

তাৰিখ ১৭ JUN 1994

পৃষ্ঠা ৫ কলাম ৭

The Bangladesh Observer

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Expanding Horizon

Post-Graduate Medical Education Abroad

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THERE is wide information gap among the members of medical profession and general population about the system of Post Graduate medical education in renowned universities of Central Europe, Japan, Thailand etc.

In the pre-Liberation days, our doctors used to go to UK and Ireland for higher education in medical sciences. So, we find most of the professors of Medical Colleges till Eighties were British degree holders. They were exposed to the better technologies and facilities in UK. In those days, France, Germany, Austria although situated in Europe, were unknown to us due to political reasons and language barrier.

Proper teaching and training facilities for medical education is highly expensive. Bangladesh, being one of the poorest countries of the world with per capita income of around 180 dollars, can hardly afford all these facilities, specially at the post-graduate level. The first post-graduate medical institution in then Pakistan was founded in Karachi in early Sixties and Prof. Ibrahim was once Director of the same. The post-graduate Hospital of IPGMR, Dhaka which started its journey in a few rooms on the first floor of the present emergency department of Dhaka Medical College Hospital was in a rudimentary stage in mid-sixties.

Even in the mid-Seventies, there was a natural trend of doctors going to UK, Ireland, USA for higher education, training or to make a living. The only Physician I can remember with a central European degree in those days was Dr. S.A. Wadud of Islamia Eye Hospital who obtained DOMS from the University of Vienna—famous for its Ophthalmology, Dermatology, Medicine, Paediatrics, basic science departments. The situation started to change dramatically after Liberation. Doctors went abroad on employment and the increased exposure brought new information to them. The University of Vienna Medical Faculty in

Austria, Mahidol University of Bangkok, founded and run with Japanese collaboration, Universities in Japan etc. came in the picture.

Vienna is not only the centre of culture and music; it also houses the biggest hospital in Europe. Vienna with its fine musical heritage of Strauss, Schubert, Mozart and many others was the capital of Austro-Hungarian empire which included, Prussia, part of present Poland, Hungary, Moravia, Bohemia, Croatia, Slovenia, part of present Italy. It was a huge empire the melting pot of central Europe. The best brains of central Europe were attracted the University of Vienna Medical Faculty, the second oldest university of Europe. Vienna city General Hospital was founded 350 years ago. The Medical School is situated in the heart of the city on an enormous compound attached to the Medical Faculty. There is only one medical school in Vienna. The teaching wing of medical faculty, the main hospital—AKH-Allgemeines Kranken Haus has more than 2300 beds, and there is a number of teaching hospitalis attached to it. AKH-Allgemeines Kranken Haus der Stadt Wien — City of Vienna General Hospital is the biggest hospital in Europe with every conceivable medical and research facilities. For example, the Dermatology department occupies two floors of the new twenty-four storied building. It consists of four full fledged stations with separate wards for STD, a separate four storied building for AIDS. It speaks eloquently about the enormosity of the teaching hospital, Dermatology being an off-shoot of Medicine, which is by the way the most unflourished branch in our country. The Paediatrics Department is housed in a separate eight storied

building. The old University Clinics as departments are called, are situated in Alsergrund, Alserstrasse, on a large compound which remains of Ramna Park, because of the trees and the beautiful garden. At the entrance, one is welcomed by the statue of Prof. Bilotroth, one of the pioneers of modern surgery. Statues of famous paediatricians, surgeons, medical specialists, dermatologist, anatomists, psychiatrist adorn the hospital campus.

As you walk around, you leaf through the history of evolution of medical sciences. The new hospital is located across the street at Wahringer Gurtel and Lazarettgasse. Austrians are highly motivated educationists. Prof. Bilotroth, Prof. Virchow, Prof. Skoda, Prof. Hebra, Prof. Kaposi, Prof. Piquet, Prof. Fraed, two Noble laureates and many belonged to Vienna Medical faculty. The rich tradition of high standard of education and humanity above all is being carried on by the present members of the faculty which includes internationally acclaimed skin specialist. Prof. Klaus Wolff, innovator of phototherapy which revolutionised modern Dermatology and co-author of many books on Dermatology.

Although Austria is a German speaking country, English is widely spoken in the hospital. Foreign medical graduates are taught spoken German and encouraged to learn the language so that they can communicate with the patients. Lots of Indian, Pakistani, Iranian and doctors from Europe are pursuing Post-Graduate medical studies in Vienna. The former Shah of Iran, Dr. Soekarno, Ex. President of Indonesia, the Ruler of Qatar, King Saud of Saudi Arabia and many other states-

men were among the frequent visitors to Vienna City General Hospital for medical check-up and treatment.

The University of Vienna Post-Graduate Medical Institute offers one-academic-year diploma courses in all the branches and subbranches of medical science. The whole idea is to impart teaching and training to the medical graduates from developing and underdeveloped countries by highly qualified, professional and dedicated members of Medical Faculty which gives the incumbents opportunities to learn and get trained along with the indigenous doctors and other doctors from Arab countries, Iran, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Hungary, Former Czechoslovakia etc. Latest educational methods both audio and visual are employed for these courses. The teaching is imported in an excellent academic atmosphere of the Vienna General Hospital.

There is another excellent institution for Tropical Medicine and Dermatology in Bangkok, Thailand, under Mahidol University. It is jointly sponsored by Thailand under Mahidol University. It is jointly sponsored by Thailand Government and Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA). It is one of the best institutions in the whole southeast Asia, from facilities, teaching staff and training points of view. Now a days, lots of Bangladeshi doctors are getting enrolled in the University of Vienna or Mahidol University or Universities of Japan on government scholarships or on self-finance basis. They are bringing back the rich expertise and experiences acquired from developed countries to serve the medical system of our country. Exposure to better technologies and facilities enhance their knowledge and vision. This new generation of doctors are contributing immensely to the medical education and service system of our country.

Rightfully, new frontiers have opened up for medical education and services.