

Experience of Residential Semester at TARC, Savar

Progna Paromita Majumder

"YOU will cry thrice -once when you come to TARC since you had never stayed away from your family. You will cry again as you leave for your home from TARC. However, this time you will cry twice as much as before since you will like the place so much that you will not want to leave", said the Campus Super of TARC in our orientation program. And trust me, this is true. Once you start staying in TARC, there is so much to see, so many things to learn, so much to enjoy that you will want to stay there forever.



Training And Resource Centre (TARC) as the name implies, is a training centre where students do not only get the training of being educated but how to survive in the society. The students here do not only extract lessons from the textbooks but also from the surroundings, from their friends and even the staffs as well. This is a unique program of BRAC University called Residential Semester (RS) where the students receive "Education Plus" because here they do not only learn how to educate themselves but rather how to lead a better life independently.

Every time, when a BRAC University student gets promoted to their second semester, they have to complete this semester (a four month course) in TARC, Savar. The second semester is being chosen because within this time a BRAC university student gets accustomed with the curriculum system of the university and the pressure of studies is also comparatively low.

The environment of TARC itself is incomparable. It has so much greenery, so many different kinds of small animals and the air is so fresh to breathe that you will definitely fall in love with this place. The whole area is so secured that you can freely walk around. We, the students, live here with our batch mates, with our friends. All of us are of the same age. We study together, chat together, help each other out and stay by each others side when we have any emotional break down. We share our joys together and our sorrows as well. I got the first taste of getting wet in the rain in TARC which I cannot even imagine in Dhaka.

The most important thing that we learned in TARC is how to make a balance between education and socializing, since excelling in both of them is equally important for leading a better life. Moreover, as we share our rooms with roommates, we learn how to make adjustments and compromise and also how to understand and respect the sentiments of other people. We also develop our communication skills as we have to do plenty of group assignments and we all know how much important communication skill is to compete in the corporate world. All these things combine together to develop our leadership quality.

One distinctive feature our RS is the social lab. For one whole day, all the staffs of TARC takes a "holiday" and the students get to do the jobs of the staff. Nothing to worry! It is not as hard as it sounds, but rather FUN! The students choose their designation via lottery--- some of them get to become cooks or laundrymen or even admin officer or Campus Super! In my turn I have been a cook and I have had to cook (along with others of course) for 135 people! Only then I have realized how hard it is for the cooks to do their job day in and day out and maintain the hygiene as well.

We are also taken to different study tours and these study tours are really enlightening. I was touched when I saw the unprivileged physically disabled and mentally challenged people taking treatment and trying to lead a normal life in CRP (Centre of rehabilitation of the Paralysis). I use to neglect them before but now the whole scenario has changed me. Some of my friends have cried as they have been moved too.

Village trips are also included. We have gone to the villages, mingled with the villagers and learned how they lead their lives. In this way, we know the lifestyles and the way of thinking of different people and have learned how to respect each and every individual of the society.

Guess what? The entire cultural programs in TARC are being organized by the students with a little help from the teachers. To me it was a perfect chance to recognize our hidden talents. I never knew that I am such a good actress until I acted in the cultural program and never believed that I can ever entertain anyone with my Hawaiian guitar. Some of my friends who have never danced in their life on stage did not even hesitate and had put the stage on fire. Moreover, whenever we have seen our friends participating, we automatically felt the drag in our heart that "If they can do it, I can do it too." The frequent "coming on stage" raised our confidence level to the peak and cut down all our hesitations.

We even had our own magazine of TARC called "the Weavers" where you can publish your own writings. Besides, we can also explore our creative hobbies such as jewelry box making, fruit carving and many more. For both sports loving boys and girls, TARC provides two huge fields where we can play to our heart content.

The resident teachers are also available and they are always ready to help whenever required. The doctors and the counselors are also there to take care of our health.