



VIEWPOINT

Every week in this column, VIEWPOINT, we print opinions of our readers on subjects which we feel are of popular interest and concern. The opinions, however, do not always coincide with those of HOLIDAY's

Dhaka Varsity on a road to disaster-II

By KAZI ZAKER HUSAIN

The old residential status of Dhaka University must be restored at once, and only then should one expect the 'Oxford of the East' image of Dhaka University. This should not be a difficult task. The President (who is doing so many things by his orders) can do this by one of his orders, or may be the Parliament can do this.

Establishing new affiliating universities is not necessary. The Dhaka Board (of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education) can easily take over the full responsibility of the colleges.

I say 'full' because the Board is already looking after the half of it, i.e. the H.S.C. section. The Board, which is at present efficiently looking after the syllabi, examinations and issuing of certificates of thousands of students of hundreds of schools and H.S.C. section of colleges, has all the manpower, capability and experience of taking over the responsibilities of the degree pass of a few dozens and honours and master courses of a dozen colleges.

The board may be converted into a 'university' and given a new name with the appointment of a vice-chancellor in place of the chairman.

It will be still better if the schools and colleges are allowed to conduct the examinations and issue certificates for S.S.C. and H.S.C. respectively.

When Dhaka University had to take over the responsibility of the colleges, it was definitely a difficult situation, but we thought it was only a temporary measure. Unfortunately it

has become a permanent arrangement.

What is more disgusting is that, all the successive general universities made carbon copies of the funny 'Golam Hosain' image of Dhaka University. As a result, these universities are also suffering from 'AIDS' disease, with no hope of any recovery.

CONCLUSION

Lately, we have started giving master's degrees to our students and then encouraging them to become taxi drivers. This is nonsense, they could have done this with the knowledge acquired 10 years ago. They have simply wasted these years of life. We certainly need mass education, but not mass university education.

We have numerous avenues now-a-days, and there will be many more in future. It is not necessary that all the boys and girls must go to universities after H.S.C. The general universities do not give professional degrees, here one specialises in a particular field, hence we need only a few of the best of the lot.

Politicians, guardians and students must realise that for the nation we need 'top' people in every sphere of life. We need top scientists, economists, historians, social workers, etc.

Quality and quantity do not go together. There must be selected places for producing top quality because it is these few top men or women who shape the destiny of the country all over the world.

In the Dhaka University we now have two first years, two second years, two third years, three preliminaries and two finals in almost every department.

Still some people are demanding 'night shift', 'double shift' etc. in this university. I find no reason for such demands.

Talking of quality, I invite our guardians, politicians and students to think of the other countries of the world. Every country has a number of 'centres of excellence'; and it is these centres which produce 'top' men and women in various spheres of life. Every Briton has a right to study in Oxford or Cambridge or London University; every American has a right to go to Harvard, Chicago, Barkley or M.I.T. But they can't go, and they do not regret it. Every Indian student wants to go to IIT, but he can't go. It is a question of quality, not quantity.

In this world of extreme competition, we are far behind the rest, yet we must pick up the top boys and girls from among the best of what we have and train them to look after the various affairs of the State, our science, technology, industry, economy, art, culture, administration, defence, etc.

I am told that in Pakistan, during the last 8/9 years, the authorities took up a programme to pick up the top talents of teenagers from all educational institutions, put them in some special institutions and give them the very best of training. And we all know what Pakistan has done in the field of science and technology in this short period.

The story of Taiwan and South Korea is too well-known to be repeated here.

Do we have any such 'centre of excellence' in Bangladesh? The answer is

'no'. Do we not need such centres? How can we have such centres if we sacrifice quality at the altar of quantity, because of unscrupulous demands of 'rights' and exercise of brutal force?

Dhaka University once upon a time had certain reputation. Whatever criticism you may have, the fact remains that the universities—all of them—are still the best centres for the maximum concentration of the best talents of the country. The Dhaka University, by virtue of its size and age, has the largest concentration of the brightest men and women of the country.

This, and all other general universities could still become centres of excellence, if these are freed from their present burden in the light of suggestions made here or through any other process.

There are some colleges which can also be selected and given special treatment under the affiliating university. They should be allowed to teach honours and masters only, and H.S.C. and pass courses should be excluded from there. There are many well-trained senior teachers in colleges, and they should be brought in these colleges. What I have said about the Dhaka Board is applicable to all other boards. This would mean that we shall have six affiliating universities in place of boards, and presumably all these would be government universities.

There is nothing wrong in it. In the U.S.A. there are many state universities, which are said to be government universities. And of course the 'private' universities like Harvard, Chicago, etc. are the best.

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