

Standard Of Education At DU Falls: Blame Goes To Negligence Of Teachers

Nibedita Roy

SADIA Farjana was looking forward to her first day at Dhaka University, once known as the Oxford of east. Eventually, the big day arrived. Wearing a beautiful dress, she arrived at the university well before her first class. But, Sadia had to begin her university life with a big disappointment. The teacher did not show up. She and her other classmates were dejected.

No, the teacher was neither sick nor there was any problem in his family. He did not turn up because he went to deliver lectures at a private university.

Skipping classes by the university teachers has become common. Instances are also there that teachers fly abroad leaving behind their courses unfinished. Tutorial classes are not taken regularly. Students are seen expressing anger and dissatisfaction at the situation.

According to administrative sources, the number of regular teachers in the university is now 1,473. Of them, 170 are now abroad, which means about 10 percent of the teaching force is absent. The administrative sources, however, could not provide any specific statistics as to how many teachers are engaged in second job like teaching at private universities and working in NGOs.

There are other problems too. About the state of education at science faculty, Apu Majumder, a third year student of Physics, says after attending classes all day long they have to spend a busy time at laboratory in later the afternoon. But their practical classes get delayed for lack of equipment, research materials and inadequate computers. As a result, science faculty lags behind by two years compared to

other faculties. So, the students need seven years to finish a four-year honours course.

Rabindra Nath Sarker, father of Joy, a master's final year student, is worried about his family's future. He says, "I'm going to retire next month. I thought my only son would get a job after his university and take the responsibility of the family well before my retirement. But, it'll take another year for him to finish his studies. His course was supposed to be completed long ago. It's not his fault."

Another sufferer is Anwar Mehedi, a guardian of Public Administration's third year student Rafeza Mehedi. "Nowadays, people remain unemployed on completion of university education. But, in our time, it was not very difficult for a Dhaka University student to get a job," he says.

He thinks the present educational activities of the university simply do not match the standard of the past. "Teachers are now busy with other things. They now work at private universities, NGOs, consultancy firms, different agencies and research organisations. Therefore, they don't have enough time for taking classes at the university."

Partha Protim, a fourth year student of International Relations, says there should be enough books and journals in libraries of all the departments. Whatever books the libraries have are quite old. It takes time for the libraries to have contemporary books, as those are not always available.

"We're far behind when it comes to technology. Different faculties should have cyber cafés like the one we have at the Teachers-Students Centre (TSC)," he adds.

Smriti Roy, a fourth year hon-

ours student of Anthropology, says, "Our teaching system is very much conventional. The teachers take examinations on completion of some specific chapters. And, in the exams almost everyone is awarded second-class marks. Those who want to get first class need to have another quality along with study maintaining a good relationship with teachers."

Overall, the standard of education in the country's premier public university has deteriorated significantly. Even then some students are doing well. "Some students are doing excellent results only because of their personal efforts and some exceptional teachers," says Prof Atiqur Rahman of Social Welfare and Research Faculty.

He also says, "Some vested quarters are abusing the democratic system stated in the University Ordinance 1973. This needs to be stopped. If members of the teachers recruiting appointment committee are chosen based on honesty and accountability it is possible to appoint teachers, vice-chancellors and directors."

News Network recently organised an essay competition titled 'Good Governance in Bangladesh and My Thoughts'. The prize distribution ceremony of the competition was held on May 27. Chairman of the Trustee Board of Transparency International, Bangladesh Prof Mozaffer Ahmed told the function that in terms of standard Dhaka University is not on the list of 100 universities in the world.

A senior official of the University Grants Commission (UGC) admits the educational standard of Dhaka University is falling. The UGC is still working to determine the Dhaka University's position among the universities

across the globe. "We're yet to have any statistics. But, according to different newspaper Dhaka University has no place among 3,000 universities in the world," he says.

Prof Dr Shawkat Ara Hossain of Political Science also supports the contention that the standard of education at the Dhaka University is falling. She cited reasons skipping classes, teachers and student politics. Teachers are not driven by their own values it is not possible to overcome the problem."

She also says, "A teacher spends time for other universities or research activities at the cost of their main job. In Bangladesh teachers are lowly paid compared to their counterparts in India and Pakistan."

Dr Sabbir Ahmed, an assistant professor of the same department, says the standard of education a university depends on its overall situation. The standard of education in Dhaka University is falling due to student politics and lack of facilities and training.

Prof Sadrul Amin, Dean of Arts Faculty, says, "The standard of education depends on facilities and infrastructure and to ensure that we need more money. I cannot charge more. So we have to depend on the concerned ministry for development fund. But, files in the ministry do not move at the desired pace."

About teachers involvement elsewhere, he says, "As the teachers do not get adequate salaries they engage themselves in other works. But, when there is an allegation of negligence in the classroom, an inquiry committee is formed and action is taken accordingly."

-News Network