the grade distribution in the uniform system is way too liberal. As a result difference in grade distribution never ensures the same quality education in these universities. Table 1 - provides us with a glimpse how different the universities and UGC think regarding grade and their grading policies.

Course structure in a particular programme in various universities is not the same. Even in some cases, the universities have incorporated unnecessary courses to generate more money from the students. Moreover, many universities are recruiting less qualified teachers who don't even hold a master's degree in many cases. Administration is making money by paying these teachers less because of their lack of qualification. Last year an allegation was raised against a well-reputed university in Dhaka for appointing a director in the BBA programme who doesn't even have an accelerated university degree. If this is what happens in the case of well-known private universities, how bad can the scenario be in less reputed ones? In the interim of this money making contest, such university management perhaps forgot about the quality of education and avoided the responsibilities of being an educational body which promised to serve the nation while taking permission for the institution. Sad but true, UGC again doesn't live up to its own expectations or pledges.

Table 1: Difference in grading policy

Grades	Uniform Grading Scheme (UGC)*	North South University (NSU)*	East West University (EWU)*	American International University Bangladesh (AIUB)*
A+	80% and above	Not available	97-100	94 100
A	75% to less than 80%	93 and above	90 - below 97	90 93.99
A-	70% to less than 75%	90 92	87 - below 90	86 89.99
B+	65% to less than 70%	87 89	83 below 87	82 85.99
B	60% to less than 65%	83 86	80 below 83	78 81.99
B-	55% to less than 60%	80 82	77 below 80	74 77.99
C+	50% to less than 55%	77 79	73 below 77	70 73.99
C	45% to less than 50%	73 76	70 below 73	66 69.99
C-	Not available	70 72	67 below 70	62 65.99
D+	Not available	67 69	63 below 67	58 61.99
D	40% to less than 45%	60 66	60 below 63	54 57.99
D-	Not available	Not available	Not available	50 53.99
F	Less than 40%	Below 60	Below 60	0 49.99

** *Data taken from the institution's website*

The 'should be' remains 'Shouldn't be'

There are many factors that should have been a concern for UGC but remained as an ignorant one. Fees structure of the private universities is a major questionable factor. Many of the universities are registered as Non-profit organisations hence taking the advantage of tax exemption from government. The picture in reality is quite different though. Recently, we have seen students from North South University protesting on increment in fees and ended up getting beaten up by the police force and being arrested. Also, allegation for charging illegal campus development fees and many other fees, which should have been borne by the university authorities is being charged on the students. All these factors are making university education a high priced commodity day-by-day and taking education away from the reach of even middle class people.

Unfortunately, the authorities from these universities fail to understand that there are only a small number of rich people's children who study in these institutions as most well-to-do families can to send their children overseas for education. As a result, we see that students from middle class families who are taking education in these institutions are being seriously affected. These issues come under the financial accountability and transparency code of University Grant Commission. Again the government agency exhibits its failure to introduce a universal fee structure to avoid these accusations.

To cope with the rapidly changing globalised society, research on various issues and topics are essential for the growth of educational environment. Private universities in Bangladesh avoid funding innovative and demand-driven research. It has been seen that many of the teachers are working as consultants for different donor agency projects but fails to work in a research and development wing in the university itself. Some of the faculties complained that the university registers them for 6/7 classes per day in many cases that they don't even get spare time to work for their personal researches. They have also mentioned that despite having higher degrees and recognition, the university never encourage them to get involved in a research project. The numbers of research work conducted by the private universities are not as high as the growth rate of these institutions. According to the mission of UGC, these factors also come under their supervision. Alas! The Emperor again fails to hold his promise.

Who's lagging behind?

Surprisingly, this question arises automatically when we visit the act page of the University Grants Commission website (www.ugc.gov.bd). The policies and acts regarding private universities are not given in the website. The Monitor of education who should have been the frontier of establishing and promoting 'Digital Bangladesh' has unfortunately been incapable of availing the blessing of information technology, hence keeping the page under construction. The website of the apex body is deficient to exhibit a digital copy of Private University Act of 1992 and the Private University Ordinance of 2008 initiated by the caretaker government. Having said all these, the question that arises is who exactly lags behind-the monitoring body or the private universities?

University Grants Commission should act more actively to restructure and develop the educational environment of Bangladesh. We all know any private organisation tends to do business. But their business should be under strict monitoring so that a core component like education doesn't become a luxury for poor and even middle class people. The government should take some initiative to make the apex body stronger and effective to promote and regulate education and the educational system in the country.