

REVOLUTIONIZING SRI LANKAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

OPINIONS FROM THE PUBLIC AND VICINITY

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“NSBM has revolutionized the Sri Lankan education system and its conventional ways. It has graciously embraced ‘innovation in higher education’ through its many affiliations with leading foreign universities providing its services and maintaining the standards on par with them.” says Mr.M.R.D.K. Gunarathne, the principal of Mahinda Rajapaksa College, Homagama expressing his

thoughts on NSBM Green University. Mr.Kasun Gunerathne is the present incumbent of the office and he has served the school for three years as the head. Having graduated from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Kelaniya he has gained experience in the education sector for many years before joining Mahinda Rajapaksa College as the principal. We asked him

about his views on NSBM’s journey so far.

What are your thoughts on NSBM in general?

Since the inception of NSBM Green University in 2016, as a school we have maintained a very close relationship with NSBM Green University. In my point of view, NSBM has taken higher education

in Sri Lanka to a whole new level through its innovative approach to higher education. I think it is fair to say that NSBM has revolutionized Sri Lankan higher education system and its conventional ways. It has graciously embraced 'innovation in higher education' through its many affiliations with leading foreign universities and maintaining the standards on par with them. I see NSBM as a higher education institute with a futuristic view on education that strives to create promising scholars of 'tomorrow'.

As a principal of a leading school in Homagama, what are your thoughts on NSBM's contribution towards your school?

So far, we have conducted a number of programs in our school with the support of NSBM. We were able to conduct several teacher training programs with the valuable contribution of NSBM lecturers. In addition to that, NSBM has conducted several programs in our school to help our students shape their mindset and attitudes-especially regarding their future goals and aspirations. Through these programs we were able to enlighten them on the fact that they have a broad spectrum of choices when it comes to new fields of study, higher education opportunities and professions.

What are your thoughts on NSBM as a state-owned university which has embraced a unique model/system in comparison to other state universities? Do you think our country needs more of this kind?

In my point of view, NSBM has taken a big and an important step towards innovative higher education in Sri Lanka. NSBM is a fully state-owned university with a

considerable level of administrative independence due to its unique system or structure. This undoubtedly plays a major role specially in making quick and situational decisions and in providing the best to its students. Further, when it comes to the staff, NSBM has employed many young academics and scholars thereby making the best use of the potential and agility of the well-educated youth in Sri Lanka.

What are your thoughts on the contribution NSBM towards uplifting the economic and social conditions of the villagers?

NSBM has obviously brought numerous economic and social benefits to this area and to the villagers. One major benefit is the increase in land prices in the area. As we all know, before the inception of NSBM and our school this area was not known to many and was largely isolated. The inception of NSBM and our school added a huge economic and social value to this area. Further, this also contributed largely towards the rapid social mobility in the locality. The way these people live has changed drastically in a matter of few years. The good thing is that it has changed for the better. The living condition has improved thanks to the many sources of income ranging from small shops, boarding houses to transportation etc.-all created as a result of our institutions. NSBM has also created a spiritual impact in the lives of the people by exposing them and encouraging them to reach higher living standards.

How would you compare your university life with that of a student at NSBM?

I don't think it is something that we can compare. Because we are looking at two different approaches

here. The university life I enjoyed and the university life of an NSBM Undergraduate are quite different in terms of the environment, background and social strata. NSBM students have access to a lot of resources unlike a student studying at a state university. However, I do hope every student pursuing higher education should have access to the kind of resources NSBM has made available to its students.

In addition to the physical resources an important thing to note would be the effort taken by the university management and staff to inculcate positive attitudes, behaviors in students and the effort taken to educate them on the culture and traditions is praise-worthy. Especially by organizing events such as pirth chanting ceremonies, Avurudu celebrations and other important occasions across religions NSBM has taken an important step towards improving spirituality, religious and ethnic harmony within the community.

What are your final thoughts on NSBM and its journey so far?

For the past two years, NSBM Green University has done an excellent job in creating well-rounded graduates while sticking to its core values and principles. NSBM has revolutionized higher education in Sri Lanka with its innovative approach to education, facilities and environment. It has created both economic and social benefits to this area and the country as a whole.

Finally I would like to congratulate the management, the staff and students of NSBM on this journey they have come so far and I would like to wish them more strength to serve this country better in the future.

NSBM - A JEWEL TO THE HOMAGAMA ELECTORATE

OPINIONS FROM THE PUBLIC AND VICINITY

MR. SAMPATH JAYASINGHE

CHAIRMAN- HOMAGAMA PRADESHIYA SABHA



Mr. Sampath Jayasinghe is the present incumbent of the Chairman's office of Homagama Pradeshiya Sabha. He was gracious enough to spare a few minutes from his hectic schedule to talk to us and give his perspective on NSBM Green University Town's journey so far.

What are your thoughts on NSBM Green University and its journey so far?

NSBM Green University Town project is undoubtedly one of the milestone projects undertaken during the tenure of Former President Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa under the guidance of Parliamentarians, Hon. Bandula Goonewardene and Hon. Dullas Alahapperuma. This is a unique project which was initiated with the purpose of providing world-class higher education to both local and foreign students. This university has facilities which accommodate 30,000 students and I hope it would soon reach the desired student numbers in the years to come.

What are your thoughts on the contribution of NSBM towards uplifting the economic and social conditions of the villagers?

NSBM Green University Town is a jewel to the Homagama electorate. I think everyone would agree on that.

I personally believe that the inception of this university largely contributed towards the development of the economic and social status of the people in this region. The people in this electorate experienced a rapid growth in their income with the establishment of shops, boarding places, transportation modes etc.

I am very happy and proud to say that our electorate is the home to an establishment where hundreds of scholars gather under one roof. I also appreciate the effort taken by the management and the staff of NSBM to prohibit ragging within and outside the university premises.

What are your final thoughts on NSBM Green University Town?

I congratulate NSBM on completing two successful years as a leader in higher education in Sri Lanka. I wish it would grow in leaps and bounds in the years to come.

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NSBM NOT MERELY A UNIVERSITY; A SOCIAL VENTURE



Livelihood of Many: A thriving platform for Tuk-Tuk drivers

NSBM Green University has created many direct and indirect employment opportunities to many people in the Homagama and suburbs. **Mr Sujith Indika** is a good example of how NSBM changed the livelihoods of people in Homagama. Mr Sujith knows about NSBM from the day in which the foundation stone was laid. He joined MAGA construction company as a helper and a worker for many years. He adds "Many of

us near by got jobs when this project started". After a while, when the project was completed, he managed to buy a three-wheeler for himself from the savings he earned through his small job. Today, Mr. Sujith is self-employed. He works as taxi driver in the three-wheeler park near Green University. He says there are 34 three-wheeler drivers in his park who have benefited immensely from the Green University students. "Green university is our economic pillar, we are better off than ever before;

our families are secured and happy thanks to the Green University." Mr. Sujith chirps in with joy.

In fact, Mr Sujith is just one example. Due to the Green University many others have received job opportunities. The majority of the employees working with the cleaning service, canteens, security service, supermarket and bank attached to Green University are living in Homagama or suburbs. Also, there are many external transport

In year 2012 NSBM Green University Project was started with the main intention of providing a top class higher educational experience to local as well as international students. On 26th October 2018, NSBM Green University Town became a reality through opening its doors thousands of young Sri Lankans to complete their undergraduate and post graduate degrees of an international standards in state of the arts university complex. But is it only a university? Are there any externalities of this project to this project? How has the Green University transformed the livelihood of Pitipana, Homagama? In this article we investigate the social impact of NSBM Green University Town.



providers who take NSBM student and staff daily to university. All of them agreed that they have secured income due to NSBM Green University.

Extra Income: Empowering stay-at-home moms

Mrs. M. D Asoka, 51-year-old single mother living with her two children at her house in Pitipana. After her husband passed away, her only income was what she earns from sewing dresses to neighboring customers. But since Green University was opened, she

rented out two spare rooms of her house to NSBM students. "It was a life saver, now I have a good income and I am not worried about the future of two children" added Mrs Asoka. Since the inception of Green University Town, many of the house owners in the area have started boarding places as an extra income source. Further, some land owners have built dedicated student apartments rooms for NSBM students. Mr. Tharindu Galdeniya, a manager of a student apartment complex states that more of these

types of apartments will be put up in the area soon. It has become a profitable business opportunity for investors. He also adds "when a boarding house or student apartments starts it creates a lot of indirect income for the villagers. I personally know a few housewives who provide meals for the students who are boarded".

Unexpected business growth: Nurturing small-scale businesses

"Few years back these places are not busy like today, after 2016

many people travel to Pitipana from various parts of the country creating new demand for business ventures” added **Mrs. Erandika Shiranthi** who runs a hotel near Green University Town. Many eateries have put up in the area after the opening of Green University. Some of the hotels now deliver the food to boarding houses. Not only hotels, but all other shops of the area are experiencing a significant growth in their businesses after year 2016. Mrs Sureka who works in a nearby bookshop shared her experience, “Before 2016, a person came to take a photocopy once in a while, but now shop is filled with NSBM students to take photo copies and stationaries.” According to the villagers, many new shops have come up after 2016, product variety of the shops have changed vastly due to the demand of the NSBM students. This has created new living standards for the people of the area. Many villagers whom we interviewed agreed that the bus service to the area has improved after 2016, as many new buses have been added to the route.

Land Prices sky rocketing: Adding value to property

If you want to point out a benefit that all the residents of Pitipana and suburbs enjoy due to the inception of NSBM Green University is the sky rocketing land prices in the area. **Mr. Priyantha**, who is running a catering service in the area added “10 – 15 years back this area was a coconut estate, there was less demand for the land in the area, but now demand is high”. Many land development companies have put up lands plot to sale within the vicinity of Green University. And there marketing slogans never missed to add this phrase “close to NSBM Green University”. Mr. Tharindu who manages one of

student apartment said “before 2016, one perch in this area was around Rs. 100,000, but now it is more than 350000”. Which means land value of the area has been increased around 300% in the area after the NSBM Green University opened it doors to the public. Also, speculation about prospects is high, “This area was a forest before, But I am sure this will be developed like city in future” Mr. Tharindu emphasized.

NSBM Green University started as a national project to provide state of the art higher education to Sri Lankan students. Thereby gifting a high level of intellectuals to the country’s development. Undoubtedly, NSBM is delivering this primary task to the nation. But it is not just a university, it is a social venture which has provided many economic and social benefits to its stakeholders. We just discussed some of micro level benefits to the residents in the vicinity. But in a Macro level, NSBM is saving millions of foreign exchange annually within the country by stopping the students to move into foreign universities. We conclude this article with the remarks of Ven. Homagama Seelawamsa Thero Nayaka Thero- Homagama Pitipana Purana Maha Vihiraya “I am aware of NSBM Green University Town as a university is in the process of creating global citizens. With its inception NSBM has brought many benefits-both economic and social -to this region. It has changed the lifestyle and living standards of people in this area by creating numerous opportunities. In a way, it has become a lifeline for them. Before the establishment of NSBM this area was quite isolated and deserted. But now it has become a second home to many locals and foreigners. ”

NSBM Green University started as a national project to provide state of the art higher education to Sri Lankan students. Thereby gifting a high level of intellectuals to the country’s development. Undoubtedly, NSBM is delivering this primary task to the nation. But it is not just a university, it is a social venture which has provided many economic and social benefits to its stakeholders. We just discussed some of micro level benefits to the residents in the vicinity. But in a Macro level, NSBM is saving millions of foreign exchange annually within the country by stopping the students to move into foreign universities.

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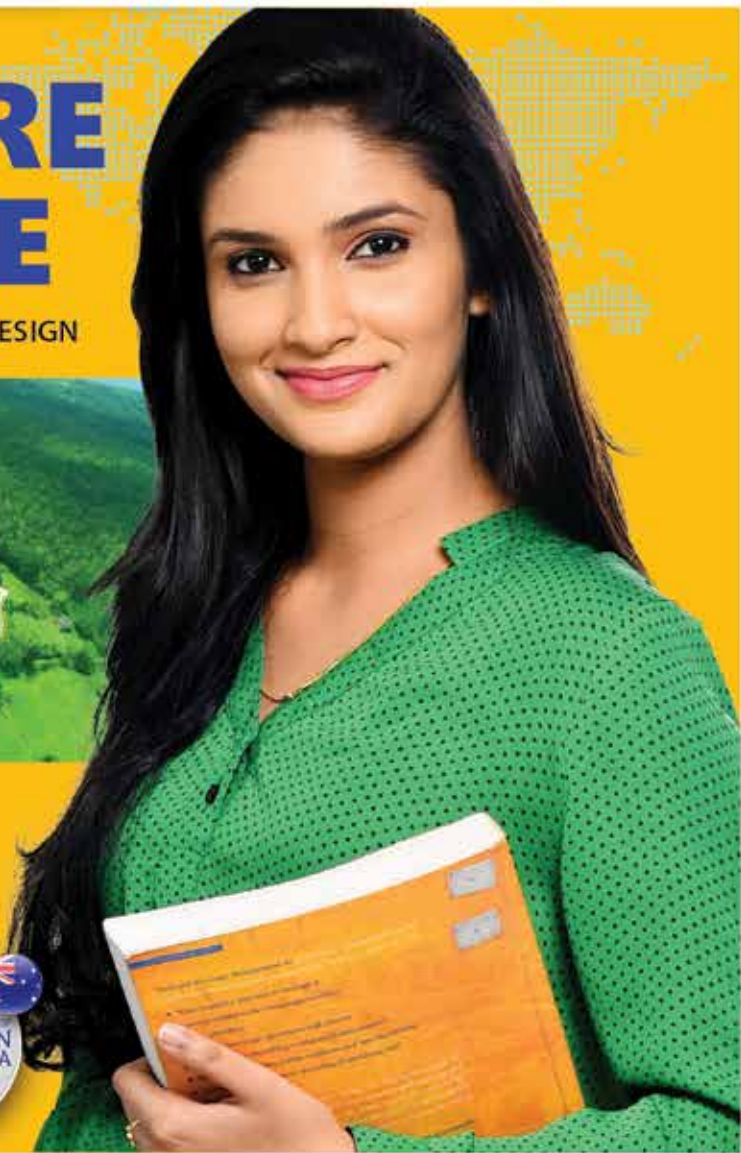


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