

Education suffers

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Following political disturbances and closures due to strikes by students, teachers and employees on various occasions the academic sessions in Dhaka University as well as in the other educational institutes affiliated with the university have become a victim of what is now described as a session jam.

The academic sessions in some particular departments of Dhaka University are now lagging behind by two to five years as compared to the calendar and normal session periods.

The DU which began its sessions in 1921, now has six faculties and 36 departments extending education to as many as 18 thousand students.

It is now heading for a most crucial crisis as the students once admitted into their classes can never guess how much time they would require to complete their normal academic session.

According to available statistics, since independence the sessions of DU have been suffering from closures of one type or another in most cases rooted in political turmoil, strikes and clashes between rival student groups. But the situation during the recent period has aggravated to the worst.

In 1972 when the students of DU had lost an academic year following the War of Independence in 1971, the DU authority was able to make it up in 1976 by joining two academic sessions together.

But the trend could not be maintained during the subsequent days as undesirable closures became a regular and normal practice.

In many cases a lack of a proper policy framework in running the university administration has also contributed to this grave problem.

It was seen that the Faculty of Science under DU with its eight departments is the worst victim of session jam among which the Department of Geology is behind the normal schedule by about four years. The students who took admission in the honors classes in 1979-80 to pass their M. Sc. examination in 1983-84 have just appeared for their final examinations.

Students admitted in the honors classes for the 1981-82 session completed their three-year honors courses in 1988 and they are now attending their M.Sc. classes under special arrangements.

Students admitted for the 1982-83 honors courses

have yet to complete their three-year courses lagging behind the normal academic period about three years.

In some of the other departments the honors examinations for the students admitted in 1983 are going on.

The picture in the Faculty of Biological Science is the same as in the Science Faculty. The honors examinations scheduled to be held in this faculty in 1984 have just been given when in some of the departments those have yet to start.

The results of the honors examinations for 1982-83 session in the faculty of Arts have just been published about three years behind schedule.

The dates for the final examinations in this faculty had been shifted thrice following sudden closures from time to time. Most of the departments under this faculty have lost at least three years while the fate in some departments is still uncertain.

The education scene in the Faculty of Commerce is comparatively good where the students of both honors and masters classes have so far lost only one year following closures.

According to statistics available from the university authorities during 1986-87 session the number of academic days had been estimated at 224 days while the actual academic days at the end of the session was 174 days. The university remained closed for 50 days following unaccounted for closure.

The academic sessions of Dhaka University became the worst victim of session jam in 1984-85 when the academic days were estimated at 189 days while in practice classes could not be held on 89 days only.

During the current 1987-88 session the government suspended DU classes for 122 days following a series of incidents on the campus.

In 1973-74 the semester system was introduced in many of the departments under the university with a view to forcing the students to engage themselves in continuous study and also to relieve the students from taking all the examinations at a time.

But the system could not yield any remarkable result as it was not possible to give examinations under this system without taking a certain number of classes.

Consequently, the system had to be abandoned by the university authorities replacing it with a course system.