

# 42pc higher edn students face discrimination on campus: survey

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Around 42 per cent tertiary level students in the country faced various forms of ‘discrimination’ on the campus, particularly in results and issues related to, among others, gender, political opinion and physical appearance, a survey has revealed.

Only 25 per cent of the students who faced discrimination lodged complaints with the university authorities, according to a press release issued on Saturday by Aachol Foundation, a non-governmental organisation that conducted the study.

Of those who lodged complaints, only 11 per cent said that the authorities took proper action, 44 per cent termed the authorities' action as ineffective, and 17 per cent termed the role of the authorities as unhelpful.

The survey also showed that 21 per cent students failed to join the classes and 51 per cent said though they joined the classes they failed to give attention.

The survey also revealed that 51 per cent among the affected students were female, while the rest were male.

Among the affected students, the highest 56 per cent were from different public universities, followed by 19 per cent from different private universities, and 5 per cent from different medical colleges.

The survey also found that the highest around 60 per cent students alleged that they faced discrimination regarding their examination results due to malice on the part of the teachers; around 30 per cent faced gender-based discrimination; around 30 per cent faced discrimination for political opinions; around 29 per cent for physical appearance; around 23 per cent for economic reason; around 19 per cent for religious identities; around 9 per cent ethnic identities; and around 7 per cent for physical disabilities.

The students mentioned more than one reasons or types of discriminations they were allegedly subjected to, said foundation president Tansen Rose.

The foundation in its release further said that they had conducted the survey titled 'Mental health of the university students faced discrimination' with 1,173 honours-level students participating as respondents between March and May this year.

The highest, 40 per cent, students faced discrimination were studying in the third and fourth year.

The highest, 58 per cent, students faced discrimination from their classmates, while 55 per cent students blamed teachers, 32 per cent blamed the university administration, and 15 per cent blamed the universities' Class III and IV employees.

The survey also revealed that the discrimination often seriously impacted the mental health of the victims.

Among the respondents, nearly 90 per cent reported facing mental pressure, 39 per cent mentioned severe mental pressure, 51 per cent mentioned mild impact, and 6.5 per cent mentioned no impact at all.

Among the affected students, 22 per cent sought mental health support, while 24 per cent affected students said they were not aware of mental health support systems, and 27 per cent affected students admitted to not seeking mental health practitioners' support due to social stigma attached to it.

Only 15 per cent students said that their universities had sufficient mental health support services, while 70 cent said that those services in their universities were insufficient.

Around 60 per cent, the highest, students faced discrimination in classroom, followed by 38 per cent at friends' gatherings, 37 per cent at different events at the universities, 31 per cent at social media, 19 per cent at the student halls or dormitories, 18 per cent at the university buses, while the rest at the universities' cafes, libraries and examination halls.

Among the study respondents, 49.3 per cent were from public universities, 22 per cent from National University, 19.6 per cent from private universities, 3.4 per cent from medical universities and colleges and 1.6 per cent from polytechnic institutes.