

## Views

## Religion And Students In Politics

A.Z.M. Shamsul Alam

EVERY nation needs a morality-based political and public philosophy to ensure justice and fairness to all groups of people belonging to various religious communities. There must not be any imposition on anybody on religious issues, not believed by other persons. The religious people or bodies should articulate their views about the contribution of their thinking to civilisation and it is upto society to accept or reject. What is wrong is the imposition of certain tenets against the wishes and beliefs of others.

The religious people must assert their views and moral values. They must merge and blur with non-religious people and persuade them to accept moral values.

Is it ever possible for a man of sincere and firm convictions to separate his religious views from his daily actions and conduct? The convictions find expression in our votes, in our support for a political party, in our life-styles, in our behaviour pattern.

The social conduct and interpersonal behaviour must be based on justice. The legislators must ensure what is right and what is wrong. The legislations are supposed to be ethical guides by consensus.

Separation of religion and state does not mean that a nation should be led by people devoid of religious values. The separation also does not mean that the conduct of the affairs of man should be in contrast to or inconsistent with the religious values or should not be based on religious values.

It can never be right to say that people with deep and clear-cut religious views should not take part in politics or tell the people what they

consider right from the point of their own values.

Government should not favour one group of religious people over the other even belonging to the same religion. But this must not mean that religious people would not compete with others to have their views accepted by the people.

While enunciating the issues and clarifying their stand, the public leaders should also explain if their issues and stand are morally right or not. The morals or principles behind issues should be clarified.

Every society or group of people must have commitment to basic values. Modernity must be in conformity with humanity. Without morality, we can be modern monkeys rather than modern man. The dealers in deception may drag one indifferent to values from real peace to escapism in drug, drink and smoke.

Now coming to student politics, there are very strong reasons in developing countries for student indiscipline and their participation in politics, academic as well as national. In many cases those who come to power in the developing countries do not like to leave power gracefully. They feel that they are free to remain where they climbed through election, fair or foul. They do not like to abandon the political power which they attained by the sweat of their brow. When politicians find it difficult to continue due to erosion of popularity, military leaders sometimes step in to fill the vacuum and some spineless politicians gather around them to make a common cause.

In the developing countries Gov-

ernment is the largest employer. Through the process of competition, generally comparatively better students get into the Government services. Whatever happens to the country, the salary and privileges are not generally reduced in spite of natural calamities or catastrophic economic mismanagement. The public servants as a whole constitute a vested interest class.

If the state takes full responsibility of any organisation or institution, general people lose interest in it. The employees of the institution become employees of the Government which is not visible and are not very capable of looking after its own interest. Consequently, the Government organisation is weekly run of ill-run than equally well-financed private organisations.

In spite of being emancipated from the colonial slavery, most of the voters do not and cannot behave in a political responsible way. They are not conscious of the value of their votes due to lack of education. Those who can spend a fairly good sum of money during election for at least 5-10 per cent of the marginal votes, have reasonable chance of winning election. Election in the developing countries is, comparatively speaking, more expensive than in the developed countries.

Many politicians in the developing countries do not have fair image. In the absence of a wide industrial base, politicians coming from either landed aristocracy or business community are not too rich to forget the expenditure incurred by them for winning election. Some of them try to get a part of expenditure incurred for elec-

tion through means not every honourable. Consequently, their image is not very high to the voters.

Due to the ineptitude of public servants, indifference of the educated people employed in the non-Government sector and poor image of politicians, a political vacuum is created and there is no organized group to challenge the wrong-doing of the persons in political authority who outlived their utility. This vacuum is filled by the student community in the developing countries. It is more pleasant to criticize the elder bureaucracy and politicians than to concentrate in the studies of books. Many students find it easier to satisfy their ego by delivering forceful speeches than doing hard labour to secure a good grading in the examinations.

In the newly independent developing countries, many citizens have a distorted notion of freedom and liberty. By freedom, they understand relaxation of the strict laws and rules. As free citizens, they want to behave as they like. Discipline and compliance of rule and values are viewed as curtailment of freedom.

Not only adult citizens, even their children, particularly those going to school and colleges are too keen to test and enjoy the fresh air of freedom. Often do not like to comply with the orders of the teacher and educational management.

Due to student politics and indiscipline, academic standard remains low. Sense of responsibility and dutifulness does not grow as required. Consequently, student suffer. The country concerned is deprived of the valuable services the educated persons can render to society.