

Higher medical education in Bangladesh

Higher medical education, meaning post-graduate studies in medical science, for a developing country like Bangladesh, has got much importance since, like all struggling people in the world, we are fighting for food, health and shelter — the three basic needs of human life.

As we all know, the modern era is one of science and highly developed technology. Development in science has enabled human beings not

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only to conquer the Moon or Mars but also kept contribution in helping medical science to reach its peak of prosperity and success. We are living in a day, where treatment of diseases are being tried with laser-ray and diagnosis is being done with computer and electromagnetic waves (CAT scan-computerised Axial Tomography & EMR — Electro-Magnetic Resonance). Medical education has got tremendous importance in our national life. Yet it is highly regrettable that few people or the Government itself think or work for the development of medical science. If we look into and compare the system of higher medical education in the developed countries, we will find a gulf of difference. As for example, regarding method of education, we know that all over the world, students are being taught medical science in black and white by audiovisual system where emphasis is given more on the practical side than theoretical lectures.

Here the things are being made easy and comprehensible to the students with the help of slide projectors, computers, films and other aid. On the contrary, in our country stress is given more on lectures than the demonstration and practical side. Students are compelled to commit to their memories the big theories and other data without keeping any link with the practical application. Students are exhausted not only by this heavy burden of memorizing, they are also to face a tough situation in the examination due to the faulty method of examination system.

As we all know the examinations system throughout the world has been radically changed from old descriptive pattern of questions to short objective or M.C.Q. i.e. multiple choice question system. The latter (2nd) has proved far more effective in evaluating the students in the examination because it is through this system that the examiner can cover the

whole book or syllabus in contrast to the much more selective and descriptive type of questions where the examiner has to choose a few selective questions for the examination. This system of essay type of answers not only make the knowledge of students narrow but also put them into situation of memorising the big theories and chapters and to vomit them in the examination paper. In USA all examination system in higher education is now M.C.Q. or objective type. In Britain also, the examination system of MRCP or FRCS Part I is M.C.Q. or multiple choice question type. Not only in USA and Britain, but throughout the world, this system has been adopted for assessment of students in the examination. This system has been proved not only easy for the students but also help them in expending their knowledge and to understand and help develop medical science.

In our country, if we all look into results of MCPS/MCPS, we will find that majority of students are doing bad in theoretical or written examination where in this twentieth century of computer age, questions of primitive age are being set. Whereas the same students when

appearing in the M.C.Q. system of examination in Britain and U.S.A. are scoring ninety per cent marks or more. They are not only scoring there, they are also keeping contribution in the development of medical science. This disparity of evaluation of merit and giving proper dignity to it, has been the main cause of brain drainage in third world countries including Bangladesh.

Now, time has come for the people of this country and the Government to look into the matter why our medical science is not developing and has remained stand still in a position as it was fifteen years back. Why are we lagging behind day by day? In this respect we appreciate the declaration of our Health Minister which he made in a conference a few days back, about government's concern about and sincerity in improving the standard of medical education in Bangladesh. But until and unless the root of the problem, which has been briefly discussed above is solved, all our efforts and speeches will be like crying in the wilderness.

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