

Letting students without moral, ethical values concerning

TWO-THIRDS of primary and secondary schools not having acceptable infrastructure, health or hygiene condition to promote learning and instil ethics and moral values in students, as the Education Watch Report 2018 made public on Wednesday says, comes to be concerning. The study, a qualitative survey that education rights group Campaign for Popular Education conducted based on interviews of 1,400 primary, secondary and university students, 576 teachers and 1,280 school managing committee members, finds that a half of primary students, two-thirds of secondary students and seven out of 10 university students do not look on their teachers as their role models for ethical and moral conduct. On the other front, a half of the teachers, as the study report says, do not perceive themselves as role models for students in ethical and moral conduct. People who spoke at the programme where the study was made public gave the attitude of business by offering private tuition and coaching centres and the moral and ethical degradation of others around the students as a reason for students not taking their teachers as their role models. A situation like this is bad for the students and would remain so when they grow up, which puts out a call for the government to attend to this issue.

A situation where more than a half of schools do not have the infrastructure to instil moral and ethical values in students and where more or less a half of the students do not have teachers to look them on as role models, this might also harm society because liberal democracy is said to flourish if citizens hold certain moral and ethical values and manifest certain virtues. As the students need to have moral and ethical values, experts say that school experiences do not create the opportunity in lessons and co-curricular activities to use reasoning and thinking about ethical issues and moral conduct. Experts also think that a common subject of religion and spiritual values could be introduced for primary and secondary students that can bring together the common heritage of great religion, sanctity of life and other issues. While teachers, who are nation-builders and ideal people in society, should shake off their attitude of business and society, as well as families, should come forward to inculcate moral and ethical values in children. What experts think ironical is that everybody in society wants others to be honest but no one is ready to change own attitude and this makes the teaching of moral and ethical values difficult.

What seems to have gone largely ignored is the issue of moral and ethical values in policy planning on national education. While the government must, under the circumstances, think over and work on the issue, especially in policy planning when it comes to national education, individuals, families and society should work together to create a situation where students would be living within the moral traditions that have so far been broadly in practice for the students to learn such values and advance society.