



Academic Standards

Sir,

Recently I was an invigilator during the admission tests for the Honours courses at the University of Dhaka.

In one question, the students were required to write the full names of acronyms such as I.M.F. (International Monetary Fund) and I.C.B.M. (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile). For the former, one student wrote "Inland Military Force", and for the latter another student wrote "International College of Bachelors and Masters".

In the General English section, the students were instructed to "write out a brief imaginary conversation with a friend who is also taking this admission test about your chances of being admitted to the Departments of your first or second preference".

Many students did not understand this question and many more believed they were required to write a letter thus lowering their chances of admission automatically and ironically.

Another question said "Give your opinion of life in Bangladesh in three short paragraphs".

One wrote:

"Life of B.D. is not so good. Because we are poor unilliterate and population growth. The people of B.D. is very miserable. We need population control. Population. Obviously a semi-literate student!"

Another question instructed "Write briefly on two things you dislike most". One candidate wrote: "I dislike many things. Such as drinking, smoking, gossiping, politics, etc. etc. Drinking and smoking writing there are follows—Drinking is not good for health. It may grow many diseases. Such as cancer, peptic

Alcohol, etc. Its diseases may down full life. Smoking is not so good for health. So we avoid or dislike this things. We should understand this things.

One wonders how such inarticulate and ignorant students do so well in the S.S.C. and H.S.C. exams as to be eligible to sit for the Honours admission test at the university of Dhaka. This is a demonstration of the overall drastic decline in academic standards.

It is no wonder, on the other hand, that our academic certificates are not formally recognised outside the frontiers of this sub-continent. To the extent that the master of Dhaka University, after obtaining one master's degree here, then goes abroad to secure yet another master's degree! Still the standards of their students do not improve.

The above abysmal academic samples also prove that the current demand by a group of students for the further expansion of seats at Dhaka University, which under present circumstances is only feasible through the intake of sub-standard students, is both irresponsible and illegitimate.

M.A. Zafar Shah, University of Dhaka.