

Training for teachers is key

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QUALITY education has a number of elements that need to be fulfilled. These include physical facilities like libraries, IT, and labs. Qualified faculty members are also an essential element which I believe is the main challenge in Bangladesh so far private university education is concerned. Permanent campus, in most of the situations, is considered as a precondition for the development of the basic facilities, and such a notion is not without exception. There are a number of city-based good universities in this world who are run on rented campuses. Providing the right facilities is the main issue, and it should be evaluated that way.

Another important aspect is transparency of the institution that includes admission, recruitment, and disciplinary regulations. In the long run, research is one of the most important requirements for a quality higher education institution, which is grossly ignored in Bangladesh.

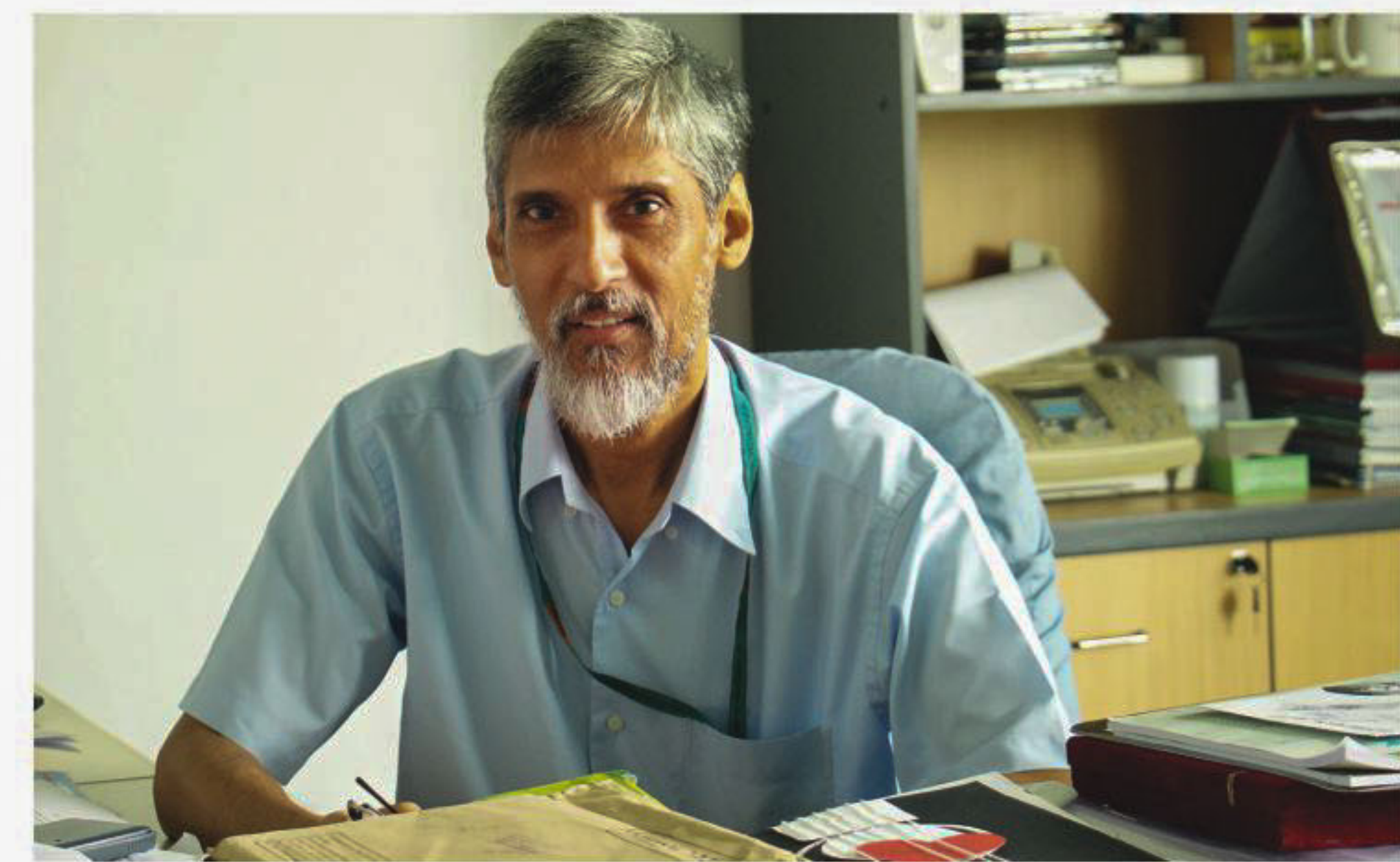
remaining land left for a playground, garden, and landscaping. The campus will have all the modern facilities for teaching, learning, and research.

Accreditation of the degree programmes is the single most important step to ensure quality education, irrespective of public or private universities. Private universities usually take the brunt of the allegation that quality is not maintained properly, but I feel that it is equally true for many of the newly established public universities as well. Formation of an accreditation council by the government is a very positive step in this respect, provided that the accreditation council maintains its independence and neutrality.

As far as research activities in a university are concerned, it is usually guided by the mission and vision of the university. A university may choose to develop research along with its undergraduate or graduate programmes by introducing PhD courses, or it may choose to remain as a teaching university without offering PhD Staffing and physical facilities can be quite different for

quality. Initially, the PhD awarding capability should be judged (by UGC/appropriate authority) case by case to make sure that there are qualified faculty members and physical facilities to offer the PhD degree. Joint PhD programmes with reputed national or international universities can be an effective way to ensure quality. Such a programme could be based on joint supervision and/or exchange of the students.

UIU has so far been very successful in developing exchange programmes and attracting national and international research funds. Over the last six years, UIU was awarded six European Union funded Erasmus Mundus scholarship programmes, having a total worth of about 20 million euros. A total of around 120 students, faculties, and staffs from UIU visited different universities of Europe under the programme. UIU has credit transfer agreements with a number of Asian, European and North American universities. As far as research and development is concerned, UIU has been successful in attracting foreign funds, amounting close to



that the High Court recently passed a judgment in favour of the private universities. I hope the Supreme Court will uphold the verdict.

Cooperation between the private universities should increase significantly. So far, most of the private universities consider other universities as rivals and we do not see any real sense of cooperation between them. Private universities should come out of this culture and open up for collaboration with like-minded universities, if not all.

Training for the newly recruited teachers is gaining momentum after the government took steps to help all the private universities to form an internal quality assurance cell under the HEQEP programme. This has changed the mindset of the universities, and internal quality assurance activities are gaining momentum. In most of the universities, fresh teachers are recruited without having any formal training on pedagogy/teaching and it is a very common complaint that teachers either do not understand the difficulty of the students or do not have the mindset to understand them. This does not create a congenial atmosphere for teaching and learning, and must change. It is one of the primary duties of the teacher to assess the difficulty level that a class of students faces in a particular course. In other words, we should follow the principles of 'outcome based education' to ensure that students learn the necessary elements from any particular course. Besides the training of teachers, the internal quality assurance cells also look into the organograms, student enrollment, and their evaluation guidelines, and faculty and staff recruitment policies to

ensure transparency, accountability, and efficiency within the system.

Extracurricular activities are no less important than the academic activities of a university. They give students the breathing space and respite from their academic activities, nurture their inherent talents and bring out their leadership qualities – all to make them a high quality professional. Most of the universities have different clubs and forums involved in activities like debating, drama, cultural activities, games and sports, etc. At the same time, another very important aspect that needs to be addressed is to prepare them for the job market. Academic knowledge is not enough for a student to become successful in his/her professional life. So, Career Counselling Centres should be established to look into the feedback from employers, to advice the academic departments to address the issues accordingly, and also to make students aware about the present condition of the job market in different fields.

Arranging internships for fresh graduates is another important responsibility of this body – as internships bring fresh graduates close to the employers and help them understand the corporate culture and learn the etiquette to prepare them for the job market. In the advent of worldwide spreading of 'terrorism' and 'militancy', such activities will keep the students involved in constructive activities and keep them away from being distracted otherwise. UIU has a very active and vibrant Career Counselling Centre (CCC) which is heavily involved in arranging workshops, seminars, competitions and contests on professional topics to encourage students to be more proactive to develop their leadership skills.




United International University (UIU) is constructing its permanent campus at United City, Bhatara, Dhaka, over an area of eight acres of land. The 20 storied campus building will be built on two acres of land, having a total floor space of nearly 10,00,000 square feet with six acres of

these two categories of universities. To develop research, introducing PhD course is very important for a university. Considering the present state of the private universities in Bangladesh, opening up of the PhD programme in an unregulated manner is going to raise controversies about their


USD 3 million and local funds around Tk. 3 crore. This year UIU has awarded Tk. 1.5 crore worth of research funds to its faculty members from its own resources.

In my opinion, there should not be any tax or VAT imposed on the educational institutions. It really gives a glimmer of hope



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