Challenges for young teachers

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TEACHING is a very challenging profession. For long the teachers, in common parlance called *guru*, in this sub-continent are highly revered. From the history we know that students were sent to the house of the teacher, where the students were not first given the lesson, rather they were appointed in the service of the teacher, even they had to do household activities of the *guru*. This tradition has put the teachers in a high position in the society who have been considered oracle of knowledge.

The people of this sub-continent had a tendency to give different types of gifts, like banana, bottle-gourd, pumpkin, domestic chicken, as a symbol of respect. Even one can find this tradition is still in practice in some villages. It reveals the fact that the teachers had a respected position in the society. The teachers were busy with acquiring and distributing knowledge without having any concern for the financial condition of his family, which usually was taken care of by the societal people in the form of gift. It indicates the seriousness of the teachers to their profession which they were able to do without being preoccupied by how the family would be run, revealing the social responsibility of the people towards the teachers.

I do not consider teaching as a profession, rather a semi profession, which requires some mission and vision to move the students positively, thus contributing to develop efficient and committed citizenry. Proper dispensation of their profession requires that they should be provided with sufficient remuneration and other logistics. There are some professional groups in the society, like teachers and judges, who require different salary structure and other necessary facilities to discharge their functions smoothly, otherwise if they are always preoccupied with how they will meet up their family expenses, they cannot give proper service to the community. In Bangladesh the young teachers of both public and private universities are encountering many challenges.

In public universities when anyone joins as Lecturer, the first position in the hierarchy of university teaching, he/she starts to enjoy a revered status without getting sufficient remuneration and logistic support to keep the standard of the gained status. In comparison with the civil servant and military officer of the same rank, he/she gets scanty facilities. If a young teacher does not get any part time job of any private university, or have any scope of consultancy, it will be very difficult for him to survive.

Public universities do not have any training programme for the freshers to enhance their teaching and research ability, in absence of which the standard of professional skill remains in a deplorable stage, unless anyone develops his/her skill by individual endeavour. There is sufficient and good arrangement of training for civil servants, judges, college teachers, military officers, but no arrangement for university teachers. Public universities do not have sufficient fund to provide young teachers with scholarships to promote their higher education, without which the teaching and research capability cannot be elevated to international standard. If the incumbents are sincere to improve the standard of higher education, they must provide sufficient fund to equip the young teachers to cope with the changing needs of the time.

A good private university does not entertain any body without foreign degree in the fresher's position. After getting a job there, a young teacher has to stay in the university from 8/9 am to 5/6 pm, which is applicable to a traditional job holder, not to a teacher of university. The tendency of private universities to suck the young teachers is very harmful for them, as it creates obstacle for conducting research in their respective fields. Even sometimes the private university authorities are not so liberal to grant study leave to the young teachers who want to pursue their higher education.

Hard reality of the public and private universities has discouraged many meritorious students not to go to teaching profession. Given the scanty salary and facilities, many potential students opt for another job, leaving teaching for less qualified students. Though there are some brilliant students who take teaching because they are committed to this profession. Knowing all the hard realities they are teacher as they cannot think of any profession for them other than teaching. Readily I can mention two names, Masrufa Ayesha Nusrat, Senior Lecturer of the English Department of East West University, and Dr. Abdullah Al Faruque of the Law Department of Chittagong University.

After completing her study from Dhaka University, Masrufa Ayesha Nusrat did her Masters from Nottingham University of UK. She is so committed to teaching profession that she cannot think of her other than a teacher. After disposing of her daily responsibility she always busy with searching the Internet to pursue Ph.D. programme.