



Global Perspectives on Higher Education in Bangladesh

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FROM last part of 20th century our youth from different economic classes are coming to universities to study graduate programmes. There were only six universities in Bangladesh at the time of independence in 1971, all in the public sector. At present there are 38 public and 91 private universities in Bangladesh. Moreover, there are two International Universities in Bangladesh namely, Islamic University of Technology and the Asian University for Women. Islamic University of Technology is a subsidiary organ of Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Now total enrolment at the universities has surpassed four million students. But job employment has not increased apportioned to the number of students graduated from universities each year. On the other hand, mobility of graduates, scholars and workforce from Bangladesh to developed countries is increasing. 34% of Bangladeshis are aged 15 or younger, and the country has an opportunity to realise the full benefit of this “demographic dividend” in the years ahead – but only if it can provide education and training to the millions of students in accordance with internationally recognised standards. British Council report (June 2013) makes the following general observation of education outcomes in the region: “An unfortunate by-product of the low quality of higher education – both for the economies of the region and the students themselves – is the low employability of graduates who emerge from the universities”.

All our students will benefit from an education that prepares them for global citizenship and successful employment in today’s global labour market. In order to bring an international dimension to university programmes and education we should overhaul our higher education system and make necessary changes in designing curricula of programmes. In designing curricula the importance of global perspectives and sustainable development need to be acknowledged. Students will be encouraged to explore global perspectives through a range of curriculum opportunities. Curricula must be aligned with national and international professional association guidelines and be accredited by reputable standards. More courses on the humanities, languages, and social sciences are required to include in syllabi of both engineering and non-engineering programmes. The humanities,

languages, and social sciences instil a thought process that will broaden student as an individual and make him/her more attractive to employers. The mission of today’s universities should be to help raise students’ awareness of the increasing interde-

pendence of our world and to foster in students a respect for the diversity of perspectives represented in the world community and to show how these relate to another cultural perspective. Universities will remain engaged with global interdisciplinary issues such as preserving the cultural and natural heritage, environmental change, con-

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serving biodiversity, managing historic landscapes, genocide, and the role of technology. Throughout a range of activities students are required to consider issues from a series of viewpoints i.e. local, regional, national, international and global. The

courses on cultural studies and language of different nations should be included in the syllabi.

A paradigm shift in education system from traditional education to outcome-based education (OBE) in the developed countries of the world has occurred few decades ago. OBE has emerged as a major direction for educa-

tional reform. OBE has changed the focus of learning institutions from the content to the learner. Our universities should start changing education system gradually from TE to OBE. Our grading system is also not standard. We assign the letter grade A+ (excellent) to a student in a course who scores 80% marks in examinations and numerical value for letter grade D (poor) is 2. On the other hand, universities in North America give A (excellent) for obtaining 95% marks in examinations and the numerical value for letter grade D (poor) is one.

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