

Some Thoughts On Public Examinations

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It goes without saying that the student is directly benefited by the result of the examination and he is responsible for the means he adopts in the examination for getting a good pass. The next man interested in the examination is the guardian who seeks a reliever in his ward and with every increase in the qualification of the latter sighs a deep breath of relief. He is concerned only with the end and cares little what means are adopted by his ward to cross the bar of examination. In some cases he is even found directly collaborating with the examinee in the shoe of his ward. Instances are however, not scanty where a student in not adopting unfair means got plucked and evidently taken to task and expelled from the house by his guardian. The role of a teacher in this regard is vital and not in the least ignorable, since he is the more conscious part of the organism. Neither the student nor the guardian always realises that a tendency for a short cut process—less reading and better results—deters the mental growth of a learner. But the teachers should always be conscious of it. There are however, not many teachers who encourage the learners to undertake extensive optional study beyond syllabus in order to build a rich store of knowledge for his mental development. On the contrary, bulk of the teachers community is formed by those gentlemen who give suggestions for limited study right from the beginning of the session. The teacher whose suggestions are found common at a large scale in the final examination is a success or a failure among his colleagues. A tendency to engage a private tutor as private tutor. Private tuition in these days is deemed by the teachers, wards and guardians as a panacea for recovering the deficiency of a student. A guar-

dian feels relieved when he can engage a tutor for his ward. But in practice a private tutor is often seen solving all the problems by himself and the taught has got no scope to use his brain. So a practice like private tuition, in my opinion, cannot be conducive to the mental development of a learner since it fosters limited study for better result.

Among the indirect agents polluting the environment of education I like to hold note books most responsible. Its technical approach to subject matter is very much alluring to the students as it saves much of his time and labour. The publishers in order to accrue maximum advantage from the situation advertise it as the only friend and companion of the students. It matters little to them whether the students are actually benefited or harmed by using these note books, all that is desired is a good sale. Fine get up and alluring captions like "Sure Star" "Sure Success" "Digest" introduce these books as commercial items tempting maximum number of purchasers.

In these days note books on all subjects are found in plenty in the market in comparison to the availability of text books. It transpires that note books have more buyers than text books have. It is due to the fact that our text books bear no exercise, no annotation and the problems of the text are solved and illustrated in the note books leaving nothing for the learners to ponder over, no room to cultivate his faculty. Lecture method of teaching performs rest of the task towards rendering his creativeness crippled making him very dependent for begging or receiving. Thus when his education is done by the note books and his lessons are taught by the teachers the brain of a learner remains unoccupied and nothing but idle thoughts can be expected of such a brain. In this way it proves its only fitness as devil's workshop. The

only possible outcome is frustration for himself, despair for guardians, agonised shame for teachers, embarrassment for Boards and Universities and headache for the Government.

It is a happy sign that a bill has been passed in the Jatiya Sangsad prohibiting the use of note books upto class VIII. I hope the use of the same in other classes may also be prohibited in the near future. In this connection I like to remind all concerned that a similar bill was passed in the then East Pakistan Provincial Assembly during Ayub regime but, ultimately within a short time the demon reappeared with other attending evils.

Grace Marks : I know full well that I am speaking something against a popularly accepted custom. But there is enough room to admit that instead of removing the deficiency of the students, the act of giving grace in some form or other tantamounts to the healing up of a sore by using ointment keeping some swollen wounds underneath. The deficiency thus fostered by grace could have otherwise been removed if a supplementary examination could have been arranged within a reasonable short period after the publication of the result. If there were no system of such major grace giving the students and teachers would be more active in removing the deficiency by careful class-work. A penalty unleashed by this system is condonation a curse in disguise, where in the name of condoning seven times marks are deducted from the aggregate for each shortage. The candidate thereby deprived of the due division is considered unfit for admission into technical and higher studies. Now, this shortage of marks in a particular subject may owe to the variance of standard in evaluation. And if that is so the fate of that wretched candidate is sealed since no scope is left for re-examining a script once it passes through the process of examining and scrutinising The

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practice followed in the name of a re-examination is re-scrutination.

In view of the circumstances stated in the above I like to put forward the following suggestions: i) That note books should be totally banned and the text books should be made more illustrative with annotations. Sufficient number of reference books must be made available to teachers. ii) That the system of condonation (i.e. deducting seven times mark) should be immediately replaced by supplementary examination in order to qualify the students for admission into higher studies. iii) That grace upto 10 marks may be retained for the time being and ultimately wound up by lowering the pass mark upto 30 in place of 33. iv) That re-evaluation of scripts should be allowed in some specialised cases say when the scoring rate of other subjects is 60%. v) That in order to minimise the fear of facing the examination, a final examination at the year-end may be reintroduced.

We should pay a look into the curricular syllabi and examination system of the country and judge to what extent they conform to the prevailing educational environment, i.e. number of educational institutions, teacher-student ratio mode of teaching appliances and facilities available for teachers and students etc. The standard of achievement or target should be fixed to a height so that the candidates can scale this over with a high jump or at best with a pole and the use of grace as the ladder should be discarded outright if proper education of a student is the objective.

In our country the total scene reveals a miserable aspect of things. The subject-matter rendered unimpressive by colourless and artless presentation proves no better than a curry cooked without spices, causing indigestion to the young learners, who finding no other alternative seeks shelter to note

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books, which are the common source of reference both for teachers and learners. The examiners on the other hand are instructed not to assign more than average pass mark in cases of answers memorised from note books and no credit at all to answers suspected to have been copied. The differentiation between memorisation and copying is a hard task. As a result a good many students have to suffer unjust dealings at the hands of some of the examiners. This state of things may give birth to the circumstances described in the preceding paras. So there exists a big gap between our system and practice and grace is found to stand in good stead to bridge the gap.

It is therefore not strange