

Poor dining at DU halls is there a way out?

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Students involvement is needed to improve the quality of food served at different dining rooms and canteens of Dhaka University's student dormitories.

The standard of food served at the dining halls and canteens is not even upto a 'minimum standard'. No subsidy is given for dining. Only some ration cards are used for procuring rice, wheat and sugar for the dining rooms and canteens.

Coarse rice, cheap fish curry and dal are the items served regularly since November 1983. The cooking is also not satisfactory. The dal is served free of cost. But it is known among the students as 'salted water' with little lecs at the bottom. Some students are found to drink dal instead of water.

A student has to pay Taka 6 to 7 for a meal at the dining rooms. The inmates of the halls are given rich food only on occasions like victory, independence and Eid days.

The standard of food served at the canteens is a little better. But the price is also higher. One has to pay an amount of Taka 10 to 12 for a modest meal.

Under the present arrangement, the dining rooms are run by caterers appointed by the hall authorities, and supervised by house tutors.

A survey conducted by the Times Correspondent shows that about 45 per cent of the resident students take two meals daily at the dining rooms and 35 per cent at the canteens.



Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof Abdul Mannan distributing prizes among the winners of indoor games competition of S M Hall. Hall Provost Prof K M Mohsin is also seen.

Rest of the students cook their own food inside their living rooms or at the verandahs nearby using electric heaters. Despite repeated instructions given by the authorities, they have not stopped using heaters.

Most of the dining rooms are very untidy, and give foul smell. The caterers of the dining rooms and canteens do not have to pay house rent, water, electricity and gas bills.

Haji Mohammad Mohsin Hall dining room is the only exception where students operate the dining rooms. Four managers are elected from amongst the students for a one-month

term. The four manage the dining in a cyclic order. The dining room managers get their meals free of cost.

Under this system a student has to pay Taka 85 in advance for a week. The quality of foods served under mess system is comparatively better.

BUET

The resident students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) have to pay Taka 360 to 450 in advance as monthly meal charge.

Special feasts are arranged at the end of every month. A special dinner is also served at the

end of each year. A boarder has to pay an extra amount of Taka one hundred for the annual dinner.

At the Dhaka Medical College hostels, the meals served are 'upto standard'. The dining rooms are run by students' representatives under a mess system. A dining committee elected from among the students of each hostel consists of a convener, two managers and two members from each academic batch for a period of six months.

Under this system, a boarder has to pay Taka 360 for a month. Atleast four improved feasts are served among the inmates a year.

Dr. K. M. Mohsin, Provost of S M Hall in an interview with the Times described the dining system in the halls and suggested how it could be improved.

Dr. Mohsin said that during their student life, the dining halls were managed by students' committees elected under the supervision of a house tutor. Students had to pay for their meals in advance. Fines were also realised for delays in making payments.

Standards of food was satisfactory. Cooks were good. Rice with fried vegetables, curry and dal were the regular items served. Improved diets were served every weekend and monthly feasts with fried rice, chicken roasts, mutton curry and sweets were organised regularly. He felt that the system would prove to be better even today if the inmates of the halls cooperate actively.