Opinion: 'On Private-Public University'

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ON last Sunday, I read an article named 'On Private-Public University' written by Mr. A.A.M. Mostofa Saikh Chowdhury. He wrote a lot about private and public universities. The article was full of information, but I couldn't stop myself from writing something after reading the article.

The writer has projected some important points of education given in private universities. He is also satisfied achieving his goal of getting admitted in a reputable private university. I thank him for his informative article and his analysis about education in both public and private universities. But I am surprised observing his poor investigation of some sensitive issues concerning both types of universities.

He wrote about admission test, infrastructure, faculty-members, research facilities, job opportunities after graduating and so on. I would like to express my opinion regarding these topics to make the concept clear to the writer and Star Campus readers.

At first let's talk about the admission tests. After completing HSC, more than two lakh students seek admission at undergraduate level. Last year, a total of 2, 63,358 students passed HSC (source: Daily Prothom Alo, 8 Sept, 2006). If 75% of them appeared on admission tests, very few of them came successful in this war. We have about 20,000 seats in public universities (including medical colleges, engineering universities). The rest of the students have to study in private universities and colleges affiliated with National University. In such condition, no one can contradict the necessity of private universities in Bangladesh. But some questions arise when some people like Mr. Mostofa try to compare between public and private universities.

When we talk about quality education in any university, we look for some aspects like courses offered, academic background of the faculties, campus, lab facility, research facility etc. Most people are apt to comment that private universities do not have their own campus, full-time faculties and so on. But we should realize the ground reality. Public universities like DU, JU, BUET, RU- have developed into what they are today over many years. We cannot expect such progress and image from the private universities borne only in last one decade or so.

We can expect better output from them in the coming years. But at present I am not ready to compare any private university with any public university. While the public universities are admitting students from the top order and giving assistance to students of all economic classes - then how can one say that private universities are better?

Public universities offer maximum scholarships and opportunities for higher studies such as M.Phill, PhD and post-doctoral researches. Mr. Mostofa blamed the process of recruiting fresh graduates as faculties in public universities. I would like to ask Mr. Mostofa, 'Are we not young enough to speak about the year-long tradition of recruiting junior scholars to grow up as future senior scholars?' If you don't get any answer from your mind, just look at your teachers. Most of them had good academic records and they joined their university as young lecturers, and now they have become experienced faculties. You will also find faculty members in your university who were former lecturers or professors in some public universities.

I have noticed another thing - almost all the private universities are offering professional courses like BBA, CSE, EEE, LL.B etc. They are not offering courses on core subjects like history, political science, international relations etc. Are they offering mostly courses for attracting students and earning money? Don't they feel any responsibility to create graduates on basic subjects? Now-a-days we say that the job-market is globalised. But it doesn't mean that we should not produce graduates on basic subjects. If we want to make a Bangladesh having 100% literacy and take up the challenges of future, we need educated persons graduating from the basic subjects.

Public universities are serving the nation by providing education on various basic subjects beside professional courses. If we look at job opportunities, some graduates from a very few private universities get higher salary, in this respect, the students of IBA are getting most facilities in the job market. I hope you know, IBA is conducted by the best public university, Dhaka University.

In the above discussion, I have tried to clear the misconception in the article written by Mr. Mostofa. But my writing is not to criticize the private universities. They are also contributing to the education system of our country. As a student of 'Education' discipline, I have learnt that everyone should be educated not only for his own career but also to develop the country and serve the nation. We can expect that the public universities should pick out their weak points and continue their journey toward the mission of making a Bangladesh free of illiteracy. Private universities should follow the public universities to make good progress in the education sector to build a new Bangladesh

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