

Was The Agitation Of BUET Students Reasonable?

Md. Masum Billah

BANGLADESH University of Engineering and Technology has so far maintained a laudable record in the field of our tertiary level education in spite of so many odds and hurdles in this level. All the brilliant learners gather here who are more conscious and committed to the cause of their career rather than chanting slogans and taking arms in the hands. The very nature and field itself hardly allows the students to do so. The teachers also show more dedication to study, research and teaching. After passing out of BUET students usually don't remain unemployed. They manage better jobs both at home

and abroad. Going aboard they show much better performance than the engineers of many other countries. These causes can be attributed to the maintenance of peaceful atmosphere in the BUET campus. Students of general universities hardly find any bright chance in future. Acute residential problem, traditional involvement in party politics, teachers' involvement in politics etc. lead the students of general universities to be more interested in politics and other activities with some exceptions rather than their genuine study. Teachers also follow the same way. These factors contribute a lot to cause turmoil in our general universities. The closure of BUET has made the educated section of the society aback. More strange is the fact for which the brilliant students of this institution staged demonstration. Quite unreasonable phenomena have triggered this closure causing a halt to smooth functioning of academic course of this university.

The students began demonstrating on the campus from July 29 demanding deferment of examinations scheduled to begin on August 01. Locked the main entrance of BUET and spoke ill of the authorities. Vice Chancellor wanted to talk to the students about the demand of the students but students did not sit with the authorities and vandalised university properties. They vandalised fifteen cars of teachers and their houses at teacher's quarters. About 30 people were injured when students demonstrated. Students demanded 'resignation' of the VC and Director of Student's Welfare for the failure of law and

order situation of the campus. This is again a peculiar thing which students demand. How the teachers will maintain law and order situation of the campus when such kind of rational and bright inmates of the campus get locked up with police and vandalise national property just like the irrational and unconscious section of the country? How can this irrational demand can be supported by the conscious and educated mass of the country? University students of our country have to spend seven or eight years in university campus depending on their parents and posing a burden to this poor nation. In the midst of this abnormal situation students have adopted a new fashion to push back the date of the examination. How strange is the situation and student's understanding! They are supposed to demonstrate for pushing forward the dates of examination. In general universities it has become a common affair. Study and

research have departed from our universities quite a few years ago. Students left study and teachers left research. Without conducting any research the attachment to a political party gives them a lot and it's an easy and quick way to go upward and forward. So why they will spend time by doing research? Students have given up study for the same reason. But BUET was exception in this regard. BUET hardly experienced any session jam. When the sudden and tragic death of Sony, a brilliant girl student of BUET brought some session jam which can be accepted, but what about now? For World Cup Football the students of

BUET pushed back the date of examination. Does it not sound ridiculous? Different kinds of games and sports go all the year round. World Cup Football, World Cup Cricket and so many global competitive games and sports take place frequently. Can we afford to defer our examination and stop our work for those competitions? Don't our future engineers know that still 40% people live below the poverty line in our country? Don't they know the poor economic infrastructure of the country? What they will give to the nation when they show callousness towards these facts? No in no way we can support this unreasonable cause.

The university authorities also resort to a simple and traditional way to respond to student agitation. Whenever any sort of student agitation takes place in any university campus, the authorities just announce the closure of the university sine die. Don't they adopt or devise any other new way

to respond student's agitation? Teachers should also be upto that stature. University teachers of Pakistan time were morally highly elevated. Students of Rajshahi University staged a demonstration to defer the date of examination and they approached the then Vice Chancellor who replied to the agitating students in this way "The date of death may change, but the date of examination will never." The agitating students just obeyed him such a way as if magic was exercised on them. Can't we revive those days? I know the teachers of BUET hardly embroil themselves in nasty politics. They are more academicians. Even then, we will

request them to play some pragmatic roles to contribute to the country in wider perspective.

The troubled days of my university life is still vivid in my memory. How damage was caused by the unruly students sometimes for nothing and sometimes for a very negligible reason which in no way can be supported and expected from the students of the highest seat of learning. What these students would give to the nation when they don't have even a little feeling for the national wealth I just used to think. The country has become champion in the field of corruption for the five consecutive years. How it is possible. These kind of students definitely cannot play the role different role in the national level how who are at the helm of affairs than what they did in the universities. I would request the students to come to their sense and play the deserving role only.

(The writer works for PACE Programme, BRAC Head Office, Dhaka.)