[R] In Kurigram, Tiger Shroff was unanimously considered as one of their favourite dancer as his style is not typically Bollywood and is more break-dance.

[L] The 'coolest' girl in school was one who knew how to sing in Hindi, spoke English well, and also knew all the latest Bollywood dance moves.



Bangladeshi indie artists become important influencers as they not only expand their imagination and experience, but also inspire them to do the same



Adolescent boys were seen admiring artists like Tahsan and rapper Somrat Sij. Tahsan is a music artist turned actor cum university lecturer. He inspires them to pursue a career path that will grant them respect and help them provide for the family all the while doing what they really love to do. 'One doesn't have to choose being one thing!'



In Dhaka, we find older adolescents gravitating towards rapping and beatboxing: neo music that captures the essence of youth struggles with no bars held – romance, heartbreak, hardship, drugs, being misfits etc.

Rap songs are mutually sung during group hangouts especially after sundown – the group sing in sync with someone beatboxing in the background make for a strong and emotional bonding session for the adolescent boys.

MOTIVATION 5: Navigating the New World

Societal Pressure

Living on the edge breeds a hyper cautious low-risk approach to life for parents.

Parents are in a state of paralysis. Anxiety around unconventional and untested

Peers and elder siblings (also teachers and youth celebrities) become intermediaries in the learning process, the gap between the current and desired state of understanding is now filled with smaller steps. Each peer might know a little more and thus facilitate your learning journey.

Adolescent Response

To seek guidance outside of the parental construct, and to seek a wider field of progress narratives that allow for greater chances of success

Find my talent and make it a source of tangible progress. Onus is on the adolescent to curate knowledge best for him/her.

The teen is becoming a prosumer, simultaneously producing and consuming knowledge.

Resultant Life Motivation

Accumulate skills, advice, and influence from the world outside

Help me find what I am good at, and that will make my life

The adolescent has become part of the process of constantly adapting what they learn and what is being taught.

CURATED
LEARNING

Learning from different sources to create a unique perspective.

MOTIVATION PRINCIPLE: Learning from different sources to create a unique perspective.

NUTRITION PRINCIPLE: Customizable nutrition guidelines rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

Hybrid learning through different sources and modes (debate, practicals) to create one's own point of view.

Example:

A free form class in which the student can debate, experiment, plan and ideate on how to make nutritious food more attractive to teens and kids

It's important to ensure that learning is active and something the adolescents can contribute to, while participating.

Enable the teen to find individual fit and preference within the field of nutrition.

Example:

Rather than a prescription for 'ideal' and standardized nutrition, offering a variety of different ways to do the same – allowing for some personalization in how this is adopted.

MOTIVATION SIX

Powerless alone, Empowered Together

“What I am, and what I will become, depends on the company that I keep”

The current system is not inclusive, neither when it comes to education nor employment. Even education does not offer a guaranteed job. One needs to have the right contacts, or able to pay your way into a position.

Scarce opportunities are distributed through nepotistic networks. This was earlier by virtue of the extended family, but now increasingly through extended networks of peers.

There is a very strong sense of belonging to a collective that operates at multiple levels: peers, siblings, family, extended family, community, school. For the adolescents, peer groups and siblings trump family and community.

These collectives then become integral to one's identity – and how one is recognized in society.

In Dhaka we met a girls group in school called 'Dangerous group', the members of the group are all bright students, they get together to ensure that they never miss out on class lectures and class notes.

All the students of the school are afraid of them as they share a strong bond and they always stand for what's right. Earlier this group was made for group studying. If someone in this group didn't understand something during class then another member tried to make her understand. Everyone couldn't be the master of every subject so they divided the subjects among the members so that she could seek help when need be.

Now the group is very popular in school because of their good results and effort. Teachers also love them for their spirit. Besides having a good academic record they also get together to participate in cultural programmes.

On one hand these peer groups offer emotional support and belonging, but at the same time they offer tangible opportunities for personal growth



Our life is like that movie Secret Superstar, we will always encourage each other and support our dreams. W was the one who told L about the parlour course, she would support her by spending more time braiding her hair and teaching her more techniques so that they could make the most of the classes.

-10-15 year old girls, Dhaka Slum

We saw our headboy give a speech in English, he was so flawless. Made us all realise that we needed to work hard on our English speaking skills; so we made a group in class. Now we all try and get together to speak and learn English. It is the whole class as we know this will help everyone.

-15-19 year old girls, Kurigram

Peer groups also insulate its members from judgment by others and society. They also offer security from violence and harassment.



Not all parents are supportive/ know of the girls playing kabbadi, *'if they knew they'd stop them from coming to school'*...so the team supports each other by hiding their friends jerseys at their homes. This is their way of ensuring that the other girls parents don't ever find out and stop her from playing.



M maintains contact with his big brothers in the locality who are involved in politics. He does so with a view that he might need help from them in case he gets in fight or trouble. He takes his friend along to participate in some political rally with them to make them happy and be connected with them.

-Noakhali, School

Peer groups have demonstrated potential in bringing about positive change in their lives and in their environment



Construction of a canteen inside school, the headmaster was convinced only after students got together to demand for it. [Girls, Kurigram School visit]



Younger boys in Dhaka wanted to stop men from urinating in public. *'These are the ills of our society, we need to prevent this!'*

Peer collectives are often more inclusive than groups formed by schools and communities. The latter often favor the elite or the talented.



*This year we had a picnic in our school and we were all volunteers there. Sometimes some of our poorer friends cannot go out of the village for a picnic. So we decided that our picnic would be organized in school so that everyone could participate! If its held in school then we have to just pay 100 taka which I think parents can afford, but if we go to Swapnapuri or Bhinno Jagat and other places then we have to pay 400-500 taka which is too high for many families. We all had fun together, eating chatting and no one missed out on the fun!
-15-19 year old girls, Kurigram*

However, once within these collectives, there is a strong pressure to abide by the codes of the group. Since the identity of the collective and the individual is linked strongly, the collective plays a very active role in ensuring that everyone stays in line, because otherwise the entire collective's name is besmirched



We were four friends, and one among us liked a guy. she went out to meet that guy, she however lied about it to her parents that she was going to her private tuition, but we did not know about this. she used to share everything, but this is something she had hidden from us. she should have told us as other people would ask us in case they did not get her. we went to her home to call her, but she was not there, her parents asked us, as she used to be with us only. they charged us why we did not know about her. it is obvious for them also to ask us as we belonged to the same group. then after she returned home, her parents asked her from where was she coming. She said that she was coming from her private classes, which was a lie. Her parents also knew this was a lie, and so scolded her. Later on, this riled us up and we did speak to her for a year!!-15-19 year old girls, Noakhali

Any action that is taken by an individual affects the whole group

The most common source of conflict among the youth is when a junior does not give salam to a senior or calls them by their name without greeting him with a 'bhai'.

This is seen as not falling in line and trying to challenge the elders in the group.



MOTIVATION 6: Powerless Alone, Empowered Together

Societal Pressure

Larger peer collectives provide – protection, support, opportunity and voice/visibility.

In return these collectives demand strict adherence to their own organizational codes and hierarchies.

As a member one is always conscious of the ramifications of individual choices on the collective.

Adolescent Response

Relinquishing or suppressing one's individual persona in favour of a collective persona.

The group's face is my face.

Resultant Life Motivation

No matter what I do, what I encounter, I will always have to 'represent' (the larger group system of which I am a member).

In safeguarding the group's interests I promote my own.

BADGES OF ALLEGIANCE

Choices, activities, behaviours that reinforce the collective identity i.e. we all make the same choice because we all are one.

MOTIVATION PRINCIPLE: Choices that reinforce the collective identity.

NUTRITION PRINCIPLE: Food choices and rituals that showcase affiliation with the group.

Healthy nutrition as a group choice, and not an individual preference

Example:

Collective tasks, challenges and oaths that address the peer group as a unit

Positive choices linked to prominent personalities – which makes allegiance easier and more powerful.

Example:

Shakib is an 'eggs man'.

Mushtafiz has his breakfast every day to make the most of his training session

Showcasing group strength, skill and style through nutrition.

Example:

Feats of nutrition, like cooking biryani for the entire neighbourhood, which become what the peer group is recognized for.

MOTIVATION SEVEN

Crusaders for Reform

“We will protest to make our society and country better”

On the whole, there is widespread optimism about how Bangladesh is likely to grow and thrive as a nation. There are also local manifestations of this progress, as even residents of smaller far-flung districts feel that there is likely to be great infrastructural growth and progress

But there is a great sense of unfairness when it comes to who is actually participating in this growth. The opportunities that this growth creates are seen to be unevenly distributed, with the majority going to those who are already in an advantageous position: rich, educated, urban.

While earlier, there was a sense of gratitude with the trickle down of development, system inequities are increasingly being recognized, called out, and protested.

There is a persistent cynicism about what opportunities await the poor and the marginalized. Inequities are encountered by adolescents in their own environments: in their schools and communities



Some of these forms of inequity are so ingrained that it is easily overlooked, even by people with good intentions. Even though the principal started the student of the year award to build optimism among students, last year his own son won the award. The previous year, the school president was the ward leader's son.

Educational degrees though highly valued, are seen as insufficient for landing a job. Supposedly, the going rate for a clerk position in Noakhali university is 8 lakh taka. Similarly, there is a fixed cost to get a job in the Gulf.

For the older adolescent boy, this leads to a sense of resentment as well as fatalism/futility



“Life is like riding a cycle, you have to keep pedaling or you will fall down.”

I believe that all development and awareness building programs should be done through government initiatives. I don't trust the system and believe that most officials in private and public sectors are corrupt officials. They don't think much about development of poor people other than stashing money in their coffer!
-15-19 year old boy, Noakhali

The fall back option is to rely on one's nepotistic connections to ensure one's survival and growth. This is an undesirable but reliable path to go down.



Many boys mention taking support/contacts and help from relatives and family members who will help them with money or references to gain employment.

M's father is a mechanic, using his contacts M got a job at the workshop nearby. He spends time learning the intricacies of cars and machines. He knows that this is one of the only ways he could get a job in the near future. He tries to gain experience from wherever he can.

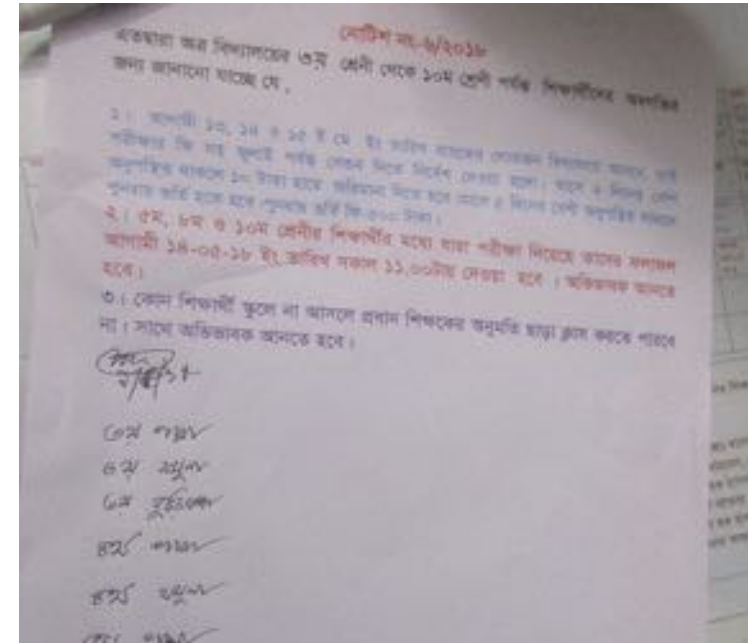
-10-14 year old boy, Kurigram.

M's toy that he made at the mechanics.

A few schools are actively trying to combat this feeling of exclusion, by trying to institute egalitarian and democratic practices



Schools have started focusing on ways to teach students about democracy, they now have student elected representatives and follow the whole process from the speeches/ campaign in public to elections. (School Visit, Dhaka)



Lists used to ensure that any student who is interested in any activity can take part by simply writing their name on the list.

This encourages different students to take part and not just the teachers favourites.

However, most other interventions in school only focus on the 'bright' students, there is a risk of them being perceived by other students to be exclusionary

In the school in Keranigang O was the SKNF representative. She was selected because she was already part of the student committee. 'I had teachers that recognised my potential and encouraged me to open up and be more expressive.'

Seeing her, some students in the school felt that SKNF was an individual achievement rather than something that they could all be a part of.

It was seen as something that was specifically O's interest or achievement, and not something personally relevant to the others.



At the national level, systemic inequities are being exposed in Bangladesh, and the youth are taking the lead in seeking to reform this system. Their optimism for the country's growth is triggering a desire to participate more fully in it. But this is more easily said than done at the local level.



QUOTA PROTEST: A more macro example of this took place in April. Students of Jagannath University blocking English Road in Old Dhaka on April 9, 2018, over demands of quota reformation.

Source: The Daily Star

Currently, girl and boy collectives spring to action when faced with clearly defined and unambiguous social 'evils' or causes. This may be social injustices (like child marriage) or life or death situations (cancer, blood donation, etc.).

Girls in the three centres were acutely aware of their peers' families that were going to get their daughters illegally married.

They would get together as a group and ensure that the teachers/ headmasters complain to the police and stop child marriage.

'Even though we didn't have access to the police station, we knew our headmaster would have to help us. He stayed till the police completely stopped the wedding and told us all about it the next day in school. We were so happy to hear that we actually made that possible!'
–Kurigram school



Boys build and get people together for protests, they help people in real predicaments. Elder brothers in the neighbourhood have more access to people. They collect money from our classes and help those who have cancer, blood cancer, etc. We have not started our own drive but supported them. I think we are too young. I am not sure if anyone will listen to us, so we follow as they tell us what to do.

- 10-14 year old boys, Kurigram

When it comes to food, there is growing awareness and frustration about unscrupulous practices by small and large vendors

Rising awareness of food related malpractices across the county:

- *Larger manufacturers using artificial colour in food items like ice cream.*
- *Added Formalin in vegetables, farmers artificially ripening their produce.*
- *People kneading dough with their feet in bakeries.*
- *Food outlets using unhygienic practices*



MOTIVATION 7: Crusaders for Reform

Societal Pressure

Pervasive national progress is visible, but these adolescents have repeatedly experienced exclusion from this narrative.

The nation will develop, our town and villages will develop but I don't see an entry point for myself in this story.

Nepotism is pervasive. Rags to riches stories are false promises.

Adolescent Response

Cynicism when it comes to institutions delivering to their personal prospects.

The teens try repeatedly to find entry points into opportunity networks but with limited success.

Resultant Life Motivation

Unless there's reform I will remain marginalised.

I need to use protest to reform this exclusionary nepotistic system.

**PROTEST AS
EQUALISER**

Participating in social reform increases one's sense of agency and belonging.

MOTIVATION PRINCIPLE: Participating in social reform increases one's sense of agency and belonging

NUTRITION PRINCIPLE: Healthy nutrition as rejecting and reforming the status quo.

Exposing systemic inequities and malpractice

Example:

Campaigns against unhygienic practices in local eateries, with the support of authorities

Reduce the sense of marginalization, by creating reform movements that invites participation across class context, on the basis of shared beliefs and ideology

Example:

A movement must equally engage both the elite as well as adolescents from the poorest families.

Healthy nutrition as a fundamental human right and not a class marker.

Clear and visible markers of unhealthy nutrition, so that it can trigger action (by self and others)

Private forms of protest that do not require confrontation, but still retains its significance.

Example:

Move away from food sources from outside outlets and 'make your own' DIY meals. Showcase this activity as non-cooperation to the corrupt forms of nutrition they have access to.

MOTIVATION EIGHT

Expressing their Romantic Fantasies

“ I want to engage with the opposite sex without being distracted ”

At this age, there is a strong biological motivation and curiosity to engage romantically and sexually with the opposite sex.

We do see some of the boys hanging around, a few were our friends too, but now we are too shy to talk to them. Even though sometimes I feel like I want to but I don't know how to go about it anymore. I feel the older we find it awkward to talk to boys.

-10-14 year old girl, Dhaka



Graffiti on the school walls in Noakhali. Names of girls and boys scribbled with hearts and messages.

But the dominant narrative against child marriage and focus on education and employment censures excessive engagement with the opposite sex



I got married when I was 12, which meant my life was decided for me! None of my children will ever have to go through that, I will make sure that they all study, make a living for themselves and then think of marriage. My younger son already is looking at ways to get jobs.
-Mother 10-14 year old, Dhaka

The modern narrative around adolescent romance is one that equates sexual abstinence and delayed marriage with better prospects for one's future (education and employment).

One of the schools we visited in Noakhali had three sections that were segregated on the basis of gender and performance in school.

The academically well performing, 'good' students were not allowed to mingle with the opposite sex.

Section A: All boys who fare well in studies

Section B: All girls who fare well in studies

Section C: Mixed class with kids who aren't studious.



The adolescent response to this pressure has been to engage with this desire underground. Boys seek out spaces and moments to meet clandestinely.

Across Noakhali there are certain spaces where the adolescents can interact with the opposite sex free from surveillance.

One of the areas is the infamous 'love road' right behind a school and a couple of parks were mentioned as being the 'right areas' to meet the opposite sex.

These are all slightly secluded and have seating for them.



A student waiting for his girlfriend on 'love road'

Girls find sanctioned spaces to engage with the opposite sex – tuition center, debate, cycling around the village, etc.



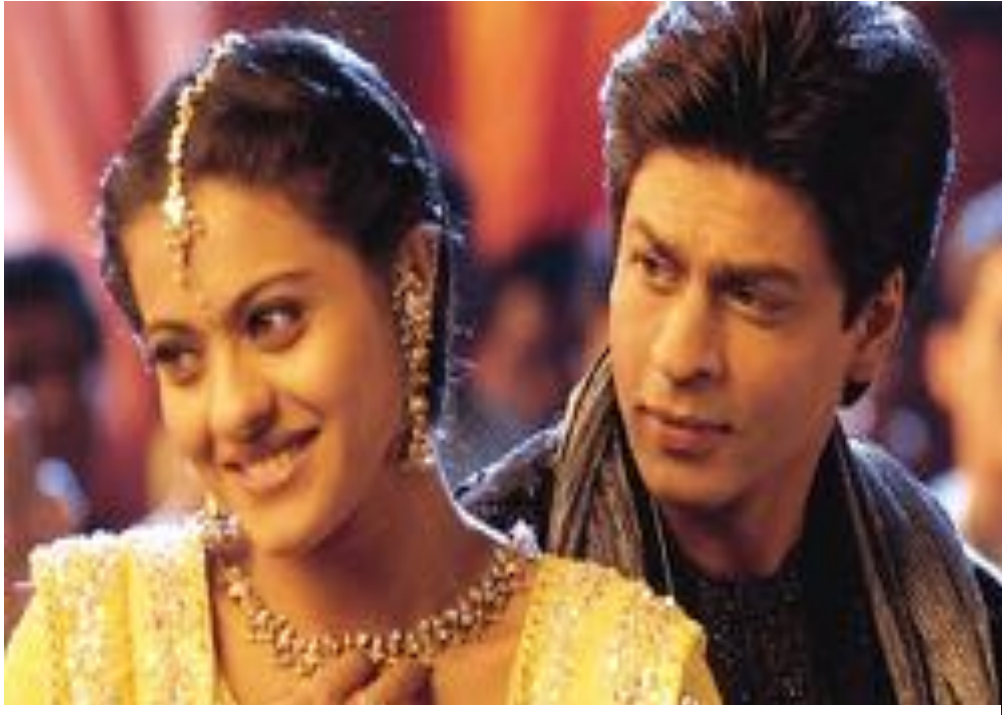
They're part of the school cultural group, Noakhali

In the urban context, we saw that girls stay away from situations where there is unsupervised access to the opposite gender, for fear of unknowingly transgressing and inviting censure. We saw limited engagement in online spaces and in places where there is no visibility by known authorities.

There was a preference to engage in the open, under the guise of activities such as studies or tuitions.

*No we don't have boyfriends! But we have friends in our tuition class, I feel boys are better friends sometimes, they really look out for you and make you feel better about your issues and worries without constantly making you think about your responsibilities.
-15-19 year old girl, Kurigram*

Girls use Bollywood, romantic films as harmless ways to indulge this curiosity about the opposite sex



Romantic Bollywood films that are based on the struggle to bring the whole family together.

For eg: In K3G he endeavours to reunite his family as his adopted elder brother chooses to marry a middle-class girl. These kind of films become a safe way for the girls to experience love and have a channel for their desires.



Hum Saath Saath Hain, 'I love how they show the everyday happenings of a large family and how everyone has their own individual story going on. Every couple has their own fight to survive and find love!'

-10-14 year old girl, Dhaka

Boys use music videos to express their desires, following themes of unrequited love and wallowing in the pain of rejection.



*Adharer oi Nilacole: This music video has the combination of song and rap. The concept of this song is- I am sitting alone and waiting for your love. Romantic as well as sad themed.
-10-14 year old boys, Kurigram*

Chupi Chupi: I look at someone and feel something. But, that doesn't have any result. However, in this song- the girl is going to school and the boy follows her by singing this song. When the girl turns back, she becomes mad in happiness! They share this strong connection together.

-10-14 year old boys, Kurigram

MOTIVATION 8 Expressing their Romantic Fantasies

Societal Pressure

The need to have relations with the opposite sex is crafted as a barrier to one's personal growth and progress.

Due to the prevalence of adolescent marriage the stigma of sexual relations is higher because of the perceived risk of dropping out of formal education in order to get married early.

Adolescent Response

Media becomes one route to experiencing these romanticized relations with the opposite sex. Narratives of unrequited desire/ frustrated desire fulfil the desire to engage in such thought but mitigate the risk of actually following through on it.

Girls being more reserved are afraid of boys, thus like to find safe ways to engage with them, like less threatening like boys in tuition class.

Although there's a desire to partake in these relations, they feel guilty as they won't be able to meet them halfway. They try to find ways to interact with boys which is romanceless.

Resultant Life Motivation

For boys: Channeling this energy to something that is a positive endeavor.

For girls: Exploring the boundaries of platonic and romantic in her relations. Looking to maximise spaces of constructive engagement with boys. Sparring without flirting.

INSPIRE TO
IMPRESS
HIM/HER

Enhancing oneself in order to display one's best in the presence of the opposite sex.

MOTIVATION PRINCIPLE: Enhancing self to impress the opposite sex.

NUTRITION PRINCIPLE: Healthy nutrition as a shared cause that sanctions interactions between genders

For boys and girls building on the existing and growing significance of body image as a way to impress the opposite sex.

Highlight the role of better nutrition (and sustained nutritional discipline) in building a better, more attractive personality.

Create acceptable and constructive ways in which one gender can impress the other.

Identify arenas of equal participation so that the boys do not dominate.

Build on mixed gender relations that preclude any notions of romantic involvement.

Example:

Older girl- younger boy: interaction stay in a sparring zone which is fun without being taboo. Older boy-younger girl: carry a greater risk of converting into clandestine sexual relations.

MOTIVATION NINE

Earning Respect and Reputation for Self, Community and Nation

“ I don’t work for myself but for others around me”

Belonging to an economic context where material prosperity is not sufficiently accessible, respect is accumulated in its absence

“Only bookish knowledge is not sufficient, you have to be a contributing member in society. There was a person who did his PhD and went to Australia.

Even after retiring and working so hard, when he eventually died nobody went for his funeral! He didn't impact anyone's life.”

-Principal, Noakhali

‘When any elder is around I make sure that I cover my hair, I want them to know that I am respectful and I know how to behave myself. It is important to follow what your parents have taught you, so that even strangers immediately identify your good values even before talking to you.

-10-14 year old girl, Dhaka



Father of 15-19 year old in Kurigram has a centre table in the sitting area that he has carefully curated business cards of important contacts. In addition, he also has foreign and local currencies displayed as a way to showcase his connections with people in respected professions. He also has a photo of his uncle who's part of the civil services.

Parents instill values of morality and selflessness as a way to accumulate respect in society. Girls internalize this when they dream about their future



I want to be a doctor, I can see myself as an independent woman. I can do whatever I want to.

I won't be treating this like a mere job, I will be treating those who have monetary issues and actually help the needy. I will spend my life serving them and helping them get access to medicines like everyone else.

-10-14 year old girl, Dhaka

We want to be part of the system and be able to help people by defending them. We watched this Jeet Ganguli film where he is a deprived child but against all odds he makes it as a police officer! We know we can achieve that too. One day I will become a police officer and I will torture people who make society bad so that I can stop them and make our society better for everyone.

-10-14 year old girl, Kurigram

Teens therefore seek to find ways that bring recognition to their families and community



You know people like us nobody asks for our perspective in things, we just have to blindly follow. But the day my daughter topped her class and I was invited to give a speech in front of everyone in the village!

That day I felt I could control anything around. I actually have a say and people finally recognized me.

For someone who is poor what else could I ask, I knew from that day that all my children will make me so proud. -Father 14-15 year old girl, Kurigram

MOTIVATION 9 Earning Respect for Self, Community and Nation

Societal Pressure

In a social scenario where material prosperity is not sufficiently accessible to be a reliable status marker – respect is what you accumulate in its absence.

Reputation needs to be constantly accumulated through small acts of goodness. There is a disproportionate result for good and bad actions – good actions take a long time to convert, while even one bad act or mistake can permanently taint your reputation. And you have to start from scratch.

Adolescent Response

These rules are followed strictly when they are around authority, especially family and elders.

They partake in acts of altruism and social service in order to increase their standing within society.

Resultant Life Motivation

I see the bigger picture. I am able to think of my actions as a balance sheet – some large acts of goodness are more than enough to compensate for a few minor infarctions.

I am invested in this economy of reputation to an extent that I safeguard not only my own reputation, but that of everyone around me.

MOVEMENT AS A SERVICE

The movement should be linked to service to multiple levels of collective identity – family, community, locality, country, Islam.

MOTIVATION PRINCIPLE: Framing individual action as service to the collective

NUTRITION PRINCIPLE: Healthy nutrition as a service to society

Make healthy nutrition a marker of progress/development for the community and country

Example:

Good nutritional choices and low malnourishment and obesity - as metrics of family/community/national evolution.

Highlight the mismatch between progress/modernization and poor teen health and growth metrics and how this negatively impacts the reputation of the community/nation (akin to the anti open defecation discourse – unbecoming of a modern nation).

Emphasize how the quality of nutrition an adolescent receives is a reflection of their elders' (parents, community) awareness and capabilities.

This acts as an incentive for teens to change themselves in order to protect the reputation of their elders

Example:

Illustrate how external observers judge progress and evolution on a variety of parameters of which nutritional adequacy is a key parameter.

Show good teen nutritional behaviour is recognized by external observers, the government and community leaders and how it can become a source of pride for parents and teachers.

MOTIVATION TEN

Self discipline as a route to personal growth & development

“I am ready to work hard to get where I want to be”

In a context of survival and hardship, the natural response is to ‘react’ to immediate needs rather than long term objectives or goals.

The ability to follow set routines and rituals is a visible and symbolic way of regaining control over one’s life and destiny.

There is also the cultural connotation of the poor and unsuccessful being so, because they are lazy and not in control of their impulses. Thus being disciplined also means elevation above one’s class, from survival and self-interest into an ordered and purposeful existence.



The daily routine of an adolescent in Bangladesh today is packed from morning to night with a variety of different learning activities, with household chores



Sweeping the home before leaving for school



I have made it clear to my daughters that these religious practices and routines need to be followed to live a good life. I have bought a book on Namaaz and kept it near her bed. She does read it and it is for her own good.
 -Mother of a 10-15 year old girl., Kurigram

My day is jam packed starting with tuition classes and then full time school. Once school is done I end up going back home and rest a little. I usually plan my time at home in such a way that I get more hours to study. I don't eat dinner until I have completed my work.

When I get more time I end up helping my mum in the kitchen, I know she has to do a lot so I make sure that I am there to support her.
 -15-19 year old girl, Noakhali.

While this discipline is required, it is not rewarded in the short term. So it is seen as drudgery and stress-provoking. With no other positive affirmation apart from task completion, it is also utterly demotivating.



I constantly keep teaching my son about inculcating a good routine. A good boy always studies well, eats food on time; goes to school daily, attends private tuitions daily, doesn't stay out too long, without any purpose.

He however keeps getting distracted by other things, he needs to concentrate on setting his routine and only then he will prosper.

-Mother of a 10-15 year old boy, Noakhali

My son is in the Madarassa we think it will help him prosper as it brings his life some structure. Once he ran away from school and we found him, he was tensed to go back as he used to get beaten up by the teacher. I'm sure he doesn't realise the importance of this now, but he needs to endure and embrace this opportunity. It is important for him to learn this life so that in the future we don't have to constantly be there to have his back.

-Mother of a 10-15 year old boy, Dhaka

But the potential for discipline as a positive motivator is realized very strongly in activities like going to the gym or joining the Scouts. Here, the effort taken is a source of pride, and there is a real sense of self development, apart from the promise of opportunities in the future.



She part of the scouts, she is getting the right training there, she will eventually get a certificate, in future this certificate will be of great importance for a job.
-Mother and Father of a 15-19 year old, Kurigram



Picture taken on the day of their son's investiture ceremony. His father was happy to remember that proud moment.

I love being part of the scouts, it organises my life in a good manner. I am more disciplined and follow the right path to success. I feel proud that I can some day in the future help my nation grow just the way I help my school and friends grow.
- 15-19 year old girl, Kurigram

Scouts gives me life! You have to get up early, you have to march in line, you have to do many tasks. It makes people better humans. It can also get us into the military or police force.
- 12-15 year old boy, Noakhali

MOTIVATION 10: Self discipline as a route to personal growth & development

Societal Pressure

Discipline is seen as valuable for long term success, but in the short term without any reward, appreciation or returns, it quickly becomes dull, drudgery and burdensome.

Adolescent Response

Anti-doting the drudgery with pranks, clandestine behavior and fun.

Discipline is sought after only when linked to an upcoming short term goal: football tournament prep.

The scouts employs discipline but also gives a steady stream of small challenges and rewards – including ceremony, petty authority and badges/medals.

Resultant Life Motivation

Receive appreciation and recognition for being disciplined, even otherwise inconsequential acts that are routinized.

**REWARDING
DISCIPLINE**

Celebrate the importance of repetition as a facet of discipline and self improvement.

MOTIVATION PRINCIPLE: Regular rewards help sustain momentum for self-improvement

NUTRITION PRINCIPLE: Gamification of nutrition: both tasks and payoffs are immediate.

Appreciation and affirmation built into every small step within the larger movement.

There have to be short-term rewards for healthy nutrition and payoffs have to be immediate.

Example:

Collect yogurt caps as a display of one's healthy eating choices.

Calendar that tracks adherence to healthy nutrition practices and instills a sense of achievement.