

THE Private University Act is one of the significant and a very effective measure of the past political governments. During the B.N.P government the Private University Act was passed in 1992. The Awami League government had amended this Act in 1998. Nobody thought, in 16 years from 1992 to 2008, private university would gradually attain the capability of giving guidance and applying authority in higher education sector. But in reality it happened. In the history of higher education in Bangladesh the private universities within a very short time were able to establish a significant contribution. At least 50 private universities have so far been established since 1992. As a result, a pressing competitive environment persists in higher education sector. The students of ours interested in higher education are gaining knowledge by stepping down in this competition. The private universities are compelled to enhance the quality of education with a view to surviving in this competitive situation. They have decreased the rate of tuition fees of the students and taken up the initiative to give quality education at affordable expenses with a hope to get more students and cope with the competition. This is the very realistic feature of a full competitive market. These constructive and positive competitions open the

Widening opportunities for higher education

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door of well certain possibility of higher education for the talented but poor students by enjoying the waiver facility. Through this process the private universities expend 25% of their annual income for giving student's scholarship. The student enrolment in the private universities is significantly higher than 2 (two) lacs. The government does not need to expend any money for their studies. This environment of higher education has decreased the burden of public expenditure.

Because of the aforesaid competitive environment, all the private universities remain busy in order to appoint quality teachers, upgrade library and laboratory and modernize the classroom and office room equipping with all sorts of physical facilities. Besides, these universities also remain committed to extend academic and non-academic services. In the past the teacher-community of Bangladesh was the poorest one. The life style of the teachers engaged in the higher education has already changed due to the development of the private university culture. In the past, it was also beyond the

imagination that the teachers in Bangladesh may draw from one lac to one-and-a-half lac taka per month as remuneration. But at present the teachers have got a good environment of jobs in education sector with high remuneration according to their market values. On the other hand, the public university is facing competition to catch hold of good teachers. Under the circumstances, the government is compelled to enhance the remuneration of the teachers of the public universities, though to some extent, to catch hold of quality teachers. So far as the life style of the teacher community is concerned, they are now in good position. Their fascination for abroad has however reduced. Moreover many Bangladeshi teachers have already started coming back to Bangladesh leaving their jobs abroad.

As a result of blooming of private university culture, the brain drain from Bangladesh has almost stopped. In 54 private universities nearly 20 (Twenty) thousand manpower including full time and part-time teachers, officers and staff have been engaged as employ-

ees. If the private universities had not been established, most of these huge numbers of highly educated manpower would have gone abroad. Though their amount of remuneration in Bangladesh is less than that of foreign currencies to some extent, yet there is hardly difference in respect of the utility of such remuneration. Because, the teachers staying in Bangladesh and utilizing their merit are making newly meritorious and productive manpower. These newly formed modern and productive meritorious manpower taking part in national development, are mobilizing the country ahead.

Before the establishments of private universities, the children belonging to solvent families would go abroad for acquiring higher education. Sending students only to India, Bangladesh would incur a loss of hundreds of crores of foreign currencies. Besides, sending students to different European countries including Australia, Canada, England and America, Bangladesh would expend thousands of crore foreign currencies. Though it cannot be said that at present the loss of foreign

currencies has totally stopped in this sector, yet it can undoubtedly be said that the loss of foreign currencies has comparatively reduced. The explicit proof of it lies in our hands. Now it is hardly seen that the Bangladeshi students go to India for higher studies. Even now only a few students go to the other countries including Canada, Australia and England than before for higher studies. Now it is observed that some concerned personnel from different universities of England, Australia, Canada and Cyprus visit Bangladesh with a view to collecting students for their universities. In the past, it was beyond our imagination that Bangladesh was considered so large catchment area in order to collect students for the universities abroad. In other words, the universities set up in different European countries would run with the students of ours. According to an opinion of a student welfare officer coming from England that Bangladesh is a larger catchment area for them than that of India. Bangladesh was able to save thousands of crores of foreign currencies for the timely implementation

of Private University Act.

It is manifest from the above discussion that for the generous principle and production oriented mentality of the politicians belonging to both Awami league and B.N.P behind the making and enactment of Private University Act, it has been possible to establish more than half a hundred private universities within so shorter time. Since hundreds of persons have taken initiatives with courage to establish private universities and have invested hundreds of crores taka in this sector, we now upholding our heads can sing a song of victory to private universities. This contribution of the law makers and the investors will survive in the history of education in Bangladesh as a milestone. Now it is our responsibility to save this long expected and favourable environment of higher education for long term basis. It is also our sensibility to increase the standard of higher education in private universities with low and affordable expenses. Besides, for the purpose of income, development and prospect of the country we should put an effort for utilizing this fruitful contribution of the private universities.

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