An afternoon with NUB VC Dr. Shamsul Haque

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IT was a warm afternoon when we met Dr. Shamsul Haque, the Vice Chancellor of Northern University of Bangladesh in his office. After the exchange of pleasantries we wanted to about his life in the Dhaka University as a student and later as a teacher and how he joined as a professor of IBA, University of Dhaka. He told us he was the director of IBA from 1992 to 1995. Later he served as the Treasurer of Dhaka University from 1995 to 1999. He was one of the founding advisors in introducing the Faculty of Business studies in DU. Our conversation drifted from one subject to another and we were amazed to find out how sharp his memory was. He could recall names and dates so far in time with such ease! At one point he narrated his experience in foreign universities where he went to do higher studies and also teach subsequently. After coming back to Bangladesh now he want to implement some of the positive aspects in his university. We asked him some specific questions to satisfy our curiosity.

SC: Does NUB have any scholarship programmes?

SM: So far NUB has provided Tk 5crore 83 lakh IBAT (International Agricultural and Technological) scholarship to financially weak and meritorious students.

SC: What is your future plan for NUB?

SM: Well, my primary target is to create an opportunity for 15000 students to get admitted in NUB by 2015. We are looking for a place just outside Dhaka, near Ashulia and Dhamrai to build a campus of our own. For the new students our upcoming programmes are B.Sc. in Civil Engineering, Architecture, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Environmental Science, textiles & Apparel Management.

SC: Are the number of universities in the country enough to meet the need of education?

SM: You see, almost 2.5 to 3 lakh students are passing out every year and only 50 to 60 thousands of them have the luck to get themselves admitted in universities. Rest have to go to different colleges across the country to finish their graduation. This picture clearly describes that there aren't enough universities to create opportunities for the students too finish their graduation. Dr. Shamsul Haque also took pride in the extra-curricular activities that are encouraged by the university and how his students have excelled in many competitions. The debating performance is particularly praise worthy he mentioned. He wishes to see even better performance in the future and for that is ready to offer all sorts of help from his office.

, Dr Haque was proud of his faculty strength and said that he believed in continued training and upgrading of the teachers.

FROM 25

Both IRCSET and IRCHSS have some attractive schemes for Post-doctoral students which can be found on the respective official sites.

University Scholarships and Industry Funding

University of Dublin, Trinity College is providing substantial funding for its international research students. *Ussher Fellowship Award* is the most prestigious award in Trinity for entrance MSc by research and PhD students. It covers full tuition fees at international rate, which is extremely high in Trinity (•14,000 per year). In addition it provides a yearly maintenance grant of 16,000. *TCD Postgraduate Research Studentship* is another scholarship for international students that covers full tuitions (at int. rate) with a maintenance grant of 8,000 per annum. There is a combined application form available on the web through which one can apply for these awards while making general admission application to the university. It is strongly recommended that students should find their proposed supervisor in advance which maximises the chance of getting selected.

Other universities, though not as massive as Trinity, are also providing different schemes but they strongly encourage their prospective students to go for either IRCSET/IRCHSS scholarships or industry funding.

Industry scholarships come from different local and global enterprises. Availability of such scholarships can be found from a special section called "Vacancy" at each research group page. Respective enterprises initiate projects under the supervision of a particular professor of a university who eventually selects candidates for that scholarship.

(Author is a "Government of Ireland Scholar". He has been awarded IRCSET Embark Initiative scholarship in 2007 for his postgraduate study in the University of Dublin, Trinity College. He is also an alumnus of East West University, Dhaka)