

‘Bribe it takes’ to get job at public univs

*TIB finds other factors affecting
teacher recruitment*

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BRIBES ranging from Tk 3 lakh to Tk 20 lakh, political influence, nepotism, regionalism and others played a role in the recruitment of lecturers at public universities in the past 15 years, reveals a Transparency International Bangladesh research.

Loyalty to the ideology of ruling political party always acted as an important catalyst in the recruitment of lecturers, says the TIB research that came out on Sunday.

Vice-chancellors, pro-vice-chancellors, depart-

ment chairmen and external experts have been found to have a hand in the recruitment of the candidates adhering to or supporting their political ideology.

This they did with the intention to make heavier the group of teachers backing the same political ideology of the ruling political party or to increase their votes to secure their positions in internal elections, it says.

Researchers and educationists have alleged that most of the teachers recruited through irregularities and corruption have been

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found spending more time in teachers’ politics and less and less in preparation, dissemination and practice of knowledge.

Professor emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury and Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam of Dhaka University both found the finding of the research titled ‘Recruitment of Lecturers in Public Universities: Governance Challenges and Ways Forward’ to be the ‘unfortunate reality and shocking for society’.

Due to the corrupt recruitment process, public universities are being deprived of meritorious teachers and subsequently students are not getting appropriate classroom lessons.

‘The impact of corruption is far reaching — universities are not getting meritorious teachers, so their academic performance is not good, no research is taking place and as a result academic standard of the highest seat of learning is not improving,’ Serajul Islam Choudhury lamented.

Syed Manzoorul Islam and TIB executive director, both talking at the unveiling at MIDAS Centre of Dhanmondi in the capital, observed that the reality of

the public universities, projected by the research, was gloomy.

University Grants Commission acting chairman Professor Dil Afroza Begum and Dhaka University vice-chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique said that if the TIB provided specific documents of corruption and political influence, nepotism, regionalism, they would ‘take next course of actions if needed’.

TIB collected data about 13 universities from January to November 2016 and information on recruitment of lecturers from 2001 to November 2016 was considered in the research.

‘There is information of financial transactions ranging from Tk 3 lakh to Tk 20 lakh for recruiting lecturers in these universities,’ said the TIB research, adding that a section of the VCs, teachers’ leaders, officials of VC and registrar offices, external experts, student leaders, influential leaders of the ruling party as well as a section of elected people’s representatives are involved in the unauthorised financial transactions’.

However, these individuals usually did not receive these payments directly. Financial transactions were

dealt via officials of the VC and registrar offices, family members and relatives of the VCs, student leaders and political activists.

The research found that at some universities the recruitments were made based on the place of origin of the candidates.

There was a visible tendency among the VCs, external experts or members of the recruitment board to appoint candidates from their own districts or regions.

It also found nepotism an important catalyst in the recruitment of lecturers in the universities.

A section of university teachers lobbied with relevant influential quarters after publication of recruitment notice with the aim to promote members of their families and relatives.

Besides, the research found irregularities in pre-recruitment process when teachers engineered or influenced academic results of some preferred students and subsequently helped their recruitment.

Teachers divulge questions to preferred students before academic examinations, gave idea about possible questions in examinations in exchange for engaging students in their

personal chores or matters.

Teachers gave inflated marks to some female students through establishing special relationships, it found.

During the recruitment test, where there is a provision for holding written test, selection committee members prepared questions without every member’s approval and leaked questions to the favoured candidates, it added.

TIB recommended a comprehensive policy or guidelines on recruitment of teachers, formulation of specific rules and guidelines for appointing VCs and pro-VCs, with the minimum qualification, criteria like seniority, good academic results, administrative experiences like discharging responsibilities as departmental head and faculty dean, professional career records as well as opinion of university-based academic council etc.

Recruitment process should be free from any kind of influences of teachers’ association, it said, adding that in all stages of the academic examination, setting questions and evaluating scripts, there should be arrangement for engaging two teachers on a rotation basis. / /