



Students cannot squarely be blamed for campus violence. Parents are often over-political teachers who often outdo politicians. Prof Abu Taher Mojumder writes on

Campus sanctity. 06 129

Campus sanctity in almost all the universities of Bangladesh and many colleges is constantly under threat from various quarters. The recent violent attack on the residences of the Vice-Chancellor, several teachers including some senior professors and some officers and the burning of the teachers' officer club of Jahangirnagar University at dead of night point clearly to a state of affairs which is very undesirable. The attacks and counter-attacks among political groups and occupation of halls of residence in Chittagong and Rajshahi Universities and similar conditions prevailing in Dhaka and Agricultural University will make all patriots of the country greatly concerned about what is awaiting us in the future. The state of affairs that prevailed in Dhaka College and many other colleges of the country are none too encouraging.

The picture that emerges from a consideration of all these clearly points to the fact that our younger generation, the future builders and torch-bearers of our country, is spending a lot of its time and energy in matters which are not academically and intellectually profitable and, therefore, in the ultimate analysis, not much profitable for the country in the true sense of the term. All these also point to the fact that students have not been successful in arriving at a truer assessment of what would serve their interest best.

This failure is indeed a very dismal one and this, in its turn shows that the education imparted in and the guidance provided by our educational institutions, particularly the universities, are miserably failing in their lofty mission of moulding the character of our younger generation in an ennobling way. The long-term effect of this failure is indeed very crippling for the nation.

In this context the President's ardent request to the teachers (15th July 1988) "to make a strong pledge to restore sanctity on the educational campus and ensure an atmosphere congenial to quality education" (Times, July 16) is easily under-

standable. He has very rightly urged the teachers to undertake this stupendous task and has certainly meant those teachers who are ideally dedicated to their profession. The bitter experiences of the present made the President nostalgic and he dreamt of the golden past when the situation was much better and when education was imparted uninterruptedly: "We want a production-oriented education which is suited to the need of time. At the same time we want to go back to the good old days when teachers earned both respect and fear from the students."

The extent of the deterioration of the situation is clearly evident in this assertion of the President: "People avoid University area. Even women whom we respect as our mothers and sisters are insulted there. We just cannot send our children there to get an education that teachers them to insult women." That the situation is really disappointing, frustrating and horrifying will be clear from another newspaper report: "Dhaka University Teachers Association (DUTA) in a press statement... condemned 'rude behaviour and threat of using arms' against some teachers to 'frustrate examinations and change its results' by certain unruly students". The statement called it unprecedented and demanded immediate inquiry into the incidents by the university authority and exemplary punishment of the miscreants... The teachers threatened are Prof Muntasir Mamun of History, Prof. Quamrul Ahsan Choudhury of Sociology, Mrs. Siddiqi Mahmuda of Bangla. Dr. Imtiaz Habib, Prof. Sadrul Amin, Mrs. Husnara Huq and Mrs. Ferdous Azim of English Department". It is thus evident that nobody is safe on the campus and the President's apprehensions about the state of affairs on the campuses of educational institutions are quite justified.

Students often resort to violent methods even to influence examinations. On 9th June the second year students of a Faculty in the Agricultural University, Mymensingh, boycotted

their examination because the questions were not upto their choice. They came out of the examination hall, ignored the request of the teachers and kept them confined to a room by locking the door. On 15th June the teachers were holding a meeting. The students again locked them up from 10 am to 5 am, snapped the telephone connection and exploded a bomb in the room of the teachers, obviously to intimidate them to submit to their demand. As a result 24 teachers offered to resign. This shows the utmost limit to which students can go to press home their demand irrespective of its logical basis. No wonder the President feels so frustrated when he thinks of the sanctity on the campus of the universities and other institutions.

Added to this is the problem of teacher-student relationship which is also deteriorating gradually in a general way. Of course the contribution of specific issues as stated above is far greater because these enable students to have a common front and father together to undertake any action they desire. Apart from this, there is a general decline in the behavioural pattern of many a student who often forget the distinction between students and teachers. Again, there are students who think that if they turn out to be very hard bargainers even to the point of being rude, harsh and violent they would acquire prominence and elicit admiration from their followers and general students, a fact which is to some extent true in sharp contrast to the ideals of academic achievements and general respect for discipline of the Sixties. It is, however, to be admitted that time changes and with time many other things—customs, traditions, habits, practices, etc which influence life profoundly also change. There is nothing static in life. But certain things, discipline, for example, have an eternal value and are cherished in all civilised societies and countries for the sheer reason that these sustain life in the proper way we wish to live it.

However, students cannot squarely be blamed for the defilement of campus sanctity. The failure to imbue students with the right kind of sentiments, genuine patriotic feelings and thoughts, a spirit of sacrifice and dedication, respect for discipline, law and order and regard for the superiors is a national failure for which politicians, guardians and teachers are also to blame. The role of political parties cannot be ignored. The guardians have to rear up the children properly and exercise proper control on them till they grow up into responsible citizens. Many guardians are unfortunately not careful enough, many do not know what goes on in the institutions where their wards are and how they are behaving there and many are not educated enough to understand their responsibility to the required extent. The unbridled political involvement of students detracts them from academic discipline in all its aspects and generates a kind of desperation in them that ultimately exercises a deleterious influence on their career.

The role of a teacher in the life of a student is indeed very great. But, in general, teachers have failed to hold aloft any aura of ideals before their students. We often hear of teachers who, under one pretext or another, neglect their duties and also indulge in activities for personal ends which tarnish their image and thus they fail to mould the character of the students who vainly expect to be guided by these teachers in the right direction.

There are over-political teachers who often outdo politicians and their supporters among students in their political zeal.

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Mr. Gandhi's remarks appeared directed against Ram Jethmalani, a prominent Attorney-MP who defended in court one of the two Sikhs hanged in January for the 1984 assassination of Mr. Gandhi's mother and predecessor Indira. Mr. Jethmalani was quoted by newspapers recently as saying that granting Khalian may be the only solution to the Sikh secessionist campaign. Opposition spokesman have denied the remark attributed to him. Mr. Gandhi's accusation was also criticised by veteran Congress (I) leader Kamalapati Tripathi, who told reporters Monday that no one in Parliament supported the Khalian campaign.