

## New female students' battle begins for seats at DU dorms

The ordeal has started in getting enrolled in five Dhaka University (DU) women's dormitories for the newly admitted female students, especially who are from outside of the capital.

"It takes usually six to seven months to complete official procedures, and even after such a long period, accommodation is not guaranteed," Diba, a resident of Bangladesh-Kuwait Moitree Hall, told BSS.

Of the total 30,000 DU students, about 45 per cent are female and nearly 35 per cent of them are from suburbs and other districts.

These students either have to live with their relatives in the capital or in female messes unless and until they get accommodation in DU residential halls. The students who live in messes lead an underprivileged life with less security and in unhygienic conditions.

"We are not concerned about adapting to a new place or situation, our worry is whether we will get accommodation," said Sabrina Akter, a DU fresher.

Individual scores of entrance test in DU admission play an important role in qualifying for accommodation, along with the distance a student came from, according to the sources.

"You are lucky if you are among the top scorers at the entrance exam coming from a distance, your early seat allotment is certain," said Tania, a resident of Shamsunnahar Hall.

Though some students complain about the rule, others said that there is no alternative to allocating limited available space with these kind of stringent rules.

"It seems a big battle has been won when one gets accommodation," said another resident of Bangladesh-Kuwait Moitree hall, but complained of harsh treatment meted out by some of the house tutors often leaving the students in tears.

Most women dormitories are over-crowded and house inmates double than their capacity.

The 90-room Bangladesh-Kuwait Moitree Hall has 360 beds

with 680 residents, Rokeya Hall with 720 beds accommodates 1,362 students.

The dormitory authorities allow students to share bed with one another due to space constraints.

"What could our madams (house tutors) do if there is no room for such a large number of students," said Naju, student of Rokeya Hall. Two new female dormitories should be constructed to resolve this serious accommodation problem of female students, she added.

Eight instead of four girls can be accommodated in a small room without much thought, but it becomes difficult when a student, especially a fresher, has to share a single room with nine others popularly known as 'gono room'.

The Bangladesh-Kuwait Moitree hall has five such 'gono rooms' each accommodating 12. But when new entrants will arrive, the rooms will be more over-crowded, said Nabila, a resident.

On an average, 15 are accommodated in each of the five 'gono rooms' of Shamsunnahar Hall, while Rokeya Hall's 'gono rooms' have been done away with for the moment, but will be back when the new entrants pour in, said Sraboni, a resident of Rokeya Hall, where 20 share a single 'gono room'.

A second-year student and 'gono room' resident, Lofa, said that disadvantages of community living are unhygienic and noisy.

"I cannot concentrate on my studies with so many around," she said, adding that "There is hardly a place to keep one's belonging."

However, she believes freshers get a better chance to fit in a new place while many of them put together instead of sharing rooms with seniors.

DU Vice Chancellor SMA Faiz said, "We have taken many steps to solve the accommodation problem of female students."