

# Universities fail to ensure quality education

Says UGC report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Public and private universities have largely failed to implement the aims and objectives of higher education, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has observed.

The reasons for the failure include influence of partisan politics on student bodies, session jam, lack of transparency and accountability in the activities of teachers and students, uncontrolled consultancy and part time jobs of teachers, it said.

In its annual report for 2008 placed in parliament yesterday, the UGC cited the other reasons as faulty process of recruitment and appointment of vice-chancellors, teachers and officials of the universities, inadequate annual budgets and poor allocation of funds for research, adverse ratio of teachers and students, and lack of policy on income and expenditure of most of the private universities.

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## Universities fail

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The UGC expressed concern over the standard of education both in public and private universities.

The UGC report, submitted by Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, mentioned regional disparity between the capital and other cities regarding the number of public and private universities.

"Out of total 84 public and private universities, seven public and 42 private universities are situated in the capital region, which shows regional discrimination. It is also an obstacle to spread of balanced education in all regions," it said.

The UGC suggested establishing universities at district headquarters with no university as in greater Faridpur, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Bogra.

It called upon all irrespective of political affiliation to come forward to help reduce session jam for the welfare of the students, guardians and the people as a whole.

The report said the authorities of all the universities and colleges will have to take initiatives to introduce a positive trend in students and teachers' politics.

"Practical steps should be taken on an emergency basis to build a national consensus taking opinion of all political parties. Students and teachers' politics aimed at protecting their collective interests can be encouraged."

The UGC said the University

Ordinance 1973 should be amended to ensure transparency and accountability of activities of teachers, students and officials of public universities.

To limit the uncontrolled culture of consultancy and part time jobs of teachers, it recommended formulation of a time befitting policy and implementation of it.

Stressing enactment of the proposed private university act 2009, the UGC said it would help ensure quality of education and good governance in the private universities. If enacted, the new law will also help eradicate the existing disorder in private universities, and reduce anxiety of the students and guardians concerned.

Citing absence of specific policy, the UGC said private universities increase tuition fees, admission fees and other fees every year without reasonable grounds, which led to student unrest in many of those in the past years.

"Keeping all kinds of fees at a reasonable level is a must to pave the way for meritorious students from both rich and poor families," it said.

On the ratio of students and teachers in public universities, the UGC report said the total number of students was 11,76,969 in 2008 and that of teachers 67,155. It means the ratio was 17:1.

The ratio is not favourable to provide qualitative education at the public universities," it said.