



Editorial

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Unfair means at exams

TWO student leaders in a joint statement have called upon the students, teachers and the administrative personnel of educational institutions to come forward unitedly for ending malpractices at examinations. Their statement, given a few days before the commencement of SSC examination, alleged that the authorities of some institutions, officials connected with education and a part of the administration are responsible for giving institutional shape to the adoption of unfair means at examination. The student leaders further alleged that at some places students are being made to pay donations for the facility of copying. They called this a plot to destroy the educational system of the country.

Without vouching for the truth of the entire range of their allegations it can be said that malpractice at examinations is becoming a deeply entrenched evil. In some centres in remote areas particularly, malpractice is rampant and "copy supply" goes on unchecked. The action against such malpractices, so far, has been haphazard and mild. And the evil is burgeoning to dangerous proportions.

More and more groups are growing a stake in this evil.

It is clear that living with this evil is proving costly. The remedy no longer lies in reforming the students and it has developed ramifications which can seriously damage the credibility of the education system. Some belated steps taken by the authorities last year included the stoppage of grants to schools with a particularly bad record in this regard. While such actions were appreciated these were possibly not pursued with the required vigour. In some cases the conduct of guardians is equally deplorable. Such rampant malpractice also reveals the overall weakness of the administration. The tone of the administration must also be improved to ensure respect for the law.

That awareness has been created among certain concerned quarters is a healthy sign. Guardians and community leaders should also try to find a way to banish this evil from the precincts of seats of learning.

Some quarters see remedy of the current malpractices in change of the system of examination. A change in the system of examination may be necessary but this, we think, should not be advanced as remedy for adoption of unfair means. The adoption of unfair means is an evil, pure and simple, and this should be ended forthwith and whether the system of

examination is appropriate or not and requires change or not is a completely different question. Confounding the two issues will amount to playing down the gravity of the malpractices.

The merits of a wholesale changeover to the quiz or objective type of question setting are not above controversy. The quiz system may discourage learning by rote, how can it discourage copying? Mass copying and adoption of unfair means are a problem of administration and ethics and should be seen as such. The problem can be ended only with the cooperation of all these concerned sectors.

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