



Thinking pattern and university education

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No one denies the development of sound political criticism in the country, more so in the university. In fact, if public opinion is really "public" and really "opinion", the growth of it is partly dependent on the university. Because as university is the seat of higher learning, it is as well the seat of matured public opinion distilled through sophisticated educational process. Enlightened public opinion is supposed to be the product of good universities. A university is definitely judged by its end product. Again its end product is not to be judged by the material success of its alumni, but by the value it contributes to the society, in its upbringing, nourishment and ultimate development of political and social thinking of a country.

Without being partial or partisan to any school of thinking can we say with confidence, since 1972 what our universities have contributed to improve the pattern of thinking of our society and country? From a random survey it is found that most of our universities, apart from scheduled holidays, remain closed for multifarious extraneous reasons for more than three to four weeks in a calendar year disrupting all the routine academic and social activities of the universities.

Now, if we ask ourselves as to why the universities or for that matter educational institutes are closed in this unscheduled way? Without blaming the government (a government is nothing but a machinery and a system) it can be easily said that when uncongenial things start happening inside the sacred portals of the educational institutions or when things which are not supposed to take place inside the university, start taking place, the machinery of the country has no other alternative than to close it down.

From here we come to the discussion as to what type of things should take place inside the universities. The answer here is also very clear. Study, research, and the growth of value are the three things that come first in our mind. The first two are academic and the third one is social. I personally believe if the foundation of thought is strong enough, it can resist the tide of any outside forces. It is difficult to penetrate an educated mind by cheap slogans. If we agree, then the fundamental question arises that why our students are vulnerable to such cheap things? Because we know that a house built by stone will stand any rough weather but one built with clay will topple down even by a gust of mild wind. Then is it true that we are building only with clay and not with stone?

The answer lies in the fact of the type of education we enter to them. A tree is known by its fruits. If our education

is not strong enough to stem the tide of colossal unreality offered to our students by the slogan-mongering half-baked so called politicians, then there must be something wrong either in our method or in its dissemination. A cultured mind grounded in socialistic economical doctrine will never accept capitalistic economy how so ever it is palatably served to him and vice versa. The question is the question of accepting a value on the fertile core of the mind from which no one can move him an inch. We have plenty of such examples in the lives of the "Kholafa-e-Rasheedeen". They accepted values in a such a way that they even gave lives without changing their values. Our tragedy is that we are so vulnerable that anything is acceptable to us provided it gives us a hope of better living.

This in fact, is at the root of our trouble in the education front. Most of our students come from a very low strata of economic profile and as such a hope of being economically well off is consuming their mind in such a strong way, that values are thrown into the thin air when an allurements offers itself. We cannot blame our students for this. They come from economically insecure homes surrounded by poverty and want. But again, these are the same students who fought heroically against the Pakistanis in our fight for freedom in 1971. They did not budge an inch from their determination to free their motherland in the face of many allurements. If they were such in 1971, why are they such now? Why a cheap slogan can exert now a great influence that they squander away their time and energy in such wrong pursuits.

The answer is simple. There is a vacuum in leadership and there is a want of a definite goal. In 1946, the goal was to achieve Pakistan, 1952, the goal was to achieve the honour of Bengali Language, in 1971, the goal was to achieve freedom

from the Pakistanis. And now there is a want of a definite goal. Whether the country will have a socialised economy or not, or whether there will be enlightened despotism or oligarchical democracy, no definite path has been shown to our student community. There are only colourful vague things in the horizon with a kind of baffling logic. This is why the unrest. To add to this extraneous powers are also working hard to make the situation misty and foggy.

So the traditional classroom lectures or the personality of the teacher cannot cast any substantial influence on the thought pattern of the students. The only way to come out of the quagmire of confusion is to bring before the students, as far as practicable, the following things.

1. Regard for the traditional value.
2. Knowledge of a fixed goal.
3. Loyalty to a cause.
4. Regard for one leadership.

Chaos will come if one of the factors is absent. The traditional value of love, pity, charity, honour should be imparted along with other traditional academic things. The students must be shown a justified goal for which cumulative endeavour is needed. When an army fight a war, it fights for one single cause and not for separate causes for separate battalions of the army. Regard for leadership is another. For good or for bad, there should be one leader to whom allegiance is needed, for the well being of the state. A country with different goals, many leadership, multiple loyalties, will always have an unhealthy influence on the student of the university and no amount of dialogue or force will be able to bring sanity in the society.

An example will clarify the point. Suppose a new movement starts in a society. Let us say it is against dowry system. May be it starts to save a victimised family, but when it takes the shape of a mass

movement, the concern for one individual family is obliterated and the movement takes a general shape. The goal is to free the society from economic exploitation and as such the entire society works for a common goal, with single leadership. Similarly in the political field also, the picture is the same. If a movement starts and gets the common consent, it goes well under one leadership (there has been many instances in the past — the salt movement by Gandhi). The moment two interests collide, the result is chaos and frustration. It is the duty of the enlightened section of the community. (In it majority are the university students) to see that more than one goal at a time and more than one leadership at a time may not spoil and divert the issue.

It is then and then only the university students and for that matter student community in general can contribute fruitful things in the countries total development.