

Quality enhancement in higher education needs to be ensured to create better opportunities

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Higher education globally has been going through dramatic changes in the last decade and that is no different in Bangladesh. A much wider demographic of people now have access to further education, and greater international collaboration has brought a more diverse perspective to education, particularly higher education. At the same time, there are many concerns over teaching and assessment methods. Moreover, in the past two years, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought challenges to the way in which higher education institutes in Bangladesh and around the world need to put more focus on the quality of education for the students.

The Daily Star, in collaboration with the British Council, has recently launched an exclusive series of LIVE webinars. On 12 December 2021, the very first session titled 'Importance of quality enhancement in the Higher Education Sector focusing on teaching and learning: Bangladesh perspective' was hosted by David Maynard, Director, English and Education, British Council Bangladesh.

"The prime barrier is the insufficient resources or assets to ensure the quality of higher education in public universities. There is a tendency to spend less public money on public universities. If we had sufficient assets such as labs, libraries, internet facilities, and logistics support like computers and laptops, we could have produced good quality graduates and secured their employability", said Dr Sabita Rezwana Rahman, Professor, Department of Microbiology, and

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Importance of quality enhancement in the Higher Education Sector focusing on teaching and learning: Bangladesh perspective

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Dr. Masuma Habib
Professor, Graduate Training Institute, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh-2202

Dr. Mohammad Tareque
Associate Professor & Director Centre of Excellence on Teaching and Learning, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh

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David Maynard
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Dr Mohammad Tareque, Associate Professor and Director, Centre of Excellence on Teaching and Learning, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, said, "We need to broaden our definition

of quality. We mainly consider doing research as a factor of showing that quality education has been ensured. But the most important aspect of quality education is that it should serve the social needs. Factors like employability and sustainable development also have

to be added to our definition of quality. And strategies need to be reorganised according to it."

On the other hand, Dr Masuma Habib, Professor, Graduate Training Institute, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh shared that one of the main barriers on the way of providing quality education is the absence of training institutes for the university teachers in her perspective. "There are no training institutes for our tertiary level education providers, which shows our failure to realise that university academicians do need formal training on pedagogy. Even though some short-term training sessions on pedagogical procedures for limited participants are arranged, these are not enough to serve quality higher education for all."

Dr Mohammad Tareque also mentioned blended learning in the education sector. He said, "Due to the pandemic, we are now more dependent on blended learning. It is not only about the hybrid of online and offline classes. However, it also refers to new pedagogical changes, the introduction of new curriculum and courses, and visionary changes regarding the educational aspects."

"We are producing more and more graduates without ensuring jobs for them. I think we should focus on hands-on training as per the market demand. There needs to be a linkage between industries and universities to understand what types of skills firms or industries want from the students, and how and with what educational institutes may help their students", said Dr Sabita Rezwana Rahman.

Rethinking workplaces

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Nonetheless, the pandemic has altered people's perspectives of business, learning and the workplace. The evaluation of employees' contributions for the betterment of the companies is constantly evolving. It was and still continues to be a dark time for many, especially those who could not use

tech for their benefit. There are certain tech companies who earned millions of dollars, whereas many unfortunately lost their jobs.

These changes are expected to leave a lasting impact on the way people plan on moving forward. Prospective future workers, upon understanding that tech is the future of workplaces where the

working dynamic is forever changing, are trying to learn more about it so that they can be prepared to use technological tools if time demands it again.

Since companies are interested in reaping the benefits of integrating tech in workplaces with noticeable shifts in company cultures, they are expecting

technological competency from their future employees. It is tech that is helping job-seekers prepare better for the upcoming days. So, experts suggest we can hope to see a higher surge in people engaging in accentuating the soft skills needed for virtual working and sharpening their tech-related skills for the future of workplaces.

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