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ISC: What a result!

Our education system produces three times more failure than success

HSC results are just out. Out of a total of 525,755 students who appeared in the examination, 376,39 have failed. What kind of an education system do we have that produces three times more failure than success? The percentage of successful candidates in HSC examinations has never been satisfactory. It has generally hovered near about 40 per cent. However, this year it is a total disaster with percentage of success only around 3.41. It is a collective failure of the education ministry, the colleges, the teachers, the parents and, of course, in the final analysis, the students themselves. In this chain of failure the students are but one part. While we definitely hold them responsible for their performance we cannot overlook the massive failure of other players in it. One possible official explanation could be that this is the result of strict invigilation that prevented students from copying during examination. While we have welcomed strict invigilation that cannot be accepted as a reason for this high percentage of failure.

The real reason is the quality of education that is being given to our students which does not prepare them to face the examination. That is why they cheat. Those who do well are intrinsically good and self-motivated or helped by parents at home or have money enough to hire extra help or to form private tuition. They do well in spite of the system and not because of it. Our education system consists of bad teachers, bad colleges, bad text books, bad monitoring system that cannot supervise the performance of teachers and an ineffective Board authority unable to change course when they are seeing that we are heading towards disaster.

There was a time when we blamed autocratic governments for deliberately keeping the standard of general education down to give an edge to the military. What can we say now with democratic government at the helm for the last decade? Both BNP and AL cannot escape the blame for having merely scratched the surface in dealing with the 'quality' question in our education.

Appeasement of teachers, using them for village and thana level politicking, never punishing them for lack of commitment and competence is one set of the problems responsible for the present debacle. Another is lack of supervision by the relevant authority and political protection of the prominent 'scroungers'. Sub-standard books and lack of additional reading material is another problem. Too many colleges which are not equipped to impart quality education but have been given permission for political reasons are also responsible for the present situation.

The bottomline, in our view, is that it is bad politics that is responsible for our bad education. It is true that the root of this debacle lies far deep in the past, but the last two democratic governments instead of stemming the rot contributed to it by further politicising the system and the tea