

Ducsu's 'Female Zone' at TSC draws mixed reactions

Supporters cite privacy needs, while critics call the move 'segregating' and question the lack of approval

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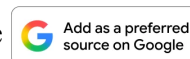


Photo: Star

The Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducsu) has introduced a separate "Female Zone" at the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) cafeteria, saying it is meant to provide women students with a private space for breastfeeding, adjusting their clothes and other personal needs.

The curtained-off area, set up around a table in one corner of the cafeteria, was inaugurated by Ducsu General Secretary SM Farhad at the initiative of Ducsu Common Room, Reading Room and Cafeteria Secretary Umme Salma.

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Speaking to The Daily Star, Salma said, "It is for any female student who feels she needs a private space. Mothers can breastfeed their babies here, students can adjust their clothes, rest, or eat comfortably," she said.

The initiative has drawn mixed reactions.

Some students argue that the university should focus on ensuring a safer and more inclusive campus rather than creating gender-segregated spaces.

Nuzia Hasin Rasha, former president of the Dhaka University unit of Biplobi Chhatra Maitree, called the move "an insulting and ridiculous publicity stunt", saying a safe university is one where women and men can move freely with equal dignity and security.

Anthropology Professor Zobaida Nasreen said the initiative was inconsistent with the concept of co-education and reflected "the politics of segregation".

Others, however, welcomed the move.

Labiba Binte Wali, a student of the Faculty of Social Sciences, said women-only spaces with dining facilities are limited on campus.

"Sometimes mothers need a proper place for breastfeeding, and some female students may feel more comfortable eating in a private space. Not everything has to be politicised," she said.

The initiative has also raised procedural questions. Salma acknowledged that no prior approval had been taken from the university administration before the structural modification.

Acting TSC Director Farzana Bashir, who attended the inauguration, said she had not been consulted.

"I was not asked for permission. Since this involves a structural change, approval should have been taken from the higher authorities," she said.

