

Problems Bangladeshi students face in United States

Quite a large number of graduate and undergraduate level students go to various US universities from Bangladesh for higher studies every year. The number is increasing.

At the beginning our students face various problems because the system of education is different, and there are many cultural differences between the two countries. If a student is not academically prepared it takes an even longer time to familiarise himself with the differences and adjust.

Students from our community should have a strong academic background, be financially capable of supporting themselves

have a good command over English language before applying for higher studies.

Even students who have a good academic background face problems because our medium of instruction is different. Many students do very well in the US but it takes time and they have to work very hard at the beginning.

These observation were made by Zebunnessa Rahman, the educational adviser at the American Cultural Centre, Dhaka in an interview. She offers advice to those who seek higher studies in the U.S.

Bangladeshi students, she continued, depend on other family members in every aspects of living. When they are outside the country they have to make many independent decision and even perform household tasks and at the same time concentrate on studies.

It is very difficult to get a campus job and this does not provide enough money to cover the cost of living and tuition expenses. She pointed out that the undergraduate level students must be sure that some one is willing and able to support them for the entire period of their studies. There are a few possibilities for the graduate students to obtain assistantships, provided they have a strong academic background, good English ability and perform well on va-

rious types of admissions tests.

She observed that financial problems caused a great deal of trouble for our students. Many students cannot continue to pay for their studies, leave the universities and return home very discouraged without a degree.

Mrs. Rahman suggests that there are some American values that our students need to be aware of if they want to be successful in an American educational system.

The educational systems there encourages independent behaviour. Their informal way of living brings them into contact with many types of people and increases their understanding of them. Our students will need to

be more straight forward, speak up when they have an opinion and ask questions if they don't understand. It will help them solve many of the problems they encounter. There is usually a very friendly relationship between students and their teachers. They talk freely, discuss issues individually and even argue over topics.

Punctuality is an essential part of life in the U.S. To be late is considered rude and a sign of disrespect. If someone arrives late, it is considered to indicate that the meeting or the class is not considered important. Awareness about the importance of time in the US will help our students use their time more

effectively and help prevent misunderstandings.

Some of the students again become so confused and frustrated when trying to communicate their needs and ideas and adjust to life in the US that they may need help from the Foreign Students' Adviser. Advisers are available at most institutions to help students. A student should go to him, talk to him and let him know their problems. There are times when a student is depressed, homesick and frustrated but they can overcome these problems by being patient and committed to their career goals, she adds.

A.B.M. TOUFIQUL ISLAM