

Enrolment growth at pvt univs falls

Lack of quality education, high tuition fees, irregularities blamed

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LACK of quality education, high tuition fees and allegations of irregularities against many existing private universities have combined to bring down the year to year student enrolment growth at the universities.

However, the number of such universities continued to swell in the past 10 years.

According to the University Grants Commission officials, year to year growth rate of private universities came

down to 0.61 per cent in 2014, as many private universities do not provide quality education, year to year growth rate is falling.

They failed to provide the data of total students of private universities in 2015 and the work of publishing an annual report for the year was in progress.

The number of private universities increased to 95 till June this year from 51 in 2006, they have said.

Former UGC chairman AK Azad Chowdhury has said that hardly 10 to 15 universities impart quality education to the students, and

UGC chairman Abdul Mannan and Association of Non-Government Universities of Bangladesh chairman Sheikh Kabir Hossain both, however, said that in the past 10 years the number of public universities had increased, as result of that student growth at private universities decreased.

'Not all but some universities lack quality,' said

Sheikh Kabir Hossain.

According to UGC, there were 1,24,267 students in 51 private universities in 2006, and growth rate of students was 40 per cent from 88,669 students in 2005.

There were 2,80,822 students in 52 private universities in 2011 with growth rate of 27 per cent from 2,20,752 in 2010.

Again there were 3,30,730 students in 2014 at 80 private universities and growth rate was 0.61 per cent from 3,28,736 students in 2013.

A UGC official involved with preparing the annual report has said there were about 3.75 lakh students at private universities in 2015 and on that count the growth rate would be around 13 per cent.

According to UGC officials, America Bangladesh University and Queens University are operating on court orders after being banned by the government. America Bangladesh University is running 16 illegal outer campuses

Continued on page 2 Col. 5

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Continued from page 1

across the country.

IBAIS University is running unauthorised campus on court's stay order and also its board of trustees are divided into factions.

Five universities — BGC Trust University Bangladesh, University of Science and Technology, University of Information Technology and Sciences, Southern University Bangladesh and Prime University — are running illegal campuses.

The education ministry and the commission had banned academic activities on outer campuses in 2007 and in the current month the government shut down all campuses of Darul Ihsan University.

IBAIS University, Queens University, Syl-

het International University and Britania University were facing disputes over ownership.

Educationists and former top officials of the University Grants Commission have said that when it comes to ensuring quality education, many private universities lack research, library and laboratories and others facilities while lack of skilled and qualified teachers held the students from the private universities.

High tuition fees along with wide circulations of news of many universities flouting the Private University Act 2010 by not moving to permanent campuses in third deadline, conflict over ownership, running without

vice-chancellors, pro-vice-chancellors and treasurers in line with law had kept students away from these universities, they think.

Public universities are the first choice for guardians as well as students, and generally students who failed to get a seat in these universities goes to enrol at private universities and others colleges.

High cost of education at the private universities is another issue, said AK Azad Chowdhury who was echoed by Sheikh Kabir Hossain.

UGC officials have said that a BBA student needs to spend Tk 4 to Tk 5 lakh as tuition and others fees for graduation while a CSE student needs to spend Tk 5 to Tk 6 lakh for the gradation degree.

Besides they need to spend handsome amount for accommodation, travel cost and other educational expenses.

Sponsors have opened some universities keeping only profits in their minds and they have showed no interest in ensuring quality, so chances of improving standard of education at these universities are slim, AK Azad Chowdhury thinks.

But Abdul Mannan thinks that since 2006 the government built at least 15 new public universities across the country, so students from remote areas do not need to go anywhere to take tertiary education, which is a major factor affecting growth of students in private universities.