

## A University For Woman ?

The proposal voiced recently that Eden College at Dhaka should be upgraded to the status of a university or a university college with facilities for post-graduate education has a great deal to be said for it. If we maintain separate colleges and schools for women, as we have to in a tradition-bound society, there is no reason why we should deny them further educational facilities, in an exclusive environment, beyond the under-graduate stage.

Now that a number of male dominated institutions, in the capital and elsewhere, have been granted university college status with permission to receive students for post-graduate degrees, Eden College's case has grown the stronger. The question of equal rights for women apart, there is a growing feeling, even in quarters, which theoretically want all boys and girls schools to be integrated, that insecurity on campuses exposes women to extra hazards. Many parents, fearing that their daughters might get involved in factional fighting between student groups would rather keep them at home than send them to places which have the reputations of being unsafe. This, we are informed has begun to operate as a positive hindrance to the spread of higher education among women.

A separate new university for women may not at the moment be a practicable idea. It may be difficult to find enough qualified women to staff an exclusive university unless, we withdraw most women from women's colleges. Nor need Eden College be immediately burdened with the responsibility of conducting separate examinations and awarding its own degrees. Initially, the problem would be eased by giving it the same powers and privileges as Jagannath University College for instance.

To be realistic, such a university college may, to start with, call upon the help of Dhaka University professors in certain subjects. That would not prove difficult. Nor need we oppose the appointment of male staff in limited proportions and numbers. What matters most is that female students should be enabled to continue their academic pursuits at the post-graduate level in an atmosphere free from the fears that violent student politics generates.

The Home Economic College which is an exclusive women's institute has been a university college for several years now. Administratively at least it has been functioning without a hitch. All that is expected is that the same rights should be extended to Eden College which is situated in the same neighbourhood.

We are inclined to think that the upgrading of Eden College to university college status is a matter of greater urgency than the establishment of more regional universities in the immediate future. The College has all the physical facilities for expansion; it could without difficulty handle a large intake of students; and the funds it would need for extra classes, staff, library and laboratory facilities would not amount to astronomical figures. We also believe that, to begin with, it might be wise to limit admissions to subjects in the humanities, and then move step by step towards the sciences.