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CAMPUS VIOLENCE

It seems as if hostel superintendents or provosts in the higher academic institutions, like medical colleges or universities, have become redundant. Clashes between rival students take place periodically, rather frequently, in such seats of learning for forcefully occupying hostel accommodation. The latest such incidents took place in a row in the Chittagong Medical College and the Jahangirnagar University at Savar, in which several students are reported to have been injured. We can't say for certain whether one or few more incidents of this violent nature will not take place by the time this write-up is in print. The campus situation is unpredictable as no one has yet tried with an irrevocable intensity of purpose to cap the craze of students to establish their own rules, often in difference with those set by the administration, within the higher seats of learning. Why do such regressive violent incidents take place at all to the utter anguish of those who understand that a deteriorated standard of education due to growing indiscipline among students is sure to curtail our capacity to achieve more and more national success and compete with the rest of the world?

Seemingly the administration in most of the higher seats of learning have tacitly surrendered their authority for enforcing discipline in the campus in a ploy to be left in peace allowing the power-hungry section of students to be on the rampage at their sweet will. The attitude is unlike that of a teacher, whose traditional image is that he is the one who resists decadence in his students with absolute firmness. Could there be a motivation in any student for forcefully occupying hostel accommodation if the authorities would have never tolerated such acts and firmly refused to legalise it with post-facto seat allotment? If punitive actions would have been taken against all defaulting students right from when it began, driving home the message that indiscipline among students would not be ever tolerated or encouraged, the trend of academic campus being always restive and frequently disturbed by violence could not have set in. The nation has suffered quite substantially in the form of deteriorated general academic standard owing to frequent clashes between rival students in various educational institutions.

You can't put the cart before the horse if you intend to have it moved forward. Students must not be given the scope to make the authorities of their respective academic institutions redundant in any manner if they have to learn from the same set of teachers. The Government should identify how students can afford to defy the authorities so arrogantly and why the administration in most academic institutions look on so helplessly or with a sense of passivity while students violate rules. Unless preventive or corrective steps have been taken to preclude authorities being rendered redundant by students in any matter of the campus, the apparent craze in some students to gain control of the campus through diverse unlawful ways will not recede, and the academic climate will not improve significantly.

All incidents of students trying to occupy and having occupied hostel accommodation illegally and without the prior approval of the authorities concerned must be sternly dealt with. Similar treatment should be meted out to those students who try to supersede the administration of their respective academic institutions in violation of all time-honoured norms and academic discipline. We must not make our national future uncertain by allowing our students to involve themselves in such activities which tell upon their proper education and training. Our advice is that the authorities should be strict manifestly in dealing with the Chittagong Medical College and, the Jahangirnagar University incidents making it clear to all that campus violence will have to become a thing of the past and that it will not be tolerated any more. If necessary, the students found guilty of breaking discipline may be expelled, whatever their number, permanently to jolt potential violators to the realisation that discipline in the campus is always a vital part of education.