

# Disunity among teachers

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One painful development in the educational arena in post-independence Bangladesh is the growth of sub-divisions and fragmentations in organisations of teachers of different levels.

Today after one-and-a-half decade of liberation, it would take at least hours if not days even for a teacher to determine exactly as to are there how many teachers' organisations in the country now.

The question that one would naturally ask is, what are the causes of such disunity among our teachers. What are the basis of the differences that exist among them? Cannot such differences be resolved on the simple democratic principle of majority decision?

The above mentioned questions would also lead one to ask a vital question — cannot the guardians bank on the wisdom of the teachers, who are entrusted with the task of grooming the future citizens, that they can act and behave with confidence, dignity, integrity and honour? If they really cannot, the only conclusion is — the entire nation is in jeopardy.

If discussion is restricted here to only the organisations of non-government secondary teachers. Because the organisations of government teachers have over the years remained more or less united, may be, because of uniformity of rules, regulations and outside influences they have been subjec-

ted to. The case of non-government teachers, however, is different.

The non-government secondary school teachers are probably the worst affected section among our teachers who are affected by sub-division and fragmentation of their organisation. Since the liberation of Bangladesh they used to be represented by one organisation called Bangladesh Teachers' Association (BTA). At present there are as many as three such organisations having the same name. By the end of 1985 another faction developed and a "Bangladesh Shohokari Shikha Samity" (Bangladesh Assistant Teachers' Association) came into existence.

A look into the causes of these divisions and sub-divisions suggest that they are rooted in political influences. A Teachers' Association does always have a non-political beginning, at least on the face of it. Bangladesh Teachers' Association is no exception. Problems develop subsequently.

This organisation of secondary school teachers had organised a long strike in 1973 to voice its demand for removal of disparities between teacher of government non-government educational institutions, and committees were formed by the government for settlement of the demand.

A section of secondary teachers, however, felt that the strike was brought to an abrupt end without achieving a

tangible outcome, and subsequently a new faction of Secondary Teachers' Association led by (late) Zainul Abedin Chowdhury grew up. The suspicion of this group against the leadership of BTA was based on the allegation that the head of the Association being a member of the ruling party and an MP of that time had, in league with the government, sacrificed the teachers' demands.

Two BTAs thus continued to function simultaneously for some years. The BTA (Zainul) joined the Bangladesh Federation of Teachers' Association that was formed in 1978, while BTA (Qamruzzaman) remained out of it.

Another crack developed in BTA (Zainul) on the basis of the allegation that the Bangladesh Federation of Teachers' Associations had lost its non-political character and the Mr. Nazrul faction of BTA left the Federation and formed a separate committee. The Bangladesh Assistant Teachers' Association came into existence as a mark of protest against alleged domination of Secondary Teachers' Associations by Head masters.

The Nur-Nazrul and Qamruzzaman factions of BTA and the Bangladesh Assistant Teachers' Associations had jointly organised the recent two-month-long strike in non-government secondary schools while another BTA faction remained with BFTA.