

Dr Nazrul Islam

If success in one's own profession bears testimony of his/her brilliant educational background squarely, Dr Nazrul Islam can be an ideal example of such a replicable manifestation. More so, when the beholder is spontaneously presented an exclusively power-based profile of a man whose whole life is seemingly dedicated to illuminate the darker yards of our personal living. By virtue of his extra-ordinary talent, his innate genius and of course his prolific commitment to the profession Dr Islam rose to the pinnacle of success. His merit of performance in all the chores and the positions since 1955 have been unquestionably superb and worthy of replication.

Nazrul Islam was born on March 01, 1934 in a respectable family. After completing his early education he entered the erstwhile Ahsanullah Engineering College, the noted predecessor of the present Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) in early nineteen fifties. He graduated from here in Electrical Engineering in 1955.

His record of employment was opened in the same year 1955. Obviously, in consideration of his academic feat he was enrolled as a teacher, precisely as a Lecturer in his own alma mater BUET. And that coincidentally was the beginning of a long, chequered career. He was with BUET teaching faculty till 1965 and meantime, in 1957 he took an M S Degree in Electrical Engineering from Texas A&M University, USA. Evidently, this additional qualification compensated his shortcoming and helped his elevation to Assistant Professor of BUET. And most interestingly, his posting to Chittagong Polytechnic Institute as its Principal in 1965 coincided with his obtaining Ph D in Electrical Engineering again from Texas A&M University in 1965. In both the cases, special emphasis was laid on electricity, gas, and expansion of water network, stability and optimum system operation.

Dr Nazrul Islam abandoned his teaching career in favour of an apparently lucrative and yet far more challenging employment in the emerging industrial sector. He was appointed in the position of General Manager of the then EPIDC Project General Electric Manufacturing Plant in Chittagong in 1967. He continued here till 1972. For about four years between 1972 and 1976 he was employed with the Planning Commission of the Government as a Division Chief.

Between 1976 and 1980 he was with Bangladesh Oil and Gas Corporation (Petro Bangla) as its Chairman. From 1980 to 1989 he served in BCSIR and Bangladesh Steel & Engineering Corporation as Chairman, as Member, Planning Commission in its Energy and Industries Division, and Bangladesh Tea Board for about two years (1987-1989) as its Chairman. He was Rector, PATC Savar for a brief period in 1989. His last employment with the Government was in the position of Vice Chairman, and Chairman, Executive Committee, Council of Bangladesh Institute of Technology from 1996 to 2002.

In the course of his government employment Dr Nazrul Islam led several task forces of the Government in the energy sector which included, among others, rural electrification and one on the formulation of National Education Policy. In fact, he was the initiator of the Rural Electrification Program while he was in Planning Commission. Besides, he led several teams representing Bangladesh on loan negotiations and formulation of projects with bilateral and multi-lateral donors which included, inter alia, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

He holds enviable expertise in diverse areas beside his core area of electrical engineering. And that's how, over the past several years in a row he had been actively associated with many national projects particularly during negotiations with international donor agencies.

The most essential and very significant aspect in such almost inevitable participation at the invariable initiative of the Government of Bangladesh, had been his immense technical know how. The great role he played at the instance of Government in the formulation of national education policy, was equally noteworthy.

Dr Islam's profound knowledgeability born of his basic educational background, wide-ranging experience gained in multi-faceted employment and successive involvement in a number of international deals, earned him universal reputation even across the national boundaries. His membership with the World Energy Coordination Team, South Asia Region New Delhi in 1991 shall grant us an instant corroboration of the statement. Concurrently, his role as Head of the Task Force, Bangladesh Energy Sector, Government (1990-91), as the Chairman, Technical Advisory Committee, Bangladesh Energy Studies financed by World Bank/ADB/UNDP in 1972-1976 and in 1984-86 shall reflect upon his immaculate expertise in the said areas.

As far back as in 1973 Dr Nazrul Islam came into lime light by virtue of his professional edge over others of his time. We had such acknowledgement from the fact that he led the government sponsored Rural Electrification Delegation to USSR, Romania and Yugoslavia in 1973. Again in 2000 we saw him playing a pivotal role as Chairman, Implementation, Evaluation, Cost Determination and Formulation Committee on National Education Policy. He had been Chairman, Task Force for Education Boards of Bangladesh. He represented the Government in the World Energy Conference in Detroit and Istanbul in 1974 and 1977 respectively, in World Bank Loan Negotiations between 1978 and 1985, in the same negotiations with Asian Development Bank between 1972 and 1976.

Dr Nazrul Islam was a distinguished member of the Presidential Entourage in 1978 and 1979. In the private sector he has been associated with at least two limited companies, namely Systems Engineers Limited and Industrial Development and Trade Promotion Limited as their Chairman. He played two a very distinctive role of Consultant for a number of studies at the behest of some noted national and international institutions. They comprised, among others, Expansion, Stability Study and Optimum Operation of US Electric/Gas/Water System of metropolitan areas between 1956 and 1957 and 1963 to 1965 under Texas A&M University Analog Computer Laboratory, USA. He rendered two consultancy services to the IDA-financed Co-generation Study for Industries and to Machinery Manufacturing in Bangladesh – an industry study with particular reference to technology capability, both in 1990-1991. He had been a Techno-Economic Consultant between 1989 and 1996.

Dr Nazrul Islam held/holds a number of Honorary positions in different national and international institutions. They include, his membership with Dhaka University Syndicate, Chairmanship of the Board of Governors, Bangladesh Institute of Technology, Chittagong, Membership with Bangladesh Agricultural University Syndicate and BUET Syndicate. Currently, he has been a distinguished Member of the Selection Committee, BUET Syndicate, an External Examiner and Member of its Academic Council as well. He has been a Senior Research Fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue and also a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh. Besides, he is a former member of IEEE, USA.

He has been a widely traveled person which took him to almost all the European Countries, USA, Middle Eastern States including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, besides India, Pakistan, Indonesia, USSR, Yugoslavia and Canada.

Dr Nazrul Islam has been, all his life, a very unassuming type of person despite his rich personal heritage and imposing stature as a thorough-bred professional commanding spontaneous respect.