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OPINION

BUET Architecture Dept: Admission Rules and Poor Results (!)

As far as my collection of newspaper cutting goes, a total of more than a dozen articles, editorials, official clarification, letters to editor, correspondent reports, clarification by faculty members of the Dept. of Architecture and write-up by architects were published in the Daily Star alone since 10 Jan. '98 on matters related to admission into the faculty of Architecture.

As a conscious citizen and also as an academic (humble submission) I wish to concentrate my effort to analyse these one by one before putting forward my few questions.

Mr. Borhan Kabir expresses that he is "unpleasantly surprised and shocked, as are many others including the admission seekers and guardians spread over the length and breadth of the country.....". Well, my simple question to Mr. Kabir is "Why didn't you take the pain of revealing your source of data collection and satisfy our curiosity by presenting the data in the tabular form?" Because, it is evident that Mr. Kabir likes to collect facts and figures, hence he should satisfy the curiosity of others like him. I feel really proud to have a masters degree in the "mother of science (Physics)" subject, but has to say that Mr. Kabir's opinion is self-contradictory, because I am afraid that no one doubts the inclusion of three credit hour courses of Physics in the syllabus.

Next, I will take the opinion expressed by one Mr. Mahmuduzzaman — I must appreciate the depth of his guessing power — "possibly the editorial means the universities of UK and the USA." Mr Zaman said that "the chart makes one thing spectacularly clear and it is that Physics background is the most preferred". Unfortunately, a close look at the said table says that out of 26 institutions mentioned only four show preference for Physics as one of the entry requirements. To my simple eyes it seems Mr. Zaman mixes up facts with his opinion many a time — "if a student is not interested in academic subjects, the study of architecture which draws heavily on many academic areas will probably be of little interest to the incumbent" — and inadvertently or otherwise it seems Mr. Zaman tried to undermine the whole

readers' community, because every single educated person knows that an academic curriculum of any undergraduate or graduate study programme of any recognised university will surely include academic subjects. A reader like me is hurt when we read "in an effort to settle the scores, presumably between the BUET Academic Council and the Architect teachers" — what type of scores are to exist in an academic institution, and why?

When it comes to the letter sent by the faculty members of the Dept. of Architecture in response to Mr. Zaman's letter I don't find any new issue to discuss; though they could not clarify their position very academically.

Next, I would like to humbly touch on some points elaborated by the Registrar of BUET in the clarification note published recently. He mentioned that the importance of science subjects was felt at the meeting held in the faculty of Architecture on 4th June '97 and after a while he mentions that the importance of English was also felt; at this point my inquisitive mind asks a question — why is it that we see "at least 60% marks on the average in the subjects of Maths, Physics, Chemistry" why isn't English included here?

Next, why is that marks of Chemistry is to be included when the admission seekers of the dept. of Architecture do not need to sit for Chemistry test in their prescribed modules? At this point I would take a fact revealed by the registrar — a poor pass rate in Physics offered in Level I, Term I of Architecture; here I wish to put a question to the honourable faculty members of the Dept. of Physics — HOW DID THEY ABSORB THIS SHOCKING FACT?

The anxiety expressed by the university authority the poor academic results of the architect graduates is naturally shared by all educated citizens but what is the link between a poor result obtained after five years of study and the admission test participated by the candidate? Was there any valid research conducted to check this poor show during these long span of time?

There seems to be certain anomalies: We find that in the syllabus of compulsory subjects only Physics is mentioned as a

pre-requisite subject, then why should seven honourable members of AC express note of dissent on non-inclusion of Chemistry? May be this was done to introduce the SAME TEST ON A SINGLE DAY policy. There is another point which draws my attention — it seems the honourable Dean of the faculty of Architecture and Planning agreed to act as the chairman of the said admission committee, then why and when did he express his inability to perform his honorary duty? Because, if all the decisions were taken under his chairmanship then what is the reason which forces him/her to express inability afterward?

Last of all, I would like to use parts of the letter sent by Mr. Monirul Haque — his first remark "almost irresponsible remarks by men in quite responsible positions" becomes redundant, as it is known that a registrar acts as the administrative spokesman of the Vice-Chancellor, hence for any irresponsible remark the registrar cannot be held "responsible".

Now, about the statistics — I sincerely hope that there is only partial truth in both registrar's and Mr. Haque's statements, and this shows the necessity of having a separate research cell for conducting action research in each department. If such was the case, then neither the faculty members of the department of Physics or Architecture nor the registrar would have to publish remarks and counter remarks on the published results.

But I am happy to note that Mr. Haque has put one question which is very naturally my question also — WHAT SCORES THE ARCHITECTURE FACULTY MEMBERS ARE TRYING TO SETTLE WITH THE BUET ACADEMIC COUNCIL?

Lastly, my humble question to the admission committee — why is it that instead of English, marks of Chemistry are to be counted out of HSC results of the Architecture admission seekers? Was it Really Impossible to Make Public these New Rules as Soon as the HSC Result was out? Why is it that the guardians are put to this extra and unnecessary anxiety?

An anxious citizen and a burdened parent
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