

Interference In Educational Institutions

The best way to destroy a nation is to destroy its education system, so goes a wise saying. Its opposite axiom therefore ought to be the co-relation between good education and national advancement. It is a natural expectation that the matter of education is left in capable hands. Unfortunately, increased political interference in educational institution is taking a heavy toll on our education. The policy-makers are yet to realise that it is too dangerous to leave as important a matter as education to the supervision of half-educated politicians. Manipur High School, recognised as the best achiever among the secondary schools in the country in the years 1990 and 2003, has of late become a casualty of party politics. As many as 41 teachers of the school have reportedly been sacked at a time. Their offence is that the appointment process was completed during the tenure of former headmaster Sardar Ali to whom the credit goes for bringing the school from obscurity into the limelight. For 30 long years he struggled to turn the educational institution into a prestigious one but he was sent on retirement at gunpoint.

The appointment of the 41 teachers was reportedly completed duly, following rules and regulations. But it was not to the liking of a BNP MP, who now holds the chairmanship of the governing body of the school. He is so powerful that he does not bother to give election to the governing body, instead he prefers to manage things with an ad-hoc committee. Since becoming the chairman of the governing body, the MP has been running the administration with an ad-hoc committee formed for only six months. This is flagrant violation of the rules and blatant interference in the educational institution's management. The incumbent headmaster has denied that the teachers were fired, he claims the appointment has been withheld because of irregularities in the recruitment process.

A thorough and neutral investigation will bring out the truth. Recent developments in the school however point to the fact that not everything is going well on the administration front of the school. The teachers had to qualify for the job and many of them left their jobs in other schools. So what is their disqualification or crime? What does the incumbent headmaster want to hint at by 'irregularities'? This is not the first time that reputed schools have been made a casualty of politics. Vikarunnessa Noon School, Udayan School and even Government Laboratory High School saw turbulent times with the political changeover. Earlier the political parties were busy keeping their hold on the universities, then the game of politicisation spread upto the colleges. The schools were usually spared of this blatant politicisation. This however is no longer the case. The game of political interference has reached an unprecedented level during this alliance regime. The more you interfere politically with educational institutions, the more you corrupt the system.

Its natural consequence is a sharp decline in the quality of education. When teachers are appointed on consideration of party affiliation, which has become a criterion now, education no longer remains what it should be. The standard of corruption set above finds its way down to the school level to vitiate the atmosphere of education. Even in schools like the Residential Model College, discipline has taken a serious downturn because of the compromise made on certain issues like the appointment of its principal. The comparative increase in the number of examinees under the Madrasha Board and a drastic decline in the number of HSC examinees are an indication of the wrong or deliberate policy the government is following to discredit the general stream of education. Leave, if nothing else, at least education alone. It is none of the politicians' business. Eminent educationists must be handed the responsibility to take care of education.