



Facilitating Future Leaders A Look into Chevening Scholarship

PHOTO: DARSHAN CHAKMA

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Funded by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and partner organisations, Chevening Scholarship, the prestigious global scholarship programme of the United Kingdom, is a great opportunity for those looking to pursue a one-year master's programme at any British university. SHOUT met with International Liaison Officer of Chevening, Harish Lokhun, who was in Dhaka recently, to discuss the vast array of benefits this programme offers.

When asked what makes the Chevening Scholarships Programme one of the best in the world, Lokhun said, "We offer an access to a world class education system in the UK, scholar and social engagement oppor-

tunities, opportunities to link with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and UK Government, and a chance to meet and develop a global network with scholars from over 160 countries. This scholarship is not just about coming to the UK for one year but also making a difference in the UK and in Bangladesh upon return."

A full Chevening Scholarship provides a complete financial package. Scholars are offered the payment of tuition fees (a fee cap applied to MBA programmes), a monthly stipend, travel costs to and from the UK, both an arrival and a homeward departure allowance as well as a study travel allowance, a thesis grant and a grant for study materials, and the cost of one visa application in addition to travel funding to attend Chevening events in the UK.

Chevening Scholarship is no longer connected to the British Council, and is now an independent secretariat. Chevening works directly with the funding office in delivery with the programme. Even without a physical embassy in some countries, there is still a presence of Chevening. The scholarship programme even operates in conflict zones such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

Bangladesh is a Chevening-eligible country, and Chevening Scholarship obliges its awardees to return to his/her country of citizenship for a minimum of two years after the end of the scholarship. Lokhun weighed in the significance of the return, saying, "They (Chevening Scholars) are able to develop and start implementing changes in the fields of their expertise. In two years, they can focus on that process."

If you can demonstrate strong leadership skills, a commitment to networking in the Chevening community and across the globe, and a clear career plan – knowing where you want to go and what you want to do with your master's in the UK, and give a very strong application – it could be just enough.

Though applicants from Bangladesh are welcome to pursue any course of study, they are particularly encouraged to engage in certain fields such as law, climate change, human rights, international security and energy security. Lokhun explained the reason: "The High Commissioner in Dhaka looks favourably on these particular areas because they are the key priorities for the country in terms of development – both politically and economically."

In search of emerging leaders, the Chevening Scholarship has set the standards of eligibility high. The applicants for the upcoming session are required to have (first and foremost) a solid undergraduate degree that will enable them entry to a post-graduate programme at a UK university, at least two years' work experience (internships, voluntary work, part-time or full-time employment), applications to three different eligible UK university courses and an uncon-

ditional offer from one of these choices by July 14, 2016. They also have to meet the Chevening English language requirement by the same date. Applications for 2016/2017 academic year are currently open and close on November 3.

"We look for future leaders, people who are going to make change in Bangladesh. If you can demonstrate strong leadership skills, a commitment to networking in the Chevening community and across the globe, and a clear career plan – knowing where you want to go and what you want to do with your master's in the UK, and give a very strong application – it could be just enough," Lokhun said.

For Bangladesh, the number of scholarships awarded has increased significantly. This year there are 16 scholarship recipients from Bangladesh out of over 1,800 scholars in total worldwide. FCO will look to join over 220 Chevening alumni from Bangladesh and 44,000 in the global network. Lokhun reflected, "As a result of increased UK Government funding and an investment into strengthening bilateral relations in over 160 countries where the scholarship is offered, there was more money available to fund more scholarships."

The Chevening Scholarships Programme is one of the best gateways for future leaders looking to bring about change in their home countries. This programme calls for dedicated applicants who want to go beyond just earning a degree – making a significant and lasting impact for the greater good.

For more information, visit www.chevening.org/bangladesh

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