

Teachers abroad

Higher education is one realm where less the prohibitive regulations and greater the free flow of ideas and exchanges, the better. No one ought to nurse a grudge when our University teachers go abroad to enhance their knowledge and broaden their mental horizons. A teacher from Bangladesh who has had the good fortune to get admission in a reputed seat of learning overseas, can be reasonably expected to further enrich his knowledge-base and sharpen his teaching skills. Thus he would be considered an asset for the university on coming back home.

But this is where the trouble arises. On release from the university for a stint of study-leave outside, most of the teachers seem to forget their obligations to the country and conscience by engaging their talents in the service of alien societies. A recently taken sample shows that out of 762 teachers of the university as many as 140 teachers are on study leave abroad, a large percentage indeed for an institution hard-pressed to maintain the standard of its instructions due to the thinning ranks of experienced teachers. The same report revealed that 39 teachers, from 1975 onwards, were discharged from university service for their failure to turn up in the country after expiry of their stipulated period of study leave abroad. The other notable aspect would be the surfeit of lecturers, now in the university's service, some 201 of them compared to the sanctioned posts of 159, whereas the quotas for assistant professors and associate professors could be hardly filled. This indicates that there is no shortage of inexperienced teachers with relatively modest qualifications, but highly experienced ones who would lend teaching in the university the desired vitality, are in short supply.

We do not suggest that unassailable new barriers be set up to forcibly keep the university teachers tied down at home against their volition. A disgruntled person compelled to give his best in a setting he does not consider congenial, would be a case of flogging the dead horse to run. Needless to say, there ought to be greater controls so as to put a brake on this uncontrolled exodus. But a recast of the university's service conditions ensuring built-in stimuli and appropriate reward structures, would possibly be better longer-term antidotes. Many stay back abroad feeling the inadequate scope for publications, research, and recognition of their merits at home. This mood can be reversed perhaps by corrective policies. Realistically improved pay, status and other facilities given to teachers would afford yet greater incentive to them to serve dedicatedly within the country.