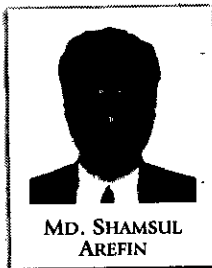


# Education in ethics



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**W**E think that the responsibilities of students are to learn their lessons, get to school/class on time, submit their work on time and

do their best on examinations and assignments only. But in addition to that, students should learn something more that will guide them to being morally upright citizens. In educational institutions, there are a very few endeavours that help build the character of students or encourage them to exercise integrity in their day to day life.

When we open a newspaper in the morning, most headlines scream of corruption, frauds and scams involving millions of taka. Who commits these crimes?

Most of the wrongdoers are well educated people. A very few of the corrupt practices are being committed by those who are illiterate. It is expected that educated people would display honest behaviour, decency, good manners and ethical conduct. With a huge expansion of the education system, the standard as measured by the percentage of marks obtained in examinations has been rising to unprecedented levels. But, unfortunately there is a marked decline in the character, moral values and general behaviour of students coming out of schools and colleges everywhere.

It is generally accepted that five universal human values, i.e. truth, righteous conduct, peace, love and non-violence are directly linked to physical, intellectual, emotional consciousness and spiritual surface of the human personality. These values are essentially acquired during childhood, first at home and then in school. We want an education system that speaks of creating

awareness about social justice and compassion, equality, secularism, gender equality, concern for the environment, social cohesion and national unity, quality of life, and scientific outlook and the spirit of wisdom.

Therefore, it has been suggested that learning materials should be designed to equip students with the ability to combat social evils like religious

needs to be taught through dedicated textbooks.

Educating people, particularly young students, about the consequences of corruption is fundamental to preventing it. To address this, the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) has formed Integrity Units (IUs) in schools across the country. These units work as associated bodies of the ACC to create awareness against corruption and

childhood, are difficult to change. Unfortunately, in today's environment, most parents, particularly those belonging to upper and middle class families, have very little time for their children. When both working parents have their own careers, they are unable to spend any significant time with their children who are left to the care of maids or have to fend for themselves. Parents

permanent damage is done to the mentality of their children.

A good example has been set by the Hong Kong Independent Commission against Corruption. Its ethics building school programme has attracted the world's attention. The Bangladesh ACC has taken its example of best practice from the ICAC of Hong Kong and has established the same programme with the expectation that it will also be successful with the support of teachers, school officials and the media.

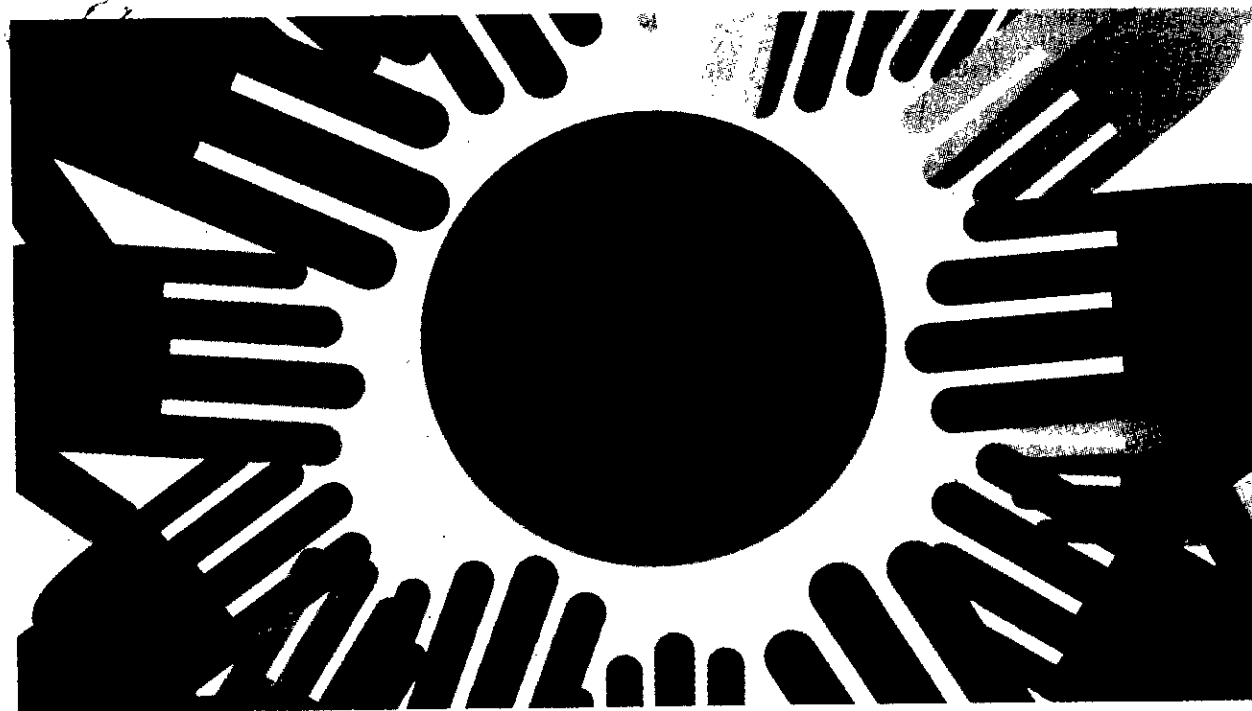
The ACC has been helping to shape the character of students in becoming good citizens. Thus, it has constituted as many as 20,855 Integrity Units throughout the country in different educational institutions.

An integrity unit is comprised of as many as 11 students. They are usually the best academic performers, athletes or organisers of their respective schools. Moreover, there is a "Teacher's Council" comprising of 3-5 teachers to guide, manage and monitor the activities of the Integrity Unit.

It is responsible for performing duties entrusted to it by the ACC with regards to the ethics building programme. For carrying out training courses on ethics building and promoting the values of honesty and integrity to prevent corruption and take measures to build awareness against corruption. The unit is supposed to create ethical standards within the school premises, identify different sources of corruption present in their school, establish, maintain and monitor 'Integrity Stores' in their schools opened with assistance from the ACC.

The ACC has been trying hard to create a value system in the minds of young students so that they grow up learning that honesty really is the best policy.

The writer is Director General, Anti Corruption Commission.



fundamentalism etc., on the one hand, and develop a scientific temper and habit of logical, rational thinking, on the other.

Unfortunately, very little has been done to implement this. We need to take concrete steps on framing study curriculums and adapting innovative methods to inculcate values and ethics in students. It is not a subject like History, Geography or Science that

promote integrity among the younger generation.

Another aspect of character building is the home environment of students. This is where students observe the behaviour of their parents and siblings which has marked influence on their own behaviour patterns and habits. It has also been revealed in various studies that values and habits, once formed in

tend to feel that their duties are complete once they send their children to expensive schools.

The child's performance even in school is largely determined by the environment at home. Therefore, parents' involvement in building the character of children is absolutely essential. Once they come to know about it, they may be able to modify their behaviour at home before

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