

Recruitment at RU

The tale of politics getting the better of merit

A University Grants Commission probe has revealed that over 700 teachers, officials and employees were recruited by the Rajshahi University authorities in violation of the University Act and UGC rules over the last 10 years. Political consideration is reported to have influenced the recruitment process, while merit was a sad casualty.

It is no secret that party politics had its more than fair share of influence in almost all public organisations or institutions when political governments were in power. The extent of such political control or intrusion was so great that some important organisations like the PSC were badly debilitated. The report from Rajshahi University further corroborates the widely held view that the political governments didn't even spare the highest seats of learning. Obviously, it is just not an issue of providing some party loyalists with jobs that they didn't deserve. The colossal damage that such party-based thinking has caused to the standard of education or other services rendered to the students at the university cannot be overlooked. And there is the question of unfair treatment meted out to the meritorious who fell victim to the highly politicised system of recruitment in a major public university.

There was violation of rules in various forms. In 2004, the university authorities appointed 544 third and fourth class employees against 255 vacant posts. That obviously meant extra expenditure for which nobody was held responsible.

The issue has a direct bearing on smooth functioning of the public universities on which depend, let us not forget, a large majority of students for higher education at affordable costs. It is a sad truth that the political parties, which were in power when all such irregularities plagued the recruitment process at the universities, showed a poor understanding of the potential efficacy of public universities in the career building processes of a vast majority of the student community. Apparently, they failed to realise that destroying a university amounted to crippling the nation.

There is no dearth of rules and regulations for ensuring the quality of recruitment to the institutions of higher learning. All we have to make sure now is to devise ways and means to implement them to the fullest.