
Professor Dr. A. B. M. Mafizul Islam Patwari: A Legacy of Law, Leadership and Education

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ABSTRACT

Professor Dr. A. B. M. Mafizul Islam Patwari was a distinguished Bangladeshi legal academic, scholar, educationist, humanist and institution-builder whose contributions went beyond traditional university teaching to legal scholarship, human rights discourse, educational administration and expansion of higher education. As a Professor and a former Chairman of the Department of Law at the University of Dhaka and the Founder of Dhaka International University (DIU), he was an exceptional figure in the interface of legal study and educational institution-building. His academic contribution is said to be more than twenty books and thirty five scholarly articles on various areas of law with special emphasis on constitutional rights, personal liberty, human rights, legal system of Bangladesh, legal education and international humanitarian law. His important writings, such as, Fundamental Rights and Personal Liberty in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (1988), Legal System of Bangladesh (1991), and Principles of International Humanitarian Law: An Oriental Perspective (1994), show the scope of his academic interests. This article critically analyzes the contribution of Professor Patwari to academia, legal education, human rights scholarship, educational administration and the development of private higher education in Bangladesh. His concept of expanding educational opportunity for students from middle and lower-middle income families receives attention. Using a qualitative and historical-descriptive approach, and drawing on published works, institutional records, library catalogs and relevant secondary materials, the article argues that Professor Patwari's continued importance lies in his capacity to connect legal scholarship with social responsibility and educational opportunity. Institutionally the philosophy was reflected in the creation of Dhaka International University in 1995. His legacy highlights the role of academic leadership in the simultaneous formation of knowledge, human rights consciousness, professional education, social mobility, and national development.

1. Introduction

Higher education is an important factor in the intellectual, social, economic and cultural growth of a country. Universities are not just producers of graduates; they are generators of information, developers of professional competence, strengtheners of civic conscience, facilitators of social mobility and cultivators of future generations of

leaders. The history of higher education is accordingly also the history of the academics and institution-builders who have worked to translate ideas of education into viable institutions.

In Bangladesh, one prominent example of such academic leadership is Professor Dr. A. B. M. Mafizul Islam Patwari. He was a Professor and Chairman of the Department of Law, University of Dhaka and later he became the Founder of Dhaka International University. The Faculty of Law, DIU, describes him as a leading jurist, humanist, visionary academic and former Chairman of the Department of Law, University of Dhaka. According to the same institutional statement, DIU's Faculty of Law is the first supplier of legal education within private institutions of Bangladesh.

Professor Patwari's impact was multi-faceted. His individuality cannot be completely defined by identifying him simply as a law professor or the founder of a university. He was at once an academic, legal researcher, author, human rights thinker, education administrator and promoter of socially relevant education. His academic publications show a good deal of intellectual diversity. He has written on fundamental rights, personal liberty, the legal system of Bangladesh, constitutionalism, international humanitarian law, legal education and other fields of jurisprudence. His published work is listed in national and international academic libraries, suggesting that his scholarly activity was not limited to the institutional context in which he was employed.

For example, *Fundamental Rights and Personal Liberty in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh* was a 480 page comparative study of civil rights and personal liberty released by Deep & Deep Publications in 1988. He authored his *Legal System of Bangladesh* in 1991 which analyzed the legal system of Bangladesh and is still listed in academic libraries. His contribution to international legal studies is also shown in his publication "Principles of International Humanitarian Law: An Oriental Perspective" (Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1994).

Another key element of Professor Patwari's intellectual contribution was the reform of legal education. He felt that the education of lawyers should not be divorced from the realities of the profession and the social demands of the disadvantaged. His writings on the situation of legal education and delivery of legal services in Bangladesh stressed the necessity for practical legal education and relating legal training with service to the poor and oppressed.

His founding of Dhaka International University in 1995 so may be seen as the institutionalization of a wider educational ideology. This concept is summarized in the University's motto, "Knowledge is Power." Education results in intellectual and social empowerment.

The paper describes the interdisciplinary achievements of professor Patwari and specifically analyzes the connection between his academic career, legal study, human rights orientation, educational leadership and devotion to higher education expansion.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The principal objective of this study is to critically evaluate the academic and educational contributions of Professor Dr. A. B. M. Mafizul Islam Patwari in the broader context of higher education and legal scholarship in Bangladesh.

More specifically, the study seeks:

To review the contribution of Professor Patwari as an academician and legal teacher.

To review the significance of the establishment of Dhaka International University.

To review his contribution to the expansion of educational opportunities, particularly for the middle and lower-middle income groups.

To review and identify the continuing relevance of his academic and institutional legacy for present-day Bangladesh.

2. Methodology

This research is a qualitative, descriptive-analytical and historical study. The research, which is principally aimed at the assessment of the academic and institutional contribution of a prominent scholar and educationist, is mainly based on documentary analysis. Also, primary and secondary materials were consulted, such as the published books and

scholarly writings of Professor Patwari, institutional records of Dhaka International University, catalogs of university and national libraries, international bibliographic databases and other relevant materials regarding his academic contribution.

His key writings were checked against bibliographic records. For example, *Fundamental Rights and Personal Liberty in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh* is listed by WorldCat and CiNii as a work published by Deep & Deep Publications in 1988. *Legal System of Bangladesh*, Independent University, Bangladesh, 1991 by IUB Library - Independent University, Bangladesh. library catalog *Principles of International Humanitarian Law: An Oriental Perspective* is listed by the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh and university catalogs abroad as having been published in 1994.

The study does not seek to make unsubstantiated quantitative assessments of the socio-economic background of all children impacted by Professor Patwari's educational efforts. Instead, the study focuses on his contribution to the expansion of access for middle and lower-middle-income populations in the historical and institutional framework of the establishment of private higher education in Bangladesh.

This methodological care is important to separate academic study from commemorative biography.

3. Professor Patwari as an Academician and Legal Educator

Professor Patwari's intellectual identity was built, in part, on his career at the University of Dhaka. The Department of Law at the University of Dhaka has traditionally been a source of lawyers, judges, academics, administrators, policymakers and political leaders for Bangladesh. As a Professor and Chairman of such a department, Professor Patwari was in a position to contribute not only to the learning of individual students but also to the institutional growth of legal education.

His idea of education seems to have been more than the traditional classroom instruction. Legal education is needed to reconcile theory with professional practice and social responsibility, said Professor Patwari. Such attitude is quite visible in his scholarly discussion on legal education and legal services in Bangladesh. In "Status of Legal Education and Delivery of Legal Services in Bangladesh" he highlighted the shortcomings of traditional legal education and stressed the need for practical training.

This is a great addition because traditionally legal education has been more inclined toward academic knowledge, statute provisions, judicial precedents and exam centered learning. Professor Patwari was also aware that legal professionals needed practical competencies. This method prefigured many of the tenets that have become synonymous with clinical legal education.

Clinical legal education allows students to learn thru practice, as they work on real legal problems and clients, provide legal help, participate in moot courts, mock trials, legal drafting and community-based activities. The technique is intended to bridge the gap between legal theory and the professional realities.

The significance of Professor Patwari's concept was made all the more important by the fact that he combined practical legal education with the delivery of legal services to poor and disadvantaged areas. His concept of legal education was therefore built around two related purposes: professional competence and social justice.

4. Contribution to Legal Scholarship

Professor Patwari was an outstanding legal scholar. Institutional reports credit him with more than twenty books and thirty-five scholarly articles in various disciplines of law. Publication counts are one measure of academic production, but the significance of his contribution is better appreciated by looking at the themes covered in his main publications.

4.1 Fundamental Rights and Personal Liberty

Professor Patwari's major contributions in research include *Fundamental Rights and Personal Liberty in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh* published in New Delhi by Deep & Deep Publications in 1988. The publication is around 480 pages long and considers civil rights and personal liberty in a comparative South Asian context. This comparative approach is especially relevant as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh share much of their colonial legal history, yet adopt quite different constitutional arrangements following independence. The link between individual liberty and government power continues to be one of the fundamental concerns of constitutional law. States require authority to preserve public order and national security, but abuse of that authority can undermine basic liberties. Professor Patwari's concern with incarceration, martial law, constitutional safeguards and personal liberty thus addressed a basic constitutional dilemma: how can the authority of the state be balanced with the liberty of the individual? Its

continued presence in foreign library catalogs as well as the Bangladesh National Parliament Library is testament to its bibliographic relevance.

4.2 Legal System of Bangladesh

Another notable accomplishment was the publication of *Legal System of Bangladesh* in 1991. It is vital to understand a country's legal system, because law cannot be understood fully by looking at individual statutes in isolation. Students and scholars need to be aware of the history of the development of institutions, sources of law, judicial systems, legal traditions, and the interconnections among different institutions. Professor Patwari's work contributed to the production of literature on the judicial system of Bangladesh as an independent area of academic interest. The fact that the work is still being cataloged in university libraries and is included among the required legal literature in universities in Bangladesh attests to its continuing educational significance.

4.3 International Humanitarian Law

Professor Patwari also made an important contribution to international legal scholarship through *Principles of International Humanitarian Law: An Oriental Perspective*, published by the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh in 1994.

International humanitarian law seeks to limit human suffering during armed conflict. It regulates the conduct of hostilities and provides protection to individuals who are not, or are no longer, participating in armed conflict. Professor Patwari's use of an "Oriental Perspective" is

intellectually noteworthy. International legal scholarship has historically been strongly influenced by European intellectual traditions. Examining humanitarian principles from an Asian or Eastern perspective contributes to a more pluralistic understanding of the historical and philosophical foundations of humanitarian norms. The publication by the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh further indicates the scholarly character of the work.

4.4 Professor Patwari as a Human Rights Scholar

Professor Patwari is an influential human rights scholar and thinker in Bangladesh, which is reflected in his academic engagements. The term 'human rights scientist' is not as widespread in international academic discourse, but it is understood in a larger sense. The term 'human rights scholar' better captures his academic contribution. His work on fundamental rights, personal liberty, constitutional safeguards and international humanitarian law shows a continuing concern for dignity and freedom of human beings. The study of human rights explores how individuals relate to systems of authority.

It raises fundamental questions: What rights do human beings have? What restrictions may the state legally impose? What remedies should be given when rights are violated? How do we protect vulnerable populations?

Some of these questions were the subject of Professor Patwari's scholarly work. His comparative study of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh put constitutional rights in the political and historical context of South Asia. This was particularly pertinent in light of the histories of colonialism, emergency powers, preventative imprisonment, political instability and martial law in the region. His work on international humanitarian law took this concern beyond constitutional rights within the state to the preservation of humanity in armed conflict. Thus the human rights that Prof Patwari worked at the national and international levels. At the national level his focus was directed upon constitutional rights, liberty, legal institutions and access to justice. He dealt with humanitarian law and universal principles of human protection at the international level.

4.5 Legal Education, Access to Justice and Social Responsibility

One of the most socially important dimension of Professor Patwari's academic that was his realization that legal education should serve the society. The law is not just an intellectual discipline, but an institutional framework, by which rights are safeguarded, disputes handled, duties enforced and justice achieved. But the law is not uniformly accessible. Poor and underprivileged communities sometimes have difficulty getting legal assistance, comprehending legal procedures and gaining access to courts. In this way economic disadvantage might turn into legal disadvantage. Professor Patwari identified this relationship in his study on legal education. He indirectly associated universities with the broader mission to promote access to justice, urging practical legal education and more contact with legal

services for disadvantaged people. This was a progressive view of the social responsibility of a law school. This strategy shows pupils not just what rights are but how they might be protected in actuality. Thus legal education appears both as an educational process and as a means for advancing justice.

4.6 Professor Patwari as an Education Administrator and Institution-Builder

Professor Patwari's most durable institutional legacy is the creation of Dhaka International University in 1995. To create a university demands a completely different style of leadership beyond teaching and research. An academic may affect hundreds or thousands of students by his classroom teaching and scholarship, while an institution-builder erects facilities that may educate generations.

Thus, Professor Patwari's establishment of a university was the translation of educational thought into institutional reality. As an education administrator, he had to envisage an institution that could offer academic programs, hire teachers, design curricula, build administrative structures, enroll students, maintain standards, and satisfy social demand. The philosophical basis of this endeavor is contained in the University's motto, "Knowledge is Power". Knowledge is power, not necessarily in the political sense but in the human sense of empowerment. Education empowers people to understand the world, make educated choices, acquire professional skills, exercise rights, improve economic circumstances and contribute to society. Thus the university that Professor Patwari built became the foremost institutional embodiment of his educational ideology.

4.7 Contribution to the Expansion of Private Higher Education

Professor Patwari's creation of Dhaka International University must be considered in the light of the long history of higher education in Bangladesh. For a long time, higher education was mostly acquired by the public university system. But the available spaces were few in the face of rising demand. With the opening of private universities, more chances opened up. Professor Patwari entered the field at a critical formative time. His involvement in the establishment of the DIU in 1995 was a turning point in the higher education scenario of Bangladesh.

His assistance was especially important because he had an intellectual background. Thus, DIU was designed under the guidance of someone who had firsthand experience of university teaching, departmental administration, research, publication, and legal education. His academic background may have provided him with a sense of the intellectual and institutional needs of a university.

4.8 Educational Expansion among Middle- and Lower-Middle-Class Communities

One of the most socially important features of Professor Patwari's educational legacy is perhaps the opening up of chances for students coming from middle-class and lower-middle-class homes. In Bangladesh, socioeconomic mobility has long been connected with higher education. For many families, a college education is one of the largest investments they can make in their children's future. A university degree opens the doors to the professions of law, business, government, banking, education, development organizations, information technology and other professional fields. Higher education can reinforce the socio-economic stability of middle income families. For lower-middle class households it might be a way of upward mobility. The founding and growth of other institutions therefore has social implications beyond the quantity of degrees granted.

4.9 Professor Patwari's contribution evaluated in this broader context.

DIU was yet another institutional avenue for students who wanted to pursue higher studies, but may not have been able to get seats in the limited public university system. However, this point must be made with academic caution. In the absence of a full historical record of household income, admission trends, scholarship distribution and students' social and economic profile, it would be improper to attribute specific numerical figures to Professor Patwari's contribution to specific social classes. What can be credibly stated is that the emergence of increased accessible higher-education capacity contributes to a greater democratization of educational opportunity. In this view, the institutional legacy of Professor Patwari is linked to social inclusiveness, educational mobility and expansion of the professional middle class.

4.10 Dhaka International University as an Expression of His Educational Philosophy

Institutions generally outlive their founders, yet the ideals established at their inception can continue to influence their evolution. Dhaka International University is Professor Patwari's most conspicuous institutional legacy. The Faculty of Law at the University is particularly relevant in comprehending this legacy, for law was Professor Patwari's own academic specialty. At present DIU is focusing on practical aspects of legal education such clinical legal education, moot courts, mock trials, court visits, research and student lectures. These strategies are based on the

notion that legal education should combine theoretical learning with practical skills. There is an important intellectual continuity between this approach and Professor Patwari's earlier scholarly concern for practical legal education. His institutional vision thus is an example of a key principle of academic leadership: that scholarship can inform institutional design. The ideas academics produce thru study don't necessarily have to remain in books and journal articles. They can influence curricula, universities, educational practices and professional communities.

4.11 Education as a Mechanism of Social Mobility

The contribution of Professor Patwari can also be studied in terms of the concept of social mobility. Education is one of the most essential ways that people can change their social status. This is particularly pertinent in developing nations because the access to inherited economic wealth is uneven. With education and skills, people can have a kind of intellectual capital that can be turned into a job opportunity. So, the motto of Professor Patwari "Knowledge is Power" can be understood in socio-economic terms. University education can provide access to a profession for a child from a lower-middle-income home. Professional job could increase household income. A better education to the next generation can be allowed by a greater household income. Therefore education can have an intergenerational multiplier impact. The societal contribution of a university should not be measured merely by the number of graduates it produces. It can affect families, communities, workplaces and future generations.

4.12 Relationship between Human Rights and Education

One particularly interesting aspect of Professor Patwari's impact is the intellectual relationship between his work in human rights study and educational programs. Constitutional law, humanitarian law and university creation may, at first sight, seem to be diverse fields of activity. But at a deeper level they have a common concern: the empowering of human beings. Human rights defend dignity and freedom. Law provides ways to recognize and enforce those rights. Education offers people knowledge and skills. Universities are institutions that generate and disseminate knowledge. All four dimensions were related to the career of Professor Patwari. And a society in which people don't understand their rights cannot effectively preserve their rights. Similarly, those without access to education may find it more difficult to engage successfully in economic, political and civic life. Education consequently indirectly helps in the fulfillment of human rights. This link goes some way to explaining why Professor Patwari's work as a human rights scholar and educationist needs to be looked at in conjunction rather than in isolation.

4.13 "Knowledge is Power": A Philosophy of Empowerment

Professor Patwari's teaching philosophy can best be expressed in one sentence:

"Knowledge is Power." The idea has multiple facets. Knowledge is power in the intellectual sense. It is what allows people to think for themselves. Secondly, knowledge builds professional power thru the skills and qualifications it provides. Third, knowledge provides economic power as professional competence may enhance work opportunities. Fourth, knowledge gives citizens the civic authority to grasp their laws, institutions, rights, and obligations. Fifth, knowledge is a source of social power. Education empowers people to overcome disadvantage and to participate more effectively in society. Thus, Professor Patwari's concept might be termed as one of educational empowerment. This ideology is still very much important for Bangladesh. With technological innovation, globalization, shifting labor markets, inequality and new needs for professional skills, colleges will increasingly need to blend academic knowledge with employability, research, ethical responsibility and civic awareness.

5. Major Findings

The analysis yields numerous important findings. Secondly, Professor Patwari was not only an administrator of education; his institution-building was based on a significant academic career in law.

Second, his study on law was marked by a remarkable thematic diversity, especially in terms of constitutional rights, personal liberty, Bangladesh's legal system, human rights and international humanitarian law.

Third, his philosophy of legal education was socially relevant. He was an early advocate of practical legal training and legal services for underprivileged areas, demonstrating an early appreciation of what is now often referred to as clinical and experiential legal education.

Fourth, Professor Patwari's scholarship and educational philosophy reflected a shared concern on human dignity and empowerment.

Fifth, his educational perspective was institutionalized by the founding of Dhaka International University.

Sixth, the growth of more university places helped to broaden higher education generally in Bangladesh and provided students with alternate choices to the extremely competitive state university system.

Seventh, the social impact of this increase was especially crucial for middle- and lower-middle class families for whom higher education is a key tool of professional advancement and socioeconomic mobility. Finally, perhaps Professor Patwari's greatest legacy is in combining scholarship with institution creation. Many academics do scholarship and many administrators build institutions. Professor Patwari's unique contribution was his attempt to tie together academic ideas, principles of human rights, legal education and institutional development.

5.1 Discussion

Professor Patwari's career shows that academic leadership can be exercised at several levels. An academic transmits knowledge at the classroom level. A scholar generates and interprets information at the research level. Institutions, thru their administrators, develop methods of dissemination of knowledge. On the social plane, an educator widens the possibilities for knowledge to better human lives. Professor Patwari has operated at all these levels. His work also shows the value of multidisciplinary thinking. He is trained in law, and his contribution cannot be reduced to jurisprudence alone. His study included the fields of political science, human rights, public administration, international relations, development and education.

His contribution to higher education is also relevant for development studies, since access to education is directly tied to human-capital development and social mobility. Thus, Professor Patwari might be seen as a scholar whose legal studies transformed into a larger project of human development thru education.

5.2 Continuing Relevance of His Legacy

Professor Patwari's contribution is of great contemporary significance. The higher education industry of Bangladesh is today faced with issues of quality assurance, employability of graduates, research capacity, internationalization, technology, artificial intelligence, affordability and nexus between university education and labor-market needs. "Professor Patwari's emphasis on practical education is still relevant in this milieu." His view that professional education should bridge the gap between theory and practice is more relevant than ever. His commitment to human rights is also vital at a time when colleges need to educate not just skilled employees but ethically responsible citizens as well. Furthermore, his worry about educational access is still relevant, because it is the expansion of participation without quality that causes new issues. Access, affordability, quality, employability, research and ethical responsibility must, therefore, be part of the next phase of educational democratization. Therefore, the universities motivated by the concept of Professor Patwari must consider "Knowledge is Power" as an everlasting burden, not an institutional slogan.

6. Conclusion

Professor Dr. A. B. M. Mafizul Islam Patwari has a special place in the expansion of legal scholarship and higher education in Bangladesh. He contributed in many ways. He was Professor and Chairman of the Department of legal at the University of Dhaka. He developed generations of legal students and contributed to academic leadership. As a legal scholar, he wrote extensively on fundamental rights, personal liberty, legal institutions, human rights, legal education, international humanitarian law and related subjects in the form of a large number of books and articles. He was a human rights scholar who emphasized the safeguard of human dignity and liberty. A champion of practical legal education, he linked professional training, social responsibility and access to justice. However, as an education administrator and institution-builder, Professor Patwari's impact was well beyond his own scholarship and students. In 1995 he founded Dhaka International University, giving his philosophy a permanent educational structure. The primary notion of his academic worldview is expressed in the motto, "Knowledge is Power. Knowledge makes people more intelligent, more professional, more economical, more social. That kind of empowerment can also be extended to the students of middle- and lower-middle class households with the expansion of educational opportunities outside privileged groups. Thus, higher education becomes an instrument of social mobility and national growth. Therefore, the legacy of Professor Patwari cannot be evaluated by the number of books he wrote, articles he published, academic posts he had or even the university he established. His greater importance rests in the links he forged between knowledge and power, law and justice, education and opportunity, scholarship and social duty. His academic papers

are still part of the bibliographic record of Bangladeshi legal study. The institution that he built continues to educate new generations. These intellectual and institutional accomplishments together make him an important figure in the history of legal education and private higher education in Bangladesh. In the final analysis, the life of Professor Patwari is a testimony to a timeless truth about educational leadership. A teacher impacts pupils; a researcher impacts knowledge; but an institution-builder can create chances by which information can impact generations. That is why Professor Dr. A. B. M. Mafizul Islam Patwari should be remembered not only as the Founder of Dhaka International University but also as a distinguished academician, legal scholar, human rights thinker, visionary educationist and pioneer of inclusive higher education in Bangladesh.

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