



NSBM LEGACY

THE CREATOR AND THE CREATION

Chanuka Wattergama

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the following individuals and groups:

The parents and family of Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe, as well as his teachers at various schools and universities both locally and internationally. Special recognition is given to Prof. Ken Sasaki, his PhD thesis supervisor. This dedication extends to all those who have contributed to the development of the free education system in Sri Lanka, which has played a vital role in shaping Prof. Weerasinghe into the exceptional academic leader he is today.

All stakeholders who have played a pivotal role in the establishment of NSBM Green University, including its students and parents. Your contributions have been instrumental in creating a thriving academic institution that fosters growth and innovation.

Lastly, this dedication extends to any individual who aspires to initiate and innovate new ventures for the betterment of humanity. Your ambition to create positive change is truly commendable, and this book will serve as a source of inspiration and guidance for your endeavors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I vividly recall the inception of this idea of a book. During a casual conversation, with Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe, I suggested that it would be valuable to document the story of NSBM Green University as a business case study for future generations. It presented an excellent opportunity to provide our management students with a local example, rather than solely focusing on international business case studies. Upon hearing my suggestion, Professor Weerasinghe immediately proposed that I take on the task. As one familiar with Prof. Weerasinghe, I knew that once he embraced an idea, he would relentlessly pursue it until its completion. He promptly connected me with Professor Chaminda Ratnayake and Professor Baratha Dodankotuwa, both of whom provided invaluable assistance throughout the project. Without their unwavering support, this endeavor would not have come to fruition.

I am grateful to extend my sincere appreciation to former Minister Dullas Alahapperuma and Minister Bandula Gunawardena for their generous support. Additionally, I am indebted to Dr. Karunasena Kodituwakku for graciously agreeing to provide the foreword for the book. I had the privilege of engaging in a comprehensive discussion with Dr. P. B. Jayasundera regarding the historical journey and future prospects of NSBM Green University.

Although the book bears solely my name, I must acknowledge that it was truly a collaborative endeavor. Allow me to express my gratitude to all those who played a significant role in this undertaking, in the order of their involvement. Ms. Thilini De Silva and Dr. Chaminda Wijesinghe were instrumental not only in providing the

necessary information but also offering invaluable suggestions. Ms. Huvini Hasadara diligently verified the accuracy of the information and furnished me with comprehensive details regarding the various clubs and associations at NSBM Green University. The editing of the chapters I authored was expertly handled by Ms. Piyumi Wickramasinghe and her team. Ms. Bhanuri Perera coordinated my visits to NSBM Green University. Then I extend my appreciation to Ms. Semini Siriwardane for skillfully coordinating the entire effort.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to my esteemed former colleagues at NIBM, namely Mr. Bernard Silva, Mr. Saman Rodrigo, Mr. Daya Abeysinghe, Ms. Chandrakanthi, and Ms. Seetha Wijesinghe, for their invaluable contributions to the book. Their insights and inputs greatly enhanced its content and quality.

I am also grateful to Mr. Ashika Witiwalarachchi for his exceptional design work on the book, including the creation of the cover. His creativity and attention to detail have truly brought the book to life.

I also extend my sincere thanks to Mr. T. M. G. Chandrasekera for undertaking the significant task of translating the entire work into Sinhala, making it accessible to a wider audience.

Last but not the least, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the well-wishers and the Welfare Society of NSBM Green University for their contribution in making this publication possible.

I apologize if I have inadvertently omitted any names, as I am truly grateful for the support and contributions of everyone involved.

THE PITIPANA MIRACLE

In the land where knowledge blooms and spirits soar,
Where intellect's flame burns brighter than ever before,
There lies a haven of wisdom, pure and serene,
NSBM Green University, Sri Lanka's academic dream.

Amidst lush green fields and vibrant trees,
Stands a fortress of learning, inspiring degrees,
Where students gather, their aspirations aflame,
To carve their destinies, to rise and proclaim.

NSBM, a sanctuary of boundless potential,
A tapestry of minds, diverse and essential,
From computer science to business and more,
Every discipline embraced, explored at its core.

Through hallowed halls, curiosity takes flight,
As lectures unfold, shedding ignorance's blight,
Guided by professors, mentors of great repute,
Nurturing young minds, like a gardener with a shoot.

In classrooms adorned with innovative flair,
Ideas bloom freely, filling the air,
From spirited debates to collaborative quests,
Knowledge expands, surpassing all tests.

But NSBM is more than the bricks and mortar,
It's a melting pot of cultures, a unity charter,
Where friendships are forged, transcending borders,
A mosaic of harmony, where diversity orders.

With events and festivals, the campus comes alive,
Echoing laughter and joy, as dreams strive,
Sports and arts, weaving threads of passion,
Uniting hearts, fostering lifelong compassion.

NSBM, the cradle of transformation,
Empowering minds, fostering innovation,
With a vision to shape leaders of tomorrow,
To face challenges with wisdom, shunning sorrow.

So, let us raise our voices, proud and strong,
For NSBM, where knowledge belongs,
A beacon of enlightenment, forever standing tall,
NSBM Green University, inspiring one and all.

FULFILLING THE DREAMS OF THE YOUTH



Dr. Karunasena Kodituwakku

*Former Vice Chancellor, University of Sri Jayawardenepura,
Former Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs,
Former Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, People's Republic of Korea, and Mongolia.*

I pen this with a great deal of pleasure. Having had the honour of seeing this extraordinary institution's creation and evolution, I am glad its narrative is being told to the world. The youth of our nation would appreciate this tale.

First, let me say a few words about this institute's creation. The NSBM Green University has always been more than just a place of learning. It is a hub of innovation, a catalyst for change, and a beacon of hope for students seeking a holistic education that goes beyond the boundaries of traditional academia. This

book encapsulates the essence of the NSBM Green University, its values, and its unwavering commitment to excellence.

I have not been personally involved in the creation or the development of the NSBM Green University, but I had the pleasure of leading the National Institute of Business Management when this institute was initially working closely with the NIBM. During my short tenure, I witnessed the rapid transformation of NIBM into a modern education institute.

Let me also say a few words about NSBM's creator. Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe is rightly called the 'miracle man'. He has a knack for turning institutions around, and he did so with NIBM. He successfully converted an institution that was playing only a traditional role into a modern, world-class higher education institute. This was no easy task. It required a deep understanding of the education landscape, as well as the courage and determination to challenge the status quo. Prof. Weerasinghe was able to do both, and he did so with great success.

It was during my tenure as the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayawardenepura that both Prof. Weerasinghe and Prof. Baratha Dodankotuwa were recruited into the university system as young academics. As students, both excelled equally in academics and on the field of sports. I've always had a lot of respect for students who excel in a variety of ways. Later,

when I served as the Ambassador of Sri Lanka in Japan, I met them again while they were pursuing their postgraduate studies in Japan. I was glad to interact with them at that stage of my professional career. I'm delighted that, later, as Sri Lanka's Ambassador to China, I was able to connect the NSBM Green University with universities in China.

Throughout the pages that follow, you will discover the incredible journey of the NSBM Green University, from its humble beginnings to its current status as a leading educational institution. The university's dedication to providing industry-relevant programs, fostering a culture of research and innovation, and nurturing the talents of its students shines through in every chapter.

What sets the NSBM Green University apart is its unwavering focus on sustainability. The university's commitment to environmental consciousness, reflected in its eco-friendly campus design, is truly commendable. The NSBM Green University serves as a shining example of how education and sustainability can go hand in hand, inspiring future generations to create a more sustainable and responsible world.

As you delve into the stories, experiences, and achievements shared within this book, you will gain a deeper understanding of the transformative power of education and the impact the NSBM Green University has had on the lives of its students, faculty, and the community at large. The testimonials and anecdotes from individuals who have

been part of the NSBM Green University family will undoubtedly leave you inspired and motivated.

I am confident that Prof. Weerasinghe will continue to achieve great things in his role as the Vice Chancellor of the NSBM Green University. He is a true visionary, and I am excited to see what he accomplishes in the years to come. I also wish the very best to the next cohort of leaders led by Prof. Chaminda Ratnayake, who is currently the Deputy Vice Chancellor, and Dr. Chaminda Wijesinghe, the Dean of the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies and Professional Achievement, of the NSBM Green University.

The founding fathers of the free education system in Sri Lanka dreamed of providing equal opportunities for education for all our children, regardless of socioeconomic status, and promoting social mobility based on the 'talent and virtue' of young aspirants to higher education. Sri Lanka was able to provide this national duty in the country's formative years after regaining Independence, but this mission has been gradually disrupted due to several reasons, the causes and remedies for which needs to be studied on a separate occasion. At this historical moment, the NSBM must dedicate itself to contributing to fulfilling the dreams of the talented youth of this country as far as possible. Therefore, there are some great challenges ahead.

Having fulfilled ten years of service, it is the now the time and duty of the NSBM management team to critically assess the institution's contribution over the last

decade, as well as its mission in this fast-changing world. The lack of opportunities in Sri Lanka for qualified students to enrol in tertiary education has created an excellent opportunity for this kind of institution, which reflects the well-known economic theory that supply itself can create its demand. However, the fundamental mission of this kind of institute is to prepare individuals of talent and virtue for vital professional and other services in the society, which may even take them beyond our national boundaries.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the author, contributors, and everyone else who have been involved in bringing this book to life. Your dedication to capturing the essence of the NSBM Green University is evident in every word. I am confident that this book will serve as a valuable resource for prospective students, educators, and anyone interested in the remarkable journey of the NSBM Green University.

NSBM LEGACY

THE CREATOR AND THE CREATION

CHAPTER 01

The walls here speak of learning, in a language rich and bold 001

CHAPTER 02

Its virtual presence is a sight to behold 009

CHAPTER 03

On national duty beyond politics 019

CHAPTER 04

I ran all the way home 029

CHAPTER 05

Ups and downs with 'Nikan Inna Beri Minissu' 061

CHAPTER 06

The DNA of an exceptional leadership 059

CHAPTER 07

Our students respect us, as we respect them 081

CHAPTER 08

Same challenge, I always got: Build from nil 109

CHAPTER 09

Under One Giant Umbrella, We Mass Together 119

Milestones 152

Awards 175

CHAPTER 10

NSBM Green University and Sri Lanka: The Common Future 183

Introduction

Introduction

.....

CHAPTER 01

The walls here speak of learning, in a language rich and bold

CHAPTER 02

Its virtual presence is a sight to behold

CHAPTER 03

On national duty beyond politics

Introduction

.....

*Let us discover the world of NSBM
Green University. Let us embark on a
journey together with the students.*

*Along the way, we will assert the
milestones of this great institution. We
will hear from the pioneers who laid its
foundations.*

Chapter 01

THE WALLS HERE SPEAK OF LEARNING, IN A LANGUAGE RICH AND BOLD

• • • • •

“ *The only way to discover the limits of the possible is to go beyond them into the impossible.* ”
- Arthur C. Clarke

I invite you to drop by NSBM Green University one day, if you haven't already. Ideally, during a weekday when students have classes. I know what you're hoping to see. Noisy canteens. Students amassed under Robarosiya or Ehela trees, sharing cigarettes and bantering with one another. A Lovers' Lane with couples in their own worlds. Possibly a few political signs calling for better facilities. Flags in black and red. These are typical sights in a state university in Sri Lanka.

Let me warn you: if this were what you thought you would see, you will be disappointed. Here, you aren't going to discover something like what you would find in a Sri Lankan state university. Instead, you'll think you've walked into a Japanese monastery – an enclave - having left the island. Tall white structures. Comforting greenery. Where are the students, you'll wonder. Yes, a few thousand students hang around the campus on any given day. They are studying in the classrooms or the library. They don't idle away time. They need to get to work.

**THE WALLS HERE SPEAK OF LEARNING,
IN A LANGUAGE RICH AND BOLD**

They resemble Japanese monks more. They practice their spirituality. They have goals. They know that they are Sri Lanka's future.

This book is about that great institution - which one may call the 'Miracle at Pitipana', and the mastermind behind that. For a long time, I wanted to pen this narrative - an ideal case study that Sri Lanka could be proud of. Our Business Management students learn about how Henry Ford and Steve Jobs made their business empires. Why not, for a start, they learn about a unique Sri Lankan experience?

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

The NSBM Green University does not come into existence overnight. It is the outcome of an advanced thought process of a group of professionals. Dr. P. B. Jayasundera, both a former Secretary to the President of Sri Lanka as well as to the Treasury, still remembers how it all was conceived.

"The Finance Ministry has received a proposal from the Government of China offering a loan of USD 200 million for establishing a state-of-the-art university in Sri Lanka", says Dr. Jayasundara. "However, despite the attractiveness of the proposal, internal conversations have led to a decision that the project could be undertaken independently, without external financial assistance. The then Minister of Youth Affairs and Skills Development, Dullas Alahapperuma, was identified as the individual who could propel the initiative. An initial meeting was held at the Minister's office in Battaramulla, during which the idea was discussed in great detail. I still



remember going to this discussion on my way to the Treasury in the morning. It was unanimously agreed upon that the opportunity could be realized locally, with no need for foreign financing. We decided local engineering firms could readily undertake the construction process."

"When the concept of the NSBM Green University was proposed, the Minister of Finance was President Mahinda Rajapaksa himself, who showed a keen interest and offered his full support. Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe was chosen from the inception to spearhead the initiative. He promptly demonstrated his enthusiastic



involvement. At the time, Dr. Weerasinghe was serving as the Director General of the National Institute of Business Management (NIBM). It was jointly determined that the new university should be established as a separate entity from NIBM. Thus, the name National School of Business Management (NSBM) was selected to reflect this independent identity, borrowing from the prestigious London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)."

"I am pleased to witness the realization of our vision for the creation of the NSBM Green University. The funding for the university was acquired through a loan



from the Bank of Ceylon, a local bank. Due to the efforts of local architects and engineers, we were able to construct the university at a cost significantly less than that which was initially proposed by the Chinese. Notably, over 70% of the funds utilized for this project have remained

**THE WALLS HERE SPEAK OF LEARNING,
IN A LANGUAGE RICH AND BOLD**



within the local economy. The establishment of this institution represents a noteworthy achievement for our country and is a testament to our economic efficiency. We have proved we could achieve great things without outside support, on our own. Such a triumph would have been impossible without the resolute determination and dedication of Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe.”

FACE-TO-FACE WITH THE CREATOR

At multiple places in this book, we talk about this unique individual, but the narrative is not complete without this personal account. Here I try to analyze how this single individual synergized the plethora of diversified forces to unfold a dream that many thought too big to achieve by a tiny group of professionals, even with the backing of the political

powers. This cannot be done without this personal narrative.

Let me start from the beginning. I joined the National Institute of Business Management (NIBM) in 2015. My preparatory background research on my prospective employer didn't come that well. My friends warned that the institute is governed by an insanely authoritative person, a bully, a dictator. (“eakaadhipathiyek”) They said nobody could follow his rules; eventually, everyone ends up being on the receiving end of berate. “You cannot work with him..., He is purely senseless. I know as my daughter studied there” came up another one. They all meant good, I know. I was a bit discouraged. Still, I decided to apply for the job. Frankly, I didn't have much choice. Having hastily left my previous one after a heated argument with the CEO, I was looking for a posi-



tion for a few months. It was an election year, and the economy was not doing too well. Many have ceased recruitment. So it was a challenge to find a new job. Some of my friends were already working at NIBM. If they could, couldn't I? Certainly, it cannot be that bad. These were the thoughts that I used to console myself.

To make things a bit comfortable for me, one friend - just one friend - a former scholar of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura added something positive. Dr. Weerasinghe, he said, has an insatiable thirst for advancement. He also added that his former lecturer is a dynamic character known in the university as 'kadiya', the black ant, an insect well known for its efficiency and methodical activities. This was the only agreeable thing I had heard about Dr. Weerasinghe before I met him face to face.

NIBM might have found my CV impressive. I was called for an interview. With a few other candidates, I was waiting in front of the Director General's room. What's going on inside was loud enough for us to hear. DG was shouting at someone. His words were harsh. My first thoughts were to leave. I was not sure whether I would work for such a character. Still, since I came, I thought I might wait for the interview.

I was recruited as a Senior Lecturer/Consultant after two rounds of interviews. During the second interview, I had to do a presentation on 'Leadership'. I talked for ten minutes about charismatic leaders. Obviously, I could not resist getting into the subject of authoritarian leadership. On one of the slides, without thinking too much, I had used an image of Hitler. Dr. Weerasinghe immediately jumped me, asking whether I considered

Hitler a leader. I replied in the negative; while Hitler or Prabhakaran had many qualities of true leaders, their objective was not ethical. We cannot treat an individual with unethical intentions as a leader, no matter how capable they are. Then he wanted me to name a charismatic leader of my choice. I was ready for this question and named Barack Obama. From his face, I could see it was not the answer he expected. While I have always respected former President Mahinda Rajapaksa for his leadership in overcoming the conflict, I did not want to get into political waters by naming Rajapaksa.

By this time National School of Business Management (NSBM) has been operational from its Nugegoda campus. Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe's main call was that. His NIBM chapter was coming to an end. We rarely saw him at NIBM. Perhaps this is one reason I could not have many direct encounters with him. I have seen him from a distance. I have also watched him building his own chapel, though with support from the state, in a state-of-the-art manner.

THE BOOK IS ABOUT THIS

The purpose of this chapter is not to go into an extensive amount of information, as that is better done in the subsequent nine chapters. Instead, what readers will find here is a brief overview of each chapter, which can serve as a helpful guide. These chapters are divided into three main volumes, which include an Introduction, a section dedicated to the Creators, and the final section on the Creation itself.

The book commences from a unique

perspective, as it sheds light on one of the most significant higher education institutions in Sri Lanka, NSBM Green University. With a substantial online presence, the institution attracts a vast number of young students. As such, it is rational to commence the narrative from this point, which will be presented in Chapter 2. The subsequent chapter, Chapter 3, is dedicated to the perspectives of two distinguished political leaders who have played crucial roles in the university's establishment, namely former Minister Dullas Alahapperuma and Minister Bandula Gunawardena. It is through their accounts that we gain insight into the institution's history and evolution. Thus, the first three chapters serve to provide readers with an insightful introduction to the journey that lies ahead.

The next section in our book delves into the personal stories of three individuals whose contributions were instrumental in the establishment of the national university. It is important to note that their impact extended beyond the creation of the institution, and their individual journeys have played a significant role in shaping the institution's framework. The first narrative is that of Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe, the visionary behind the university's inception. His story is divided into two sections, Chapters 4 and 5, which explore his journey from birth to his leadership role at the National Institute of Business Management (NIBM) and the transformation he spearheaded at NIBM. Chapter 6 is about the leadership qualities of Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe, an analysis by the author. Though meant particularly for the students of Business Management, this chapter will be useful for any general

reader to learn about new techniques that one normally does not find in the Sri Lankan environment. This is followed by the accounts of Prof. Baratha Dodankotuwa (Chapter 7) and Prof. Chaminda Ratnayake (Chapter 8), who have contributed immensely to NSBM Green University in their unique ways, distinct from that of Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe. Their stories serve as testaments to their pivotal roles as pillars of strength in the institution.

The final section of the book comprises the last two chapters that delve into the present and future outlook of NSBM Green University. Chapter 9 provides an insightful snapshot of the institution, while Chapter 10 serves as a crucial narrative of the university's role in rebuilding Sri Lanka's economy. This chapter discusses various means through which the institution can contribute to the economy, making it a fitting conclusion to the book.



Chapter 02

ITS VIRTUAL PRESENCE IS A SIGHT TO BEHOLD

• • • • •

“ The web is the most important invention
since the printing press. ”
- Tim Berners-Lee

[NSBM Green University has an extensive and diverse collection of web content, which is probably unmatched by any other higher education institute in Sri Lanka. It tells its own story.]

A vibrant group of young men and women aboard a traditional raft, presumably on a lake within the North Central Province. In eloquent unison, they sing "Adareth aran-ayeth vasanthaya evith..." ("The spring has come again bringing love"). The clip transitions to another group of young girls dancing with the renowned Sigiriya rock as their backdrop. This is NSBM Green University's 2023 Sinhala

and Tamil New Year song, which has garnered more than 29,000 views on YouTube. The song, crafted by Prof. Chaminda Ratnayake and performed by NSBM Green University students, celebrates the New Year festivities of another Sinhala Tamil New Year at NSBM Green University.

One can readily discover a different Avurudu song for every year, each

**ITS VIRTUAL PRESENCE IS
A SIGHT TO BEHOLD**



with a distinctive theme, since NSBM Green University's inception. The university's ethos of endless creativity attests to NSBM Green University's boundless ingenuity.

We now click on another video. It features an enlightening interview with Ms. Thilini De Silva, a dynamic and youthful figure serving as the Dean of the Business Faculty at NSBM Green University. A curious student inquires about the green economy initiatives. De Silva emphasizes the university's steadfast commitment to environmental sustainability, which is evident across various aspects of the institution. For instance, the university's building design blends seamlessly with the natural environment, featuring green walls, curtains, and windows that promote a harmonious coexistence with nature. Moreover, the building's



construction was optimized to maintain interior temperature, reducing the need for heavy air conditioning. In examining waste management, NSBM Green University conducts practices that minimize environmental damage through responsible disposal of solid and liquid wastes. To promote environmental consciousness among its students, NSBM Green University has established a Green Task Force that



fosters “green” values. Additionally, all clubs and societies at the university are encouraged to incorporate environmentally friendly practices as part of their standard operations.

VLOGGERS VLOGGERS EVERYWHERE

Vlogging is not uncommon a task among university students. NSBM Green University students are no exception. They have already vlogged their daily life. These vlogs showcase their day, starting with the moment they wake up in the morning. As digital natives, one of their first tasks is to organize their electronic devices for the day - their laptops and phones. We observe them walking a short distance from their boarding places to the campus. (Residents in the area usually provide accommodation for NSBM

Green University students, thereby earning an additional income.)

Upon arrival at the campus, students conveniently use their access cards for entry. This is a fast and efficient method of security clearance, probably not seen at any other university in Sri Lanka. (Alternatively, state universities rely on manual checks of identity cards by security personnel.) Students eventually gather at the university premises and use digital displays to navigate their classrooms for the day.

In the spacious lecture hall that can accommodate a couple of hundreds of students, we observe several students seated with laptops already positioned on their desks. It becomes apparent that the upcoming lecture will not follow conventional methods, as not all lecturers permit the use of personal

ITS VIRTUAL PRESENCE IS A SIGHT TO BEHOLD



computers during classes. Instead, we witness the implementation of twenty-first-century teaching techniques at NSBM Green University, where students can actively engage with course material in real-time, applying what they have learned on their personal computers.

After the lecture at NSBM Green University, we gain insight into the university's unique culture. While the students are not unlike those found in other institutions, their subculture sets them apart. Conversations between students are meaningful and often centered around academics. Discussions revolve around topics such as the boundary between classroom and self-study. Despite their academic focus, students engage in small talk and share jokes, and can often be found having breakfast at the bustling

canteens. Remarkably, the desks are found spotlessly clean, with no signs of food waste on tables or floors. While there are no supervisors present to guide their behavior, the students demonstrate a remarkable sense of responsibility that sets them apart from high school students. Overall, the NSBM Green University culture is a fascinating mixture of academic seriousness and student autonomy.

TRAVEL WITH CHATHURA

Then we join Chathura de Alwis of Derana to take us around NSBM Green University in his popular program 'Travel with Chathura'. Every year, says Chathura, about 360,000 students appear for the GCE (Advanced Level) examination in Sri Lanka. Out of them, 180,000 fulfill the minimum requirements to gain entrance into a state



university. Unfortunately, only 30,000 can be accommodated. This leaves a large number of students without access to university education. NSBM Green University is a fee-levying state university that provides quality higher education to students who are unable to gain entrance to a non-fee-levying state university. The university offers a wide range of courses, including business, engineering, computing, and the humanities. NSBM Green University is committed to providing its students with a world-class education that will prepare them for successful careers.

Chathura utilizes a buggy to travel around the NSBM Green University site, a unique mode of internal transportation that sets NSBM Green University apart from other universities. Our next stop is the Program Office, the initial point of contact for all students. Here, students make important decisions regarding their degree



program, where they can choose between following a locally approved degree program sanctioned by the University Grant Commission of Sri Lanka, or an international degree offered by one of NSBM Green University's affiliated foreign universities. The Program Office staff is highly attentive and provides invaluable assistance to prospective students by providing guidance on available options and facilitating access to bank loan facilities for those who may require financial assistance to pay their tuition fees.

Shortly thereafter, we witness Chathura engaged in conversation with the Deputy Vice Chancellor of NSBM Green University, Prof. Chaminda Ratnayake, who provides a comprehensive overview of the university's business model, which was designed to address the needs of Sri Lankan parents who aspire to provide their children with a world-class higher education without the exorbitant expenses associated with international tuition fees. Additionally, some middle-class parents prefer that their children remain in Sri Lanka for cultural reasons, rather than sending them overseas. NSBM Green University offers a cost-effective solution to this problem by providing an internationally renowned education within the country. This initiative was implemented by the government using its own earnings, and incurred no costs from the Treasury. The overarching objective of the university is to provide students with a full and well-rounded university experience.

Then we see Chathura engaged in a conversation with Professor Baratha Dodankotuwa regarding the naming of the university as 'green' despite the absence of any evident 'greenery' other than the garden. Professor Dadunkotuwa proceeds to explain the fundamentals of the 'Green concept', emphasizing that a green university is not necessarily situated within a jungle but instead, it is a facility designed with sustainable concepts in mind. NSBM Green University boasts impressively low energy usage for lighting and ventilation, and implements a water management system that recycles used

water. Furthermore, the university has minimal paper usage. These eco-friendly practices are what warrant the institution's name as NSBM Green University.

Subsequently, Mr. Kasun Dissanayake, a Senior Lecturer at NSBM Green University, elaborates on the institution's extracurricular activities to Chathura. He explains that NSBM Green University offers a diverse range of student activities that fall under four different categories, namely sports, aesthetics, religion, and international associations, with over 50 active associations. Additionally, the NSBM Green University Sports Fiesta is a widely recognized athletic event. These extracurricular activities play a crucial role in keeping students engaged in productive pursuits whilst simultaneously cultivating essential qualities such as teamwork and leadership, prior to transitioning into their professional careers. The all-encompassing university experience that NSBM Green University offers, serves as an opportunity for students to enhance various facets of their lives beyond academia.

WORK AND PLAY, TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

Moving on from Chathura's vlog, we turn our attention to Dulran Nimadith, an NSBM Green University student, who documented his experience at 'Rasoghaa' - a musical evening at the university. The vlog showcases students gathering in the canteen to discuss the musical faces set to perform that evening. The event took



place at 'wala' - the open-air theatre on campus, despite the rainy weather conditions. The venue comfortably accommodates thousands of students, and its design facilitates a communal viewing experience. Prior to the artists' arrival, the students engaged in playful activities such as blowing soap bubbles. The event commenced with an energetic performance that saw the audience dancing along to the songs.

Prominent artists such as Hana Shafa, Bathiya and Santhush are easily recognizable. These events serve as an excellent stress-relief outlet through educational activities, which benefits overall student well-being.

The next video features a graduation speech by Ishma Shenola Perera, a Management of Information Systems student. Ishma commences her address with a profound quote from Confucius, the famous Chinese philosopher: "Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace." She reflects on the significance of the moment as a long-standing dream realized, expressing a strong sense of pride and gratitude to have been chosen to represent her batch on the final day of their university lives. Ishma goes on to congratulate her fellow batchmates who were set to receive their degrees



Former Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe at a function of NSBM

that day. Recollecting her journey, she recalls how a 20-year-old girl, overwhelmed with hopes and dreams, walked into the university four years ago. That same individual is now filled with pride to have graduated with first-class honors and taken on the role of an SAP consultant at a private firm.

Ishma Shenola Perera's journey has been far from easy, marked by sleepless nights, failures, disapproval, and disappointments. In her graduation speech, she takes the opportunity to express sincere gratitude to every individual who has helped her and her fellow classmates through this arduous journey. Her heartfelt thanks extend to the Vice Chancellor, Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe, the pioneer and visionary

behind their esteemed university, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Prof. Chamin-da Ratnayake, Prof. Baratha Dodankotuwa, and the higher management of NSBM Green University, Dr. Rasika Ranaweera, Dean of the Faculty of Computer Science, her lecturers, in particular, Dr. Mohamed Shafriz, her research supervisor, as well as the professional staff of the examination and administration departments. Perera also extends a special note of gratitude to her parents for their invaluable guidance and support. She recounts the emotional moment when her father, who had fallen ill during her time at university, joins her on her convocation day, to share the joy as a family. She further highlights the strength of her mother and sister, who

rooted for her success throughout the journey. In closing, Perera shares a meaningful message, urging her fellow graduates to be kind to others, as everyone is fighting a battle that we may know nothing about. She inspires everyone to stand in appreciation of the individuals who have helped bring them to this auspicious point, culminating in a moment of emotional poignancy.

To conclude this narrative, a video from over seven years ago stands out as a remarkable choice. The video captures the visit of Mahinda Samarasinghe, the Minister of Skills Development and Vocational Training at the time, to the NSBM Green University while it was still under construction. The footage showcases the half-raised buildings and features the Minister sharing his vision of NSBM Green University as a critical component of

the country's sustainable development. The Minister emphasizes the role played by the state in establishing the institute and highlights the funding mechanism employed, which did not rely on public money. Specifically, the entire investment of Rs. 10.2 billion was secured as a loan, to be repaid with NSBM Green University's future earnings. The video also provides insights into the project's partners, including the Engineering Consultant responsible for the design, Maga Engineering as the builder, and the Bank of Ceylon as the lending agency. The Minister expresses his satisfaction with the progress made within two years since the commencement of construction.

These videos may not reflect all of the content that is available. Still, they convey a grand narrative that is worth hearing and can be used as a lesson.



Chapter 03

ON NATIONAL DUTY BEYOND POLITICS

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“ Only through right education can a better order of society be built up. ”
- Jawaharlal Nehru

[Effective political leadership is crucial for bringing about development, particularly in an Asian context. This chapter explores the personal narratives of two political leaders who played key roles in supporting NSBM Green University. Let's listen in their own words.]

DULLAS ALAHAPPERUMA CHRONICLES...

NSBM Green University has achieved remarkable success in just over a decade, which fills us all with pride. As I reflect on our accomplishments, I am reminded of a friendly competition I have with Vice Chancellor Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe for the inner satisfaction

we have gained. One day, even after my retirement from political life, I am sure my joy will continue. I will be honored to have played a key role in establishing such an exceptional institution.

The Vice Chancellor may recall the formidable challenges we encountered while planning the establishment of



Then Minister Dulas Alahapperuma and Secretary to the President Lalith Weeraratna look at a model of NSBM Green University

the university on the 6th floor of 'Nipunatha Medura'. At the time, several high-ranking government officials inquired about the rationale for establishing a university within a remote area, which they called a 'jungle'. Further, our initial proposal was rejected by the National Planning Department. However, were it not for the invaluable assistance of Dr. P. B. Jayasundera, who served as Secretary to the Treasury at the time, the idea may not have been realized. Multiple cabinet paper submissions were necessary for a single request, and the University Grants Commission was initially hesitant to grant us degree-awarding status. I distinctly recall the firm decisions we made in consultation with all relevant parties during a meeting held at my private office at the Ministry. Such fond memories are numerous.

At the NSBM Green University premises, one can still see the rock that bears the inauguration plaque of the University. I distinctly recall how we found that rock from Keragala in Dompe. We were deeply committed to establishing an institution that embodied fortitude and resilience. A Minister typically does not draft the words inscribed on a plaque; however, I can attest that what appears on the NSBM Green University inauguration plaque were my own words. Additionally, the university's appellation of 'Green University' was coined following a discussion among Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe, Dr. P. B. Jayasundera, and myself. For these reasons, I take enormous pride in this university, as does the Vice Chancellor.

It is imperative that we acknowledge the invaluable contributions of others



Inauguration of the construction of NSBM Green University

towards this project. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to former President Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, who at the time served as Secretary to the Urban Development Authority, for procuring the land at Pitipana within a fortnight. Furthermore, I must recognize former President Mahinda Rajapaksa for providing the necessary political guidance and leadership for this initiative. My utmost respect goes to both individuals.

The educational establishment that was initially established with approximately one hundred students in a leased building in Nugegoda, has since evolved into a university that boasts over 11,000 scholars today. One should be proud to have participated in that voyage, right?

Over the past decade, there have been

numerous shifts in government authorities and administrations, demonstrating a high degree of flux. NSBM Green University had to follow the directives of seven ministers at various points in time. It is gratifying to note that none of these ministers intervened in the administrative activities of NSBM Green University. Thus, I would like to express my deep appreciation to each of my successors who have demonstrated this keen insight in recognizing true talent. It is this astute management that has contributed to the triumphs which NSBM Green University has achieved.

The current global population stands at nearly 8 billion individuals. Out of this significant number, only 6.7% of the population holds a Bachelor's degree. This signifies that the overall quantity of first-degree holders is

ON NATIONAL DUTY
BEYOND POLITICS



approximately 535 million individuals. Every year, NSBM Green University contributes towards this statistic. The University of Bologna, which was established in the 11th century, remains operational to date and proudly holds the distinction of being the oldest university globally. Since its foundation, universities worldwide have been dedicated to cultivating the frontrunners of human civilization. In this respect, NSBM Green University

has proudly upheld this noble tradition.

The students of NSBM Green University have every reason to take pride in their academic accomplishments and the fulfillment of their parents' aspirations. They have invested crucial years of their lives at this prestigious institution, which will undoubtedly be recalled with reverence in the future. As members of Generation Z, they



have likely already contemplated strategies to actively contribute to the economy, identify a suitable job that aligns with their educational qualifications, create demand for their skill set in the job market, progress up the career ladder, attain financial independence, and even establish a family of their own while distancing themselves from the traditional nuclear family structure. By pursuing excellence in their respective fields, these students have

already set their sights on achieving their goals.

...AND BANDULA GUNAWARDENA JOINS

The NSBM Green University is a testament to the visionary leadership and capabilities of its founder, Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe. Additionally, credit must be given to Dullas Alahapperuma, who provided political leadership



Minister Dullas Alahapperuma on an inspection tour

for the project during his tenure as Minister of Youth Affairs and Skills Development. As the former Minister of Education, I am proud to have played a role in the planning and implementation stages of this esteemed institution.

The establishment of NSBM Green University was a direct response to a significant gap in Sri Lankan society. Specifically, we recognized that although the state universities were producing a large number of graduates, their qualifications did not always align with the demands of the job market. This structural discrepancy resulted in a lack of interest in many tertiary-level courses and consequently a significant shortage of qualified applicants for specific roles. As a nation, it is our responsibility to recognize and address this issue for the benefit of all.

Allow me to provide some context. During my tenure in the same cabinet as Minister Alahapperuma from 2005-2010, we engaged in extensive discussions regarding the issues plaguing Sri Lanka's education system. We recognized the need for reform to better align tertiary qualifications with the demands of the job market and sought out potential solutions. Minister Alahapperuma proposed the inclusion of a technology-related subject for the GCE (Advanced Level) exam, which subsequently gave rise to a new subject stream consisting of Agro Technology, Engineering Technology, and Information and Communication Technology. These subjects were developed with proper syllabi and were formally introduced to address the identified gap.

As Minister of Education from 2010 to



Inauguration of NSBM Green University by then President Maithripala Sirisena, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe and other dignitaries

2015, I consider the establishment of 250 Mahindodaya school laboratories to be among my most noteworthy accomplishments. These two-story buildings contain state-of-the-art facilities, including an Information and Communication Technology lab, Bio and Chemistry lab, Maths/Physics lab, and a Distance Learning lab. The ICT lab boasts a total of 41 computers, while the Distance Learning lab features 21 computers. In addition, each lab is equipped with laptops and other computer peripherals based on the specific needs of the program. All labs contain science equipment, catering to students within both the Science and Technology streams taking the GCE (Advanced Level) exams.

I am pleased to report that I obtained the endorsement of all political parties for this initiative, aside from the Jana-

tha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). Regrettably, they opted to express their opposition through protests and island-wide poster campaigns. However, it brings me great pride to declare that their attempts to impede our progress ultimately proved unsuccessful.

Undoubtedly, these initiatives have sparked a significant transformation in technical education at the tertiary level, generating a marked increase in public interest. It was within this context that NSBM Green University was conceived. I recall Minister Dullus Alahapperuma's unwavering enthusiasm for the Green University concept, which he and Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe initially sought to fund through foreign assistance. However, given the lack of progress on that front, the university was subsequently established through a loan obtained from



The land of NSBM Green University before the constructions

the Bank of Ceylon.

Extensive deliberations were conducted to determine the ideal location for the university. Ultimately, a suitable plot of land was identified within my own electorate of Homagama, adjacent to Mahinda Rajapaksa Vidyalaya and belonging to the Urban Development Authority. This arrangement ensured complete government support for the initiative. Consequently, NSBM Green University commenced its operations as a degree-awarding institution under the umbrella of the National Institute of Business Management (NIBM).

I was elated to witness the gradual evolution of the Pitipana area, situated within my electorate of Homag-

ama, into a thriving technology hub. This transformation is in part due to the presence of the Sri Lanka Institute of Nanotechnology (SLINTEC), a science and innovation park spanning an impressive expanse of 48 acres, dedicated to promoting scientific research. SLINTEC is among the many successful tenants within the park, including those managed by SLINTEC themselves. The overarching objective of this initiative is to bring together the most exceptional scientific minds worldwide and unite them with cutting-edge technology to facilitate revolutionary research and development outcomes. Additionally, some state universities have relocated their technology faculties to this area. Given these developments, some refer



to this location as "Pragna Bandu Puravaraya" - The City of Knowledge Networks.

I have had the privilege of being involved in every significant facet of the evolution of NSBM Green University, right from its inception. The challenges we encountered in the establishment of this university were significant and unforgettable. Initial resistance from senior government officials posed a substantial obstacle, as they were averse to taking risks and were intent on avoiding unfavorable outcomes. They put forth every conceivable objection to hinder the project's progress. At this juncture, I must express my sincere appreciation to former President Mahinda Rajapak-

sa for providing invaluable support to this endeavor. His unwavering leadership played an indispensable role in ensuring the project's success, and he was consistently supportive of the notion. Notably, we disregarded the opposition's outcry, as if we had listened to the JVP's slogans, we would have been incapable of advancing our agenda.

Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe has been critically instrumental in spearheading the establishment of NSBM Green University and provided an unwavering source of strength for the institution. It was astonishing to witness the sheer levels of determination, motivation, and energy he brought to the university. His remarkable leadership was

**ON NATIONAL DUTY
BEYOND POLITICS**

instrumental in steering NSBM Green University through turbulent waters, facing and overcoming numerous challenges along the way. His extensive training and experience in Japan played a pivotal role in shaping his visionary outlook. In my experience, I have rarely encountered such unyielding dynamism amongst Sri Lankan professionals, and this puts Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe in a league of his own in this regard. His contributions to the development of the university are matchless, and he is a towering figure among his peers.

Upon reflection, I perceive NSBM Green University town as a pivotal institution that significantly enhances not only the local economy but also that of the nation as a whole. The university caters to the needs of both the public and private sectors of Sri Lanka by producing a much-needed pool of skilled graduates. This contribution is of immense economic value. It is evident that NSBM has played a transformative role in the development of the Pitipana area, as witnessed by the emergence of a thriving economic ecosystem around it. Local residents have leveraged the university's presence to generate additional income by offering accommodation, transport facilities, and food services to students. This phenomenon, familiar in economic parlance as the 'trickle-down effect,' manifests itself by positively impacting the socio-economic pyramid's lower tiers.

NSBM Green University represents a significant achievement for the Homagama constituency and stands

out prominently as a remarkable accomplishment for its current Vice Chancellor, Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe. Being associated with the university in my modest capacity has been an immensely gratifying experience. I consider the journey of NSBM Green University to be one that has been marked by tremendous progress and success.



The Creator

The Creator

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CHAPTER 04
I ran all the way home

CHAPTER 05
Ups and downs with 'Nikan Inna Beri Minissu'

CHAPTER 06
The DNA of an exceptional leadership

CHAPTER 07
Our students respect us, as we respect them

CHAPTER 08
Same challenge, I always got: Build from nil

The Creator

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Visionaries are those who have the ability to see what others cannot. They imagine possibilities that others do not, and they have the drive and determination to make their visions a reality. They are meticulous in their planning and execution, and they are always willing to learn and grow. The narratives of such visionaries are unique and inspiring. They offer us a glimpse into their minds and their thought processes, and they teach us valuable lessons about leadership, innovation, and perseverance. Let us be inspired by the vision and the courage of those who created NSBM Green University.

Chapter 04

I RAN ALL THE WAY HOME

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“The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things.”
- Ronald Reagan

[Let's listen to the creator's story in his own words]

I, Endera Arachchige Weerasinghe, was born on July 22nd, 1954 in the village of Melegoda, near Akmeemana, in Galle. My father was an Assistant to a Private Surveyor and worked in Colombo, so he wasn't at home often. My mother stayed home and took care of the household and also sold the crops she grew to make extra money for our family. We were an average rural family with limited resources, but we never gave up and faced our

challenges head-on.

Melegoda was a mesmerizing hamlet amidst the winding Deniyaya road of Galle. The verdant surroundings teemed with small and medium-sized tea, rubber, coconut and cinnamon plantations, each one bearing a story as rich as its harvest. As a child, I was blessed to be raised in this tapestry of nature that silently nurtured my growth and evoked a sense of wonder.



Prof. Weerasinghe with his mother (seated), wife (Standing 2L) and some of the relatives at his ancestral home circa 1989

The lush greenery swathed me in its gentle embrace, offering solace from the travails of life. And, quite possibly, it sowed a seed of inspiration that has now blossomed into the creation of a "Green University".

In a household of six, I was the youngest, nestled among four sisters and one brother. Sri Sunamagala Vidyalaya of Kalahe marked my debut into the realm of education, where childhood was a drapery of unadulterated bliss devoid of tuition classes and tribulations. My sisters, my guardians, bestowed upon me their unflinching love and care that enveloped me in a sanctuary of purity. Shielded from the darkness, I remained oblivious to the obscene profanities of the world until my university days. Tragedy struck early in my life with the untimely demise of my brother, and yet, in the

aftermath, my bond with my sisters deepened.

MY SCHOOL DAYS IN GALLE

One of my elder sisters has broken the boundaries of the day and studied higher up to later become a nurse. She knew the value of education. It was she who had proposed to my father to admit me to a school in Galle. She was the first to find her little brother was too studious to be left in a village school. So against the opposition I could exert as a little boy, I was admitted to Vidyaloka Vidyalaya in Galle in 1965. I had to enter Grade seven - despite me having finished the same at village school - to match the standards. I might not say I was exceptionally studious, but the very next year, I became the eighth in the class. Vidyaloka was a completely new world for me, who has been a village kid since then.



Vidyaloka College, Galle today

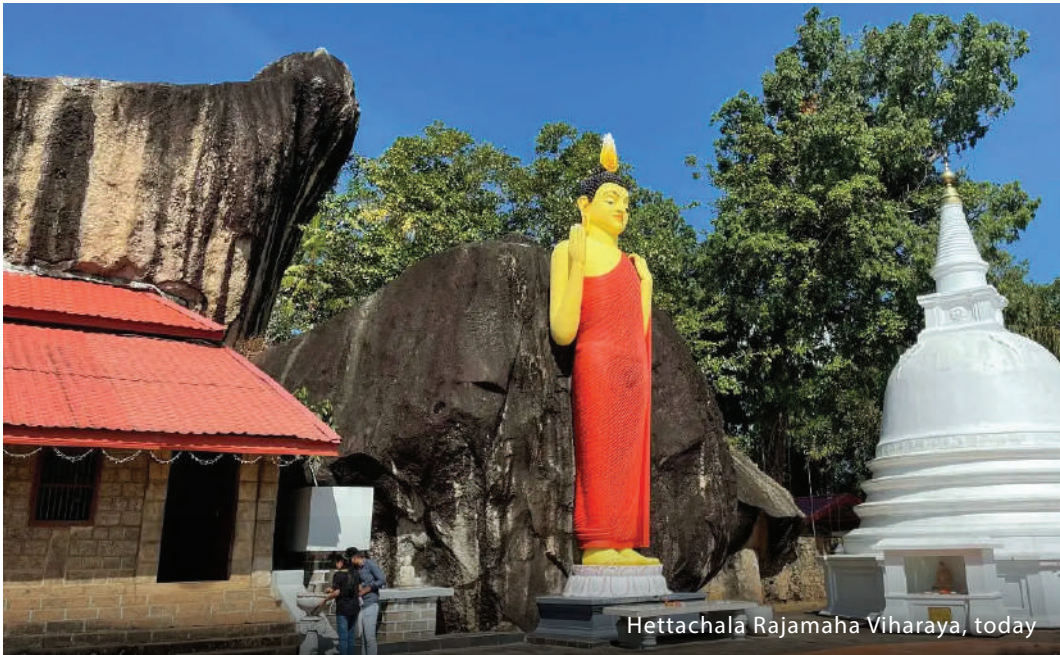
Our school was in the middle of Galle town, sandwiched between two movie theaters. It was also adjacent to Vidyaloka Pirivena, one of the prominent Pirivena (a monastic college, similar to a seminary, for the education of Buddhist monks). This Buddhist background made an indelible mark in my life, making me a stronger individual who would, little by little, build a lifestyle based on the supreme teaching of Buddha.

The school was 5 miles away from my home. Bus fare was only 25 cents per adult - they charged only 5 cents per mile those days. We paid 12 cents for the half ticket. I remember spending the money my mother handed over for a quarter of a loaf of bread and a vadai, and running all the way home. I was a master in the game. I knew all the shortcuts along narrow roads, crossing paddy fields. I sometimes completed the five miles

before the bus. I think this practice led me to become a great athlete much later.

In the mid-sixties, Vidyaloka Vidyalaya was so popular for soccer. Sometimes they used to beat even Mahinda and Richmond colleges. Vidyaloka students used to practice on the college grounds in the mornings. Once, I too went when they were ready to take new boys. I was more interested in the special meal the players were given. Having heard I was from Melegoda, the coach immediately blocked my entry to the team. It was more or reserved for the city boys. Interestingly, that didn't stop me from playing soccer. Later I even became the captain of the University soccer team. I wasn't somebody who could be stopped by obstacles.

I passed my G C E (O/Level) examination in the first go, clearing all seven



Hettachala Rajamaha Viharaya, today

subjects. I had a D for Arithmetic. We didn't call it Mathematics then. This was before the 1974 education reforms. I also scored two credits for two other subjects.

A/LS AND THE PIRIVENA TIMES

My choices for G C E (A/Level) were Economics, Geography, Sinhala and Buddhist Civilization. Sadly I did not have the ideal environment for studies at Vidyaloka. There were no tuition classes either. Apart from the few hours at school, I used to spend the rest of my day in diverse activities at the village with friends. So it was not a surprise that I could not clear a single subject, the first time.

When I was doing the exam for the second time, I selected a different approach. There was a Pirivena at

Hettachala Rajamaha Maha Viharaya at Yatagala. The monks conducted classes for lay A/L students in the afternoons. I followed those classes. That attempt also ended up as a failure, as I cleared only two subjects. Maybe I was not as studious as my sister thought. Maybe I didn't have a good mentor. I am happy today that I didn't give up after initial failures. Otherwise, I would not be here to tell this story.

Etched in my memory is a word of advice given by the Chief prelate as I bade farewell to Yatagala Pirivena. He said, "Mehe hitapu vidiyatama hema thenama inna." (Follow the same behavior everywhere you go.") These words of wisdom resounded in my heart and have since evoked guidance in times of adversity. His counsel remains a beacon of hope that illuminates the path that I traverse, ever reminding me to abide by the virtu-

ous conduct taught at the haven of knowledge.

During those times, my days were imbued with purpose as I immersed myself in the politics of the village. As a youth, I was accorded the role of organizing events at the village level, with limited prospects for expanding my sphere of influence. In the present day, the panorama of opportunities available to village youth has significantly broadened. However, it is my earnest recollection that my mother would await my return with a warm meal, even when I returned home late into the night.

Still, in the back of my mind, I held fast to the notion that education was the key. We had no family wealth, no influential relatives. If I saw a light at the end of the tunnel, the only road leading to it was education. I would study late into the night, my eyes burning, my mind racing. I would devour books, absorbing knowledge like a sponge. I would write essays, solve math problems, and learn foreign languages. I knew that education was my ticket to a better life. It was my chance to break free from poverty to make a difference in the world. So I studied hard, And I never gave up.

For my third attempt, I selected another Pirivena. Ven Akuratiyea Amarawansa thero, who later became Maligakanda Vidyodaya Parivenadhipathi (Chief prelate) and Chief Sanghanayaka Thera of Dakshina Lanka was the Chief prelate of the Pirivena. They had probably the best teachers in Galle. For the first time, I developed a fondness for the subjects. I studied them like mad. It was my

answer sheets the teachers showed to the class. I remember doing them really neat.

My world was expanded by them. I was reading all the newspapers I could get hold of. As the answer to one of the questions in the A/L economic paper, I reproduced the same cost of living figure on the papers given the same day. I guess the examiner would have been impressed.

On the day when I went to check the results from the Pirivena, something totally unexpected happened. The Chief Prelate was so angry that he wasn't even willing to talk to me. Instead, he gave me a long lecture. Results have been the worst in many years. It seemed that except for one student, all the rest had failed the examination. He questioned me why I was wasting my parents' money not studying. What the Chief prelate didn't expect was that the only student to pass would be Endera Arachchige Weerasinghe. After learning the fact, he apologized for the mistake and treated me with more respect. I have been selected for Peradeniya University. As I was not so eager to join Peradeniya, I selected my second option University of Sri Jayawardenapura, then Vidyodaya.

I have a few pleasant memories about this Pirivena. I wore trousers for the first time to visit there. In all places before I have been wearing shorts. Still, it was before I had the opportunity to wear shoes. This was long before I had an affair. I think I was not so attractive to the girls of the day. (laughs)
'VIJJA UPPATTAN SETTHA'



('AMONG ALL THAT RISE KNOWLEDGE IS THE GREATEST')

Thus began my university days. In a place prominent for its grandeur for centuries. The University of Sri Jayewardenepura has a rich history, starting from 1873 when Ven. Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thero established the Vidyodaya Pirivena as a center for Oriental learning. In 1958, it became the Vidyodaya University of Ceylon after being declared a university under the Vidyodaya University and Vidyalankara University Act No. 45, under the SWRD Bandaranaike government.

In 1961, the university moved to its present location in Gangodawila and was expanded under the leadership of Ven. Sri Soratha Thero. The university

became more inclusive in 1966 with the Higher Education Act No. 20, which allowed female students. Vice Chancellor was no longer required to be a Buddhist monk. Under the leadership of Ven. Dr. Walpola Rahula Thero and later linguist Prof. D. E. Hettiarachchi, the university gained recognition. Unfortunately, the university faced challenges during a political insurgency in 1971. The premises were taken over by the army, but the university managed to continue conducting classes at different locations to keep students' education intact.

In 1972, all universities in Sri Lanka were merged into a single university called the University of Sri Lanka. However, in 1978, university status was restored to the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Today, the university has a student population of over



With the award for being the Athletic Champion of University of Sri Jayewardenepura, 1979

18,000 and offers courses in faculties such as Applied Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Medical Sciences.

“VIPLAVEEYA AACHAARAYA” (REVOLUTIONARY GREETINGS)

November, 1977. I remember my first day at the University well. I went with my father, carrying a suitcase. The two shirts I had were inside that. ‘Bakehouse Mudalali’, a businessman known to me, gave me twenty five Two-Rupee notes. That was in addition to Rs. 10,000 Mr Nanda Gunasinghe, a respected individual in the area (who later became MP for Habaraduwa) kindly provided for my studies. I remember both with respect. Bank of Ceylon then offered us bank loans. First, we had Rs. 180 per month, which was later increased to Rs. 225.

Still, getting this was difficult. We had to spend long hours at the Nugegoda branch of the Bank of Ceylon. The staff treated us as if we were getting charity. We had to cover all our expenses with that Rs. 225.

On the first day itself, there was a function to welcome the freshmen at the Bandaranaike Hall. I went to that with my new-found friends Jayasinghe and Dayarathne. All three of us were from Galle. Representatives from different students’ unions spoke. Those who dominated were the pro-JVP Samajawadi Sishya Sangamaya. The speaker from pro-UNP Samawadi Sishya Sangamaya was met with boos and catcalls. I realized who had the power. When they invited a speaker from fresh men, I stood up. I did a pro-JVP speech and ended it offering my “Vipyaveeya aachaaraya” (Revolutionary greetings) to my seniors. That was received with heavy applause. I have become a hero instantly. I was offered food and drinks.

University life initially was not smooth. The ragging period was a nightmare. Please spare me for details, as I now find how we were ragged wasn’t a story to be shared with any civilized society. It was that bad. One day the three of us decided to leave university and even stayed at a neighbor’s place. Fortunately, the rag season was not too long. After that, university life became interesting.

Few months back, I contested for the students’ council in the JVP ticket but lost. The winners were the progressive camp consisting of many factions like those of Samasamaaja and Communist parties. That was the only remarkable

I RAN ALL THE WAY HOME

political activity of mine. My university political life met an abrupt end, with others finding out about my athletic abilities. On the first sports meet I faced, I could win multiple races. That made me focus more on sports activities. I played soccer, hockey and was an athlete too. Once I became the Secretary of the sports club.

On one occasion, I was subjected to a punishment for a mischievous activity of mine. I was suspended from classes for three months. I realized a lesson the hard way from this. Initially, there were many to be on my side. Later they all gave up on me. I realized I had to come out of the mess on my own.

I was well prepared on the day of the inquiry. While many others opted not to stand at the arrival of the Vice Chancellor, I did. I have realized the importance of getting in. The inquiry worked favorably for me. Particularly they had looked into the sports activities I was involved in. After the vice chancellor saw my photographs appearing in national newspapers after my achievements, he became too flexible. I was allowed to stay at hostels again.

INTO THE WORLD OF ECONOMICS

After the first year, which was more of a foundation year, I had the opportunity to do a special degree either in Geography, Sociology or Economics. I selected Economics as it was the highest in demand and considered the best.

I remember one more incident I faced in the final year. We had a teacher named

Wijesiriwardena. I was in his bad books. We had three papers of his for the final year examination. I was convinced he would fail me. So I put extra effort into his subjects. That ended with me becoming the batch top. Out of the three subjects of the said lecturer, I scored A+ for one, and As for the other two. There are two lessons to be learned from this incident. First, how a teacher should react to an ill-behaved student. Second, how the fear of failure might work positively towards the advancement of an individual. I had a second-class upper pass for my degree.

Summarizing my university experience, I would like to add that it is a different exercise altogether. Any fish will swim in the right pond. The university is that right pond. At school, we had textbooks. A student deprived of textbooks may not study. At university, you have those resources provided to you. You have more opportunities to study. I gained the best out of it. I can proudly say I had a complete university education. I had all the fun I wanted, and at the same time, I finished my studies with flying colors.

Our convocation was held in 1982. It was a difficult period. The job opportunities were rare. I remember applying unsuccessfully for many vacancies. I boarded at a boarding house in Delkanda at that time. My roommate worked at Wijeya Newspapers. He took me to meet Mr. Ranjith Wijewardena, the chairman. This was before they had started Lanka-deepa and Times. They had only a few periodicals. I had a temporary job there as a Trainee Manager. I was paid Rs. 35 a day. It was not much. I could barely manage.



While working there, I wanted to improve my language skills in English. Unfortunately, I did not have money for that. Learning this, Mr. Ranjith Wijewardena agreed to pay my tuition fees. In turn, he made me check the homework of his two children, Ruwan Wijewardena (who later became a national level politician and the State Minister of Defence) and his elder sister. That was a memorable time. I have won the respect of the two children. They called me 'Master'. I was happy to share my knowledge with the kids.

In 1984, my application to be a Statistician at Census and Statistics Department worked. I worked for a few months in this job. I had to travel to Kalutara daily. So I missed my classes for the children of Mr. Wijewardena.

THE GOOD TEACHER EXPLAINS, THE GREAT TEACHER INSPIRES

In 1985, the University of Sri Jayawardenapura called for the post of Assistant Lecturer and I applied. I was successful in the interview. That was the turning point of my life. I was assigned to the Department of Public Administration under Prof. Ariyapala Ekanayake. I was offered a sizable challenge. I was to take some subjects earlier taken by Prof. Karunaratna, popularly known as 'Matha-Karu' at the university. I do not think I met the same standards, but students loved my teaching.

Then I was selected for a scholarship offered by the British Council. This was really surprising as I have spent



Prof. Weerasinghe with his PhD supervisor Prof. Ken Sasaki and Prof. (then Mr.) Sampath Amaratunge in 1997 on the day of his convocation

only nine months in the university. So I could do a one-year Masters program in Computer Science at Bradford University, UK. Still, I knew my responsibilities. I set the examination papers before I left so students would not face any difficulties in my absence. The study program was exceptionally difficult, but I successfully completed it. The tradition was to offer confirmation for the one-year Masters program, but not the promotion. Consequently, I received only the confirmation. That was at the end of 1988.

In 1989, they gazetted the Monbukagakusho Scholarship, formerly known as Monbusho Scholarship that supports foreign students, is an academic scholarship offered by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Monbu-kaga-

ku-shō, or MEXT), and selected on the recommendation of the Japanese Embassy/Consulate General, University, or Authority. Following my application, I was interviewed by a panel chaired by the University Grant Commission head, Prof. Stanley Kalpage. There was a rule that an academic must wait after one scholarship for a certain period of time before getting the other. I was exempted from this rule.

IRASSHAIMASE GOZAIMASU

In 1990 I reached Japan. For one year, I had to master Japanese language at the Osaka University of Foreign Studies, Aomadani-Higashi, Kita-Senri, Osaka. (Ōsaka gaikokugo daigaku) It was dedicated to area studies and the study of foreign languages and their related cultures.



Prof. Weerasinghe with his PhD supervisor Prof. Ken Sasaki and Mr. K. M. Sunil, a friend in 1997 on the day of his convocation

After the completion of what I call the orientation program, I entered Wakayama University (Wakayama Daigaku), or Wadai, a national university located in Wakayama, Japan. It was founded in 1949 and is organized in four faculties, Education and Graduate School of Education, Economics and Graduate School of Economics, Systems Engineering and Graduate School of Systems Engineering and Tourism. Mine was the second - Economics. I had to complete my Masters degree first, as I didn't possess a masters in Economics. My Bradford University Masters was in Computer Science. So it was not counted. Anyway, this was not a major issue as I received funds from my scholarship. By that time, I was married. In 1991, I could bring my wife too.

After completion of my Masters, I have applied for my PhD. That was at Osaka

City University (OCU) (Ōsaka shiritsu daigaku), abbreviated to Ichidai or Shidai, a public university in Japan. It is located in Sumiyoshi-ku, Osaka. It is one of the most prestigious universities in Japan. I took another four years to complete my PhD thesis, titled 'Multinational Enterprise and Economic Development: The case of Malaysia and Sri Lanka.'

My PhD supervisor was Prof. Ken Sasaki. He was a university contemporary of some of the high-level business leaders of firms like Toyota and Matsuzuki. I have traveled with him a lot in this period. Our destinations were the Toyota and Matsuzuki factories in Asia and Africa. It was an educational journey. Even when drinking sake in the evenings, we have discussed the world, new trends and books. I do not remember us ever discussing people and other



Osaka University of Foreign Studies, Aomadani-Higashi, Kita-Senri, Osaka

minor matters. He narrated the economic history of Japan, the World War II saga and even the story of the Hiroshima Nagasaki bombing. He was of the opinion that I do not have to do a lengthy thesis. Still, it was the university tradition to have a PhD thesis of more than 500 pages. I completed my doctoral studies in 1997. By then, I had spent seven years in Japan, one for language studies, two for my Masters and four for the PhD.

What one gains from a country like Japan is priceless. Japanese language proficiency itself opens many doors. Then the attitudes you develop. Japanese are extremely honest. They simply do not know how to lie. The culture in which they grow up itself makes them fair and square. They are also workaholics. They like to complete the tasks

assigned to them. They work hard even in the winter.

The 5S concept is one of the most interesting aspects of Japanese culture for me. It's a workplace organization method that involves a series of five Japanese words, which are seiri, seiton, seisō, seiketsu, and shitsuke. These words translate to "sort", "set in order", "shine", "standardize", and "sustain". The goal of the 5S concept is to make the workplace more efficient and effective by organizing the items used in the workspace. The process involves identifying and storing the items, maintaining the cleanliness and order of the area, and continuously following the new organizational system. The key to the success of the 5S method is the emphasis on standardization. The standardization process involves a dialogue among



Wakayama University in Wakayama, Japan

employees to build a shared understanding of how work should be performed. This helps to ensure that everyone is on the same page and that the new organizational system is sustained.

Japanese culture is so business-oriented that they do not cry for personal troubles. They cry only if there is something bringing down the company. Japanese kids are often asked what company they would like to work in when they grow up. Once someone finds their dream company, they do not move; they work at the same place till retirement. Their life is the company.

I also learned their respect for the customer. When a client visits a Japanese office they are sent to play golf with the Managers, with the firm

advice not to win; You have to make the client win. One may see it as fooling the customer, but it is the true way of respect. One would not learn this type of lessons from any other nation. Japanese were unique in that.

THE ONLY WAY TO DO GREAT WORK IS TO LOVE WHAT YOU DO

I could apply for Permanent Residency in New Zealand by then. It was just a question of obtaining the pass marks. I had it for my family at the New Zealand embassy in Tokyo. The Ambassador commented that he would one day like to show me the New Zealand Economy.

My initial plan was to settle down in New Zealand. We made a visit to Auckland and Christchurch. The environ-

I RAN ALL THE WAY HOME



Head of the Business Economic Department, University of Sri Jayawardenepura

ment was too different from that of Japan. The cities were empty at night. Not a soul was to be seen despite New Zealand being a developed nation. Japan wasn't like that. Even at midnight and a few hours after, the roads were crowded. I realized it wasn't the environment for me. So I decided to give up that opportunity. I have no regrets about that.

By this time, I have developed another passion. I saw huge car sales in Tokyo. With my Japanese language proficiency, it was easy for me to develop a large circle of friends in the industry. All of them were exporters. My plan was to assist in the import of cars to Sri Lanka. The 1993-4 period marked the commencement of the import of second-hand Japanese vehicles. The transactions happened over the phone. Key Sri Lankan importers of the time

used to talk to me on a daily basis. I received a discount from the process. This was an extremely lucrative business. I have been putting what I have been learning to practice.

I look back at this past with a certain self-satisfaction today. I was from a humble background. I had no wealth on the face of the earth. Given that kind of background, becoming a rich man was a reason for substantial pride for me. I didn't want to be a poor academic. When I was living in Delkanda, people talked about a Professor who used public transport. I didn't want to be such a professor.

I am proud to talk about the wealth I have accumulated legally and ethically over the years. I used one model of a car after another. I bought land. Perhaps this is not what most academics today might do. They confine what they learn



Prof. Weerasinghe at his first NIBM Diploma Award Ceremony as Director General in 2006

to books. They remain poor for their entire lives. What is the use of learning management principles if you cannot put them to work? Why be poor when you can be rich? My principle has always been to practice my lessons for my own good. That is my strength. I did my business till I became the Director General of the National Institute of Business Management. (NIBM).

THE DRAMA AT JAYAWARDENAPURA

Before that, many chapters unfolded at the University. With my newly earned PhD, I became a Senior Lecturer. However, my time was spent more on administrative work than on teaching. At crucial points, I have been the Senior students' Counsellor. I also worked as the Warden. For a few months, I also acted as the Dean in his absence. I am

proud that I created the Department of Business Economics at the University of Sri Jayawardenapura and became its first Head of Department. Today the courses it offers rank second according to the demand of students.

The external political environment of the country at this time had been too turbulent. President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga of the People's Alliance was not always seeing eye to eye with her Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe from the opposing camp. North East conflict has come to a short-lived standstill with the ceasefire, but not everybody was comfortable with the outcome. After a politically uncertain period, the government cracked in the middle itself. Fresh elections were called, and a government with Mahinda Rajapaksa as its Prime Minister came into power. These national-level discords were reflected at the university level. Open



hostilities appeared. The academics were divided into diverse camps. Gone were the days of smooth sailing.

In 2004, I contested for the post of Dean. The tradition was to appoint the Deans by the votes of the faculty members. Then the Vice Chancellor was Prof. Senevi Eritawatte. Initially, it looked like things were working to my advantage. But they soon changed. Opposing forces were working against me. They were also getting together. At the last minute, a friend of mine double crossed and submitted his own nominations for the post. I lost by 14 votes.

In retrospect, I think what happened was good. Otherwise, I would not have commenced my alternative journey. You would have heard a different story. Fortunately, things didn't

happen that way. Immediately after this incident, I took my sabbatical leave. I had an offer from Nagoya University (Nagoya daigaku), a Japanese national research university located in Chikusa-ku, Nagoya. It was the seventh Imperial University in Japan, one of the first five Designated National Universities and selected as a Top Type university by the Japanese government. It is the third highest ranked higher education institution in Japan. I spent one full year there teaching as a Visiting Scholar. I returned to Sri Lanka in 2005.

There happened another turning point in my life. My friend Piyasena Gamage, then Minister of Skills Development, Vocational and Technical Education, invited me to lead the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission, the



apex body in the technical and vocational education and training sector under the provisions of the Tertiary and Vocational Education Act No 20 of 1990. Its primary responsibility is policy formulation, planning, quality assurance, coordination and development of tertiary and vocational education in the country. I was not interested.

Then came another opportunity. The National Institute of Business Management (NIBM) was facing few financial and management issues at that time. One the year before, it had recorded Rs. 19 million operating loss. Minister thought I could mend these issues. My appointment letter was issued at 4 pm, and I directly went to the institution and assigned duties. It was that abrupt.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT MY BIRTH PLACE, GALLE

Like many others, I too hold a deep sense of pride in my place of birth. The nurturing environment in which I was raised has played a pivotal role in shaping my personal growth and development. I have been fortunate to have had the support of a loving and supportive family, as well as the opportunity to receive education from exceptional local and international educational institutions. As mentioned previously, my formative years were greatly influenced by my studies at the esteemed University of Sri Jayawardenepura. Against this backdrop, it is only natural that I hold a special place in my heart for my birthplace, Galle.



Galle, throughout the course of Sri Lanka's history, has been renowned for its intellectual prowess. It has been suggested by some that this may be attributed to the significant inclusion of fish in our local cuisine, as fish is known to provide essential proteins for optimal brain development, particularly during early stages of life. This notion holds merit, as Galle has indeed been the birthplace of some of Sri Lanka's most outstanding intellectuals. Among these luminaries are Kumaratunga Munidasa, a highly esteemed poet and scholar who is widely regarded as a key figure in modern Sinhala literature. Additionally, Martin Wickramasinghe, a prominent Sinhala novelist, essayist, and literary critic, affectionately known as the "Wise man of Koggala,"

has also hailed from Galle. Other notable figures include Ediriweera Sarachchandra, a renowned playwright, director, and scholar, Wijeyananda Dahanayake, a former Prime Minister who held office for a brief period, Prof. Senarath Paranavitana, the leading Sri Lankan archeologist and epigraphist, who pioneered much of post-colonial archaeology in Sri Lanka, and Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne, the esteemed founder of the Sarvodaya movement, all of whom have made significant contributions to society. The question is how one can be not proud when hailing from a place that had produced such great men.

It is believed that ancient Greek and Roman geographers possessed knowledge of Galle, which they referred to



as the Cape of Birds. Notably, Ptolemy is also thought to have been aware of the port, which he referred to as Odoka. In the year 1342, Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta embarked upon a visit to Galle, which he referred to as Qali. The 12th and 13th centuries witnessed a significant influx of Sinhalese refugees who sought refuge in Galle and its surrounding regions, fleeing from the invading Tamil armies in the north. It was during the Dutch colonial period in the 18th century that Galle experienced its pinnacle of development. Notably, Galle stands as a remarkable testament to the fortified cities constructed by the Portuguese in South and Southeast Asia, exemplifying the symbiotic fusion of Portuguese architectural styles with indigenous traditions. The

city underwent extensive fortification by the Dutch from 1649 onwards, resulting in the Galle fort, a designated World Heritage Site and the largest remaining European-built fortress in Asia.

I take great pride in my birthplace, which is in close proximity to Galle. As elaborated in a subsequent chapter, I have diligently fulfilled my responsibilities towards my hometown to the best of my abilities. Those who visit the NIBM center in Galle, during its operational hours, will have the opportunity to witness the tangible outcomes of my dedicated efforts for the betterment of my beloved community.

Memoirs

Memoirs

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Through joy and sorrow, triumph and loss,
I retrace the steps of my life,
Reliving moments, both big and small,
With newfound wisdom and insight.

FAMILY



Prof. Weerasinghe and wife Sriyani at their simple wedding ceremony



Prof. Weerasinghe and wife Sriyani

**I RAN ALL THE
WAY HOME**



Prof. Weerasinghe family in Japan at son Akira's first birthday



Prof. Weerasinghe family in Japan more recently



Prof. Weerasinghe family at Daughter's wedding day, 2020 March



With his daughter Sonali Tharika



With his grandson Trevin

JAPAN



Prof. Weerasinghe with family and friends in Japan



Prof. Weerasinghe with
his wife on the graduation day



Prof. Weerasinghe with his wife,
little daughter and PhD supervisor



Prof. Weerasinghe with Prof. (then Mr.) Sampath Amaratunge
and Mr. K. M. Sunil on the graduation day



With Prof. Dodunkotuwa and
Prof. Ken Sasaki more recently



With wife and son
Akira Kenji more recently

PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC



Prof. G. L. Peiris attends a function at University of Sri Jayawardenepura on the invitation of Prof. Weerasinghe



Prof. Weerasinghe speaks at the same event



Prof. Weerasinghe with then Minister Piyasena Gamage on a study tour in Australia



Prof. Weerasinghe is with then Minister Bandula Gunawardana at an event in NIBM



Prof. Weerasinghe meets a foreign delegation at NIBM



Prof. Weerasinghe chairs a meeting at NSBM Green University



Prof. Weerasinghe and Prof. Chaminda Ratnayake at a dinner hosted by Plymouth University



Prof. Weerasinghe hosts Minister Susil Premjayanth and Indian High Commissioner at NSBM Green University



Prof. Weerasinghe carrying the sacred relic casket at the overnight Pirith Chanting ceremony held for the 7th Anniversary of NSBM Green University



Prof. Weerasinghe at the 7th Anniversary Celebration of NSBM Green University



Prof. Weerasinghe in a conversation with Lord Mervyn Davies of Abersoch, the UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Sri Lanka, during his visit to NSBM premises



Prof. Weerasinghe in a conversation with His Excellency Andrew Patrick, the British High Commissioner to Sri Lanka during his visit to NSBM premises



Sri Jayawardenapura Pradeepa Pranama 2016 award received by
Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe from President Maithripala Sirisena
awarded by the Alumni Association of University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Chapter 05

UPS AND DOWNS WITH 'NIKAN INNA BERI MINISSU'

• • • • •

“ “ We're here to put a dent in the universe.
Otherwise, why else even be here? ” ”
- Steve Jobs

[Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe continues his journey at NIBM, first as its Chairman and the Director General, leading a revolution. His own words.]

"The National Institute of Business Management (NIBM) opened a fresh door for me. I was trying to discover a place where I could practice the skills I learned in Japan. I didn't need an ideal space. In such a place, there was no transformation that I could bring. I desired a troubled site. I resembled more of a sculptor searching for the ideal monolithic rock. I want to transform that rock into a lovely work of art.

While NIBM was looking for a builder, I was looking for a site to fix. Therefore, NIBM perfectly met my needs. It was an ideal match - one that was made in heaven."

For those who are new to the organization, the National Institute of Business Management (NIBM) is a public business school based in Colombo, Sri Lanka. It was born as a business unit of the Indus-



trial Development Board (IDB) in 1968. Its first mandate was to conduct management training programs for the public and private sectors. Then it was re-established in 1972 under the name National Institute of Management (NIM). The organization was later incorporated as the National Institute of Business Management (NIBM) by an Act of Parliament in 1976. Some called them 'Nikan Inna Beri Minissu' (Those who could not stay idle).

Upon joining NIBM, in 2005, my observation was that the institute had become dominated by a small group of lecturers and consultants, creating a "mafia-like" culture. (However, there were still a few capable and committed academics who had grown frustrated with the negative antics.) Management of Information Systems (MIS) division generating income of Rs. 29 million out of the four

Strategic Business Units (SBUs) in 2004. The other SBUs incurred losses. By 2005, the newly established centers in Kurunegala and Kandy were also making losses, ranging from Rs. 5.1 million to 1.9 million. The institute incurred an aggregate loss of Rs. 9.7 million in 2004, which rose to Rs. 16 million by 2005, resulting in a tremendous challenge to overcome.

It's interesting to note that the records showed profits for the five years prior to 2005. How did this happen? A little secret existed. A Rs. 300 million fixed deposit was held by NIBM. At the time, fixed deposit rates were exceptionally high—around 24–25%. A non-operating profit was also displayed for this interest. That made it possible for employees to receive large incentives even when their performance remained the same. The building at Vidya Mawatha was left exactly how Geoffrey Bawa had designed

it in the 1960s, ruined and in disrepair. The conditions in the classrooms and restrooms were at an all-time low.

BUILDING COMPETENCIES

It was not unexpected that NIBM faced issues during a challenging period for the country. The government focused more on achieving peace in the nation amidst conflict rather than economic development, resulting in limited budget allocations for activities such as management training and consultancy, which were critical to NIBM's operations. Additionally, opportunities in the private sector were limited, with high competition. Unfortunately, NIBM's management had previously ignored external environmental developments. While NIBM was once the only organization of its kind, new competitors emerged, which surpassed NIBM's standards. NIBM needed to address the competition and adjust its approach accordingly. Its intake numbers were significantly low, with few marketing activities to enhance its visibility. As an institute established to promote management excellence in Sri Lanka, NIBM faced an internal shortage of management, which was an unexpected situation.

As part of my marketing strategy, I launched new campaigns utilizing both mainstream and social media, which were gaining popularity at that time. It was the first time in the organization's history that we ran television commercials. We increased public awareness of our brand through exhibitions, seminars, and regular interactions with state and private sector organizations. We also held convocations and award ceremonies

more frequently, which were pioneering efforts at the time, although they may be commonplace today.

We also encountered branding issues at the institute, as NIBM's consultants prioritized their personal brands over building the institutional brand. When advertising courses, it was common practice to feature photos of the lecturers, which did not necessarily add value to the courses, but rather boosted the individual profiles of the consultants. (Fortunately, most of these consultants have now retired, and NIBM has done well by attracting young and talented professionals during and after my tenure.)

As the head of NIBM, I instituted a complete stop to several practices that had been problematic. Despite pushback from a few lecturers, I resolved to breathe new life into the old NIBM building with full renovations. I prioritized operational improvements and built strong relationships with key personnel, including the Director of Finance, Director of Administration, and other administrative staff. These efforts were intended to transform NIBM into the leading educational organization within the country, and the desired change occurred slowly but surely.

"STRATEGY REQUIRES THOUGHT, TACTICS REQUIRE OBSERVATION." - SUN TZU

I have employed a variety of tactics to enhance the environment. A corporate plan for the years 2007 to 2011 was created in 2006 by the reputable outside agency MTI Consulting. This prompted the company to change its



tactics. One novel strategy was to increase the number of school leavers enrolling in NIBM-run courses. The 'old school' consultants vehemently opposed this action. They believed that if we brought more teenagers to the institute, the professional atmosphere would be disrupted. Naturally, they preferred instructing professionals. Additionally, there was resistance to change. They were at ease instructing the tried-and-true courses. They had to be pushed beyond their comfort zones because they were unwilling to explore new doors.

How has NIBM's academic profile evolved over the years? In 2009, NIBM was granted degree-awarding status and subsequently began offering BSc degrees in Business Management with specializations in Human Resource Management, Logistics, Project Man-

agement, and Industrial Management. This academic expansion led to a significant increase in student enrollment, particularly among GCE (A/L) qualified students seeking undergraduate studies. In addition, NIBM began offering BSc (Management) degrees from the University College of Dublin, which is widely regarded as one of Europe's best universities and has an international alumni network of 5,000 students among its 25,000 students. Then, in 2011, NIBM signed an MoU with Limkokwing University of Creative Technology in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to offer undergraduate degrees in Interior Design and Facility Management. Limkokwing is a well-known private university with a global presence across Africa, Europe, and Asia, boasting over 30,000 students from more than 150 countries at its main campus in Malaysia.



Further to degree courses, NIBM also expanded its profile of Diplomas and Certificate courses. We also established an English language unit, which later developed into a separate department. I wanted to offer courses even in Tamil, Japanese and Chinese. Unfortunately, this was a goal I could not achieve.

Even now, the NIBM building would not be recognizable from an image taken before 2005. It was much smaller than what is currently standing and was painted dark brown. It only had a tiny auditorium. The building was already becoming congested, and there wasn't enough room to accommodate the growing number of students. I had trouble imagining how it could possibly be credited as a Geoffrey Bawa design. I decided to stop disparaging the great man. I started a Rs.150

million sizable innovation initiative. A significantly bigger auditorium was added to a new wing. There were additionally built new lecture halls, student study places, and a sizable cafeteria. These actions improved the organization's reputation.

NEW LIFE WITH KURUNEGALA, KANDY, GALLE AND MATARA CENTRES

I have carried out modernisation programs at the regional centers too. Just like we did in Colombo, the Kurunegala Regional Center was refurbished at a cost of Rs. 140 million. Kandy Center was relocated. The income improved by itself. We opened two new centers at Galle and Matara. Largely, at the request of the government, we also started a center in Jaffna, but it wasn't a success with



the prevailing conditions.

I was particularly proud of the NIBM Galle center for nostalgic reasons. I was born in Galle. I have studied in Galle. This was my contribution to the place in return. My personal interest in the center was so much that I used to visit the Galle center every time I reached my hometown.

I can list some of the operational changes I have introduced. We kept the NIBM centers open, usually eight hours a day, more when it was necessary for seven days a week, 365 days a year. It ceased to be a typical government office that closed its doors to customers on holidays. Students and their parents were our customers. We had to treat them with respect and interest. I created efficient front desks to receive students and parents. To

keep up with the times, we incorporated changes to the website. We included more information. We have even enabled the payments to the courses through the website but found perhaps we were too early for that. The vast majority of the students were happy with the physical payment options.

Even I could not believe the change that I have brought to NIBM. I changed everything. I was so surprised by how they teach management while having old and broken furniture in the classrooms and offices. So, I replaced the old furniture with new ones. Reconstructions were carried out to make the environment fresh. For the first time, I built rooms for the lecturers and consultants. I realized they needed the right environment to work. My advice to the staff was to teach management to students and then bring them down



NIBM Galle Centers



NIBM Matara Centers

to show our own offices.

On my entry, the institution was heavily politicized too. On the way to the Director General's room, there were multiple notice boards managed by trade unions supporting different political parties. They were filled with posters and notices of diverse political groups. I removed them all. I could not make the institute free of politics, but I did the next best thing. I deactivated the system. Political divisions would have been okay if the salaries were paid by the treasury. For a place that depends on everyone working together for a definite goal, political divisions would have been disastrous.

WELFARE SOCIETY FOR EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

My strategy was to activate the Wel-

fare society of the institute to work for the common good of the employees. I am not sure whether anyone has used such a system anywhere else with the effectiveness and efficiency I achieved. I created income generation means for the Welfare society. With the earned income, we could take the employees on a foreign tour every year. Eventually, they found no use in politics.

It did not take long for the results to arrive. By 2007 most divisions were making substantial profits, with only two making minor losses. Management Information Systems division made a profit of Rs. 44 million. Management Development division made Rs. 21.6 million. By 2011 all five centers were making profits. Management, Productivity and Development had a bottom line of Rs. 185 million and MIS of Rs. 130 million. By the same year, the

**UPS AND DOWNS WITH
'NIKAN INNA BERI MINISSU'**



NIBM Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe stepped into as the Director General

aggregate operating profit of NIBM was Rs. 253 million.

I have learned in my management classes that when business was good, Henry Ford passed a considerable part of the earnings for the benefit of the employees. He increased the daily wages of the employees to USD 5 a day - a first in the industry - when others, on average, paid only USD 2.34. The increase was more than double the prevailing standards. He also conducted English classes for employees whose first language was not English. I initiated similar steps. I arranged English classes within the organization for needy employees. I also gradually increased their incentives. NIBM started paying monthly and annual incentives purely based on performance. I didn't stop there. Employees' children



received concessionary rates when following courses. We also arranged annual foreign trips for the employees. This was possible as we negotiated with airlines for a reduced charge for groups. All employers became members of the Welfare society that worked as their benefactor. I directed the trade commissions to the welfare society,



enabling it to use it for collective activities.

The credit for the NIBM transformation should go to the marvelous team I have worked with. Prof. Lakshman Jayathilleke joined in July 2006 as the Chairman. He was a distinguished educationist and a former Vice Chancellor of the University of Peradeniya. Dr. D.M.A. Kulasooriya and Ms. Kishani Wijesiriwardena were the two Executive Directors in charge of academic affairs. Mr. Tissa Deheragoda and Mr. Bernard Silva ably handled the administration and finance operations.

I would not call that a smooth journey. There were innumerable attempts to stop me. Hundreds of petitions were submitted to the ministry against my

activities. Some even made it to the offices of the President and Prime Minister. I was fortunate to have a Minister who took no notice of them. I was also called multiple times to the Bribery Commission.

Overall, NIBM was the place where I applied all that I have learnt in Japan, starting from 5S. Cleanliness was extremely important to me. I would not see a single piece of paper on the floor. I used to make a fuss when I saw others not following the Japanese ways I respected so much. I used to spend all seven days at the office. I reached home at midnight. I got up early in the morning to return to work. That was my passion.

Chapter 06

THE DNA OF AN EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP

• • • • •

“All that we are is the result of what we have thought. The mind is everything. What we think we become”
-Dhammapada

[In this analysis, the author explains the precise leadership traits Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe possesses and the management strategies he has employed to accomplish that objective.]

As the period I have worked with him is not long, and even then, I have not worked with him that closely, my view of Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe has always been from a distance. Perhaps that was the best way. So I can unbiasedly analyze my theories about this outstanding personality.

TRAIT 1: AUTHORITARIAN STYLE OF LEADERSHIP

One of the first things I have observed

is that Prof. Weerasinghe is different from the image that many have about him. He is an authoritarian leader, no doubt, but that does not necessarily mean he is not caring. He has ears for all but finally does what he thinks best. This is a common trait of all authoritarian leaders. Still, not all authoritarian leaders are the same. Nobody can say Stalin is the same as Lee Kuan Yew.



A meeting of the Board of Directors in progress

In general, authoritarian leadership is a style of leadership in which the leader controls all aspects of the decision-making process and demands strict obedience from subordinates. This type of leader tends to make decisions based on their own ideas and beliefs without consulting others or taking their opinions into account. Authoritarian leaders often have a top-down approach, with a clear hierarchy and strict rules and procedures. While this style of leadership can be effective in certain situations, it can sometimes also lead to a lack of creativity, innovation, and engagement among team members. Overall, authoritarian leadership is characterized by a strong emphasis on control, discipline, and order, with the leader at the center of all decision-making processes.

At the state level, we have enough evidence about authoritarian leaders achieving great results for their countries.

A term that is closely associated with our topic is 'Benevolent Dictatorship'. This explains a theoretical form of government in which an authoritarian leader exercises absolute power over the state but does so for the benefit of his population as a whole. Those who lead such regimes often tend to view democratic regimes as messy, inefficient and corrupt. In reality, they may be the opposite. They can be the cleanest and least corrupted times.

A benevolent dictator can allow some economic liberalization or democratic decision-making. It can be considered a republican form of enlightened

despotism. The controversy lies in determining who qualifies as a benevolent dictator and who does not. Although many 'dictators' and regimes are presented as benevolent, that does not necessarily mean they are benevolent. Among others, this label has been previously applied to leaders such as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Turkey), Josip Broz Tito (Yugoslavia), Lee Kuan Yew (Singapore), Mahathir Mohamad (Malaysia), Abdullah II (Jordan), Paul Kagame (Rwanda), and Qaboos bin Saïd al Saïd (Oman).

Please note the term 'dictator' is used loosely here, as many of the above are not only democratically elected but also have run their governments in a more democratic manner than the so-called democrats'. In most of these cases, the 'dictatorship' means a strict authoritarian rule rather than one that has unlawfully harassed the masses.

Lee Kuan Yew is arguably the most well-known and popular 'benevolent dictator' in the eyes of Sri Lankans. I have seen him treated as a 'hero' even by those who don't fully approve of his free market economic philosophy. A lawyer turned politician Lee has been the Prime Minister of Singapore from 1959 to 1990. During his long rule, Singapore became the most-developed country in Southeast Asia. An island nation with no natural resources and limited land and population, Singapore was a British crown colony and the site of Britain's principal naval base in East Asia. Lee transformed this country not only into the leading financial center in Southeast Asia but the key air and naval hub as well. He

brought his country an efficient administration and spectacular prosperity at the cost of an authoritarian style of government that sometimes infringed on civil liberties. By the 1980s, under Lee's guidance, Singapore had a per capita income second in East Asia only to Japan's, and the country had become a chief financial centre of Southeast Asia. Today the Singaporean economy is known to be one of the most liberal, innovative, competitive, dynamic and business-friendly economies.

I would like to term Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe, in his own way, a 'benevolent dictator'. So my friends were correct. He governs with an iron hand, but that is for the benefit of everyone. The establishment of NSBM is a win-win for all; for the students, academics, staff and finally, at large, the country itself.

TRAIT 2: LEARNINGS FROM THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN

The second management denominator apparent within Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe is his passion for quality. This is most probably an inheritance from his long days in Japan. The Japanese have a strong passion for quality in management, which has been evident in their approach to business for many years. They have a deep respect for tradition and strive to improve their processes and products continuously. This has led to the development of various management methodologies, such as Total Quality Management (TQM) and Kaizen, which emphasize continuous improvement, defect prevention, and teamwork. The Japanese believe that

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AN EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP**



every employee should be involved in improving the organization, and this approach has helped them achieve high levels of productivity, efficiency, and customer satisfaction. Japanese companies place great importance on quality management, and the passion for delivering the best products and services possible is deeply ingrained in their culture.

The Japanese culture is a part of NSBM Green University to the level that it looks more like a Japanese University in the middle of Sri Lanka. You walk around the campus not to find a single piece of paper on the floor. The toilets are super clean. The canteens are not congested. Students do not throw away food. They place the food waste carefully on the dust bins. The library, although a factory of knowledge production, is unusually silent. Every-

thing happens in order. Nobody deviates from that order.

Then Education. Education is highly valued in Japanese society, with parents and teachers emphasizing the importance of academic achievement and hard work. The Japanese approach to education is rooted in the belief that education is the key to success in life and that everyone, regardless of their background or social status, should have access to quality education. The Japanese pride themselves on having one of the best education systems in the world, with a strong emphasis on discipline, respect, and cooperation. Japanese students are taught to be diligent, focused, and hardworking, and they are encouraged to develop skills and knowledge that will prepare them for success in the future. This focus on education has helped Japan



become a leader in many fields, including technology and innovation, and it continues to be a central part of Japanese culture and society today.

Although it is difficult to make direct comparisons, Prof. Weerasinghe's management style is notably distinct and possibly a rarity in Sri Lanka. The styles prevalent in Sri Lanka are typically adaptations from either British or American management techniques. The fact that Prof. Weerasinghe's techniques deviate from these norms may suggest that he draws inspiration from management styles from other countries. It is, hence, informative to investigate Prof. Weerasinghe's management techniques in greater depth to gain a deeper understanding of the distinctive differences in his approach.

In my professional capacity, I have had

the pleasure of working with Saman Rodrigo, current Director of HR and Administration at NIBM, who holds a unique perspective on Prof. Weerasinghe's management style. Having previously held the position of Administration Officer in 2008, Rodrigo worked in close collaboration with Prof. Weerasinghe during his tenure at NIBM. With an MBA from NSBM Green University, Rodrigo perceives Prof. Weerasinghe's management techniques as exceptional and highly structured. While some view working with Prof. Weerasinghe as challenging, Rodrigo found the experience effortless, attributing this to Prof. Weerasinghe's ability to visualize success. Prof. Weerasinghe's unwavering focus and commitment to achieving his goals made team members' journeys all the more manageable since they knew what to achieve from the outset. Those who are successful in reaching the destination stay with him, and those who cannot achieve the KPIs established by Prof. Weerasinghe, tend to leave the organization.

Rodrigo further recounts: "I am amazed by Prof. Weerasinghe's exceptional resilience. As many found, he was affiliated with former President Mahinda Rajapaksa; he faced major opposition during the government transition in 2015. Unknown to him, the trade unions organized a political rally within the NIBM premises, which could have led to his ousting by the incoming administration. The initiation of the program he spearheaded was at risk of collapsing had he left at that time. This left me sleepless for many nights. However, when I shared



my concerns with Prof. Weerasinghe, he laughed it off. He remained unperturbed by the challenges he faced, which undoubtedly stemmed from his strong self-confidence. He was confident that he would be able to reach his goals, despite any external changes. Even during the most trying times, when many of his closest allies abandoned him, Prof. Weerasinghe remained resolute in his conviction. He was steadfast in his commitment to staying true to his principles, regardless of who left his side. Ultimately, he emerged victorious in the face of adversity.”

Bernard Silva, a former colleague of Prof. Weerasinghe, worked closely with him both at NIBM and NSBM Green University, where he was responsible for finance. Silva notes that Prof. Weerasinghe was thorough in his

review of even the minutest financial transactions, requiring detailed explanations before signing off on any document. Such scrutiny ensured compliance with correct procedures and that expenditures were deemed reasonable. Notably, Prof. Weerasinghe was keen on avoiding unnecessary expenses while encouraging spending where necessary. He quickly introduced modern furniture to NIBM, steering it away from its traditional government organization appearance and establishing a more corporate image. By deferring certain transactions and postponing payments that were non-essential, he was able to save the organization significant funds. His financial guidance resulted in enormous savings, which amounted to hundreds of millions of rupees throughout his tenure.



TRAIT 3: MASTERY IN TEAM BUILDING

Thirdly, Prof. Weerasinghe is a master in team building. Team building is an essential aspect of workplace success. As Henry Ford once said, "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." Good teamwork can help boost morale, increase productivity, and foster a positive work environment. Other inspiring quotes about teamwork include: "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." - Helen Keller. "The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team." - Phil Jackson. "Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean." - Ryunosuke Satoro. By encouraging teamwork and fostering a positive work environment, one can ensure the

success of one's workplace.

The selection of the initial NSBM Green University management team is an exemplary example of Prof. Weerasinghe's capacity for team building. He has selected the best team possible. Let's take it one by one and examine how the synergy has been achieved with this magnificent team.



Prof. Baratha Dodankotuwa

Prof. Baratha Dodankotuwa emerges as a senior player with a plethora of experiences. He was an Associate

Professor attached to the Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya. Having graduated from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura with a Bachelor of Science in Estate Management and Valuation (Special) Degree in 1984, he was selected to the academic staff of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce in 1985. In 1987, he earned a Postgraduate Diploma in Demography from the University of Colombo and an M.Sc. in Civil Engineering (Urban Planning) from Kobe University, Japan, in 1991. He held the Head positions of the Department of Estate Management and Valuation and the Department of Business Economics in the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce. Prof. Dodankotuwa was appointed as the Chairman of NIBM in 2004 and then the Chairman of Milco (Pvt) Ltd in 2005. He joined the University of Peradeniya in 2007 and held the responsibilities as the Head, the Department of Management Studies, Faculty of Arts and Head, the Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management.

Prof. Dodankotuwa's contribution to the initiative was apparent from the beginning. He was a pioneering academic at NSBM Green University when he joined in 2012 on sabbatical leave to spend one year. During this period, he was instrumental in preparing the NSBM Green University Corporate Plan 2013 - 2018 and the NSBM Green University Magazine 'Business Dialogue'. He joined NSBM Green University again in 2015 for another year on sabbatical leave. Then NSBM Green University became his second home.



Prof. Chaminda Ratnayake

Prof. Chaminda Ratnayake, current Deputy Vice Chancellor of NSBM Green University, was another remarkable selection of Prof. Weerasinghe. He again is one of the pioneer academics at NSBM Green University. He came from NIBM, where he headed Kurunegala and Kandy Branches for a decade. This has led to his active involvement in administrative, marketing, advertising and event management activities at NSBM Green University.

Initiating his academic achievements as a graduate of the University of Colombo, he completed his Master's Degree from the University of Colombo School of Computing (UCSC). He has also completed the postgraduate level of his MBA at the University of Wayamba. He also possesses vast exposure to various local and international training. These include training on Transformational Leadership at Maastricht School of Business, Netherlands; Vocational Educational Institution Management at the Ministry of Commerce, People's Republic of China; International Business at the University of Plymouth, United Kingdom; Mobile Application Development and Testing Best Practices-Computer Science at Computer Society of Sri Lanka; and Information Access Centre Operations - Korean Agency for Digi-

tal Opportunities, South Korea. He is also an Associate Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). Currently, he is following his doctoral studies at Stockholm University in the field of Citizen Science.

Now at NSBM Green University, Prof. Rathnayake takes an interest in partaking in the Personality Development activities of students and has an intense concern for youth development. He is the mastermind and the project manager behind the Emerging Young Leader Award (EYLA) Program, launched as a project to celebrate the United Nations International Year of Youth, which later became an annual national event. He also played a crucial role in content management of the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2014 held in Hambantota and World Conference on Youth 2014.



Ms. Thilini De Silva

Ms. Thilini De Silva, currently the Dean of the Faculty of Business at NSBM Green University, is another exceptional selection. She graduated from University of Wayamba as the gold medalist with a Bachelor of Science in Banking and Finance with a First Class. She has completed her MBA at the Postgraduate Institute of

Management, Sri Lanka. Her areas of expertise are Financial Accounting, Financial Markets and Institutions, Management Accounting, Professional Development and Management.



Dr. Chaminda Wijesinghe

Dr. Chaminda Wijesinghe is another member of the initial team. He started his academic career in 2007, joining the National Institute of Business Management (NIBM) as a Consultant/ Lecturer. Soon after joining NIBM, he initiated several new Certificate and Diploma programs, such as Diploma in Computer Systems Design (Part-Time), Diploma in Software Development, Diploma in Computer Networks and Certificate in Software Development in Java. From the day NSBM started its operations, Dr. Wijesinghe has been leading all academic programs in the School of Computing and initiated a Postgraduate Diploma in Computer Networks, which is approved by the University Grants Commission.

Dr. Wijesinghe is the Dean Postgraduate Division, Faculty of Postgraduate Studies and Professional Advancement at NSBM Green University. He was engaged in the design and development of a modern University Management Information System for NSBM Green University at Homagama as the Project Leader. He holds a Bachelor of

Science from the University of Peradeniya and a Master of Science in Computer Science from the same university. He was a licensed Air Traffic Controller and worked at Bandaranaike International Airport for nearly five years as an Air Traffic Controller. He changed his job and joined the academy because of his passion for being in academia.

The beauty of this initial team is that, with the exception of Prof. Weerasinghe and Prof. Dodankotuwa, the rest were all young professionals. They were academically sound, dynamic enough and had already demonstrated their talents in academic and extracurricular activities. Still, for an outsider, they looked relatively inexperienced for the responsible positions they were going to hold. In the traditional university environment in Sri Lanka, those who held high posts were invariably senior and experienced in terms of the years they served. Young professionals are promoted only on extremely rare occasions. This is where Prof. Weerasinghe's distinct vision played a key role. He saw the future, not the present. He realized the vast future potential of young individuals. So he created a new standard. What's important was not the seniority but the talent; not necessarily the number of years of teaching but the positive attitude. That was the winning formula for NSBM Green University. If Prof. Weerasinghe had selected a group of senior academics who only had years to show, the whole exercise would probably have failed. NSBM Green University became a success because of this vision which was clearly a deviation from the existing norm.



Mr. Bernard Silva

Bernard Silva recalls how Prof. Weerasinghe led his team at NIBM. "He was seldom confined to his office; most of the time, he would walk around the building, using stairs instead of the elevator. His movements were dubbed 'ward rounds' by the staff. Prof. Weerasinghe would observe the work of each team member, inquiring about any issues they faced and addressing them immediately. Leaving any problem unsolved was not part of his modus operandi. He applied his own management techniques to identify both high-performing and unproductive or dishonest staff members. Prof. Weerasinghe would offer guidance to unproductive workers and demand their resignations if matters did not improve within a short period. He was determined to prevent one bad apple from contaminating the entire team. This same principle was extended to students. Prof. Weerasinghe would ask exceptionally underperforming students to leave with their fees refunded. He was not willing to compromise the reputation of the institute for short-term financial gain. This was one risk he was not willing to take."

Thilini De Silva expressed high admiration for Prof. Weerasinghe's exceptional team building skills. Prof. Weer-

asinghe's leadership style involves taking calculated risks, such as recruiting Thilini and subsequently appointing her as the Dean of the Faculty of Business, the university's largest faculty, at merely 30 years of age. This style stems from his special ability to assess individuals and their capabilities accurately. While not all of Prof. Weerasinghe's gambles have yielded positive results, he has nonetheless managed to assemble a team that is loyal, competent, and dedicated to the pursuit of his vision. This ability to identify and cultivate effective teams is recognized in Management theory as the skill of selecting the 'In' and 'Out' teams, at which Prof. Weerasinghe is a master.

"It is interesting to observe Prof. Weerasinghe's team selection process," says Thilini De Silva. "Having sat in numerous interview panels with him, I have observed that he typically delegates the task of questioning candidates to others while actively listening to their responses. He then poses one critical question that offers a comprehensive understanding of the applicant. Ultimately, the decision rests with him, although he takes into account the opinions of others. This method has consistently yielded positive results, including in my own case. Though I had yet to complete my degree when I applied for a job at NIBM, Prof. Weerasinghe recognized my potential and not only employed me but entrusted me with a role in the NSBM Green University Project. I have since made the most of the opportunity, although I still wonder about the risk he took by hiring me. Such risks are not something I would undertake personally."

TRAIT 4: PROFICIENCY IN DEALING WITH POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Prof. Weerasinghe's fourth leadership quality is his capacity to win and work with political leadership. This is an ability which becomes extremely handy in this part of the world, where nothing really happens without political intervention. On the contrary, much good work is obstructed by political interference. Thus, it becomes a primary task of any achiever to get the political forces aligned with one's goals.

Though we usually do not appreciate its significance, political leadership plays a crucial role in society. Leaders are responsible for making major decisions that impact the lives of people in their community or even the entire nation. It is important for leaders to understand the needs and concerns of their constituents and to work towards addressing them. Effective political leadership can bring about positive change, promote social justice, and improve the overall well-being of society. Leaders who are visionary, communicative, and able to make tough decisions can inspire people and create a sense of hope and unity. On the other hand, poor political leadership can lead to corruption, civil unrest, and economic instability. Therefore, it is essential for leaders to be competent, accountable, and trustworthy, and to prioritize the interests of their constituents above their own personal or political gain.

As political leadership plays a pivotal

role in shaping the direction and outcome of societies, an individual appointed to the position of a political leader is entrusted with significant responsibility and power to steer the nation in a certain direction. With the aid of innovative policies, visionary decision-making, and effective communication, the impact of the leader on society can initiate positive change in the community, promote social justice, and foster social and economic development. A leader that understands and acknowledges the needs and requirements of their constituents can develop a vision that places their people on a trajectory of prosperity, progress, and development. In contrast, a leader who fails to deliver on their promises, neglects their responsibilities or engages in corrupt practices can cause severe harm to the nation and the society at large. It is, therefore, crucial for a leader to take their role seriously and have an unwavering commitment to their people's well-being, prioritizing the interest of the public above their own personal or political gain.

Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe has carefully used his position to direct the political leadership of the day towards gaining results for his own institutional intentions. There wasn't an iota of personal agenda behind it. Whatever the achievements, they were for the organization. That was how a world-class university was raised from barren land in a remote area.

Some find Prof. Weerasinghe as an exceptional leader who had the unique ability to manage and motivate any group of people, even when they did not officially report to him.

Saman Rodrigo, Secretary of the NIBM Governance Board during Prof. Weerasinghe's time, witnessed firsthand how he could rally a diverse board with differing opinions and get them all on the same page - something that is no small feat given that only three members were appointed by the Minister while others were independent ex-officio members who could dispute proposals made by said Minister. Despite this complexity, Prof. Weerasinghe consistently managed to lead his peers in agreement with his own proposals and serve as a true leader within the Governance Board environment - one whose skills went far beyond mere political leadership but rather encompassed an understanding of people management on a larger scale than most are capable of achieving.

TRAIT 5: THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe is a star-class innovator. Innovators are different from inventors, who invent new products. Instead, innovators create solutions. Innovation is crucial for firms to stay competitive and relevant in today's fast-paced business environment. It helps firms to grow, increase productivity, and generate greater output and value with minimum resources. Innovation can bring uniqueness and novelty to business processes, making them stand out from the rest and contributing to increased customer satisfaction. It also helps businesses respond to unforeseen events effectively and solve complex problems within the organization.

Innovation can lead to the creation of new products, services, and pricing models, breaking the monopoly of a few companies and businesses. Companies that do not embrace innovation and change cannot afford to stay afloat, and they risk becoming irrelevant in the market. For example, Apple's partnership with Microsoft kick-started an era of innovative risk-taking, which led to the invention of tech products that many consider staples of their lives today, such as iPods, iPhones, Macbooks, Apple Watches, and iPads, alongside the invention of iTunes, which effectively reshaped the music industry as a whole.

Examples of Prof. Weerasinghe's innovativeness are seen everywhere at NSBM Green University. In the beginning, he proposes and starts a new bus service to attract students to a location not served by public transport services. For students to purchase their necessities, there is a mini supermarket on the premises - one thing you do not typically find in a university. All events at the university are branded and carried out in style. Sinhala-Tamil new year festival is "Siyapath Siya Udanaya". Music evening is "Rasogha". The annual sports meet is branded "Sports Fiesta". These mini-brands make NSBM Green University a "House of Brands".

Bernard Silva has shared with me the significant advancements accomplished by Prof. Weerasinghe during the latter's tenure as the Director General at the National Institute of Business Management (NIBM) since 2005.

At the time of Prof. Weerasinghe's arrival, NIBM faced overcrowding and a lack of facilities to support its growing student population. In response, Prof. Weerasinghe spearheaded the construction of new buildings, not only at the NIBM Colombo headquarters but also at branch offices across the country. For instance, the Kurunegala branch, which was more of a house than an educational center, was completely transformed under Prof. Weerasinghe's leadership. Temporarily relocating classes to another facility, the Kurunegala Center was rebuilt to be more conducive to learning and student-friendly. Moreover, the NIBM Galle branch, which was entirely the brainchild of Prof. Weerasinghe, was built on abandoned land owned by the Central Transport Board and purchased at an affordable price. This center is now one of the most spacious among all NIBM branches. Prof. Weerasinghe's vision also extended to the Kandy branch, where he negotiated a lease of a building recolored to reflect the NIBM brand. The transformation of NIBM's facilities resulted in a notable increase in student enrollment, and I have been informed that Bernard Silva, who has worked in numerous other settings, has never witnessed such a rapid and effective transformation as that accomplished by Prof. Weerasinghe during his time at NIBM.

The parallel I see in international management is Henry Ford. Either knowingly or unknowingly, Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe has followed many lessons first taught to the world by Ford. The founder of Ford Motor Company and chief developer of the assem-

THE DNA OF
AN EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP



bly line technique of mass production, Ford created the first automobile that middle-class Americans could afford. His conversion of the automobile from an expensive luxury into an accessible conveyance profoundly impacted the landscape of the 20th century. On the other hand, Prof. Weerasinghe's intervention in the higher education market

has enabled many middle-class parents to educate their children in professional streams. Otherwise, that opportunity was available only for the rich who could send their offspring abroad.

Ford was recognized for his innovative approach to personnel management, known as "welfare capitalism." This



strategy aimed to improve working conditions for his employees and reduce the high turnover rate experienced in many departments, where 300 individuals had to be hired each year to fill 100 slots. Ford understood that a high level of efficiency relied on attracting and retaining the best workers. In 1914, Ford earned global attention by introducing a daily wage of USD 5, which was more than twice the rate paid to most of his workers at that time, equivalent to USD 150 today. This decision proved to be advantageous to Ford; skilled mechanics across

Detroit were drawn to the organization, utilizing their expertise and knowledge to increase productivity while reducing training costs. As a result, Ford was able to benefit from a stable, efficient workforce that helped him remain profitable.

Prof. Weerasinghe has given a fine example of employee motivation by offering a quick boost in the standard of living for dedicated and productive employees who contribute value addition to the organization. He increased the compensation packages. At NIBM,

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AN EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP**



when I joined in 2015, the lecturers were paid only an LKR 700 additional allowance per day for visiting Kurunegala and Kandy branches for teaching. They had to cover the traveling and other costs from that. Prof. Weerasinghe, with the approval of the NIBM Governing Council, increased the allowance to LKR 3,500 a day. He also

introduced incentive systems for those who contribute more to earn an additional income, sometimes more than the basic salary. In the years the organization made adequate profits, he used a part of that to take the entire staff on a foreign tour. For some of the minor staff, it was the first time to visit a foreign land. I have seen how they

demonstrate their gratitude, sometimes touching the feet of Prof. Weerasinghe, which is a rare gesture in the work environment.

Saman Rodrigo shared with me the story of how the first foreign trip came to fruition. "Initially, the plan was to organize a local trip," Rodrigo recalled. "However, when we found that there was a surplus of funds, we proposed the idea of a foreign trip to Prof. Weerasinghe. At first, he was hesitant about the idea, as it was uncommon for state sector organizations to take their staff on foreign trips. Additionally, he was unsure whether it would be possible to obtain government approval for taking all staff on vacation at the same time, which could have led to the organization's closure for several days. There was a considerable amount of risk involved. However, we were able to convince him to support the idea, and once he was on board, nothing could change his mind. He encouraged us to make the idea a reality, despite any obstacles we may encounter. Prof. Weerasinghe also boosted our team morale. We had to persuade other members of the organization to participate in the trip, which was not an easy task given that some of the staff members had never before left the country and did not hold a passport. We had to facilitate the process of obtaining passports and visas for them. Furthermore, Prof. Weerasinghe sought permission from the government for the expenditure and the unprecedented move to take all staff members of the organization abroad simultaneously."

Rodrigo recalls how Prof. Weerasinghe

defined the principles to be followed. He wanted to make the effort inclusive. He wanted to ensure that every member of the organization was included, not just the permanent staff, as some proposed because of the financial constraints. The principles were based on treating everyone equally, irrespective of their role in the organization. All participants were expected to fly in the same class, and accommodations and food were to be consistent for all participants, from the top management to the most junior staff. The trip proved highly successful in terms of its impact on team building, and Prof. Weerasinghe's leadership in allowing it to be organized earned him genuine respect within the organization.

Another fantastic example was provided by Seetha Wijesinghe, a program coordinator at NIBM who served Prof. Weerasinghe. This is connected to his work at the NIBM Welfare Society. Initially, the only source of funding for the Welfare group was the money raised from an annual entertainment event. The Welfare Society was then given the responsibility of providing students with daily tea at Wijesinghe's proposal, according to Prof. Weerasinghe. With a cup of tea costing Rs. 10, this provided the community with consistent revenue. Furthermore, it was mandated that marketers for the institution pay a 5% commission, with the proceeds going to welfare funds. According to Wijesinghe, that is how the Welfare Society was able to make enough money to send all of its members on vacation abroad.

TRAIT 6: PASSION FOR QUALITY

Sixthly, Prof. Weerasinghe is insanely obsessed with perfection. He has an insatiable thirst for quality. An essential factor in production we teach management students is that quality helps to satisfy customers and retain their loyalty, which ultimately leads to higher revenues and profitability. Quality products also help to maintain customer satisfaction and loyalty and reduce the risk and cost of replacing faulty goods. Companies can build a reputation for quality by gaining accreditation with a recognized quality standard. Quality is critical to satisfying customers and retaining their loyalty so they continue to buy from the same firm in the future. Quality products make an important contribution to long-term revenue and profitability. In addition, studies show a strong positive association between quality and profitability. High quality produces a higher return on investment (ROI) for any given market share. Therefore, it is important to ensure that quality is considered from the very beginning and built into everything a business or organization does. In spite of all these theories in the textbooks, there are only a few individuals who religiously demand quality, as humans crave Oxygen under water. Prof. Weerasinghe belongs to that tiny minority.

Steve Jobs was widely known for his obsession with perfection. During the initial production phase of Apple-I, says Walter Isaacson - biographer of Jobs, even when fighting with extremely tight deadlines, Jobs insisted that

Steve Wozniak, co-founder of Apple and the designer of Apple-I should focus on the aesthetic aspects of the machine. Wozniak was puzzled. "Who cares about the aesthetics of a computer motherboard?" He quipped. Steve Jobs responded, saying he does. That was the level of perfection sought by him.

I remember a narrative my former colleague and friend Lakshman Amarasinghe, former Head of the Kandy NIBM branch shared with me. Amarasinghe, too has had enough interactions with the Japanese to be well-trained on quality aspects. While organizing an event at the Kandy branch, he wanted to demonstrate his own passion for quality. He made extra efforts to make everything happen perfectly. Still, Prof. Weerasinghe's sharp eye found a piece of string somewhere it should not be! It was that difficult meeting his expectations for perfection.

Daya Abeysinghe, who had the privilege of working alongside Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe for nearly a decade, recalls his senior colleague as a skilled expert in visualization. With remarkable accuracy, Prof. Weerasinghe was able to visually conceptualize structures in his mind, resulting in completed buildings that were nearly indistinguishable from their original designs. Unwavering in his pursuit of excellence, he incorporated state-of-the-art techniques and consulted numerous advisers, ultimately making autonomous decisions based on his own professional judgment. Even the location of trees on the property was a matter of concern for Prof. Weerasinghe.



he. During construction, he insisted on working exclusively with contractors ranked at the highest level, taking absolutely no chances with quality. The resulting buildings are so impressive that students studying within them have stated that they feel as though they are attending classes in Singapore rather than in the developing country in which they are actually located.

Abeyesinghe expressed his awe at the exceptional level of meticulousness that Prof. Weerasinghe consistently demonstrated. Even when met with opposition from architects and engineers, Prof. Weerasinghe remained steadfast in his vision, refusing to compromise on quality or functionality. For instance, a power line that was

prone to overloading presented a challenge for the NIBM building. Without hesitation, he replaced the line and added a generator for backup. He even weighed in on column design, despite significant resistance from political trade unions. Undeterred by those who protested against his methods, Prof. Weerasinghe held fast to his convictions and saw his plans through to completion.

TRAIT 7: PERSUASIVENESS (“I THINK, THEREFORE FOR I DO”)

Finally, persuasiveness. As a vital skill that can be applied in various aspects of life, including the workplace, and social interactions, persuasive capabilities are becoming more and more important in today's work environ-

ment, as they can change the mindset of employees, leading to a change in how a business operates. Persuasive communication can be a powerful and effective tool for achieving goals, both in internal and external business operations. To be an effective persuader, one first needs to understand what persuasion is, be confident in oneself and one's ideas, and clearly state all the benefits. Prof. Weerasinghe has been successful in persuading all NSBM Green University employees to work towards creating a better and more productive working environment. He has also been successful in retaining many employees long-term. He completed 18 continuous years at NIBM and NSBM Green University together in 2023.

During my conversation with Saman Rodrigo and Bernard Silva, they both shared insights on the challenges faced by Prof. Weerasinghe in implementing his solutions. Despite encountering opposition from his detractors, Prof. Weerasinghe remained unfazed by their criticisms and never sought to retaliate. Some of his critics reportedly went to extreme lengths to undermine his work, yet he remained unbothered by their actions. Additionally, Prof. Weerasinghe's leadership style was characterized by a fair and inclusive approach where subordinates who opposed his ideas continued to have equal opportunities. He did not adopt a vindictive approach when dealing with dissenting opinions or opposing viewpoints.

In his assessment of Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe's motivational style, Dr. Cha-

minda Wijesinghe characterizes it as both exceptional and unique. Notably, Prof. Weerasinghe displays an unparalleled sense of urgency when completing tasks. Even after assigning a task to a team member, he remains actively involved in overseeing its progress and will stop at nothing until it succeeds. Prof. Weerasinghe has a clear vision of the targets he wants to achieve, and he is not afraid to take decisive action in order to ensure their attainment. For instance, when Dr. Wijesinghe was tasked with designing a degree in data science and encountered delays due to team members failing to provide their input in a timely manner, Prof. Weerasinghe held Dr. Wijesinghe personally responsible for the project's timely completion rather than the team as a whole. By setting a specific deadline and providing clear guidance and expectations, Prof. Weerasinghe was able to motivate Dr. Wijesinghe to complete the task successfully Well before the deadline, despite the challenges.

"He does not micromanage," continues Dr. Wijesinghe. "He offers total discretion when performing a task. Only the boundaries and the immovable deadline are specified by him. Nevertheless, he inspires the group so that everyone works voluntarily. His inspirational abilities were on display during the COVID-19 lockdown and the financial crisis. He makes such a terrific leader."

Thilini De Silva shares her agreement, stating that Prof. Weerasinghe is an exemplary leader who tirelessly



pursues the fruition of his ideas. She notes that he possesses a keen sense of discernment, adeptly differentiating between potential ideas and those less promising ones. Thilini cites the establishment of a fee-levying university as an outstanding example of this. Despite intense opposition during her campus days in the early 2000s, Prof. Weerasinghe remained resolute, pressing forward with the idea and successfully building the brand of the NSBM Green University. His determination and unwavering dedication

were evident in his dynamic energy and self-defined path to success. Today, he continues to work at his own rhythm.

Chapter 07

OUR STUDENTS RESPECT US, AS WE RESPECT THEM

• • • • •

“ It is always good to work with people who make you feel insecure about yourself. That way, you will constantly keep pushing your limits ”

- Sundar Pichai

[Prof. Baratha Dodankotuwa is one of the most senior academics at NSBM Green University. Unsurprisingly, the Head of Academic Development and Quality Assurance has his own story to narrate.]

I was born in the serene village of Kotaligoda, Menikdiwela, located in the Yatinuwara area of the Kandy district. My family was middle-income, and my father held the esteemed position of the village headman, referred to as "Gammuladeni" in those times.

I have always excelled academically,

which was evident from my early years of education. After completing my primary education at my village school, I enrolled at Vidyarthi College, located in Kandy. Despite not being as well-known in the rural areas, I discovered that Vidyarthi College stood on par with other esteemed educational institutions in the region, including Trinity, Dharmaraja, King-

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AS WE RESPECT THEM



swood, and St. Anthony's. The college prioritized both education and sports. Following my participation in the National Certificate in General Education (NCGE), I got eligibility to be selected for any stream for my Advanced Level examinations. Additionally, during my time at the college, I was a member of the oriental band and played Flute for six to seven years. Other than that, I was also engaged in boxing and athletics.

As significant changes were done back and forth after the government's fall in 1977, we had to stay in A/Ls for four long years. Within this period, I have tried a gamut of subjects in Commerce and Arts streams. Finally, I completed my A/Ls in Commerce, Accounting, Economics and Geography. I was selected to Sri Jayawardenapura University in the first attempt itself to

study 'Real Estate Management and Valuation'. There were only 25 students enrolled for the program.

THE RUGBY CAPTAIN AT J'PURA

I was so playful and easy-going those days, not many thought I could do well in my studies. I knew I could manage both. I think the best period of my life was the time we started rugby at the University of Sri Jayawardenapura. I captained the team in 1984 and became the runners-up at the inter-university tournament.

Upon the completion of my degree with a Second Upper Class standing, I was eligible to apply for a position as an Assistant Lecturer at the University. During that time, the Vice Chancellor was the esteemed Prof.



University of Sri Jayewardenepura



Meeting with Dr. Karunasena Kodituwakku, Sri Lanka Ambassador to Japan - 1988

Karunasena Kodituwakku, whose immense care towards young graduates, including myself, impressed me greatly. Upon facing the interview panel, Prof. Kodituwakku introduced me by saying, "This is my Rugby Captain," which boosted my morale

significantly - much like being tapped on the back by a senior in a rugby match. Although the interview questions were challenging, I answered them successfully and, as a result, was selected for the Assistant Lecturer post. I joined the Real Estate Man-

agement Department shortly thereafter.

That was where I met the protagonist of the NSBM Green University saga. He too was selected as an Assistant Lecturer in the same faculty. As he was older than me by several years, I first called him 'Weere-ayya'. It didn't take much time to change it to "Weere". (Now, I never use this address in public. Our public relationship is different. I give him due respect in the public sphere.)

In fact, Prof. Weerasinghe's fame has travelled before him. He was well known as an athlete of long-distance running and an excellent football player. I had the opportunity to meet him while organizing a get-together for senior faculty members, which was when I first realized that he was a unique individual. Unlike many who engage in idle chatter, Prof. Weerasinghe was far more concerned with getting things done. When I requested Rs. 100 from him for the party, I was surprised when he promptly handed it over without any hassle. This was a significant amount for someone earning a salary of only Rs. 1,700 per month.

I remember another encounter during the get-together. A senior staff member got angry as our "Weere-ayya" had addressed him as "Machan". "What could I do? I addressed him as "Machan", because he too addressed me like that" responded Weere-ayya. We all had a nice laugh. Later that senior and Prof. Weerasinghe became good friends.

IN THE LAND OF SAKURA

Over the course of the next several years, my interaction with him was infrequent as he received scholarships to pursue post-graduate degrees at various universities. In 1988, I was fortunate to receive a scholarship to study in Japan. This was during the time of the 1988-89 incidents, which I only heard about through news reports or communication with my friends and family. I completed my Masters in Urban Planning at Kobe University, a national university in western Japan. Established in 1949 with roots dating back to 1902, when it was known as Kobe Higher Commercial School, the university has since grown to become one of the country's leading comprehensive universities, with ten faculties and schools, fifteen graduate schools, and multiple research centers and institutions. My area of focus was in the Engineering Faculty.

Prior to my studies at Kobe University, I followed a course in Japanese language and culture at Osaka University of Foreign Studies (OUFS), known as Osaka gaikokugo daigaku in Japanese, which was one of Japan's two national universities specialized in foreign studies. This was the same university where Prof. E A Weerasinghe too studied. From my experience there I have understood the real meaning of 'Internationalization'. The program was so diverse and deep that we automatically learned about 100 cultures, as the participants were from all over the world. Still, our focus was the Japanese language and culture. As Sri Lankans, it was easy for us to learn



Japanese as our language structure is the same.

While pursuing my studies in Japan, I had the opportunity to rekindle my friendship with my friend. As Osaka and Kobe are in proximity, we had the opportunity to spend time together on weekends. Being familiar with Japa-

nese culture and customs, I was able to introduce him to the local ways of doing things. Initially, Prof. Weerasinghe was ambivalent towards Japanese cuisine, but with limited alternatives, he eventually came to appreciate its unique flavors. Over time, I learned that my dear friend had also taken up business activities, which seemed to

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Osaka University of foreign studies



With friends from Isreal and Australia – 1988

be a natural fit for him. Witnessing his progress filled me with immense happiness, knowing that he had found his true calling.

WIJERAMA DAYS

I returned to Sri Lanka in 1991. I could have extended my scholarship to cover my PhD course too, but I wanted to be on the island for a personal reason. For the next few years, my colleague visited his motherland very often. Sometimes even 3-4 times a year. This was from his own money as he was earning well now. I was the one he always first informed of his travel plans. I used to organize get-togethers for him. My colleague is a man who had his inner satisfaction by treating his friends. That was his nature.

I became the Head of the Real Estate



In Japan – Summer 1990



At the summit of Mount Fuji, the highest mountain in Japan – Summer 1988



Prof. Baratha Dodankotuwa as Chairman of MILCO, 2005

Management Department in 1994, as the youngest head then. I was involved in many students' activities during that period. I also taught thousands of students. I remember 'Weere-ayya' - now as Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe- returned to the island sometime in the late 1990s. So, I could work with him again closely. One opinion both shared was that there is something wrong with the Sri Lankan education system.

During a particular period, the entire faculty underwent restructuring, which was spearheaded by Prof. Jagath Bandaranaike, who served as the Dean at the time. The restructuring efforts gave rise to a new department of Business Economics, with Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe as its first Head. At that time, I served in the Department of

Real Estate Management and Valuation, with my background in economics being largely applied. Despite some lack of obvious connection, Dr. Weerasinghe extended an invitation for me to join his department, which I initially doubted. However, upon his insistence and eagerness to have me on board, I eventually accepted the offer and became the department's second Head. We later handed over the reins to Prof. Sampath Amarantunge, who now serves as the Chairman of the University Grants Commission.

In 2004, a group of friends proposed Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe for the post of Dean which he lost unfortunately (or in retrospect, fortunately). He was flabbergasted and decided to end his relationship with the University of Sri



With Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe at Milco (Pvt) LTD - 2005

Jayewardenepura due to the reason mentioned above. He wanted to move out. He wanted to apply his knowledge to transform another institution. He wanted to do better. He had the capacity to do that.

Actually, he was so frustrated that he wanted to play a political game. We formed a group of lecturers who were pro-SLFP. Dr. Weerasinghe's management capabilities were so effective that he could even attract those who politically disagreed with us, to our group. When we met top SLFP leaders of the times such as Madame Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and her Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse, we should over-show our strength. Especially after the formation of the new government in 2005, some of us were given top positions in state institutions. Even I served as the Chairman of the National Institute of Business Management for a few months. One thing I still need to learn

is who promoted me. I didn't stay there for long. It was my predecessor, Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe who could spearhead the transformation of the institute. I think it is better to hear that story from him.

MY EXPERIENCES AT MILCO

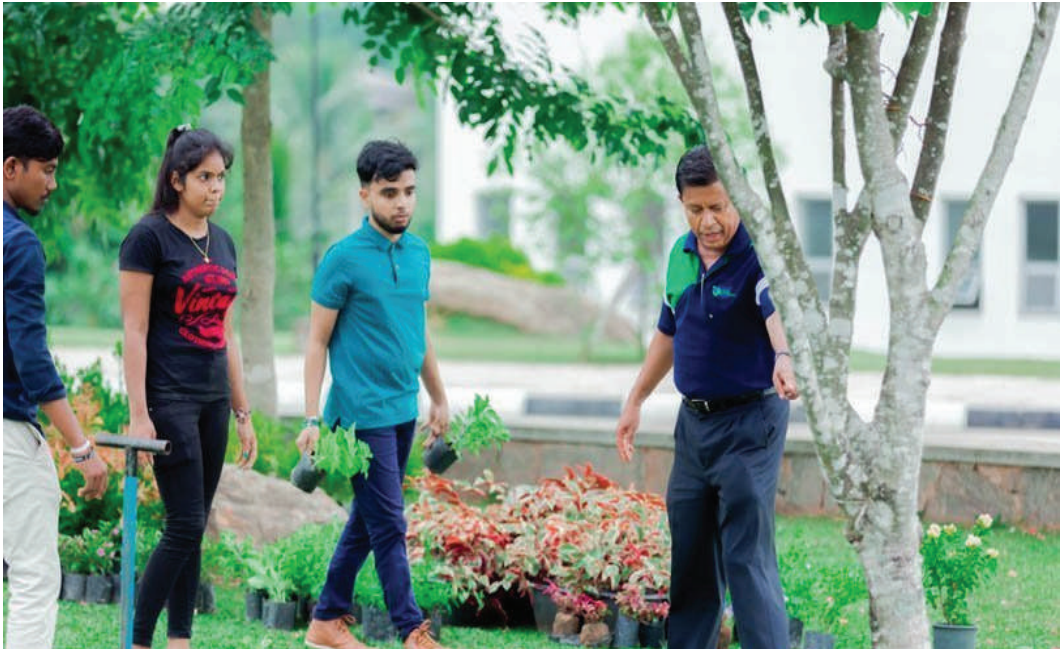
In 2005, I was appointed by then Minister C. B. Ratnayake, who was responsible for Livestock Development, to serve as the Chairman of MILCO, a government-owned dairy company in Sri Lanka. MILCO operates three milk plants, strategically located in Nara-henpita, Digana, and Ambewela, with a combined plant capacity of 200,000 liters per day. The core activities of MILCO involve the collection, processing, packaging, and distribution of milk and milk products throughout Sri Lanka. During my tenure of two years at MILCO, I was able to implement significant improvements to the company's operations.

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One of the notable achievements was the modernization of the 75 refrigeration centers scattered across the island, which were previously poorly maintained. We successfully upgraded and modernized all of these centers, significantly enhancing their efficiency and reliability. Additionally, we undertook a comprehensive modernization project at the Narahenpita plant, resulting in improved production processes and enhanced product quality.

Another aspect of our success was the recruitment of fresh graduates for milk procurement activities. I am proud to note that several of these individuals have since advanced to management positions within MILCO, a testament to their talent and the opportunities provided by the company. Furthermore, we were able to obtain international certifications for the Ambewela plant, underscoring our commitment to meeting global quality standards.



FROM HANTANA TO PITIPANA

Then let me get into my involvement with NSBM Green University. I was serving as a Senior Lecturer at the University of Peradeniya then. This was a move I made in 2007, as the place was closer to my residence. . Still I was continuing my relationship with Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe although we did not meet quite often; meet-ups were limited to participating in a religious ceremony or two at NIBM.

Then after about two years, I heard a massive news on an ambitious project started by my friend. The moment I noticed a related advertisement I became over-jubilant. There could not be anybody as happy as I was to hear it. I could not even imagine the immense possibilities. I had a vague feeling that my future is going to be with this newly established university.

In 2012, at the request of my friend, I submitted an application for the newly established NSBM Green University and it got accepted. So, NSBM Green University became the third higher educational institute in Sri Lanka I was associated with. First I joined NSBM during my sabbatical leave. My first workplace was the Nugegoda centre. It was long before we built the Green University campus town at Pitipana, Homagama.

Though I returned to Peradeniya after serving a year at NSBM Green University, my mind was always with it. A few years back, one day my friend told me, “Bharatha, if you like the idea so much, why don’t you join us? Resign from Peradeniya and submit an application.” That was just a few weeks before NSBM Green University had planned to move to its new location at Homagama.

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Making the decision to leave a secured, full-time position at a reputable state university for a new institution was not a small step. It was not a conventional move, as people rarely make such decisions. However, despite the challenges, I felt an inner conviction that guided me to take the leap and join NSBM Green University. Just mere ten days before the university's opening, I joined the staff, and with such a limited time frame, I did not have a place to stay in Colombo. Therefore, I had to reside in the university premises alone, as my family was in Kandy. This period was one of the most challenging experiences I have ever faced, spending my nights in an empty and desolate environment. However, looking back on that time, I take pride in my dedicated work for NSBM Green University. Our efforts culminated in launching the Pitipana premises on October 26, 2016, which President Maithripala Sirisena

graced as the Chief Guest..

A CULTURE OF EDUCATION IS MORE THAN JUST A SCHOOL

Subsequent to my appointment, I have been fully dedicated to advancing the operations of this esteemed institution. At its inception, we had an enrollment of 4,000 students. However, we have grown the student population to over 12,000, spread across our five faculties comprising Business, Computing, Engineering, Science, and Postgraduate studies. Our faculty is rich with top-tier academic professionals selected among the best of the best in the country. Furthermore, we have established several departments that have skilled academic specialists overseas. To facilitate our students' overall development, we have also assigned extracurricular responsibilities to each lecturer, recognizing the

critical value of fostering a collaborative and cohesive learning environment. In conclusion, effective teamwork is as essential as individual contributions at this institution, which we fully uphold as a guiding principle.,

Given that both the Vice Chancellor and I have excelled not only in academic pursuits but also in sports and other activities, it was imperative to us that we foster a well-rounded environment here at the university. We have established approximately 20 sports clubs and an additional 20 clubs focusing on activity-based programs. We are dedicated to providing our students with opportunities on par with those in an international university setting. Students can participate in organizations such as Leo Club, Rotaract, AIESEC, and Toastmasters through our robust club offerings. These affiliations are instrumental in honing the critical teamwork skills necessary to succeed in virtually any professional endeavour. Additionally, we proudly support clubs representing all the major religions in Sri Lanka. I am honoured to have played a significant role in cultivating such an enriching environment.

Our staff is quite youthful, comprising mainly academic professionals below the age of 50. In fact, approximately 75% of our academic staff members are under 30.. Some commonly believe that a large number of senior staff members are necessary for the creation and development of a successful university institution, but as I think this notion is incorrect. Age

is not a significant factor when it comes to developing an institution. Rather, what is essential is whether a potential employee's values align with our organizational culture. An individual's capacity for success is more heavily correlated with their drive and willingness to work rather than their age or experience. Much of what I have achieved at this institution, I have never attempted elsewhere. Similarly, the Vice Chancellor has also gained a wealth of valuable experience in his role. We possess an innate dedication to constant learning, which has allowed us to thrive, even as we have undertaken numerous completely new initiatives such as our business magazine. The culture of our organization centers on learning, which allows us to remain competitive and at the forefront of our field.

THE BEST WAY TO PREDICT THE FUTURE IS TO CREATE IT

We have implemented innovative solutions for several issues which we were facing in the initial stage of NSBM journey. As the bus routes were not serving the Pitipana site initially the Vice-Chancellor proposed we would purchase five buses.

Although everyone admitted we must do building maintenance, we outsourced it. Now they are into their work far better than we would have done it. Our security staff too is outsourced. We have only one internal position in security. These decisions have not come from experience but through the sharp brain of the Vice Chancellor. Everyone has to be a part

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of that NSBM Green University culture; every newcomer learns the importance of learning and practicing the same culture within a month.

At NSBM Green University everyone is treated equally, both students and the lecturers. All are treated as human beings; we are empathetic of others. When someone leaves our team, we feel sad as it takes time to create smart and capable individuals. We need them to raise the institution to the next level.

Our students are different from the students at many other universities, especially state-managed ones. Our students listen to us, they do not disfigure the university buildings; they do not paste posters; they do not raise black flags or banners. Instead, they willingly take part in our special culture. One may call it “taming” - but I am against that term. Our students

are independently thinking in mature mind sets. If they agree with us, they do it consciously; not blindly. They do not want to deviate from the track.

How can one build such a culture? How come individuals of the same age behave differently in two different environments? Is it because we have students who pay for their studies? No. That has nothing to do with it. Our students stand with us because of the special relationship the academic staff has with them. Our lecturers on the first day at NSBM Green University learn the importance of that relationship. They dedicate their time to build that relationship. Unless we treat students with respect, we do not earn their respect. We must understand their problems and find answers to them. Not that we are always flexible. We insist on a dress code. I am sure many students might not like it. Why should they respect somebody criticiz-



ing their dress in front of the rest? So if we were to push it and we expect them to agree with it, the bond between the two parties should be strong. We should be with them on the cricket field. We should be with them when they play music. We should be pillars that share some of their burden. If we do that genuinely for our students only, we win their respect.

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY IS A FAMILY

We treat the NSBM Green University staff as a family. It doesn't mean that we are perfect. There may be few unfits. If we find them early, we make them leave. Staying here longer is not good for them; not good for us. We do not want academics just to be academics. They have other roles to play. This is for their development and more than that for the development of the

students. In the future perhaps, we might be able to recruit pure academics. We have even earmarked certain senior academics to lead depending on their abilities, talents, and passion.

We have identified segregation of students according to their faculties was not the right way. Some faculties are big. Some are small. The bigger faculties have better chances of winning in games. So instead of dividing students faculty-wise, we created four houses with equal strength, namely Emerald Fighters, Ruby Adventurers, Sapphire Heroes and Citrine Warriors. The names reflect the dynamism of youth. Academics are equally divided among the houses, which are again reassigned on a rotational basis. See how competitive that would be. See how fair that would be. Everyone has an equal chance to win. They all stand on equal ground. We find this system

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encourages every student to contest.

Finally, I want to talk about the vision of the great man who is now our Vice-Chancellor. Despite being a close friend of his for decades, I cannot fully answer the question of what made him start such a mammoth initiative. I am someone who has become a part of his dream. I believe that is the best one can do if one's dreams are not big enough.

Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe had once told me, "Bharatha, it is easy to create buildings, but a university is far bigger than its buildings." This is an interesting statement. Many knew him as a great businessman. Physical buildings were components that create a venture. Still, he saw beyond. NSBM Green University is not easy to create as something similar never existed. When you create a new portrait from scratch you need two things. You need imagination and you need paint. He had both. Then he was so good at team building and choosing team players. He is a good researcher in people matters. He knows exactly where an individual fits into a team. As he knows that he has no fear of placing the right person in the right place and giving him/her responsibilities.

I have made great sacrifices to be here. I gave up a job at a reputed university to accept this post. Still, when looking back I can justify all those sacrifices. I am satisfied with what I have done. That is the best a human being could achieve.

Chapter 08

SAME CHALLENGE, I ALWAYS GOT: BUILD FROM NIL

• • • • •

“ If somebody offers you an amazing opportunity, but you are not sure you can do it, say yes – then learn how to do it later ”

- Richard Branson

[If I were to describe Prof. Chaminda Ratnayake in one word, it would be 'Talent'. Amazingly gifted and startlingly dedicated, his mark is seen everywhere and in everything that is NSBM Green University. This is the story of the current Deputy Vice Chancellor of the NSBM Green University]

I was born in Matale, at a place called Gangala Puwakpitiya, a beautiful village within the Knuckles Mountain Range. My parents were school teachers. In fact, you can say teaching is in our blood. In my family, everyone is into teaching. I had a flavor for teaching and making an impact from my very young days.

I studied at St. Thomas' College Matale. Then, I entered the University of Colombo to complete my bachelor's degree and postgraduate studies in the field of computing. After completion, I worked initially in the private sector. That was as a multimedia consultant. Part of my job was to teach, but I always dreamt of a

**SAME CHALLENGE, I ALWAYS GOT:
BUILD FROM NIL**



NIBM Kandy branch

full-time job in which I can make a major impact to society. That was my life goal. Everything around me pushed me to that goal.

STARTING FROM KANDY, THE CITY OF CONTRAST

My opportunity came in a bizarre manner in the form of an advertisement from NIBM for a Executive/In-charge to run its Kandy branch. Those were the early days of my marriage. My wife was pregnant with our first child. We both were working in

Colombo. I thought it was time we should move somewhere closer to home. I applied for the job. It was a turbulent time at NIBM. The selection process took months. I applied in the time of one Director General. I was interviewed and selected by a different Chairman. At that time, the Chairman of NIBM was Prof. Baratha Dodankotuwa, who is the current Head of Academic Development and Quality Assurance at NSBM Green University, which I recall with profound gratitude. Finally, I had to work under a third Director General.



His name was Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe, who since then has been the guiding force, mentor and fatherly figure in grooming me into the person I am today.

Once I was selected, I asked when I could resume work and whom I should meet at the NIBM Kandy branch. Then only I realized the branch remained closed for about eight months. I was supposed to start with nothing. (Interestingly, this was not the only time I had to start from scratch.) I remember well my first visit to the branch. NIBM sent an officer with keys to open the doors. It was on the fourth floor of an old building. I can still remember my first sight of NIBM. It had been standstill for so many months; the entire place was full of dust. You cannot walk

because of the cobwebs. I was supposed to give life to this drenched place. If you thought I was discouraged, certainly not. That was not my style. In my prime youth, I was ready to take any challenge put in front of me.

My first task was cleaning. For that, I hired a person from a private cleaning company, whose main task was cleaning, but ended up doing too many things, even handling telephone inquiries when I was having lunch. That person almost became my unofficial secretary for a few months. I am so grateful for all the contributions that person made, providing immeasurable support during the very early days of my journey.

No need to say, I had a Herculean



At NUBM Kurunegala Branch, during a visit by then Director General, Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe

task. My first attempt to offer Certificate Courses in Computer Science. We are talking about 2005. Offering degree courses was unheard of. I was successful in my job. Soon I could introduce more courses. Many students, both school leavers and professionals, found NIBM was the place for them. The center was getting little by little known in the hill country again. With the introduction of the new courses, we added new staff. We had more facilities for the students. Life was going good.

My leader, Then Director General of NIBM, Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe visited me from time to time. His initial reactions were all negative. He saw something to improve everywhere. I was so behind his quality standards. He even complained about the dust and cobwebs, which were so rare then. I listened patiently and explained I needed more support to build a better center. He was attentive. He also

agreed to most of the issues raised by me. The two of us were building up a good rapport. He gradually understood me. Within 3-4 years, he became so confident in me that he assigned me a new task.

THE FIRST NIBM CENTER TO HAVE A SPORTS MEET

Yes, you would have guessed it. This time was also to start from nothing. Only the place was different. In the middle of Kurunegala town, NIBM has built its branch. I was made its Head. Within a short time, I could introduce new certificate courses there too. Soon more than 300 students were studying there. The same process followed. More courses, more students, more staff and yet more courses. By 2011 both centers were perfect. They were running on profits. I have proved my capacity to the NIBM management. I introduced so many new items to Kurunegala



center, including the most popular Diploma in Computer System Design for the first time at a regional centre. It was the first NIBM center to have a sports meet. Later the other centers, including the Head Office, followed.

I was now the head of two branches, but I didn't act like one. I did not want to be at the periphery. I wanted to be in the center stage. I didn't believe in a model where the center controls peripherals. In my view, branches are very much a part of the network. (This is a lesson not understood by most of the firms in Sri Lanka.) Once a week, I traveled to the Colombo Head Office. This was not always for administration purposes. I talked to my colleagues in the Colombo Head Office. I learned what they are up to. I learned new trends and plans. In short, I could maintain the same vibe. We were one big family. We worked together. By the way, I had not reached 35 years when I made most of these achievements.

In 2010, I had another great opportunity to show my capacity and talents. United Nations named 2010, the International Year of Youth. The resolution called upon governments, civil society, individuals and communities worldwide to support activities at local and international levels to mark the event. Youth organizations, governments, and civil society were encouraged to organize activities that promote an increased understanding of the importance and benefits of youth participation in all aspects of society, as well as those that support youth to devote their energy, enthusiasm and creativity to development and the promotion of mutual understanding. Upon the request of the Director General Prof. Weerasinghe, I made my own proposal, which was approved. My task was to select 100 youth leaders from different parts of the country. We call for applications through our Head Office and centers. Over 1,500 students applied. I went

**SAME CHALLENGE, I ALWAYS GOT:
BUILD FROM NIL**

from center to center to interview them. In fact, I myself interviewed all 1,500 of them. We finally selected 100 after several rounds of interviews. That was the turning point of some youth leaders in Sri Lanka, who are now performing well in private organisations and NGOs, as well as UN. I think this was another point that helped me win the confidence of the NIBM management.

**IT WAS ONLY A BARREN
LAND**

By this time, the idea of a new University was born in the mind of Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe. I call this a solution offered by a set of Public sector professionals to a national problem of the country. Typically, such solutions are offered by politicians with officials in the back seat. The power factor is with the political leadership, while almost always, the responsibility is passed on to the professionals. The approach we used was unheard of. So what was the problem? Many parents in this country prefer not to send their children overseas for studies. Good or bad, we, as a society, have developed a culture that provides such protection to our children. Simultaneously, the same parents would like an international level higher education for their children. How do we address this paradox? NSBM Green University was the long thought answer.

During this period, I was given another challenge. I was requested to resign from my job to join NSBM Green University. First, this came as a shock. I was trying to settle down in my life. My

two kids were studying at good colleges in Kurunegala. On the other hand, again I was requested to be a part of something that is built from scratch. This was the third time I was asked to do so. Maybe I am risk-prone. Maybe I like taking huge risks, one after another. I resigned from my post at NIBM. I joined the new University, National Business School of Management. By this time, the Pitipana ground that we have our campus today was a barren land.

It was certain that one day we would occupy the Pitipana land. Still, the sharp brain of Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe planned it out in a different manner. He realized before we settle down, we need a brand and students. That is why we first had a city campus at Nugegoda.

During the period between 2012 and 2016, we were situated in Nugegoda for a duration of four years. The singular building, positioned along the Highlevel Road, close to Anula Vidyalaya, Nugegoda, accommodated the entire university at the time. This building currently serves as the headquarters of a private cab company. In its time, this building was equipped with lecture halls and computer labs that were functional.

During that time, we achieved several significant milestones. One notable achievement was receiving the degree awarded status from the University Grants Commission. As a result, we could offer five undergraduate programs, one Master of Business Administration program, and four postgraduate diploma programs. With



With Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe at NSBM Green University

bi-annual intakes, the student population increased to 4,000 within a short period of time. Our student personality development programs continued to be successful, while we also initiated the publishing of our business magazine, the bi-annual Business Dialogue, at our

Nugegoda premises. We have continued to publish this magazine to this day. Additionally, we published a quarterly newsletter and organized our first research conference, which was a half-day event for students to showcase their research.

**SAME CHALLENGE, I ALWAYS GOT:
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MANAGEMENT = MANAGE+MEN+TIME

From the very beginning, I was entrusted with many activities. Apart from lecturing, I was handling the new university's administration, cooperate governance, event management, and branding and advertising process. Dr Weerasinghe always encouraged us to trust our talents and to adopt things which are not used by conventional organisations. For example, in advertising, we have our own way of positioning ourselves. We thought about our customers and kept on changing taglines depending on the circumstances. We wanted the average men and women to understand our message. The right message at the right time. That was our aim. I had previous experience neither in branding nor advertising. I know that branding and advertising are two serious subjects. Advertising agencies follow internationally accepted models in creating branding content. Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe had confidence in my abilities, and I employed my brain. In

this manner, we were successful in being close to our customers.

It was only after assuming my duties at NSBM Green University, I could truly understand the personality of Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe. He is truly a legend at NSBM Green University. It would be pertinent that I elaborate on some of the management lessons I have learnt from him.

He does not show that often, but Prof. Weerasinghe is not just a sensible person, but he is extremely sensitive to the environment as well. He can easily read other people's faces and body language to predict what they are up to. Many times, he has told me, "Look at that guy. His face does not look good. Learn what goes in his mind." Most of these times, he was proven correct. Thus, we have been able to identify the team members who have been mentally dismembered from the team even long before they take any action. If the term 'management' can be loosely broken into "manage-men-and-time", Prof.

Weerasinghe is a true practitioner. In his view, the best capital is the 'human capital'.

Then he, like some others here at NSBM Green University, is an inborn team builder. For NSBM Green University, he selected his own team. That makes things convenient for him and others, but he never takes it as an advantage. He treats the team like his children. If anyone wants to leave, he takes it seriously, as we make great efforts to build individuals here. We do not treat an employee leaving as a collapse of a relationship. We take it as our failure to nurture that individual anymore.

Prof. Weerasinghe dynamically practices what he has learnt in his long tenure in Japan. These practices have now become part of the NSBM Green University culture. Our meetings will start on time and end on time. Neither anyone is late nor goes over the time. Also, he starts meetings with the outcome in mind. The meeting is to achieve them, not for anything else. NSBM's Board Meetings are scheduled for one hour and finish within 30-40 minutes, with all the objectives achieved. Another practice of NSBM Green University is to streamline repetitive tasks. For example, we do not sign vouchers individually. They should be brought to the management as a batch. I do not check and answer my emails individually, either. I do it twice a day. By doing all these, we have saved time and attained time to reflect on the future.

We also have another daily tradition that no other corporate entity that I know of practices. The higher management team

at NSBM Green University takes their lunch together exactly from 12.30 - 1.30 pm every day. This is a working lunch. We typically discuss managerial and administrative issues at this meeting. So the issues do not get piled up. This is a productive one hour that we use.

Another important aspect of NSBM Green University is our belief in continuous growth. We will not be complacent about our achievements. If you come to NSBM Green University you will see every week we have an event. Having one successful event does not make us complacent. We take a few days rest and be ready for the next event. That is in NSBM Green University's blood. It is like running on a treadmill continuously. If you stop, you will fall. We have established a thriving university. We could have ended our journey there. But we want to go forward. That is why there is a Phase II for NSBM Green University.

Lastly, I would like to add that Prof E. A. Weerasinghe is a leader like no other. Since the first moment we met, I have been privileged to witness the remarkable strides he has taken in his visionary journey while standing by his side through good and tough times. Exceptional Leaders of his calibre are indeed a rare find, and it is crucial that we recognise their value and protect them for the betterment of generations to come. Today as the Deputy Vice Chancellor and a one who closely worked with him, I am truly grateful for the remarkable leadership he has displayed. Working with him has not only taught me invaluable lessons but has also facilitated my personal growth in ways that words cannot adequately express.

The Creation

The Creation

.....

CHAPTER 09

Under One Giant Umbrella, We Mass Together

CHAPTER 10

NSBM Green University and Sri Lanka: The Common Future

The Creation

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This is a story about the past, present, and future of a great institution. It is a creation that will serve generations to come. It will be a place that inspires the minds of tens of thousands, perhaps millions. It will be a beacon of light, a fountain of knowledge, and a source of hope for all who seek it.

Chapter 09

UNDER ONE GIANT UMBRELLA, WE MASS TOGETHER

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“No institution can possibly survive if it needs geniuses or supermen to manage it. It must be organized in such a way as to be able to get along under a leadership composed of average human beings”

- Peter Drucker

[What is NSBM Green University? How it differs from other higher education institutes on the island? Join us to dissect the mammoth.]

WHAT IS NSBM?

The question, on prima facie, looks too elementary. One can provide a straightforward response. NSBM Green University is a world-class international university owned by the Sri Lanka government, yet that maintains a unique culture very different to those at

other state universities in Sri Lanka.

You actually have to visit this 26-acre land to truly fathom its magnanimity. There is a powerful aura in the place that one cannot easily understand. One cannot explain it in words. Only one can feel it. It is just there. This is a futile attempt to describe the phenomenon

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that is called NSBM Green University. Let's move in steps.

First, here's NSBM Green University's own perspective. According to its website, www.nsbm.ac.lk, NSBM Green University is the first Green University in South Asia, and it sets an example for the entire region by promoting environmental sustainability. The institution has opened a new chapter in Sri Lankan higher education and is open to both the national and international student communities.

NSBM Green University was established under the State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Innovations, and it is renowned for its world-class academic offerings. This state-of-the-art university offers nationally and internationally recognized, University Grants Commission approved degree programs and foreign degree programmes in five faculties: Business, Computing, Engineering, Science and Postgraduate Studies.

The university is spread over a wide area, and the massive university complex was built with the aim of providing an opportunity for both national and international students to have a fully-fledged education in Sri Lanka. Currently, around 12,000 students are studying at the university and the highly qualified local and foreign lecturers who teach at the university are committed to train these undergraduates to face any challenge the world has to offer.

The university's dedication to quality in

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education goes beyond the delivery of courses since it has forged profitable alliances with businesses to give students access to experience real-world businesses. Therefore, to give its students better exposure to the market, NSBM Green University has partnered with more than 85 business organizations. Additionally, there are research and development institutes and laboratories that partner with corporations to give students the

chance to see industrial operations while studying. NSBM Green University is committed to providing the future leaders of the world with a full-fledged university experience. This commitment is motivated by the ambition of making Sri Lanka the best educational center in Asia.

Let's Start with NSBM Green University's Five Faculties .





FACULTY OF BUSINESS

The Faculty of Business of NSBM Green University is the ideal faculty for any undergraduate interested in pursuing a career in the Business field. Once Dr. Sarath Amunugama, then the Minister of Skills Development and Vocational Training, stated NSBM Green University Business School is the best business school in the country. The faculty nurtures students with a business mind and moulds them into fully-fledged business leaders of the future. The drive behind achieving this goal is the passion for excellence and perfection that surrounds the Faculty of Business in its methods of teaching, learning, research and networking with the business community.

The Faculty of Business offers multiple degree programs: Business Management, Human Resource Management,

Banking and Finance, Accounting, Business Communication, Industrial Management, and Project Management being amongst the many specializations offered in collaboration with world-renowned universities, University College Dublin, Ireland, University of Victoria, Australia and University of Plymouth, UK, as well as NSBM Green University owned degrees approved by the University Grants Commission. This provides the graduates of NSBM Green University the opportunity to gain an international degree while living and working in Sri Lanka.

Students will find learning at NSBM Green University's Faculty of Business quite a unique and interesting experience as undergraduates are also given the taste of real-life business experiences while learning the theories behind it in class. Through this process, the faculty strives to prepare business

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WE MASS TOGETHER**

undergraduates to face any challenge in the real business world as they will be equipped with excellent problem-solving and analytical capabilities. The Faculty of Business takes special care to ensure that all students are provided with intellectual depth and abundant resources as well as individual attention. Each department of the Faculty of Business is dedicated to its students and provides them with the

best possible educational experience.

The Faculty of Business is the one with the largest number of departments. It constitutes the departments of English and Modern Languages, Legal Studies, Economics and Decision Sciences, Operations and Logistics, Marketing and Tourism Management, Accounting and Finance and General Management.





NSBM Faculty of Computing



FACULTY OF COMPUTING

The Faculty of Computing provides world-class education and training in Computing and Information Technology, both at undergraduate as well as at post-graduate levels.

The Faculty of Computing offers University Grants Commission's approved degree programs in multiple disciplines. It has also partnered with the world's top-ranking universities, University College Dublin

in Ireland, University of Plymouth in the UK and Victoria University in Australia, to provide undergraduates with highly recognized international Degrees. The innovative teaching methods along with the latest state of the art equipment form the perfect blend that motivates NSBM Green University students to do their best and reach their goals with ease.

The faculty provides top notch research, training and development services that will help students acquire new knowledge

**UNDER ONE GIANT UMBRELLA,
WE MASS TOGETHER**

along with the best practices in their respective disciplines. It aims to be among the foremost centers of excellence in research and development and advanced education in computing while taking into consideration national as well as regional requirements for Information and Communication Technology.

The Faculty of Computing comprises four departments, namely, Data Science,

Network and Security, Computer Science and Software Engineering and Information and Systems Science.

The Faculty of Computing places equal emphasis on both theory and practice of all aspects of the computing field, enabling NSBM students to have sufficient hands-on experience to take up any working assignment in their respective IT fields at the end of their degree programs.



FACULTY OF ENGINEERING

The Faculty of Engineering is the third academic school at NSBM Green University. Its degrees are carefully crafted to suit industry requirements with great practical exposure. The faculty consists of the most sophisticated engineering training facilities in the country including smart laboratories with remote access.

The students are guided and trained by a leading full-time and part time faculty with long term experience in the field to make one a world-class engineer in the era of Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

The Faculty of Engineering boasts the departments of Electrical, Electronic and Systems Engineering; Mechatronic and Industry Engineering and Design Studies.



NSBM Faculty of Science

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

The Faculty of Science at NSBM Green University is for undergraduates who are passionate about developing their career in the discipline of Science. Currently, the faculty offers two University Grant Commission approved four year degree programs; Biomedical Science and Public Health and Nutrition and a Nursing degree program in collaboration with world renowned University of Plymouth.

These programs provide Science education in the field of the choice of the student. Science graduates from these programs will be a source of health science related skilled professionals and research scientists with practical skills, multi-faceted team members having planning, project and business

skills including cost, safety, reliability and time management, lifelong learners.

Students admitted to the Faculty of Science have the privilege to acquire knowledge from a well-qualified and highly accomplished lecturer panel. They have access to the state-of-the-art laboratories, with high-tech instrumentation facilities and to a range of student support services to help deal with their particular requirements. With the strong foundation provided, they will be more competent in their learning with developed practical skills, rational thinking, and analytical, and clinical skills. The four-year remarkable experience a student gains from NSBM Green University will fulfill their dreams as a fully-fledged professional with high confidence.



FACULTY OF POSTGRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT

The Faculty of Postgraduate and Professional Advancement of NSBM Green University offers multiple post-graduate programs through the Postgraduate and Professional Advancement Unit. The range of courses consists of Certificate, Advanced Certificate, and Diploma level programs which lead to Postgraduate Diplomas and MBA programs approved by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Ministry of Higher Education.

These programs are specially designed to create pathways for business professionals, government officials, and entrepreneurs to strengthen their professional potential, while inevitably enabling their organizations to attain sustainable growth. NSBM Green University Professional Programs are

conducted during weekends, ensuring a step-by-step learning experience under five disciplines: Business, Computing, Engineering, Language, and Design. All the programs are facilitated by renowned academics and industry experts, delivered within a fully equipped learning environment, on par with international standards.

Ensuring a 360-degree university experience, these courses guarantee the successful transition from academic to professional life, since they provide the adequate know-how to empower every participant to skillfully employ his/her education and academic competency in real-life corporate contexts. These courses also ensure that its participants are fully geared to meet the opportunities and challenges of the world beyond local grounds.

Each Academic department of NSBM Green University has student circles and student centers to provide further

guidance into their respective subjects as well as to culminate leadership and teamwork skills. These groups give a helping hand to students with their studies along with the development of their soft skills. Students are encouraged to perform projects relevant to the purpose of their circle or center. They get experience in planning, organizing, controlling and managing through these different projects. NSBM Green University has implemented these groups to increase the exposure of

students to the basic skills they would need to excel in their respective careers. NSBM Green University conducts international and local university collaborative research projects, international research conferences, industry lead collaborative research, and research specialized workshops and training under the NSBM Research Council. It also provides internal/external research grants for impactful research of both the staff and the students. What follows are the nuts and bolts.



RESEARCH INITIATIVES OF NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY

NSBM Green University is recognized for its commitment to research initiatives, which significantly contribute to its success and reputation. Research activities are not only essential for the advancement of knowledge and understanding in various fields, but they are also critical to the overall growth and development of any reputable university. Through research initiatives, new

knowledge, technologies, and innovations are created, which have significant potential to bring about significant economic, social, and cultural benefits to society.

Moreover, research activities provide a splendid opportunity for students and the faculty to engage in critical thinking, problem-solving, and intellectual discourse, which enhances their skills and fosters intellectual curiosity. As such, research plays a crucial role in

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Briefing the research center

attracting talented faculty and students to the university, highlighting the institution's academic excellence and commitment to intellectual inquiry. In conclusion, research activities are critical to the advancement of NSBM Green University's mission and the betterment of the society, as a whole.

NSBM Green University is renowned for its innovative and creative approach to research activities, which have demonstrated that a true university should not solely disseminate knowledge, but also create it. The institution is guided by its mission, which is composed of driving themes: innovation, entrepreneurship, technology, and globalization, aimed to lead the country towards a knowledge-based globalized economy, fostering sustainable devel-

opment in a circular economy.

As a forward-thinking higher education institution, NSBM Green University emphasizes the importance of making learning relevant to industry expectations, which is why it forges strategic collaborations with top universities worldwide. These collaborations provide students with access to universal thinking and best practices in global industries, preparing them to thrive in today's dynamic workforce.

As the institution strives towards greater heights, its NSBM Research Council spearheads a new journey to establish NSBM Green University as a leader in research, combining the essence of scholarly and practitioner work. Through this approach, the institution aims to contin-

ue to set the standard in research in the tertiary education system, one of the ways in which it is making significant contributions not only to academia, but also to the society and industry at large.

Some of the most advanced facilities that support internationally renowned research are found at NSBM Green University. It features sizable print and digital library collections, as well as Turnitin and Emerald services, and also a wealth of on-campus assistance and services to aid with resource discovery. The library and information management specialists at NSBM Green University collaborate closely with academic colleagues to offer students a wide selection of pertinent print and digital materials as well as to develop customized reading lists for courses.

The Academic Development and Quality Assurance (ADnQA) unit of NSBM Green University is responsible for driving the implementation of academic

strategy across the institution. The unit's goal is to elevate the academic standards of the university, positioning it on par with globally recognized tertiary institutions in today's dynamic and highly competitive environment.

To this end, the ADnQA unit offers a broad range of strategic initiatives, including the management of the academic program portfolio, implementation of quality assurance enhancement, academic staff development programs, organization of conferences, and encouragement of publications, research and development, and public engagement programs.

As NSBM Green University strives to bolster its research activities, the establishment of the university research council represents a significant step forward in the advancement of dedicated research-led initiatives, which complement the core academic mission of the institution.



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INTERNATIONAL CONFER- ENCE ON BUSINESS INNOV ATION (ICOB)

International Conference on Business Innovation (ICOB) is NSBM Green University's annual research conference. So far, it has been happening for five years, with the last few years despite COVID-19. ICOB creates a common platform to bring together like-minded people: local and international academics, industry experts, and entrepreneurs with a passion for building a discourse and disseminating their experience and knowledge on respective fields of study. It has been structured each year around an impactful and timely theme relevant to Business

Innovation and Sustainable Development. ICOB 2018 was held in August 2018 under the theme "Business Resurgence and Green Living"; the theme of ICOB 2019 held in November 2019 was "Reviving Talent and Green Living" while ICOB 2020 was declared under "COVID-19 Transcending Challenges, Recovery Measures and Resilience" and ICOB 2021 was held in November 2021 under the theme, "Revitalizing the Economy through Sustainable Strategies". The theme of the latest conference, ICOB 2022, held in November 2022 was "Accelerating Growth Towards SDG Accomplishment".

NSBM Green University also publish-

es its own journals. The International Journal of Contemporary Business Research (IJCBR) is a multidisciplinary peer-reviewed journal that publishes the highest quality original research papers in the field of business and related domains of study. It is a premier bi-annual outlet published by the Faculty of Business. IJCBR aims to attract scholarly research with a focus on empirical, theoretical as well as applied research in the fields of Management, Accounting and Finance,

Marketing and Tourism Management, Operations Management, Economics and General Management fields. Articles published in IJCBR are pivotal for both scholars and practitioners who are seeking to understand the field of business and drive impact led actions. While realizing the intricate relationships and the complexities of contemporary business, the journal promotes studies aiming to explore business decision making processes in the actual business climate.



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The geographical scope of the journal is worldwide, which is also reflected in the membership of the editorial board as well as the followers of the journal. The journal also encourages research employing qualitative, quantitative as well as mixed method methodologies which could provide fresh insights into the research problems. The coverage of the journal includes, yet is not limited to, Management, Accounting and Finance, Marketing management, Tourism management, Operations management, Supply chain and logistics management, Economics and Decision sciences.

NSBM Journal of Management is a refereed academic journal being published by the university which is a bi-annual, open access journal that aims to provide a scholarly platform for critical and informed articles in all fields of Management. The journal accepts

authentic work in the form of research articles, case studies, research notes and book reviews.

NSBM Student Research Symposium is the unique product offered by NSBM Green University to inculcate the research consciousness among student community of Sri Lanka. Every year young researchers from NSBM Green University and other higher educational institutes present their research outputs to an esteemed panel of senior researchers in relevant fields.

The academic component is only one part of NSBM Green University. There are many other facets of NSBM Green University experience. One such attribute is sports. It's pertinent to have a look at some of the sports clubs to get an idea about the activities in this facet of the university.



Mr. Simon Tham, Assistant General Manager, CHEC Port City Colombo



ARCHERY CLUB

Archery is an art, sport, practice or a skill where one shoots with a bow and an arrow. The word “Archery” comes from the latin language “arcus”. Today archery is a competitive sport and recreational activity. NSBM Green



university provides a platform to create young energetic archers through the Archery club. Using the professional level equipment and training provided at NSBM Archery Club, young archers of NSBM Green University participate in both university and national level tournaments.



ATHLETIC CLUB

NSBM Green University’s Athletic Club has been established with the intention of promoting track events, field events and road race (marathon) among the undergraduates. Athletic club is rich with national level, school level athletes who are from short distance running, middle distance running, long distance



running, throwing events, jumping events and hurdle events. It molds strong athletes to take the leadership in the corporate sector with accelerated speed of adapting to scenarios, team working and completing the task accurately. The Athletic Club organizes its own athletic meets and takes part in interuniversity level athletic meets and open, national level athletic meets.



BADMINTON CLUB

NSBM Green University's Badminton Club is another active and well-established sports club with many mercantile and national level players. This club is open to undergraduates of all levels for the purpose of recreation, physical fitness, and development of

skills in the sport. As one of the fastest sports in the world, badminton is a great way for students to develop and improve their reflexes, hand-eye coordination, as well as mental alertness. The club organizes in-house badminton tournaments, inter university tournaments as well as other international badminton tournaments.



BASKETBALL CLUB

NSBM Green University's Basketball Club is one of the main sports clubs that was fully active even before the inception of the Green University. Having played in major interuniversity and corporate tournaments such as KDU Leaders' Trophy, CIMA Sports and

APIIT Sports Extravaganza, Basketball teams have garnered a solid success over the years. Becoming the Champions in 2018 KDU Leaders' Trophy in boys' category and 2019 NSBM USPORTS in both girls' and boys' categories can be highlighted as major achievements of the Basketball Club thus far.



CHESS CLUB

The NSBM Green University Chess club embarked on their illustrious journey in 2017. Their dedication and passion for the game set the foundation for remarkable achievements and a legacy that continues to thrive.

In the realm of competitive chess, the girls' team showcased their indomitable spirit, emerging as the runners-up in the esteemed 4th SLIIT Castle Fest 2019. Their triumph didn't end there as they clinched the championship title in the highly anticipated NSBM U-sports 2019, leaving an indelible mark on the chess landscape. Not to be outdone, the boys' team displayed their unwavering prowess, securing the 2nd runners-up position in the fiercely contested 4th SLIIT Castle Fest 2019. Additionally, they claimed the 1st runners-up spot in the prestigious U-sports 2019, solidifying their reputation as formidable opponents on the chessboard.

As the year 2020 unfolded, Sanura Chamantha gracefully assumed the presidency, guiding the chess club through

uncharted waters. However, the challenging presence of the COVID-19 pandemic cast a shadow over their path, testing their resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity. From 2021 to 2022, a new era dawned upon the Chess club, under the leadership of President Nipun Harshana Dabare and the unwavering captaincy of Nadun Yasodana Hewawasan. These years were undoubtedly arduous, with the pandemic continuing to disrupt normalcy. Nevertheless, their unwavering determination and commitment to the game kept the flame of hope alive.

In a remarkable turn of events in 2022-2023, Nipun Harshana Dabare held dual roles as President and Captain, guiding the Chess club to unprecedented success. This transformative year witnessed the club's meteoric rise, culminating in the glorious achievement of becoming champions in the highly esteemed Sabra Chess Championship. Their triumph didn't end there as they secured the remarkable 1st runners-up position, further solidifying their dominance in the chess arena.

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CRICKET CLUB

NSBM Green University Cricket Club is one of the pioneering sports clubs with a long tradition of nurturing talented and aspiring young cricketers to be the

best that they can be. It attracts school-level players and engages them in sports activities, providing them opportunities to participate in the university level and national level tournaments.



FITNESS CLUB

NSBM Green University Fitness club is provided with a recreational center which offers an opportunity for NSBM Green University students to master their talents on Powerlifting. Powerlift-



ing is a strength sport that consists of three attempts at maximal weight on three lifts: squat, bench press, and deadlift. As in the sport of Olympic weightlifting, it involves the athlete attempting a maximal weight single lift of a barbell loaded with weight plates.



MARTIAL ARTS CLUB

The martial arts club of NSBM Green University is an amalgamation of the Taekwondo and Karate Clubs. The high performers of these clubs have the opportunity to participate in events throughout Sri Lanka to repre-

sent NSBM Green University. There they are able to showcase their skills and talents in high-flying, and fast-paced techniques. This club can proudly boast about the many medals and awards it has collected by participating in many local and international events.



NETBALL CLUB

NSBM Green University's Netball Club has been in existence since 2016 and has grown in skill and excellence throughout the years. This club is ranked as a highly active sport here at NSBM Green University. The Netball Club is a valuable place for

the girls to grab opportunities to develop some major skills such as teamwork, self-esteem, perseverance, discipline, and time management. The club has showcased its skills in events organised by NSBM Green University as well as in the events organised and held by other institutions.



RUGBY CLUB

Headed by Professor Baratha Dodankotuwa, NSBM Green University Rugby Club believes in unity and discipline above all else. They believe that their many accolades were achieved by sticking with these core principles. The rugby club is one of the most highlighted clubs in NSBM Green University, resulting from their excellence and achievement of victories throughout its existence.

The club emerged as winners in many platforms such as the Mora 7s, ICBT 7s, KDU 10s, and one international tournament, the UiTM international sports tournament organized by the University of Technology MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia, beating tough onshore and offshore universities in Asia. Rugby Club moves ahead, stronger by the day through consistency, hard training, and pure determination.



SOCCER CLUB

NSBM Green University Soccer Club is an active sports club that is composed of highly competitive players with skills on par with any other university

soccer player. The team had participated in several inter-university tournaments and international sports tournaments in the past few years and was able to bring several winning trophies to NSBM Green University.



SWIMMING CLUB

The Swimming Club of NSBM Green University consists of a massive student body and has so far guided the talented swimmers it produced into the medals. With the sophisticated,

international level swimming pool and the other facilities it has, Swimming Club stands straight among other Sri Lankan educational institutes' Swimming Clubs. The members of the swimming club have achieved a variety of awards.



TABLE TENNIS CLUB

NSBM Green University's Table Tennis Club has played in major inter-university and cooperate tournaments such as KDU Leaders Trophy, SIEG Table Tennis

Championship (University of Kelaniya), Mora Smashes (University of Moratuwa) and other major tournaments the Table Tennis Club has gained a reputation among Table Tennis teams of other universities as a fierce competitor.

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VOLLEYBALL CLUB

NSBM Green University's Volleyball club provides an ideal environment for young athletes, irrespective of their gender, to improve their skills in the game of volleyball. They also learn the important values of team spirit and sportsmanship. Volleyball club thus encourages the development of skills and techniques necessary

for players to compete at a high level, focusing on the physical, mental, and emotional development of all players.

Going beyond that, NSBM Green University respects the freedom of faith of an individual. For its students, teachers and staff, clubs representing all four major religious faiths are introduced for this purpose.



BUDDHIST SOCIETY

The Buddhist society of NSBM Green University represents all Buddhist students of the university and conducts all Buddhist events under the guidance of the senior staff. It has been five years since the Buddhist society began. A Buddhist shrine has been placed near the entrance of NSBM Green University. Starting from that the society has conducted two Pirith ceremonies com-

memorating the anniversary of the university.

Dhamma sermons, blood donation camps, health camps, donation of spectacles, donation of budget packs to low-income families and many other Community Social Responsibility work were carried out on Vesak, Poson and other Poya days. The society also conducts Pirith chantings to welcome every new batch to the university.



CATHOLIC AND CHRISTIAN CLUB

With the intention to serve the Catholic and the Christian communities of NSBM

Green University, the Catholic and Christian club has been formed. It is one of the active clubs. Events were organized to enhance the unity and love among the students and to cultivate faith in God.



HINDU SOCIETY

The Hindu Society has been created as a religious society to provide opportunities for the Hindu students to

celebrate their festivals and to conduct their prayers at NSBM Green University. Currently, the society has around 100 students as members of the society.

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ISLAMIC SOCIETY

NSBM Green University Islamic Society is one of the most vibrant and diverse societies on campus. As a religious society catering non-exclusively to Muslim students through a wide range of activities and events, the Islamic Society promoted the well-being of all. One of the main aims of the Islamic society is to provide Muslim students with the

necessary means to develop spiritually and learn more about their religion. The society conducts an Ifthar ceremony every year and programs to university students to share the culture and knowledge of Islam.

Then, in addition to local ones, there are some branches of international clubs established here at NSBM Green University as well.



AIESEC CLUB

AIESEC is the world's largest youth-led organization advocating for youth leadership through global affairs. In 2017 AIESEC was initiated in the National School of Business Management as "AIESEC in NSBM". AIESEC in NSBM was able to host two global villages on the university prem-

ises in 2018 and 2019 with over 200 international students from over 25 different countries. Today, AIESEC in NSBM has over 90+ active global-minded and culturally sensitive members across the island. As an Official Expansion, the club won the Most Outstanding Award and Most Progressive Expansion Award in 2018 & 2019, respectively.



ROTARACT CLUB

The Rotaract Club of National NSBM is a youth-led service organization that operates under the auspices of Rotary International. The club is based in the NSBM Green University in Sri Lanka and aims to promote leadership, professional development, and community service among its members. The club is composed of young adults who are passionate about making a positive impact in their communities. They organize a range of activities and events throughout the year, including blood donation campaigns, environmental conservation projects, and educational workshops for disadvantaged youth. One of the main goals of the Rotaract Club of National NSBM is to provide its members with opportunities to develop their leadership skills. To achieve this, the club organizes regular training sessions, seminars, and

workshops on various topics such as public speaking, project management, and teamwork. In addition to its community service and leadership development initiatives, the club also focuses on building international connections and fostering cultural understanding. The Rotaract Club of National NSBM participates in a range of international projects and exchange programs with other Rotaract clubs around the world. Overall, the Rotaract Club of National NSBM is a dynamic and active organization that provides its members with valuable opportunities for personal and professional growth, while also making a positive impact in the local and global community.

Students at NSBM Green University are always encouraged to take part in activities that lift their spirits. Clubs with an activity focus serve this function.

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DANCING CLUB

NSBM Green University dancing club is a lively and energetic group that shares a passion for dance. The club is open to all students, regardless of their dance experience or skill level. The club's main goal is to create a fun and supportive environment where students can come together to learn, practice, and enjoy different styles of dance.

The club meets on Wednesdays and Fridays in the Recreation Center for practice sessions. Dancing lessons will be delivered by Mr. Dilupa Wijerathna, who is a professional dancer in the Dancing Industry of Sri Lanka. These lessons cover a variety of dance

styles, including traditional, hip-hop, salsa, contemporary, and more.

In addition to regular lessons, the club also hosts an annual dancing show called “KINETIC FIRE” which is a vibrant dancing show with all styles to showcase creative skills, socialize with other dancers, and have fun.

The club is open to students of all majors and backgrounds and is known for its friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Whether you're a seasoned dancer or a beginner looking to try something new, the dancing club is a great way to get involved on campus, make new friends, and improve your dance skills.



DRAMA CLUB

"Behind every mask, there is a face; behind that face, there is a story". The Drama Club of NSBM Green University is engaged in doing main annual events

to entertain the university students and staff. They normally perform as per the requirements in specific events like Orientation, Open Week, and other particular events conducted by the students.



LITERATURE CLUB

The NSBM Green University Literature Club is a vibrant and inclusive community dedicated to the appreciation and exploration of literature.

The club provides a platform for avid readers, writers, and literary enthusiasts to come together and engage in thoughtful discussions about literature. Members have the opportunity to share their insights, perspectives, and interpretations of different literary works. The club encourages open-mindedness and welcomes diverse viewpoints, fostering a rich and intellectually stimulating environ-

ments for all participants.

In addition, the club also hosts various literary events and activities. The club aims to promote a love for reading, writing, and creativity among its members, encouraging them to express themselves and explore their own literary talents.

Overall, the Literature Club provides a nurturing and engaging community for individuals who have a passion for literature. It offers a space where members can connect with like-minded individuals, broaden their literary knowledge, and celebrate the power and beauty of written words.



MUSIC CLUB

The Music Club of NSBM Green University is the most dynamic and active club in the university that embraces musicians of all genres and talents. The enthusiasm and talent that they have among their members is what makes this club unique. The aim is to nurture the talent within the club and create a platform for future artists to reach the international standard in performance.

Over recent years the Music Club has been able to stage many events and concerts that enabled our young artists to showcase their talents and skills to a large audience within the university. Furthermore, the club members perform at many other events and programs organized by the many clubs and societies present at the university as well as major university events.

The Music Club is proud to introduce the NSBM Green University Choir, which debuted at 'Spandana'22 – Music from the Heart' which gained much praise and recognition within the

university. The Music Club Band is also famously reputed for being one of the best university bands, as its talented instrumentalists are the ones who provide the music aspect for all the clubs' events and shows.

The Music Club has presented annual concerts 'Ahanna 2019', 'Adawwa 2021', 'Mathaka 2021', and, 'Spandana 2022' which is the highlight of each year and further organized and performed for various other musical events such as 'Hagum Thotilla 2023', 'Govipale Geethaya 2022', 'HALO Carol Service 2022', 'Two's Day 2022' and at all NSBM Green University Open Day Weekends which have all been conducted successfully thanks to the hard work and dedication of the club members.

The Music Club is open to all those passionate about music and has the willingness to learn new things in a creative environment. Members usually gather in the Music Room located on the 1st floor of the Student Centre and conduct all practices and rehearsals for the many events the club take part in.



ORATORY AND DEBATING CLUB

The Debating and Oratory Club of NSBM Green University is widely recognized as one of the best clubs and societies in the university. This prestigious club is led by two accomplished lecturers, Ms. Tharushi Hettiarachchi and Ms. Hirushi Dilpriya, who oversee a thriving community of over 100 students. At the heart of this club are the talented and passionate Sinhala and

English debaters, who represent all four faculties of the university. Joining the Debating and Oratory Club is an excellent opportunity for students to develop their public speaking skills, improve their critical thinking abilities, and engage in spirited and thought-provoking debates. Whether you are an experienced debater or a novice looking to learn, this club offers a welcoming and supportive environment where you can hone your skills and make lasting connections with like-minded peers.

UNDER ONE GIANT UMBRELLA, WE MASS TOGETHER



STEM UP

STEMUP NSBM was initiated to inspire and engage both undergraduates and school-level students to become interested in pursuing STEM degrees and careers. This society conducts workshops for students within NSBM prem-

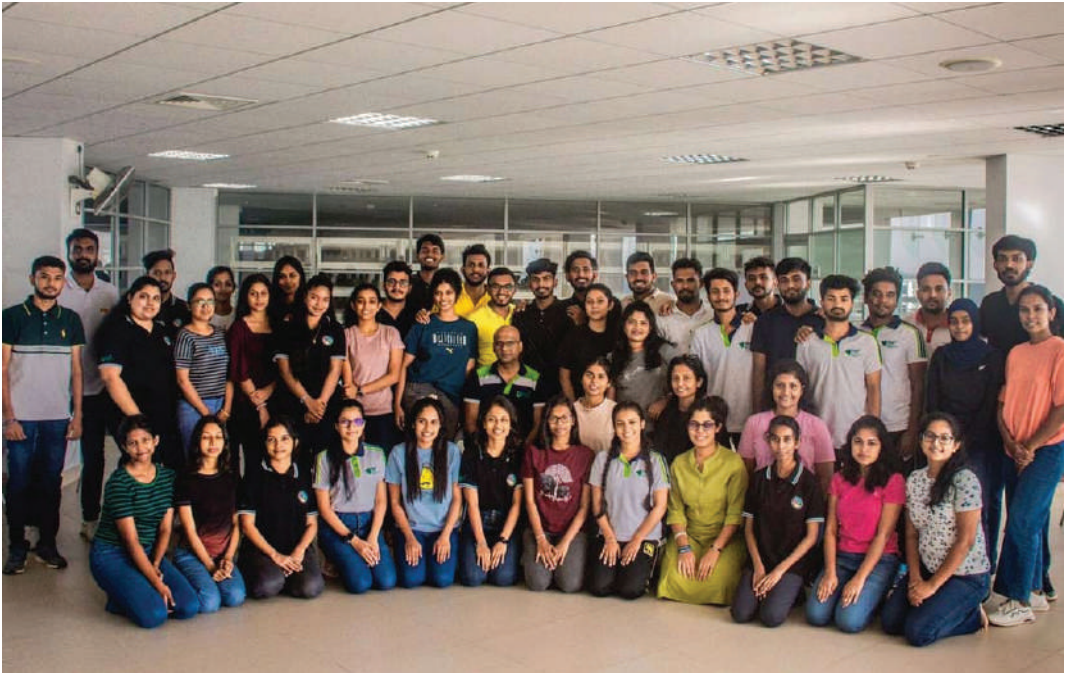
ises as well as outside the premises to uplift the students' skills and knowledge in IT-related domains. STEMUP NSBM was established under the STEM Educational Foundation Sri Lanka and is the second STEM UP society established in the Private Sector universities in Sri Lanka.



VOLUNTEER CLUB

Student Volunteer Club at NSBM Green University plays a vital role at all times. As student volunteers, club members are engaging with a multitude of events that are organized by the university. At most events, volunteers are responsible

for crowd and event handling at the university. Therefore, students in the volunteer club are capable of multitasking at these events. Currently, many talented students that represent different kinds of clubs at the university are helping us to succeed in the tasks assigned to them.



WELLBEING CLUB (STUDENTS' WELLBEING ASSOCIATION)

The Students' Wellbeing Association of NSBM Green University is the first and the only students' club initiated in Sri Lankan University that expects to develop the wellbeing of individuals for the betterment of the younger generation. The club was initiated at the beginning of the year 2018 with the intention of advocating the mental, physical, social, and spiritual wellbeing among the undergraduates of the university, as well as to pave a path towards the betterment of the entire Sri Lankan nation in terms of ultimate features of wellbeing.

The association is well-organized with seven departments designed to enhance the skills of the NSBM Green

University undergraduates in various fields, including Content Writing, Finance Management, Coordinating, Media and IT, Public Relations, Marketing, and Aesthetics. These departments also serve as platforms for students to showcase their skills. Joining SWA offers undergraduates the opportunity to build networks with students across all levels.

The Students' Wellbeing Association is uniquely renowned for its iconic events such as the NSBM Leadership Conference, Harithawarjana, Harithaswara, One More Light, and SECMIC, among many others. As the largest association on campus, SWA consists of members from every faculty and academic level, making it a sought-after partner for collaborative events with other student organizations at the university.

Milestones

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY 2011 – 2023

Seven cycles of the sun, a tapestry of time unfurled,
If NSBM 's journey were a stream, it would have
traversed the world.

Through verdant meadows, where emerald grasslands
sway, It flowed, with grace and purpose, on its destined
way. A cascade from lofty hills, a descent filled with
thrill, Gathering momentum, as it danced with nature's
will. Each milestone, a pebble in its ever-changing
course, Marking the passage of time,
with unwavering force.



MILESTONES

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY 2011 – 2023

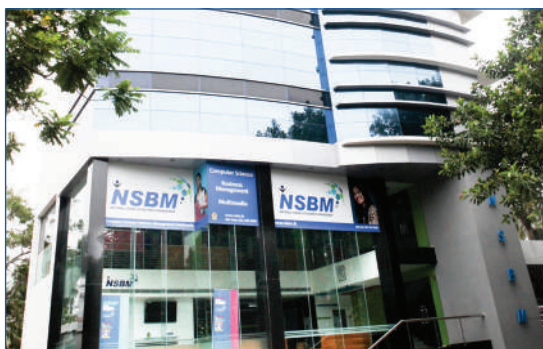
• • • • •

2011
OCTOBER 2011

• • • • •

OCTOBER 2011

**BIRTH OF NATIONAL SCHOOL OF
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT (NSBM)**



2012

MARCH 2012

NSBM CITY CAMPUS AT NUGEGODA



JULY 2012

**LAYING FOUNDATION STONE FOR
NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY, PITIPANA,
HOMAGAMA**



JULY 2012

FIRST BUSINESS DIALOGUE MAGAZINE



2012 ●

CHAPTER 09

SEPTEMBER 2012

PARTNERSHIP WITH PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY UK



2013 ●

MARCH 2013

COMMENCING UGC APPROVED,
NSBM OWNED DEGREE PROGRAMS



APRIL 2013

SIYAPATHSIYA AURUDU UDANAYA



2013

OCTOBER 2013

LAUNCH OF SCHOOL OF COMPUTING



2014

DECEMBER 2013

FIRST-EVER NSBM STUDENT TALENT SHOW
AT NELUM POKUNA



DECEMBER 2014

FIRST NSBM CONVOCATION CEREMONY



FIRST ISSUE OF THE NSBM JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT

INAUGURATION OF NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY, PITIPANA, HOMAGAMA

**NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE -
GOLD BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD
(STATE & STATUTORY BOARD SECTOR)**

2016

DECEMBER 2016

INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS -
GOLD AWARD IN ANNUAL REPORT COMPETITION
(STATE & STATUTORY BOARD SECTOR)



2017

FEBRUARY 2017

GOLD AWARD FOR THE BEST EDUCATIONAL
AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES WEBSITE



FEBRUARY 2017

CONDUCTING NSBM'S FIRST EVER INTER-SCHOOL
DEBATING TOURNAMENT - VIVADA



2017

MARCH 2017

**LAUNCHING VICTORIA UNIVERSITY,
AUSTRALIA DEGREES IN MANAGEMENT AND IT**

**MARCH 2017**

**FIRST CHINA - SRI LANKA STUDENT
EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

**MARCH 2017**

**FIRST SPORTS MEET AMONG EMERALD FIGHTERS,
RUBY ADVENTURERS, CITRINE WARRIORS,
AND SAPPHIRE HEROES**



2017

MAY 2017

FIRST INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM



AUGUST 2017

**FIRST INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR
BUSINESS EXECUTIVES ORGANIZED
BY NSBM IN UCD, IRELAND**



AUGUST 2017

**FIRST INTERNATIONAL SUMMER CAMP HELD
WITH PARTICIPANTS FROM UK,
CHINA, AND EGYPT**



2017



THE UNIVERSITY OF
**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**

DECEMBER 2017

CONDUCTING NSBM'S FIRST EVER INTER-SCHOOL ENGLISH DAY COMPETITION



DECEMBER 2017

CELEBRATING NSBM 1ST ANNIVERSARY AT GREEN UNIVERSITY TOWN



2017

DECEMBER 2017

RECEIVED THE GOLD AWARD AMONG THE GOVERNMENT SECTOR BODIES FOR THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR AT "QUINTESSENCE OF EMINENCE", 53RD ANNUAL REPORT AWARDS WHICH WAS HELD ON 5TH DECEMBER 2017



DECEMBER 2017

CONDUCTING NSBM'S FIRST EVER CAREER FAIR



DECEMBER 2017

ENTERING IN TO MOUS WITH ACCA, CIMA AND CISI TO PROVIDE CONCESSIONARY BENEFITS TO NSBM GRADUATES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS



2017

DECEMBER 2017

**GOLD AWARD FOR BEING THE MOST EXCELLENT
BUSINESS ORGANIZATION IN THE STATE
SECTOR AT NATIONAL BUSINESS
EXCELLENCE AWARDS**



2018

MARCH 2018

**SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING COMMENCEMENT WITH
UGC APPROVED ENGINEERING DEGREE PROGRAMS**

**JUNE 2018**

**INTRODUCTION OF NSBM'S ISLAND WIDE CSR
PROGRAMME 'CHATHURWIDHA MANPETH'**



2018

JUNE 2018

OPENING OF NSBM'S IT R&D AND BUSINESS INCUBATION CENTER



AUGUST 2018

FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BUSINESS INNOVATION - ICobi 2018

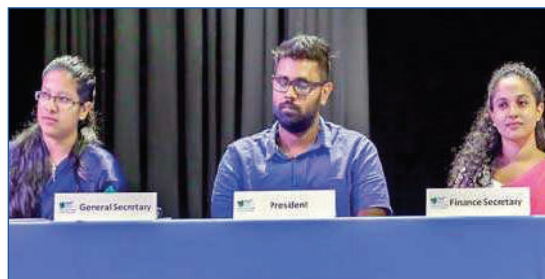


SEPTEMBER 2018

FIRST EVER INTER UNIVERSITY SPORTS TOURNAMENT (NSBM USPORTS)



2018

SEPTEMBER 2018**INTERSCHOOL RUGBY CHAMPIONSHIP
(NSBM GREEN RUGBY 7S)****SEPTEMBER 2018****NSBM'S FIRST BUSINESS FORUM ORGANIZED
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE
DIVISION - "COMPREHEND - ALIGN &
COMPETE TO SUCCEED"****SEPTEMBER 2018****THE INAUGURATION OF
NSBM ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

2019

OCTOBER 2019

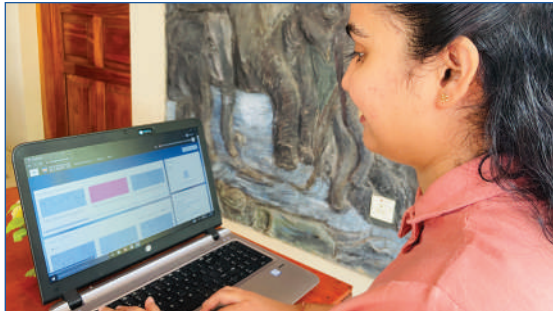
**REACHED GROSS INCOME OF RS.3 BILLION
AT THIRD ANNIVERSARY**



2020

MARCH 2020

**CONTINUE TO CONDUCT CLASSES IN THE LEARN
FROM HOME (LFH) MODE DURING COVID-19
LOCKDOWNS**

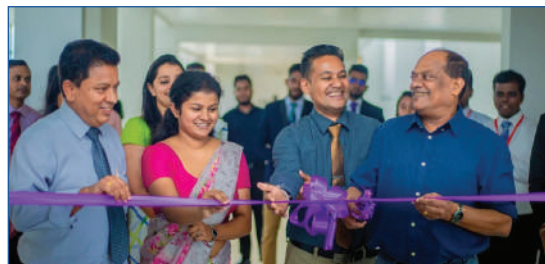


MAY 2020

**DONATED RS. 10 MILLION TO COVID-19
HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY FUND**



2021

JANUARY 2021**FOUNDATION STONE LAYING CEREMONY -
NSBM PHASE TWO****FEBRUARY 2021****INTRODUCTION OF DEPARTMENTS AT FACULTY
OF BUSINESS: MANAGEMENT, OPERATIONS AND
LOGISTICS, ECONOMICS AND DECISION SCIENCES,
LEGAL STUDIES, MARKETING, ACCOUNTING
AND FINANCE****FEBRUARY 2021****INTRODUCTION OF DEPARTMENTS AT FACULTY OF
COMPUTING: INFORMATION AND SYSTEMS SCIENCES,
COMPUTER SCIENCE AND SOFTWARE ENGINEERING,
NETWORK AND SECURITY, DATA SCIENCE**

2021

FEBRUARY 2021

OPENING OF INVESTMENT CENTRE



MARCH 2021

**OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
FOR MODERN LANGUAGES (ICML)**

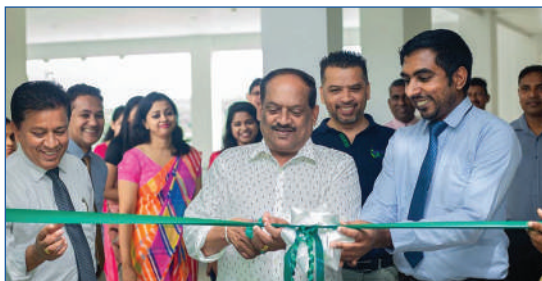


OCTOBER 2021

**CELEBRATED 5 YEARS OF SUCCESS UNDER
THE THEME 'PRABHAWALOKANA'**



2022

MARCH 2022**INAUGURATION OF FACULTY OF SCIENCE****MARCH 2022****INAUGURATION OF DEPARTMENT OF
ENGLISH AND MODERN LANGUAGES****JULY 2022****INAUGURATION OF FACULTY OF POSTGRADUATE
STUDIES AND PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT
AND DOCTORAL STUDIES AND RESEARCH UNIT**

2022

AUGUST 2022

**INAUGURATION OF PHD AND
POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMS**



OCTOBER 2022

**STUDENT RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM IN MARKETING
AND TOURISM - SRSMT 2022**



OCTOBER 2022

**LARGEST UNIVERSITY LEVEL IEEE DAY
CELEBRATIONS IN SRI LANKA**



2022

NOVEMBER 2022**INAUGURAL EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY BUSINESS RESEARCH****NOVEMBER 2022****COMMENCEMENT OF LLB (HONS.) DEGREE****DECEMBER 2022****WINS GOLD AWARD FOR THE BEST STATE SECTOR ANNUAL REPORT**

2023

JANUARY 2023

**LAUNCHED THE FACULTY OF POSTGRADUATE
AND PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT**



APRIL 2023

**INAUGURATION OF BM (HONS) APPLIED ECONOMICS
AND BM (HONS) BUSINESS ANALYTICS DEGREES**



MAY 2023

**FIRST-EVER STUDENTS' RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM
IN OPERATIONS AND LOGISTICS**



2023

MAY 2023

**"BEST GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE ENVIRONMENT" -
PRESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT AWARDS 2021-2022**

**JUNE 2023**

**PARTNERS WITH FINETECH CONSULTANCY TO
FACILITATE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION**

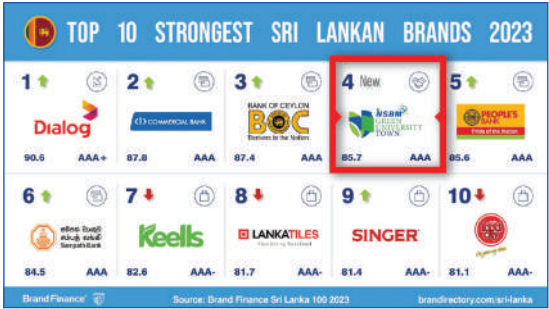
**JUNE 2023**

**WINS GOLD AT NATIONAL BUSINESS
EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2023**



2023

JULY 2023
NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY BECOMES ONE OF THE STRONGEST BRAND NAMES, FOURTH IN SRI LANKA AS SEEN BY BRAND FINANCE SRI LANKA



AUGUST 2023
FIRST EVER GLOBAL YOUTH CAMP 2023



Awards

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY 2011 – 2023

Awards, the sweet nectar of admiration,
Bestowed upon the deserving, a precious validation.
In the realm of knowledge, where brilliance is sown,
NSBM Green University, a garden of triumphs known.
For seven wondrous years, this noble institution,
Has danced in the spotlight, gathering recognition.
A constellation of accolades, like stars in the night,
Each telling a tale, painting a vivid light.

SPECIAL AWARD FOR VICE CHANCELLOR



YEAR	AWARD
------	-------

2016 Jayawardene
Pradeepa Pranama 2016

AWARDED BY

Received by Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe from then President Maithripala Sirisena – awarded by the Alumni Association of University of Sri Jayewardenepura

FINANCIAL REPORTING AWARDS : STATE AND STATUTORY BOARDS SECTOR



YEAR	AWARD	AWARDED BY
2014	Gold Award in Annual Report Awards Competition 2014, State and Statutory Boards Sector	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka (50 Years Anniversary)
2015	Gold Award in Annual Report Awards Competition 2015, State and Statutory Boards Sector	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka
2016	Gold Award in Annual Report Awards Competition 2016, State and Statutory Boards Sector	The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Sri Lanka

2017	Gold Award- Annual Report Awards 2017 State Corporations and Statutory Boards- Quintessence of Eminence	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka (53rd Years Anniversary)
2017	Gold Award- Annual Report Awards 2019 state Corporations and Statutory Boards	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka

BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS



BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS: STATE SERVICE SECTOR

YEAR	AWARD	AWARDED BY
2016	Winner/ National Business Excellence Award 2016 -State Service Sector	The National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka
2017	Winner/ National Business Excellence Award 2017 -State Service Sector.	The National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka
2018	Runner up/ National Business Excellence Award 2018 -State Service Sector	The National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka
2022	Winner/ National Business Excellence Award 2022-State Service Sector	The National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka

AWARDS

BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE SECTOR

YEAR	AWARD	AWARDED BY
2021	Runner up/ National Business Excellence Award 2021 -Educational Service Sector	The National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka

BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS: EXCELLENT ORGANIZATION IN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT.

YEAR	AWARD	AWARDED BY
2021	1st Runner-Up National Business Excellence Award being the most Excellent Organization in Performance Management.	The National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka

COMPETITIONS



YEAR	AWARD	AWARDED BY
2022	Gold Award- For the Best State Corporation and Statutory Board	Tags Awards Ceremony 2022 (The Triumph of Excellence) organized by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka
2017	Second Runner Up- Next Generation Challenge 2017	Competition powered by The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

AWARDS FOR THE BEST WEBSITE



YEAR	AWARD	AWARDED BY
2017	Overall, Bronze Winner of the Best Website in Sri Lanka 2017	Bestweb.lk
2017	Gold Winner Of the Sri Lankan Best Website in Education and Professional Services Category In 2017	Bestweb.lk
2020	Silver Winner Of the Sri Lankan Best Website in Education and Professional Services Category In 2020	Bestweb.lk
2021	Silver Winner Of the Sri Lankan Best Website in Education and Professional Services Category In 2021	Bestweb.lk
2023	Overall, Bronze Winner of the Best Website in Sri Lanka 2023	Bestweb.lk

VOLUNTARY SERVICE INTERNATIONAL AWARDS



YEAR	AWARD
2016	Jayawardene Pradeepa Praname 2016
AWARDED BY	

Received by Dr. E. A. Weerasinghe from then President Maithripala Sirisena – awarded by the Alumni Association of University of Sri Jayewardenepura

AWARDS AND CERTIFICATES FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTRIBUTION



YEAR	AWARD	AWARDED BY
2021	Certificate for meeting the Green Building Standards required for the Mainstream (Gold)) of certification under the CIOB Green Mark Rating System	CIOB Green Mark
2022	Silver Award- Presidential Environment Awards 2021 -2022 - Best Government Institute That Contributes to The Environment	Central Environmental Authority



JANABHIMANI HONORARY AWARD

YEAR	AWARD	AWARDED BY
2019	Janabhimani Gaurava, Helaye Mahaviru Ravana Rajabhimani Gaurava	Government of Sri Lanka

Chapter 10

NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY AND SRI LANKA: THE COMMON FUTURE

• • • • •

“ You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something – your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life ”

- Steve Jobs

The inevitable question that arises as we commemorate NSBM Green University's seventh anniversary is, "What about its future?" It would not have been difficult to respond to this question if NSBM Green University's mandate were limited to that of becoming a standard higher education institution. So let us first have a look at that aspect.

Universities in Sri Lanka have a varied history. They have grown in response to the nation's shifting requirements. New faculties, departments, and study areas have been added. They have attracted new employees, paying particular attention to the talents of the youth. The perspectives of the institutions' intellectual capacities have been broad-



ened by these new employees. Additionally, Sri Lankan universities have built new facilities and drawn in more students. In the year 2022 only, 14 new departments were established in 8 of these institutions. A total of 54 new undergraduate and graduate degree programs too were introduced. Only in state organizations, there are now more than 160,000 students, increased from 150,000 the previous year. These changes are expected and will continue to take place.

If the discussion were limited to such factors, a similar transformation happens at NSBM Green University too. It is well known that the university

has ambitious plans for the near future. Following the implementation of the NSBM Strategic Plan in 2016, it has already created its Strategic Plan for the years 2022–2026 in collaboration with MTI Consulting. The Strategic Plan has positioned NSBM Green University to continue providing the highest caliber of excellence in the higher education sector. In order to further expand its services and prospects to future generations and have a greater impact on the global education at large, NSBM is currently developing Phase II on an additional 15 acres of land adjacent to its current facilities. The master plan for Phase II encompasses the following facilities.



- New Faculty Building Complex
- Hostel facilities for over 1,000 students
- Multipurpose Conference Hall with over 1,500 seating capacity
- Playground
- Scenic Walking paths
- Rainwater Harvesting Pond
- Extended Car Park

It could be assumed that with these developments, NSBM will expand their intellectual boundaries too. Legal Studies and Nursing streams have been introduced already. More faculties and study programs will be initiated, following the demand. Every university expands but a university like NSBM, with superior

management principles will expand exponentially.

SRI LANKA'S ECONOMY: REBUILDING AFTER A CATASTROPHE

This is not the “future” I have in my mind when I raise the question of NSBM’s future. Or rather, this is only part of the future I envisage. The future of NSBM Green University is closely entangled with the future of the nation. One cannot break that link. So one has to look at how NSBM would contribute to the future of Sri Lanka. Or in other words, how the developments within NSBM will trigger a much more extensive develop-

**NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY AND SRI LANKA:
THE COMMON FUTURE**



ment within the country, in the same way a few tiny raindrops start a stream that would evolve into a wide river a couple of miles later.

Sri Lanka, at the moment of penning this, is enjoying a tea-break within an economic crisis, which has caused a significant negative impact on the growth of the country, showing traces of looming poverty. The crisis visibly started in 2019 and we soon found it to be the country's worst economic crisis after nearly 75 years since its independence in 1948. The economy contracted by 4.8% year-on-year in the first half of 2022, and all key sectors contracted amidst shortages of inputs and supply. According to the latest South Asia Economic Focus and the Sri Lanka Development Update, Sri Lanka's real GDP fell by about 8% in 2022 and a further drop of 4.2% is

expected in 2023. The country is facing an unsustainable debt and severe balance of payments crisis, and it has lost access to international financial markets since 2020 after credit rating downgrades. The fluid political situation and heightened fiscal, external, and financial sector imbalances pose significant uncertainty for Sri Lanka's economic outlook.

However, there is some positive news. According to the Sri Lankan finance ministry, the country's foreign reserves had grown by 23.5% from USD 1.7 billion in September 2022 to USD 2.1 billion in February 2023, representing an increase of USD 400 million. The Central Bank of Sri Lanka predicts that Sri Lanka's economy would grow by 3.3% in 2024,. Many analysts feel that 2024 would be the



Construction of the Phase II of NSBM Green University

beginning of recovery for Sri Lanka.

I have authored a series of articles to Echelon, the business magazine and Daily Financial Times that offer insights on economic recovery strategies amidst turbulent times. As a temporary solution, IMF assistance may not suffice to recover Sri Lanka's economy. The key challenge lies in increasing the country's GDP, which is critical to counteract the crisis. Sri Lanka's limited natural resources, including the absence of oil reserves, pose an added challenge in boosting the GDP. Emulating Lee Kuan Yew's successful model for Singapore in the mid-1960s, the most viable resource for Sri Lanka to develop is its human capital. In doing so, the country can attract foreign investment and build a productive human resource capacity that generates wealth. Given these

limitations, there are no viable alternatives to achieve sustained economic growth.

RAPID INDUSTRIALISATION AND DIGITALISATION

The interesting question is how other Asian countries developed themselves. A notable aspect common to all developed Asian nations, is the turning point the country made from the third world to the first, under a charismatic leadership. Singapore's story cannot be told without Lee Kuan Yew. Malaysian and Chinese stories have their own heroes; respectively Mahathir Mohamad and Deng Xiaoping in the centre. However, my favorite, as I always say, is the Korean story.

What changed Korea's future was the

Heavy-Chemical Industry Drive (shortened to 'HCI') that commenced in 1973 under President Park's guidance. The outcome of it was simply great. It moved Korea from a middle-income country to an industrial one with high growth potential. By 1977, steel production was over 4 million tons a year, up from 1 million in 1972. Machinery production, within six years to 1978 averaged an annual growth rate of 45%. Transport equipment output grew annually at a rate of more than 50%. Electronic machinery also took off in the mid-1970s, starting with the production of color television sets and other electronic items, with a growth of more than 50% a year. The boom in shipbuilding was equally dramatic. In 1974, Korea, for the first time, also started refining ethylene, polyethylene, and polyvinyl chlorides. The non-ferrous metal sector production increased fourfold between 1972 and 1978. By 1979 per capita GDP in Korea had risen to nearly USD 1,700 - a four-fold increase within six years. Other developments followed, but a strong foundation was laid by President Park before he died in 1979.

If Sri Lanka were to achieve that kind of dramatic development, there would be two terms it should focus on: Rapid Industrialization and Digitalization. The former is the approach used by all East Asian and Southeast Asian countries to come out of poverty and to reach the first world status. China, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan - all developed their industries with an export orientation. India is following suit. India

assembles cars now - some of the largest car manufacturing plans in India are in nearby Tamil Nadu. Chennai is nicknamed 'Detroit of Asia' for its large number of auto component industries. That is only part of the picture. Coimbatore, known as the 'Manchester of South India', for its textiles, is a major industrial hub in South India and houses more than 30,000 small, medium and large industries. The world's sixth-largest watch manufacturer produces its watches for the Indian market in a partnership with TATA. The Tamil Nadu state government owns the world's biggest bagasse-based paper mills. This is exactly the type of industry portfolio one must look for in Sri Lanka.

The other approach is perhaps even more appropriate. Digitalization has the potential to transform developing nations in many ways. Digitalization can speed up development by enabling better use of resources, bringing people closer together, and helping economic growth. Digital projects around the world spur innovation and help people access better services. Digitalization also creates new opportunities for developing countries to boost growth and be part of the globalized economy. It offers technological advances in productivity that can improve the economic situation for people and reduce poverty. Digital technologies can also transform markets and economic opportunities. Further, Digitalization can help foster innovation and entrepreneurship by providing people with the necessary skills and knowledge to

create new businesses and products. It can also create incubators and accelerators that provide people with the resources and the support they need to start their own businesses. Finally, Digitalization can support SMEs by providing them training and resources to help them adapt to the digital economy.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND THE ROLE OF NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY

In my view NSBM Green University should place itself in this bigger picture. As a knowledge creator, the role it can play in the economic transformation is larger than anybody could imagine. Perhaps that would be a role only a few institutions can ever play. I know NSBM Green University will obligingly take the challenge. The following are some ways it can contribute towards the economic transformation of Sri Lanka:

Building much needed HR capacity for the nation by providing world-class education: This would be a challenging endeavor. Beyond simply filling the quantitative demand, NSBM Green University also has a direct stake in producing graduates of the highest caliber. Since the university has established mutually beneficial collaborations with businesses to give students opportunity to receive exposure to the real-world workplaces, the university's dedication to quality in education goes far beyond course delivery.

a) Fostering innovation and entre-

preneurship: NSBM Green University can foster innovation and entrepreneurship by providing students with the necessary skills and knowledge to create new businesses and products. The university can also collaborate with the industry to create incubators and accelerators that provide students with the resources and support they need to start their own businesses. In fact, they do it already. Still, this is an area that always looks for continuous improvement.

b) Industry oriented research: The university can set aside funds for research projects that are aligned with the national development goals. This would help to ensure that the research is relevant and has the potential to make a real impact on the economy. It can further share the findings of its research with industry leaders and policymakers. This would help to raise awareness of the potential of research to drive economic growth.

c) Promoting digitalization: NSBM Green University can promote digitalization by offering courses and programs that focus on digital technologies and their applications. The university can also collaborate with industry to create platforms that facilitate trade and e-commerce, and Internet-based training and business services. Mastering the digital transformation process demands solid managerial and technical skills, leadership institutions, policies and regulations for a digital economy,

and a competitive communication infrastructure and ICT industry.

d) **Supporting Startups:** NSBM Green University can support startups in several ways. Firstly, the university has created mutually beneficial relationships with the industry to provide students with opportunities to get exposure to the real-world workplaces. This means that startups can collaborate with the university to provide students with internships, mentorship, and other opportunities to gain practical experience. Secondly, NSBM Green University Faculty of Business can offer guidance on various aspects of business, such as marketing, finance, and management. Finally, the university hosts events such as conferences and workshops that bring together students, academics, and industry professionals. Startups can participate in these events to network, showcase their products or services, and gain exposure to potential investors. Overall, NSBM Green University's commitment to excellence in education and industry partnerships makes it an ideal partner for startups looking to grow and succeed.

e) **Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs):** SMEs contribute to about 45% of total employment in Sri Lanka, but many of them are struggling due to a decrease in demand for their products or services. NSBM Green University can support SMEs by providing them with training and

resources to help them adapt to the digital economy. The university can also collaborate with the government and other stakeholders to create policies and regulations that support SMEs.

These efforts can certainly help create a more competitive and innovative economy that is better equipped to meet the challenges of the digital age.

A FEW CONCLUDING REMARKS FROM A FORERUNNER

I would like to end the narrative from the same individual I have commenced it: Dr. P. B. Jayasundera, one of the few personalities involved in the initial discussions about the NSBM Green University. I have questioned him about his satisfaction with the developed model. He did not respond in a manner that was as straightforward as I had anticipated. It was also more thorough.

“On one hand,” said Dr. Jayasundera, “I am satisfied with the current state of NSBM Green University, as it has successfully materialized my dreams with minimal cost to our nation, while educating thousands of students, including those whom I have had the privilege of lecturing. I am also certain, just like me, the political leaders, including President Mahinda Rajapaksa and former Minister Dullas Alahapperuma, who supported this initiative and made a positive contribution to our country, feel proud.”

“However, I must admit that NSBM

Green University is not exactly what I had envisioned. Rather than another state university with a Vice Chancellor, I had hoped for a university supported by a trust, such as those seen in Harvard and other well-respected institutions in the developed world. In my opinion, a modern-day university should be run by a Director with a business orientation, supported by a group of chairs. NSBM Green University has yet to reach this level of institutional structure."

"Beyond that NSBM Green University has a global level responsibility. That is to promote environmental sustainability based on the principle that all universities have a role to play in addressing the climate crisis. As a global leader in education, NSBM Green University is uniquely positioned to help raise awareness of the climate crisis and to train the next generation of environmental leaders. The university is also committed to conducting research that can help inform decision-makers and to developing innovative solutions to environmental problems."

Dr. Jayasundera shares my opinion that NSBM Green University would benefit from an increased focus on the "Green" aspect of its name. To this end, the university could establish itself as a leading regional or international center for Green Technology research. Research initiatives could be developed to explore topics such as carbon costing, solar energy, and climate change.

Finally, we should be grateful for the

fact that NSBM Green University does all this while becoming a financial success. This presents it with yet another difficulty, as similar issues are not encountered by state universities which are already supported by the government. Thus, it is important to recognize the outstanding service that the NSBM Green University provides on both a national and an international scale.

POST SCRIPT: BRAVE NEW PLAN OF A MEDICAL FACULTY

During the process of compiling the book, an important development has taken place. NSBM Green University has expanded its offerings by establishing a Medical Faculty, which is a significant achievement. This is particularly noteworthy considering the challenges associated with fee-levying medical education in Sri Lanka, which has always faced resistance from various stakeholders, including doctors themselves and state university students.

The North Colombo Medical College (NCMC), established in 1980 by the College of General Practitioners of Sri Lanka, was the country's first privately funded medical school. Located in North Colombo and affiliated with the University of Aberdeen, its establishment was accompanied by numerous obstacles, such as limited funds, inadequate infrastructure, and staffing challenges, which affected its credibility. Nevertheless, within a year, the college was inaugurated by President Junius Richard Jayeward-

**SAME CHALLENGE, I ALWAYS GOT:
BUILD FROM NIL**

dene on September, 1981. The college initially admitted 100 local students and 20 foreign students. Despite facing ongoing resistance, the college persevered, with its first batch of students graduating in 1990. Eventually, the college was nationalized and became the Medical Faculty of the University of Kelaniya.

Subsequently, a more recent case exemplifies this situation. The South Asian Institute of Technology and Medicine (SAITM) was a privately-owned educational institution dedicated to providing higher education in Sri Lanka. Established in 2008, SAITM operated as a degree-awarding institute under the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978. Situated in Malabe, a suburb of Colombo, SAITM boasted a vibrant location within Sri Lanka's bustling heart, offering a welcoming atmosphere, a proficient faculty, and exceptional facilities. Notably, SAITM Faculty of Medicine stood as the sole private medical college in the country. However, regrettably, it faced untimely closure. In November 2017, the SAITM Faculty of Medicine ceased new student enrollments, and the national government agreed to "abolish" the institution due to the intense controversy surrounding SAITM. Concerns regarding its standards and legality in terms of its operations were raised by various stakeholders. Consequently, some of the student batches were transferred to the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU).

outlined above, it requires great courage to consider undertaking a similar endeavor. Nevertheless, Professor E. A. Weerasinghe remains steadfast in his belief that he and his team can develop a viable plan. He contends that denying fee-levying education at a time when the country's demand for doctors is increasing constitutes a grave offense. "We will not allow such a situation to persist," he asserts. "Our objective is to establish a new faculty that will produce doctors of exceptional quality, meeting the country's needs. We will approach this endeavor in our unique manner, ensuring that NSBM Medical Faculty students are no different from any other students within the university. They will reside and study in the same environment, as we have no intention of segregating the medical students, a practice observed by many other universities. This approach embodies the true spirit of NSBM Green University."

Given the unfortunate experiences



A true tribute to great leadership

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CHANUKA WATTEGAMA

Academic, Engineer, Writer.

Graduated as an Electronics Engineer, Chanuka has completed his postgraduate studies in Business Administration. He has over 30 years' experience at specialist and management level in government, private sector and International civil society organizations. Central Bank of Sri Lanka, UNDP, ICTA, Softlogic and Bartleet are some of the organisations he has worked. He has also been a visiting lecturer at University of Colombo and Open University.

He has been the founding editor of 'Wijeya Pariganaka' magazine, the largest selling monthly IT magazine in Sri Lanka. As a science writer, he has won the award for Best Science writer (Sinhala) once and Best Science writer (English) twice.

He is also a scholar in French contributing literary works for international French readers.

NSBM LEGACY

THE CREATOR AND THE CREATION

Charuka Wattegama

A bit far from Sri Lanka's bustling capital city, at Pitipana, Homagama, stands a vibrant campus - NSBM Green University. With towering buildings and sprawling lawns, it is a place where students' aspirations are born. Classrooms are filled with eager minds, being trained by a faculty that's compassionate and kind.

This university stands where once was barren land, a few trees scattered here and there. Then came a remarkable man. He had a grand plan. He cleared the land and planted seeds. And soon, a beautiful garden, a repository of knowledge emerged. He created a place where students thrive and their passions come alive.

This book is the story of that creator and his creation. It narrates how a single man's vision transformed an infertile wasteland into a lush oasis of learning.

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NSBM GREEN UNIVERSITY

Mahenwaththa, Pitipana, Homagama.
011 5445000

inquiries@nsbm.ac.lk | www.nsbm.ac.lk