

OPINIONS FROM THE PUBLIC AND VICINITY

# THE ROAD TO NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

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## **As a politician in Homagama electorate, what is your view of NSBM?**

When I was the Cabinet Minister who was in charge of the electorate of Homagama, I had a vision to make Homagama an education hub of the country. Also, we had a plan of reducing the traffic density of Colombo city by shifting education centered development towards areas like Homagama, Awissawella, Kesbawa and Kaduwela. We thought specially Homagama area, which is a beautiful country side of the island, would be the

ideal place to open educational institutes where students can study surrounded by the village culture. Thus, we established the school, Mahinda Rajapakse Vidyalaya, the South Asia’s largest secondary school. Then, we also built a book store complex to distribute school text books for the whole country. Further, we established the Nano Technology and Science Park in an area of 58 acres. When I was the Minister of Trade, Marketing Development & Consumer Affairs, Measurement Units Standards & Services Department was also established in Homagama.

Hon Dullas Alahapperuma, the

then Minister of Skills Development and Vocational Training wanted to open a state-owned university under his ministry and I was keen on implementing that project in Homagama. When I was the Minister of Education, we introduced the technical stream for A/Ls which was a turning point in Sri Lankan education. Thus, technical subjects such as Engineering Technology, Bio-Systems Technology, and Science for Technology were introduced to schools.

Then, technical faculties had to be introduced to universities for such students who study in the





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technical stream for A/Ls. Now, three technical faculties of three universities, University of Colombo, University of Moratuwa and University of Sri Jayewardenepura are being built in the same area where NSBM is located. And also, the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura is going to be built in Maththegoda. Hon S B Dissanayaka, the then Minister of Higher Education, worked on opening the Technical Faculty of University of Moratuwa, in Biyagama.

Then, Mahinda Rajapaksha International Sports Complex was built for the use of both national and international sports practices. A baseball ground was also built with the aid of Japan. Those days there was only Pali and Sanskrit University in Homagama, but now Homagama is the only electorate in Sri Lanka with nine universities.

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Telecommunication University. After working as an executive member for UNESCO, I was able to bring the Teacher development center for South Asia to Meepe. And also, the Sri Lanka Technological Campus was established in the same area. Thus, an education hub has already been created in this area.

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### What do you think of the quality of NSBM? What steps should NSBM take to improve it?

National and international recognition of a university received depending on the competitiveness and the standards of the study courses and the extent to which the students apply them practically. In some of our neighboring countries, there are certain universities which offer BSc, MSc and also PhDs, but they are not recognized even within the country. So success depends on the quality of education. Since NSBM offers degree programmes in affiliation with high ranked, well-recognized international universities, by following their syllabi and teaching methods, we believe that NSBM will be able to produce quality graduates.

### What do you think of NSBM graduates and the current status of NSBM?

English and IT are very important tools in this globalized world. Since NSBM undergraduates study in English medium using computer technology, NSBM graduates should have more access to job opportunities in the country. Due to projects like port city, job opportunities will be open for many within the next decade. So, NSBM may have more opportunities in such context.

### What do you think of the visionary leadership of Dr E A Weerasinghe?

Dr E A Weerasinghe is a product of University of Jayewardenepura (Vidyodaya University). It is the first University established after the independence. That is where even I studied. University of Peradeniya was established before that, but they had a western oriented system. Those days, Welivitiye Soratha Thero had a vision to produce creative and efficient graduates who will serve the country in different fields. Prof Wimal Balagalla is the only lecturer who is still alive from all those who were there at the beginning of the university. He says, Management studies were first introduced by Welivitiye Soratha Thero and that there was no one to study management those days. He further mentions that Management courses were held in the evenings because only the professionals were studying there. Today, Management has become a well-recognized stream of study all around the world. However, University of Jayewardenepura, specially the Faculty of Management has produced many visionary leaders. Dr Weerasinghe is one of them.