

Honours And Masters Courses In Colleges

Sir,

The National University is a milestone in the field of imparting higher education. The university got its institutional form in 1992 with the passing of a bill in national parliament. Since then, the university shouldered the responsibilities of looking after the Degree colleges of the country. Its main business includes making curriculum, conducting and controlling examinations, publishing results, distributing certificates among the successful candidates and giving approval for opening new courses of study in the affiliated colleges.

Of late, the affiliated government and non-government colleges are getting approval for opening honours and masters courses easily in different discipline from the National University. But the indiscriminate opening of any branch of learning in the colleges namely, English, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics etc, which are considered major subjects undoubtedly, startles me. A few days ago, I had a talk with a good number of students who are doing their honours course in various colleges. They informed me of their problems. The major two problems they are facing, are: (1) shortage of specialised subject teachers and (2) insufficiency of text and reference books in the college libraries.

Not let us have a glimpse into the above mentioned two problems. As a matter of fact, Honours colleges are suffering from the shortage of quality teachers though the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (PSC) is recruiting teachers against vacant posts in the government colleges almost every year. Aren't they capable of teaching honours course? Of course, most of them are. But the right persons are not in the right places. Before posting of teachers, judgement is hardly made who are capable of teaching honours and masters' courses and who are not. More often than not, the long-experienced teachers capable of teaching honours and masters' courses are posted in such

colleges where intermediate and degree (pass) courses are available. As a result, their vast knowledge in honours and master's courses become unproductive. Besides, when these teachers are promoted to the post of vice-principal or principal or posted on deputation, they remain busy in doing administrative work. On the other hand, the students suffer

immensely losing their teachers well versed in their subjects.

The second major problem is the non-availability of text and reference books in the college libraries. The books that the seminar library of a university has, most of the college libraries don't have. Teachers cannot keep themselves abreast of the up-to-date information and development in their respective subjects for want of good books. The adverse consequence of the non-availability of reading materials is that the advanced students find it difficult to continue their higher study on the one hand, the teachers on the other, fail to deliver fruitful lectures in the classrooms that let the students adopt unfair means in the examinations.

My humble suggestions to the Ministry of Education and National University are as follows:

(i) Before granting any approval for opening honours and masters course by a college, the National University authority should specially consider the physical infrastructure of the college including classrooms, the capacity of the laboratories, sufficiency of books in the libraries and above all the teachers-student ratio.

(ii) The Ministry of Education should highly encourage the government college teachers to do M.Phil and Ph.D and should grant them financial assistance for the purpose.

(iii) Opinions from government college teachers who are interested in teaching honours and masters courses, can be invited and they can be posted accordingly.

(iv) In case of shortage of skilled teachers in the government colleges, university teachers can be employed as part-timer on payment to teach difficult topics of a particular branch of learning.

(v) Last but not the least, our government should raise funds for the education sector, specially for higher education of the country, to arrest its gradual deterioration.

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