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Reorganisation Of Undergraduate Medical Education — IV

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FOLLOWING successful completion of the existing medical course of study, the universities in Bangladesh, as it is practised in some countries, confer a conjoint degree of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, though, the University of Dhaka misnomerly confer it as a single degree of Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery.

The nomenclature of the first medical degree however needs certain appreciation because of the involvement of a lengthy period of study. In Bangladesh, it takes 5 years' study since completion of HSC examination, while a contemporary student requires in total 4 years to complete his Master's degree in other faculties and, abroad, by that 5 years one can obtain a Doctorate degree. Yet as the medical graduates here are conferred with a Bachelor degree, even the government recruiting agency such as the Public Service Commission too treat them as of same status as other graduates (BA/BSc) in respect of their employment and salary, and requires them to pass a BCS examination along with other graduates.

As the medical course takes much too long time everywhere in the world, the appropriate nomenclature of the first degree thus conferred following such a course of instruction has always been a matter of great discussion. To mark the difference and to compensate the time required for the study, some countries confer the first degree as double Bachelor degree, while others prefer to confer it as a Doctorate degree. As a result, of the countries which have organised course of medical education 28 countries confer the conjoint degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, and 45 countries confer it as Doctor of Medicine (including some as Doctor of Medicine and Surgery, and as Doctor of

Medicine, Surgery and Obstetrics). Even of the contries which confer the degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, some are now becoming increasingly conscious of the fact and instead of changing the nomenclature of their established degree, they now prefer to confer another Bachelor degree as Bachelor of Medical Science or Bachelor of Science in Medicine, in addition.

Bangladesh therefore needs to take a conscientious attitude towards it. Since after 5 years of study one can even obtain a Doctorate degree in another faculty, preference can be for a Doctor of Medicine degree so that not only the lengthy period of study is lawfully compensated but the employment authorities too do not equalise them with other graduates for the purpose of employment status and salary scale.

If for any reason it is not feasible and, the universities may prefer to continue conferring the double degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, the universities may grant another degree of Bachelor of Science or a Bachelor of Science in Medicine after the satisfactory completion of second professional examination so as to compensate the length of study, period, in addition. Thus, after the satisfactory completion of the entire medical course of instruction a student may receive the degree of Doctor of Medicine, or may obtain a Bachelor of Science degree after the second professional examination and the double degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery after satisfactory conclusion of the fifth

professional examination.

This modification, as explained earlier, is essential not only to compensate the lengthy period of study but also to make the government recruiting agencies fully aware of the fact that a medical graduate cannot be considered equal with another graduate of another faculty in terms of employment status and salary scale. The length of study and possession of a Doctorate degree or three Bachelor degrees will then be sufficient to put an emphasis that a medical graduate need to be appointed at a higher status with almost a double salary than other graduates.

Registration

Following successful completion of the medical course of instructions and passing all those five professional examinations of the university, or exempted therefrom, every candidate shall need to undertake an internship before the registration is granted. At present the students are granted provisional registration following qualification and a full registration after completion of the internship. This appears unnecessary, and involves extra financial burden for the provisional registration. The provision of provisional registration can therefore be easily waived. Once the student has succeeded obtaining the medical degree he can therefore start working in the internship training programme and can obtain registration as soon as he successfully completes his internship.

Following the existing pattern of rotating internship, every successful

student can start working straight in the hospital for a period of 12 months. Otherwise, the internship training programme may be arranged as 2½ months in medicine and 1½ months in the allied specialties of medicine, 2½ months in surgery and 1½ months in the allied specialties of surgery, 1 month in gynaecology and 1 month in obstetrics. The remaining 2 months period may be spent in any specialty, sub-specialty or academic department of the institution, as preferred by the candidates, where the successful student is not only made responsible to perform all responsibilities as other staff of the specialty or academic department do, they are also encouraged to undergo a supervised special study during that two months period. Satisfactory conclusion of 12 months' internship will naturally entitle the candidates to obtain registration.

As the rural areas often lack the services of the qualified medical practitioners and as it is desirable that the newly qualified young medical graduates acquire extensive practical knowledge before they start their career, perhaps much better can be done if an additional one or two years compulsory services may be included before the registration is granted to them. In such a case the Directorate of Health Services will be obliged to employ each year newly qualified medical graduates with regular salary and amenities for a period of, say, one year in the rural centres. After the completion of such a compulsory period of service their rights to government service will automatically lapse, and they will then be given the registration. Following this they may pursue a career as they wish to or may join the government service or may specialise in the field of their choice.

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