

Learnings That Surpass Theory

Posted on



Professor A K W Jayawardane believes that UK education is not simply about a qualification, but rather a process that molds an individual to become a holistic being.

Professor Ananda Jayawardane, Vice Chancellor and a Professor in Civil Engineering

at the Moratuwa University, has a unique approach to his responsibilities at the most sought after technological university in Sri Lanka. The ability to analyse a situation and act accordingly demands precision as well as flexibility; qualities he believes his time in the UK instilled in him.

He first visited the UK to read for his Masters in Construction Management at the Loughborough University of Technology, through a scholarship supported by the British Council. He later completed his doctorate in Construction at the same university.

Being in a class room with different nationalities, he says, exposed him to different perspectives as well as learn and grow as a human being. Adding to this vibrant experience were university soirees that helped mold his personality and create relationships that he has fostered through the years. Using these connections in the UK, he has been able to implement exchange programmes that provide exposure to industry professionals and students in Sri Lanka. Professor Jayawardena believes that collaboration and exchange are key to the betterment of oneself. To further improve his capability he continues to visit the UK on educational programmes annually.

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He however explained that studying overseas at the post-graduate level is rather a time for reflection than for drastic change.

During his post-graduate experience, Professor Jayawardena observed the organised culture in the UK, the manner in which courses were delivered and the interaction between staff and students. Upon his return, he applied these concepts to his academic career, as well as in his personal life, which have served him well. He firmly believes that the learnings of such a cultural exposure should be used for the betterment of the motherland.

He explains, “We expect who ever it is to bring good things on their return. That’s the whole idea of going abroad to study. It is not just to get a qualification. As you see the world, you see different ways of doing things, you gain a new set of skills and competencies. You must bring them back to Sri Lanka and influence the country and our institutions in a way that suits us, to ensure that the good things are implemented here.”

Professor Jayawardena says a UK qualification immediately adds value to oneself and puts you on top of the world. Yet, the lessons that surpass theory are what he cherishes the most. Thus, the UK will forever be his “second home”.

