

So far as Shibpur is concerned, that is, for the students who belong to the west of the Ganges, there ought to be some sort of arrangement for giving higher agricultural education; but for the students coming from the eastern districts, an Agricultural College at Dacca should, I think, be of immense advantage to them. I have already submitted that the experimental farm at Monipur possesses natural advantages for the purpose of agricultural education and that there are thousands of acres of land around where experiments can be carried on with the utmost efficiency and utmost regard to the requirements of higher agricultural teaching. In the circumstances and with all these natural advantages at hand, I submit to your excellency that it is high time that an agricultural college should at once be started at Dhaka and in the near future when we hope to have the Dhaka University, the agricultural college be incorporated with that University, which will give the Dhaka University a high status among the Universities. With these few observations I would strongly commend this resolution to the acceptance of Your Excellency's Government?

The resolution was accepted by Government and the Hon'ble Mr. C. Cumming, the Member-in-charge, assured the House that Government was going to make a beginning towards giving practical effect to the recommendations contained in that resolution. Nearly 20 years have since elapsed, but although the country has witnessed momentous political changes, covering within these two decades the pace of it is to be regretted that the scheme which I then advocated and which materialised. The brilliant function with we are associate this afternoon recalls to my memory the events of far off years and all that I have seen and heard today has touched a very tender chord in my heart and filled my mind with deep thankfulness to the Almighty providence that it has given me the opportunity today to lay the foundation stone of an edifice which I contemplated in theory more than 20 years ago, and that through the mercy of Providence my dreams have now come one to be practically realised. The history of this institution is in some respects a very interesting one. Progress in the direction of the establishment of this Institute has been slow but I am glad to be able to say that the idea did not actually escape

the attention of the authorities during all this period. Bengal is predominantly an agricultural province. The importance of improving her agriculture can hardly be exaggerated. It has already been said that since the present government came to power, it has been the earnest endeavour to effect an all-round improvement of agriculture in various directions. A tentative 4-year plan was drawn up last year by the Nawab Bahadur of Dhaka. The then Minister of Agriculture, and this is being gradually and steadily worked out. The Agricultural Institute at Dacca is one of the most important items in the plan. It is our earnest desire that the buildings, the foundation of which is being laid to-day will be completed within the next financial year so as to enable classes to be started in the latter part of that year. The other important features of the plan include better facilities for research and experiment, increase of the grant and staff for demonstration and propaganda so as to bring

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home to the agriculturists the results of the research and experiment carried on by the department and to persist them to adopt the new methods evolved as a result of such research and experiment, improvement of live-stock and the creation of better facilities for the marketing of agricultural produce. The first academic session of BAI began in 1941 with 20 students. Mr. D.M. Clerk was the first Principal of BIA. After partition, an Agricultural University was established in the then West Pakistan. There was enough scope and importance to upgrade this Agriculture College to an agricultural University but it was totally ignored by the then East Pakistan Government.

In the beginning, Bangladesh Agricultural Institute started functioning as an Independent Faculty of Agriculture under Dhaka University, when its administration was controlled by the Ministry of Agriculture. The agricultural courses have undergone a lengthy evolution. At first, 4 years B.Sc., B.Ag. courses were

introduced. Then after many changes, in 1964 when the Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) was established in Mymensingh and BAI's academic matters were placed under the Faculty of Agriculture of BAU a 5 years B.Ag and B.Sc. Ag (Hons) course after SSC was introduced. After our independence, the courses were further modified. Now a 4 year B.Sc. Ag (Hons) course after HSC (Science) is being offered by BAI. The entire B.Sc. Ag. (Hons) course has been divided into four parts, each of one year's duration. The annual examination of each part is conducted by BAU while periodical examinations of about 20% marks are being conducted by the teachers of BAI. Due to BAU's session jam, the academic session of BAI is also running two years behind the current session.

At present, there are 100 seats excluding 3 reserved for tribal students and two for the foreign students. The number of students in different years at present is about 600. The BAI has 14 departments, namely:

1 Agronomy, 2 Horticulture, 3 Agricultural Extension, 4 Agricultural Economics & Rural Sociology, 5. Animal Husbandry 6. Crop Botany 7. Soil Science 8. Genetics and Plant Breeding 9. Entomology 10. Plant Pathology 11. Agricultural Statistics 12. Agricultural Chemistry 13. Farm Mechanics 14. Mathematics.

There are three student hostels, viz. (i) Sher-e-Bangla Hall (ii) Sirajuddowla Hall and (iii) Ladies Hall. The Institute has a library containing more than ten thousand books on various subjects of agriculture.

Like any other educational institution BAI has also some problems. Due to the dual academic and administrative control by BAU and BARI respectively, the BAI is under serious stress as an independent educational institution. Lately it has been felt by every quarter that the only way to solve the problems of BAI is to turn it into an independent autonomous institution. The government is also examining the issue in the greater national interest.

Meanwhile, on the happy occasion of its 50th anniversary, BAI is taking a fresh vow to contribute effectively in the agricultural development of Bangladesh through producing high quality agricultural graduates.

Bangladesh Agricultural Institute fifty years in education—II

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