The Visionary

As one of the few scholars who has dedicated her life to the education of the visually impaired, Dr Diba Hossain, a professor at the Institute of Educational Research (IER) at Dhaka University, is a rare jewel. Her mission is to ensure the very basic right to education of a huge portion of our population who are constantly being deprived of it.

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN



Dr Diba Hossain PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Of late, "Education for All" is a much overused term. Celebrities and famous personalities have expressed their support for it through dazzling TVCs. But in reality the education scenario in developing nations like Bangladesh is quite grim. According to recent statistics, there are 800,000 visually impaired people in Bangladesh who are 15-25 years old. And with very limited facilities from the government and the NGOs, Dr Diba Hossain is fighting to make this huge population enlightened with education and life skills.

After finishing honours and masters in Psychology from Dhaka University (DU), Diba was planning to do something for the disabled children. But lack of technical knowledge and unavailability of the adequate resources in Bangladesh at that time, were hindrances. Professor Dr Sultana Sarawat Ara Zaman came forward as Diba's mentor. Dr Sultana herself initiated the department of special education at the IER, the largest institute of DU and launched an elaborate diploma and master's courses on special education for enthusiasts like Diba. Dr Sultana also inspired Diba to work for the visually impaired children, especially those who were almost out of the educational system at that time. Cherishing the memories with Professor Dr Sultana, Dr Diba says, "She was the pioneer of special education in Bangladesh. Before her, nobody even knew what we could do to educate this generation with special needs. But now from this department we are creating a large group of people each year with proper knowledge and skill to spread the light of education among the differently-abled."

After completing her studies on special education, Dr Diba under the guidance of Professor