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Educational Aberration

The excuse is simple and straight: uncommon question paper has been set, so the examinees must be allowed to copy in the examination halls. This sounds unbelievable but that is exactly what happened on Saturday in the English second paper examination of the Higher Secondary Certificate (H.S.C.) throughout the country. More than 5,000 examinees were expelled from halls for adopting unfair means. If that is not enough to illustrate the degeneration that has eaten into the very vital of our education system, then look at the voluntary participation of outsiders in helping the students in their random copying business in the examination halls. Unless the well-wishers of the examinees are thoroughly convinced that the examinees deserve to go on copying at the examination centres and they have a cause to fight for, how can they attack in a mob teachers, invigilators, magistrates and law enforcers?

The only silver-lining is that invigilators and others in charge of holding the examinations took a tough stand and tried to do their duty at the risk of physical harm. Well, not everywhere they could demonstrate the toughness needed on the occasion but at some places their performance was really exemplary. We profusely thank those sentinels of our educational norms and standard. Having said this, we hasten to add that the symptom is very dangerous. Since when has society started endorsing copying as a right for the students! We still believe that the majority of our population do not accept copying as a creditable way of passing examinations, but when reports of widespread violence in support of the demand for copying pour into newspaper offices, we become greatly concerned and highly alarmed. What if the majority endorse the idea!

We would pray for sparing the country from such an eventuality. But mere prayers won't do. We must try to find where things have gone wrong. It must be within the education system. Students so far have grown in the confidence that they would have a strait-jacket passing formula, thanks to the objective type questions and question bank. Now the system is changing but not the habit nor the way of imparting lessons. Underpaid, unqualified teachers cannot do the job. There are limited number of good teachers and they cannot contribute meaningfully in the sea of ignorance. The worst affected are the good students and teachers in such a chaotic situation. So we must try to improve the academic standard in schools and colleges first to get rid of such aberrations, at examination halls.