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# A medical university turns ordinary hospital

*Politicisation in last 5 years blamed*

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), which was supposed to be a centre of excellence in medical education in the country, is just operating like a general hospital as the institution saw widespread politicisation during the five years of the past BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

The country's lone medical university that was established in 1998 with a view to creating efficient doctors and bringing uniformity in medical education across the country is ruined by the corrupt administration, sources said.

The main objectives of formulating the university were to improve the quality of medical

education, create high quality doctors and initiate a technologically developed education system through the residency programme, said several senior teaching staff of the university.

A batch of students were admitted under the residency programme and a modern curriculum was nearly completed but it was later eliminated by the administration headed by former vice chancellor Prof MA Hadi.

"Now the medical university is following the course module which was prepared in 1965 by the University of Dhaka. The age-old course is not seen in any country in this modern age," said Rashid e Mahbub, a retired professor of the Department of Surgery.

"Just before finalising the curriculum, former vice chancellor Prof MA Hadi cancelled it and restored the decade old, backdated curriculum," said members of the committee formed for developing the curriculum.

The departments are running in an unplanned way, while a five-year plan remains inactive due to unwillingness of the authorities, they added.

Discrepancies are observed in works of different syndicates and partisan people sometimes form the syndicate, present Vice Chancellor Prof Tahir told The Daily Star.

But for politicisation, the university would see positive signs in

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## A medical university

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many cases, said Prof Tahir who served the BSMMU as the pro-vice chancellor during the term of Prof MA Hadi.

The master plan prepared between 1998 and 2001 that included infrastructure development for providing life saving emergency treatment facilities in a separate building, pathology building and outdoor service with day care facilities was left unattended.

Disregarding the University Ordinance, a large number of unskilled teachers were recruited through a nexus between the University authorities and Doctors Association of Bangladesh while the number of employees doubled.

"The present administration did not do anything except recruiting the incompetent employees," Rashid e Mahbub said.

The authorities have extended the time of retirement for their favorite teaching staff and officials. Even there are officials who have got their job extended for five years before retirement, which is violation to the university act.

One of the main focuses in initiating the residency programme was to encourage the teachers in institutional practice so that they could engage themselves in teaching, studying and research work whole-heartedly and work in the hospital as an alternative to private practice.

But the reality is no modern research-based work is going on at the BSMMU and nobody knows how the budget meant for research is being spent, lamented a senior teacher of the university.

The university is yet to have any internationally accepted journal and the medical education has become a theoretical one, and no alternative of private practice has been implemented yet.

Setting up a standard laboratory, giving proper service to the patients and providing satellite service in different zones in Dhaka city are also demand of the time.

Committees were formed to

monitor the service, education and development in each department but those were dissolved immediately after immediate past vice chancellor Prof Hadi took the charge of the BSMMU.

Burden of huge employees has made the university economically crippled, and disproportionately high number of doctors compared to patients and infrastructure hinders the skill development of the doctors.

In absence of monitoring mechanism, indiscipline prevails at the institution.

Although the University Grants Commission (UGC) objected to recruiting unnecessary manpower, they did not take any stern actions in this regard, said several senior teachers.

As there is no political influence now, it is time to renovate the university and make it a model and right place for producing really efficient doctors for the next generation, they said.