

We need to digitalise our higher education

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In 2009, UNESCO published a report titled "Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution" which highlighted the rise of the knowledge based economy in a world order witnessing unprecedented change. This finding has tremendous repercussions in increasing the demand of higher education - a phenomenon which may be called "democratization of education".

The main goal of higher education is to create skilled manpower and to ensure effective use of human resources. It is clear that the mechanisms currently in place in our country are not adequately designed to meet the demands of the global market. Private entrepreneurs have been involved in the education industry of various countries since the 80s. Following this trend, a considerable number of private universities have been set up in Bangladesh. These universities play an important role in producing quality human resources for both the local and international markets. As a result, the higher education sector has been transformed into a competitive market. Concurrently, there is an ever-increasing demand for extensive research on the impact of privatization of higher education. In order to make the private education system more effective, more research and experimentation is needed to identify our shortcomings and find innovative solutions to existing problems.

John Daniel, the President and CEO of The Commonwealth of Learning, emphasized the importance of open and distance learning in a recent seminar. He urged all education providers to incorporate the fruits of the technological revolution in the

higher education sector. He cited many successful examples of this technological transformation of education system. In Bangladesh, Anir Chowdhury, Advisor to the UNDP and USAID-supported Access to Information (A2i) Programme, also put forth the idea of "education going outside the building". Quite a few revolutionary distance learning ideas are in the process of being scaled up through the A2i's Service Innovation Fund, a shining example of the progress in Digital Bangladesh spearheaded by our honourable Prime Minister.

Technology has made it possible to provide high quality services in a shorter timeframe than ever possible before. The total disruption of postal communication after the invention of e-mail by Ray Tomlinson in 1976 is a good example in this regard. Radical changes in our everyday lives are already evident due to the magical influence of the tech genie.

Regarding education quality, we often measure the standard of a private university with the yardstick of having a permanent campus. Our media often focuses on this particular issue with great zeal. Whether it really matters or not is an issue of perspective. As a common citizen I believe that quality teachers, well-equipped laboratories, rich libraries, job-oriented curricula and an amiable learning environment

are the keys for building an effective education system. I do not want to belittle the importance of proper academic buildings but we have to keep in mind the dangers of a narrow scope of vision, especially in terms of education. In this age of disruptive technology, there is a significant chance that these large academic buildings will become redundant. That is why I think we should think about investing in the technological changes that can better equip us to provide quality education services to the students. We have often seen regular academic activities being hampered due to student protests, blockades and general unrest. As a result it becomes really difficult to complete courses on due time. At present, many teachers are guiding their students over the phone or through internet so that students can complete their courses on due time. Students are even taking online exams. All these initiatives are appreciable. It proves that education should not be confined in the four walls of class rooms. Now we do not require large space for libraries - we can digitalize our library and provide 24/7 access to our students so that they can avail all the library facilities in their home.

Recently, the World Bank has said that Bangladesh is doing a great job though we do not have an adequate management system. That is why we need to invest more in creating a better management system of our private education. We need to invest in research and development, skilled teachers, effective learning environments, extra-curricular activities and focus on improving the quality of education and devising a market-oriented curriculum. Incorporating technological changes into our higher education system is of paramount importance for sustaining the revolution in higher education.

All taxes on private universities should be waived

PROFESSOR DR. ABDUL MANNAN CHOUDHURY
 Vice Chancellor, World University of Bangladesh

WORLD University of Bangladesh has been established with a vision to provide utilitarian education for economic emancipation without undermining the ideals and aspiration of the nation. Our mission is to build up a University of distinction enabling students to flourish academically, individually, and socially through utilitarian education at affordable cost and with an exciting range of programs that are continually updated to reflect the latest developments.

We have conceptualized utilitarian education in terms of choosing the courses that give quick yield. Therefore, we have courses like Business Administration, English, Law, Civil Engineering, Mechatronics Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Computer Science and Engineering, Computer Information System, Textile Engineering & Pharmacy. The courses other than Mechatronics Engineering are traditional in nature but have got wider markets for paid employment and self employment. The Mechatronics Engineering is yet an unknown area in Engineering Education. It is the synergistic combination of several branches of engineering with heavy emphasis on Robotics and computing that enables a graduate to do the jobs of a number of engineers.

The second element of utilitarian education is the imparting of quality education. The offering of utilitarian courses without due emphasis and importance to quality will not bring the desired results. Therefore, we have adopted quality education as one of our significant goals. We understand there are several determinants of quality education, such as understanding of vision, mission, objectives and functions of the university, the infrastructural facilities, quality of students, the qualified, experienced and dedicated teachers as well as surveillance by an independent and unbiased Accreditation Council.

By now, we have added all elements or determinants of quality education except the permanent campus which is on way to completion. The permanent campus located at the heart of Uttara

residential areas will be an attractive one in all respects to the stake holders.

All along I have been ardent and passionate supporter of Accreditation Council. To equip us with the demand of Accreditation Council, we have already instituted the Quality Assurance Cell, Institutional Quality Assurance Program with the funding and help of HEQEP project and our own contribution.

We believe that investment in education must bring return in order to sustain self and societal development. In the grooming & pattern, we charge very low fees, provide lot of facilities and scholarship for needy and meritorious and support transfer of grades and employment after graduation.

We have more than 10 thousand alumni in the market; none of them is reported to have remained unemployed.

But we believe the most important determinant of quality education is teacher and more specifically the qualified experienced and dedicated teachers. To attract such teachers, we have adopted several strategies and tactics of recruiting, training and development of the teaching staff without overlooking the need for auxiliary staffs. We strictly follow the guide lines of UGC and make changes only when situation demands so.

We conduct induction programs for the newly recruited teachers where each and every teacher is given inputs for teaching and research methodology. They are encouraged to do research and publish them in our Journals of Population & Health, Journal of Business, Journal of Arts and Humanities, Journal of Science and Engineering as well as in journal for each specified department. Certain percentage of the recurring expenses is earmarked for research. All researches conducted through the Centre of Excellence.

We have exchange programs with as many as 36 universities in 5 continents of the World.

Of course, we have faced a number of problems in steering our affair. One of them is the imposition of different types of tax including tax at sources, VAT and income tax. The government by its action has changed the basic characteristics of the private universities, may all the universities. The universities are not supposed or mandated by their Act to pay any



amount of tax. Recently, the decision of the high court waiving all taxes on private universities is a right decision to right direction.

However, we urge the govt. to modify the present Act by eliminating the provision of three names for the post of Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellor and Treasurer for each university, embargo on mortgaging university properties to obtain loan. At present hundred of talented people are required to man the higher echelon of the administrative structure and teaching of the private university. A time will come when every individual having a first class degree in Bachelor and Master program or having PhD with third class in SSC, HSC or Master program shall have a fair chance of becoming boss of private universities, unless some modification is brought about in the Act. Most universities will be crippled unless some financial leverage is offered to the universities.

The private universities must be given opportunities to frame their service rules and compensation packages and for running of the PhD programs with each one's resources or pooled resources of public & private universities. A system of transfer of teachers may be introduced which shall cross fertilize the condition of the less developed universities.

Large Chunk of government scholarship must be channeled for private university teachers. All baseless and derogatory propaganda against the private universities must be carefully avoided. All particularization as opposed to generalization we shall welcome in this respect.



"Inter Private University Football Champion, 2016"



NSU celebrates "Pohela Boishakh, 2016"

Student activities at North South University

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are extremely important for modern universities, especially for aiding students with the best chance for shaping their future. Skills development has been embedded in academic programs as well as extra-curricular activities at North South University (NSU). The Plaza area, recreation center, boys lounge and upper deck gallery, OAT etc. remain busy throughout the year with programs and events organized by various student bodies of the university. Our international auditorium, with its all modern amenities, is an addition to this list of places that facilitates students' activities to a great extent these days.

The prime objective of these clubs is to engage students in result-oriented activities and to help prepare them as socially responsible and

worthy citizens of the country. By now the number of student clubs has reached 21 and they are all working in different socio-economic, cultural, environmental and scientific fronts. Nevertheless, in a recent move the university authority has merged some of the old clubs in a new setting to facilitate the emergence of some more new clubs.

The clubs are: Art & Photography Club, Athletics Club, Cine & Drama Club, Communication Club, Computer & Engineering Club, Diversity Club, Earth Club, Ethics Club, Finance Club, Human Resources Club, International Club, Marketing Club, MBA Club, Model UN Club, Pharmaceutical Club, Public Health and Sciences Club, Shangskritik Sangothon, Social Services Club, Young Economists Forum, Young Entrepreneurs Society.



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BBA General

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BS in

- Biochemistry and Biotechnology
- Environmental Management
- Environmental Science
- Microbiology

School of Engineering & Physical Sciences

Bachelor of Architecture

BS in

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- Computer Science & Engineering (CSE)
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OR

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OR

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For the programs under School of Engineering & Physical Sciences, applicants must have Math or Physics with minimum B grade in HSC or C grade in A-Levels

For BPharm Professional, applicants must have Biology & Chemistry with minimum B grade in HSC or C grade in A-levels and should have done Physics in HSC/A-levels.

For Biochemistry & Microbiology applicants must have Biology & Chemistry at SSC/HSC or O/A-levels

Admission test is waived for candidates with minimum score of 1500 in SAT (Math+ Critical Reading+ Writing) and 500 in TOEFL (CBT213/IBT79) or IELTS 5.5

Application Deadline

22 November, 2016, 11:59 pm

Admission Test

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For more details

NSU Admissions & Information Office Level-1 & 3, Bashundhara, Dhaka -1229

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Partial view of graduating students 19th Convocation 2016