

UGC proposes double shift at public univs

Mohiuddin Alamgir

UNIVERSITY Grants Commission has recommended that public universities can introduce double shift to widen the scope of higher education for more students.

With the double shifts, the UGC thinks, the authorities will be able to ensure maximum use of the establishment as many of the universities have no classes or other academic activities after 2:00pm.

It argues that limited intake capacity at the public universities continues to be a hurdle for many aspiring higher education and many are compelled to pursue study at private universities at high cost.

Moreover, the quality of education at colleges under National University is not up to the mark, which forces some of the students to move to foreign countries, it says.

'Public universities can contemplate starting double shifts to ensure quality higher education for students passing higher secondary education,' says the UGC Annual Report 2015.

The report, which was handed over to president Abdul Hamid on November 18, is likely to be placed in the next session of the parliament.

If the public universities can introduce the double shifts at their institutions, this will simply double the current intake capacity, says the report.

Detailing the proposal further, it says that theory classes of the first shift can take place from 8:00am to 1:00pm and practical classes from 2:00pm to 5:00pm while theory classes of the second shift can take place from 2:00pm to 7:00pm and practical classes from 8:00am to 1:00pm.

For introduction of the second shift, the number of

teachers can be increased or teachers will get more honorariums for taking extra classes, the report proposes.

UGC chairman Abdul Mannan has said that the commission proposed the double shift to maximise the utilisation of the establishment of public universities.

'Many departments of the universities, including Dhaka University, remain vacant after noon. We should use them properly,' he said.

When asked whether the residential halls and library and others' facilities will be able to cope with the increased number of students, Mannan evaded direct answer.

He said, 'We have a huge gap between supply and demand as far as higher education is concerned.'

UGC places the proposal when the number of students passing HSC exam has increased substantially. In 2012, about 7.21 lakh students passed the HSC and

equivalent exam and this year 14.52 lakh students passed the exam.

Although the number of HSC passed students doubled in the past five years, number of students enrolling at public universities did not increase that much.

In 2011, a total of 66,172 students enrolled at 32 public universities and in 2015 a total of 74,066 students enrolled at the 34 public universities, show UGC annual reports of the years.

Meanwhile, the number of students enrolling at colleges under National University and private universities has increased significantly in the same period of time.

In 2011, around 5.72 lakh students enrolled at colleges under NU that increased to 8.21 lakh in 2015.

About 69,500 students got enrolled at private universities in 2011 and 1.20 lakh in 2015, say the UGC reports.