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**Met with Dr. Ishrat Hussain, Dean & Director of the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) to bring you this exclusive interview. Having served important positions at the World Bank and as Governor of Pakistan’s Central Bank, his life and work serve as an inspiration and motivation for all of us to become better human beings.**

**How did you start your career?**

**I started my career as a civil servant at the age of 23 serving people at the grass root level. In 1968, I was posted to East Pakistan, in a place which had no roads. Everything was connected by rivers, canals and water inlets. There was a river called the ‘Agunmukha’ which means the ‘River of Fire’. It was a fierce river that would bump you up in the air due to the immense force of the water. I didn’t know swimming but I used to travel for more than 21 days out of my headquarters on the boats in order to reach out and serve the needy. It was at great personal risk but the satisfaction I got from listening to the poor and resolving their problems, without having them to incur the expense and pain of traveling to reach us at the headquarters, is something that I still rejoice over.**

**What was the turning point in your professional life?**

**I was working in the Planning & Development Department of the Sindh Government. My background education was in Chemistry but I realized soon enough the need of a degree in Economics to be able to perform my job well. My friends were of the opinion that I may be in the Planning & Development sector today and tomorrow I may end up some place else.**

**According to them the right education didn’t really matter – just needed common sense to get the work done. I didn’t agree with the attitude and believed that I had to specialize**

**in the field of Economics to be able to get the work done well. I was convinced that I had to**

**equip and educate myself. I was newly married at the time, and my wife was expecting our**

**first child, but we decided to go to Williams College, Massachusetts, USA so I could pursue a Masters degree in Development Economics. They were challenging times; it used to snow half the year, we didn’t have a car and it was difficult adjusting in a new place. But I completed my Masters and went on to receive a Ph.D in Economics from Boston University. This decision to invest in myself, turned out to be the most important decision of my life.**

**What has been your most important learning in life?**

**Service to the poor and humanity. This is something that I learnt early on in my life. I believe that one should not live just for himself or his family and friends. We should have a**

**much bigger goal in life. Blessed with many privileges it is our duty to look out for people who need our help. There are people all around us who are unable to get even two square meals a day. We must be responsive to their plight and needs.**

 **Did you have role models growing up?**

**As a young individual, I was very impressed by the life of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). The fact that he would never make any commitments or any pronouncements unless he had practiced them himself is something which sunk deep inside me. I am always conscious that there should never be any disconnect between my words and my actions. Another role model for me has been the founder of our nation, Quaid-e-Azam. Despite the immense opposition he faced, he created and gifted us with an independent nation. This taught me that if you have the determination and will, you can accomplish even the toughest challenges in the world.**

**What drives you to get to work every day?**

**I am very fortunate, that despite the atmosphere of gloom and doom in the country, I get**

**to meet bright young boys and girls every day. Seeing them gives me hope for the future of Pakistan. I strongly believe that it is the youth of this nation that can make it a better place to live. I want to work with them to make them not only competent professionals but individuals with a sound value system, so after completing their education, they can practice hard work, dignity of labor, truthfulness, honesty, integrity, merit and discipline. As one may have the highest of qualifications but if you don’t believe and practice these values you can’t be a good human being. And we need strong and good human beings to take this country forward.**

 **What’s a typical Sunday like?**

**The day starts with reading the daily newspapers. I try to spend as much time with my family; we have lunch together, go out sometimes, take a picnic if the weather is pleasant. It’s a slow-paced, relaxing day doing things we can’t over the week.**

 **A habit that you would like to give up ?**

**To be able to balance work and family better. In fact, if I had to relive my life I would spend**

**more time with my children.**