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The Case Of The Twenty Students

That education in Bangladesh is in a state of predicament is reflected in the messy situation created over the admission of twenty meritorious students into Dhaka University. The plain fact is that these young people, after having successfully, and creditably, completed their higher secondary education, are caught in conditions not of their own making. It so happens that on the day set for the admission test at the university, these young people were made to attend a reception arranged in their honour by the governmental authorities. It was their singular honour to meet the functionaries of the government and be appreciated for the good show they had made of themselves at the HSC examinations. Little did these students know that while they were busy receiving accolades from official quarters, their academic future was running up against serious obstacles on another front.

The truth is by now known. Owing to their attendance at the official reception at a time when they should have been answering questions at the admission test, these twenty bright people are now threatened with losing a whole academic year unless some way is found for them to enter the university. It is not that the issue has not drawn the attention of those who matter. There has already been a war of words between the Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University and the Dhaka University Teachers' Association. And even if the wish has been expressed that these young should somehow be accommodated at the university, the rules relating to admission have come in the way. The question has gone even to the academic council. The answer is yet to be found. Add to this problem the new controversy that has arisen regarding the rules pertaining to the admission of the wards of university teachers to the institution of higher learning. If one is to go by the reports that have been appearing in the media, protests have been voiced about the easy formalities sought to be employed about dealing with the admission of teachers' children. Put the two issues together, and what one comes up with is something that reeks of the contradictory.

Be that as it may, the point that must be made here is that it would not be judicious to keep the fate of the twenty students hanging in the balance. While one is in little mood to suggest any violation of the rules of admission to the university, one is aware at the same time of the tremendous pressure, both academic and psychological, the issue has been putting on the students. They could well lose a year; and that is a prospect not at all cheering. What could be done in the circumstances is for the Vice Chancellor and the teachers' association and also everyone else connected with the admission process to arrange a way out of the imbroglio. We suggest a fresh test can easily be arranged for these students to enable them to get into the university. For them to be denied admission in the present circumstances, we repeat, will be a negation of academic ethics. It would be morally untenable to allow young talent to be wasted. Let their future not be obscured by the myopia of their elders and their own naivete. And as for those who saw little that was wrong about these students meeting government leaders when they should have been at the university, let the country tell them that they ought to have known better. The mistake must not be repeated.