"Once a Sunshiner, a Sunshiner forever"

An Interview of Ms Safia Ghazi Rahman

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FORTY students, five teachers and three staff member- it was the starting of a little school with hopes to touch the sky. What started as a consequence of a long cherished dream of a bright-eyed young lady, now boldly stands as a pioneer in sowing the seeds of dream in many young people's heart. This is all about Sunshine Grammar School and College, one of the leading English medium schools in Bangladesh. The dawn of January 14, 2009 had seen its 25th birthday. Recently Star Campus (SC) spoke to the aspiring woman behind this long journey. Here are the excerpts of the interview of Ms Safia Ghazi Rahman (SGR), Principal of this reputed school situated in Chittagong. Ms. Safia is perhaps more known for convincing the British Council to establish Examination Centre in Chittagong thus saving the students from the hazard of traveling all the way to Dhaka to sit for O/A level exams. She also introduced "Bangladesh Studies" in O levels syllabus with her personal initiatives.





SC: What inspired you to start an English medium school when society used to see women mostly as a homemaker?

SGR: I would rather say that the story behind starting Sunshine is a long one though not a pre-planned one at all. I completed my post graduation in 1984 and by that time I had three kids. I was really worried where to enroll my daughter who is the eldest of my three kids and was not even three years old at that time. At the same time, I saw parents sending their kids to Dhaka after the completion of their primary schooling as there were no schools to provide O & A Levels in Chittagong. All these made me think about the importance of a good English medium school because without having a good grasp in English, it is practically impossible to get a good job. But I did not really think of starting a school myself and that was also an English medium school. It was at that time that some of the women who were known to me suggested that I should start an English medium school myself. To be frank, at first I was actually shocked rather than surprised and told them how could I do that as I did not have any experience. But I do not know why, they had a firm belief in me and they said that if anyone in Chittagong could do it, it was me. I was surprisingly happy and decided to start my own school...Well, that is how it started. But now, I simply cannot imagine myself without this school.

SC: To encourage the meritorious and needy students, what type of scheme does Sunshine have?

SGR: From the very beginning, Sunshine gave attention to the special needs of the students. In Sunshine there are different types of scholarships and need-based financial aids to cater the needs of the students. There is "Massi Ghazi Scholarship" for the students who achieve outstanding results in their O levels & A which provides them with waiver from 50-100% as per results. Similarly there is "Rabeya Ghazi Scholarship" for the meritorious students of national curriculum (S.S.C. & H.S.C.). Apart from these scholarships there are also provisions for need based financial aid for those who have potentials but cannot afford.