

Transportation for university students AT WHAT COST?

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University students have a myriad of obstacles they have to tackle outside of their academics. One such problem that they have to tackle is the issue of managing transport to and from their respective universities.

While some students have their own private vehicles or resort to using the numerous ride sharing services, a large proportion is still reliant on public transportation such as buses and lagunas.

However, these services aren't exclusive to only students, and at times getting a seat on the right bus at the right time isn't the easiest task. And as we already know, being late to classes can end up affecting your grades.

University based transport services can be a solution to this problem.

In the case of public universities, the service is usually heavily subsidised along multiple routes throughout the city. The situation for private universities isn't always the same.

Not all private institutions have their own transport services, and the ones that do, aren't always subsidised.

University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) has a dedicated service for students traveling to their new permanent campus. The buses enlisted are air conditioned, and entails no cost. However, the only route is from their two campuses in Dhanmondi to their new permanent campus in Ramchadpur. This service, while a good initiative, doesn't do much to help students who were already commuting from places far from Dhanmondi itself.

United International University (UIU) enlists the services of local non-air conditioned buses along multiple routes. The service is not free, however, and requires a fee of BDT 4000 per trimester.

BRAC University on the other hand has recently started its own transportation services, along routes starting from



PHOTO: STAR

Dhanmondi and Abdullahpur to the main campus in Mohakhali. The buses in question are air conditioned but require a fee of BDT 100 per trip.

In a recent Facebook poll, we asked the respondents whether a flat BDT 100 per trip inside Dhaka is too much for students. The results – in which around 2800 Facebook users participated (at the time of writing this article) – showed a polarising 91 percent answering that BDT 100 was too much, with the remaining 9 percent in favour of the fare.

All of this maybe a lot of information to process, but a common point to understand is that students are on a tight budget, and a total of BDT 200 on transport to and from university is not feasible for the majority. Obviously some people will still be able to afford the service, but if the fee excludes most of the people who are dependent on public transport, then it really doesn't solve the overarching problem.

Not to mention that when combined with the high level of tuition being charged by private universities, justifying a system of transport that costs anywhere above BDT 50 a day becomes hard to justify. Mostly when ride sharing bike services can generally compete with anything that is

around BDT 150-200 per day anyway, and they are also guaranteed to get you to your location a lot faster.

One Facebook user commented, "Obviously it is (too much). Imagine if you take bus twice a day, that'd set you back BDT 200. A handful for students."

Another user also added that, "That's a lot. Considering an AC bus service, I personally think on a daily basis it's too much, added if you are taking trips back and forth. My recommendation would be BDT 40-50 is more than enough per trip."

Private universities don't have the same access to funds as public universities, and they don't have the same aims as the latter. They also don't have the same intent as public universities, as their main focus is on education quality. But to have a service in place that is unfeasible for the majority of their student demographic is redundant.

So what are the possible solutions at hand? Well, I don't have one to offer. The problem is rather complicated, but that doesn't mean we can't engage in discourse over it. In the systems currently set in place, there are problems that need to be addressed, or at the very least acknowledged. And the best way to do so is to start a conversation around the topic.

SHOUT created a poll.
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Do you think a flat BDT 100 fare per trip inside Dhaka for a university bus service is too much for students?

Provide translation into Bengali

91% Yes ☑

9% No

This poll ends in 7 days 2.8K Votes



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