

Academic Excellence

Educationists in our land bewail loudly the loss of academic excellence in a system which has outlived its usefulness, but the chase for that desirable piece of paper once believed to be unquestionably a sign of the achievement of an accepted standard of educational level is today suspect. But, nevertheless, it is no less desired by a still certificate conscious society. Is it really true that our degrees and certificates have lost their value? That today's students emerging from a system we have perpetuated even after independence come out clutching to their breasts 'worthless' pieces of paper whose only value is in the Marriage Market?

Humanities, now known as Social Sciences and Liberal Arts, were even in the days of the British subjugation looked down upon by elitist science faculty members and their students. Yet today these are the most sought after areas of expertise as more and more emphasis is laid on social and welfare matters of development in a country suffering from extreme poverty. And is it also true that standards have eroded? Judging from the quality and quantity of the books a student must study we would say not. In view of the the emphasis we still place on academic achievement we do our children a great injustice by under-rating the value of their degrees. It is evident that although there are indeed students who cheat and copy and otherwise deprive themselves of opportunity, there are others who do utilise whatever comes their way in order to achieve that academic excellence that sets them on the path to a lifetime of learning and this we must carefully nurture. Disparaging remarks and condemnation out of hand is demeaning, not just for the student but for those who unknowingly and in ignorance utter those same words.