

Status of UGC Chairman and Members

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IT is learnt from a national daily news paper that the Chairman of the Bangladesh University Grants Commission (UGC) is going to achieve or expecting to get the status of a Minister and the members of the UGC are getting or in the process to achieve the status of state minister. So it is a kind of transition from teaching to ruling atmosphere or movement from academic atmosphere to administrative hemisphere. The UGC is thus transforming to semi-secretariat of the ministry of higher education. It is not clear to me what is exactly going to happen. Do they want more facilities to enjoy? Or do they want more power to exercise over the university authority or the teachers? If it happens, they will surely enjoy huge facilities or, they will get immense opportunities to enjoy their lives at least for four years. It makes me happy to finding any colleague from academic world being honored. At the same time it makes me very unhappy when an academic colleague in administration is found sitting in a costly chair just like a puppet that has no power of taking decisions. Like many of my academic colleagues, I am still confused about the responsibilities of the UGC. What cooperation a university teacher or a student can expect from the UGC? If we consider each private university as a community, then the communities must have internal, local, regional external problems. Who is here to solve those problems? Have the UGC authori-

ty got any responsibility to give any solution to, such problems?

For example; the post of a Vice Chancellor is a very responsible and prestigious one and the system of appointment of a VC is many fold. It maintains lots of formalities and lots of signatures are required from top authorities before going to the final authority - THE RESPECTED PRESIDENT OF THE COUNTRY who is also the CHANCELLOR of all private universities. The appointment letter is issued on certain terms and conditions mentioning the benefits such as monthly salaries, accommodation, transport etc. that the VC will enjoy during the tenure of his four years service to the respective university. What happens then in many cases? The VCs don't get salaries months after months. Sometimes partial or fraction of the total amount is paid. The VC cannot work in the disciplined ways because of lack of sufficient rules and regulations on private university act. What will the VC do? Where should he complain? Who will give solutions to his problems? Unfortunately there is none. Frustration is the only solution. The UGC can do nothing and absolutely helpless and hopeless. To tell frankly they don't like to discuss on such issues. Even then the frustrated VCs and the teachers go to them expecting some solution or consolation.

In such situations what the UGC chairman and members need first? Power? Power for what? To help their col-

leagues or students? They need the responsibilities to shape the universities so that the students can learn as well as the teachers can teach in congenial atmosphere. Time is changing. Let us change ourselves. Let us start what we need first. There is no alternative than to create Digital Bangladesh if we want corruption free societies. But the country cannot be converted to digital Bangladesh empty handed or in vacuum. It needs technology and technologists. Where to get those technologists? Should we import them? No. We must not do that. We will produce technologists here.

How is it possible? The answer is - we already have thousands of scientific and technology literate human resources in the country. Now we need just to shape them according to our needs and give them the right tools in their hands. We should not forget the history of liberation war of 1971. Thousands of freedom fighters came out from the society particularly from the educational institutes like School, College, Madrasah and Universities. We can produce skilled technologists using our universities as the best platform. The UGC can play a very important role in producing ICT enabled human resources capable of creating digital Bangladesh and lead Bangladesh to the Super Highway for development. So the UGC authority in cooperation of the ministry of higher education should utilize the full potential to give right shape to the universities. At

the same time, the UGC must have highly qualified and experienced technologists as members, and in other responsible positions. The present scenario of the UGC is not up to the level. Our colleagues in the UGC know well what are going on inside the universities and what are the problems. The solutions are also within the university communities including UGC. The UGC should have lots of responsibilities to adjust our higher education to rest of the countries in the world technologically and scientifically. They can raise their positions showing their efficiency inside and outside the country. Mere gaining the status of ministers can neither solve their personal problems nor the university problems in respect of higher education. Rather seven or eight ministers (status) will convert the UGC a semi-secretariat, where a large number of police, army and security guards will be deployed that will create another problem for us to reach the chairman and members even in emergency. We should remember more power means more barriers for needy people. Time has come to avoid wrong paths and follow the right paths for prosperity. It is also important to prove the necessity of the University Grants Commission (UGC) in a developing country like Bangladesh when most countries in the world don't have these types of liabilities.

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