



Educational Environment in Colleges and Universities of The State of West Bengal: An Ethical Issue

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ABSTRACT

The educational environment in west Bengal is in jeopardy. Everyday unethical activities in the field of education is becoming the headlines in the newspapers of the state either the vice chancellor of the universities or the principal of the colleges are gheraoed or manhandled by the antisocial in the name of students. The students are involved in chaotic and intolerable activities. In most of the cases the political parties are involved, directly or indirectly. They want to keep control upon the colleges. Once upon a time education was a pride of the state. Lack of ethics in politics of the state as well as students and teaching fraternity is responsible for this chaotic situation. Students are the easy prey to the political leaders.

KEYWORDS

education, unrest, ethics, political parties.

INTRODUCTION

The campus violence or ragging or any other form of violence in educational institutions, have raised a big question as to the ethos in educational institutions in the country. The violence in FTIL, Pune (12th June, 2015), Magadh University (12th April 2015), Lucknow University (25th November, 2015) and in Jadavpur University (3rd September, 2014) across the country, the role of "ethics in education" has been seriously felt. According to the 15th official census, 2011 the overall literacy rate in our country is 74.04%, with Kerala at the top of the list (94.00%) and West Bengal is not even within the first 10 states of the country.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Objectives of the study are

- To understand the present situation of educational environment in West Bengal.
- To compare the educational environment of West Bengal with other states of India.
- To study the ethical issues in educational institutions in West Bengal.

METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary data have been used. A questionnaire was also made to collect some primary data.

EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN WEST BENGAL

According to the 2011 census report, West Bengal ranked 13th (Literacy rate 77.08%) in terms of literacy rate in India (national average 74.04%) and according to the same report, there has been a slight improvement of 8.44% from 2001 to 2011 (68.64% in 2001 to 77.08% in 2011). Unfortunately, recently the violence in various colleges across the state has raised question as how far West Bengal has peaceful educational environment. According to the report published by the University Grants Commission (UGC), West Bengal ranks 2nd in terms of number of ragging cases. The first position in this regard is occupied by U.P. (573 cases), followed by West Bengal (381 cases) and M.P. (317 cases) (The Times of India, 4th August 2015). Also, according to the Education Development Index report of NUEPA (National University of Education Planning and Administration) 2012-13, West Bengal ranked among the lower five states with a ranking of 0.527. Presidency University is lacking research infrastructure and proper educational ambience. Many faculties are leaving the institution, while others are reluctant to take up the job (Anandabazar Patrika, 13th May 2016). This has been a common picture in many educational institutions of the state while the condition of Pres-

idency University is a mere instance. Jadavpur University is, at present, a centre of political agitations and having no proper educational environment there (12th May 2016, Times of India). Vandalism by disqualified students in various educational institutions of the state has posed a major threat in the recent educational environment of the state (14th May 2016, Times of India).

TABLE 1: VACANCIES OF TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING STAFF IN VARIOUS COLLEGES IN THE STATE OF WEST BENGAL

NAME OF UNIVERSITIES	POSTS	RECOMMENDED	ACTUALLY FILLED
CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY	TEACHING	891	525
	NON-TEACHING	3293	2061
PRESIDENCY UNIVERSITY	TEACHING	295	145
	NON-TEACHING	101	PERMANENT-17, TEMPORARY-84
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY	TEACHING	895	624
	NON-TEACHING	1511	1313
RABINDRA BHARATI UNIVERSITY	TEACHING	221	184
	NON-TEACHING	513	419
BARASAT STATE UNIVERSITY	TEACHING	192	80
	NON-TEACHING	35	TEMPORARY-65

SOURCE: - Compiled from Anandabazar Patrika dated 6th June 2016.

As per the website of West Bengal College Service Commission, 142 government aided general degree colleges do not have principals and only 73 eligible candidates applied for the post. The faculties are reluctant to assume the posts due to disturbances in colleges. It is noteworthy that, only 27 applications were received by the Public Service Commission for the said post in their last two attempts (Times of India, 30th June 2016). According to the same source, 9 out of 20 universities in West Bengal (Calcutta University, Kalyani University, WB State University, Diamond Harbour Women University, Raigunj

University, Sanskrit college and University and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Technology) does not have a permanent Vice Chancellor.

TABLE 2: STATE-WISE VIOLENCES IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

SOME RECENT INCIDENTS					
NAME OF THE INSTITUTIONS	STATE	SET ON FIRE AND OTHER VIOLENCE, MISC.	RAGGING	AS-SAULT TO TEACHERS AND COLLEGE STAFFS	SOURCE
MAGADH UNIVERSITY	BIHAR	1			TOI, PATNA, 2ND FEB 2016
GOVERNMENT LAW COLLEGE	KERALA		1		TOI, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 4TH DEC 2015
AIIMS, BHOPAL	MADHYA PRADESH	1			TOI, BHOPAL, 28TH MAY 2015
SREE SANKARACHARYA UNIVERSITY OF SANSKRIT	KERALA	1			TOI, KOCHI, 8TH OCT 2015
COMMERCE DEPARTMENT OF LUCKNOW UNIVERSITY	UTTAR PRADESH	1			TOI, LUCKNOW, 25TH NOV, 2015
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY	WEST BENGAL	1			TOI, KOLKATA, 17TH SEPT, 2014
RAIGANJ UNIVERSITY	WEST BENGAL	1			THE TELEGRAPH, CALCUTTA, 4TH SEPT, 2015
RAMA DEVI WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY	ODISHA	1			THE TELEGRAPH, CALCUTTA, 7TH OCT, 2015
EKAMRA COLLEGE	ODISHA	1			THE TELEGRAPH, CALCUTTA, 2ND OCT, 2013
FTII	MUMBAI	1			THE TELEGRAPH, CALCUTTA, 8TH JAN, 2016
MUZZAFARPUR INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	BIHAR		1		THE TELEGRAPH, 17TH SEPT, 2013
DIBRUGARH UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY	ASSAM		1		THE TELEGRAPH, 8TH AUGUST, 2015
BENGAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	WEST BENGAL		1		TOI, 26TH AUG, 2013
RAIGANJ COLLEGE	WEST BENGAL			1	THE HINDU, 6TH JAN, 2012
HARI MOHAN GHOSH COLLEGE	WEST BENGAL	1			THE ECONOMIC TIMES, 12TH FEB, 2013
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY	UTTAR PRADESH	1			THE INDIAN EXPRESS, 11TH MAY 2012

ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY	UTTAR PRADESH	1			THE INDIAN EXPRESS, 18TH MAY 2011
PN DAS COLLEGE, PALTA	WEST BENGAL	1			THE INDIAN EXPRESS, 16TH JANUARY 2010
DHENKANAL COLLEGE	ODISHA	1			THE INDIAN EXPRESS, 6TH FEBRUARY 2016
PRESIDENCY COLLEGE	CHENNAI	1			THE HINDU, CHENNAI, 6TH JUNE 2013
PRESIDENCY COLLEGE	WEST BENGAL	1			THE INDIAN EXPRESS, KOLKATA, 23RD AUGUST 2015
INFANT JESUS COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, TUTICORIN	TAMIL NADU			1	TOI, MADURAI, 11TH OCT 2013
ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE	NEW DELHI			1	BUSINESS STANDARD, NEW DELHI, 6TH JULY 2015
PANDIT NEKI RAM SHARMA GOVERNMENT COLLEGE, ROHTAK	HARYANA	1			INDIAN EXPRESS, CHANDIGARH, 6TH OCT 2015
ANDUL COLLEGE, HOWRAH	WEST BENGAL	1			THE INDIAN EXPRESS, 19TH DECEMBER 2010
DELHI UNIVERSITY	DELHI	1			THE HINDU, DELHI, 14TH JUNE 2014
ALLAHABAD UNIVERSITY	UTTAR PRADESH	1			INDIA TODAY, ALLAHABAD, 27TH APRIL 2012
CHENNAI CHRISTIAN COLLEGE	KERALA	1			THE INDIAN EXPRESS, KERALA, 18TH JULY 2012
JAWAHAR LAL UNIVERSITY	NEW DELHI			1	THE INDIAN EXPRESS, NEW DELHI, 12TH AUG 2013

SOURCE: - Compiled from various newspaper Reports

From the above table it is observed that the educational environment in West Bengal is at stake. Primary data collected through questionnaires reveal that according to 60% (out of 200 respondents) of students, lessons taught in the class rooms are not adequate and 53.33% have opined that they are forced to take private tuitions. The same study indicates that 30% of them are against the requirement of student's union at all. According to 53.33%, election of students' union is not done in a fair manner. Also, 13.33% of the respondents informed that they paid extra admission fees as gratitude to the student union leaders at the time of their admissions in the colleges.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL

The proposal of introducing a uniform code of conduct for teachers, staffs, students suggested by the Governor in 2015 (The Telegraph, Calcutta, 18th Sept), has received a green signal from the government of West Bengal. In order to eradi-

cate various ill-effects from the educational environment, the state government has decided to enforce a list of code of conduct to be followed within the colleges and university premises [Anandabazar Patrika, 18th July, 2016]. Circulars containing directions to be followed for enforcing the code of conduct will soon reach the colleges and universities (Anandabazar Patrika, 19th July 2016). Low attendance of teaching staffs and the quality of education are another problem. This is a common problem in most of the colleges situated in rural areas. In order to stop these irregularities, the state government has proposed to introduce biometric attendance in all the colleges. Also, the state government is likely to take control of the transfer of the teachers (Anandabazar Patrika, 27th June 2016). The state government has welcomed the decision of UGC to increase teaching hours to improve the quality of education. Accordingly, the Assistant Professors have to take 24 hours classes a week from 16 hours previously; while the Associate Professors have to take 22 hours classes from 14 hours previously (Anandabazar Patrika, 5th June 2016). The state government has taken initiative to change the syllabus of students of the state to make their scheme of "Four E" (Expansion, Equity, Excellence, Employability) a grand success. The state government has taken into consideration the issue of formulating a uniform syllabus across the length and breadth of the state colleges and universities so as to reach quality education to all (Anandabazar Patrika, 30th July, 2016). The state government has eliminated help desks of the student unions and introduced online admission in the colleges. The state government has planned to issue digital mark sheets in order to stop forgeries (Times of India, 18th July, 2016). The state government has announced free Wi-Fi services to the colleges for the benefit of the students (17th June 2016, Anandabazar Patrika).

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the UGC guideline if the teachers and students both remain in colleges or universities for long hours, it may reduce the dependency of the students on the private tuitions. Smart-classrooms have been started in many colleges of the state but, this facility is available only in a few colleges. In order to minimize the class drop-outs, a compact syllabus is required to be scheduled with time adjusted factor and improvement in the teaching quality as well as standard is to be ensured. In this regard, the infrastructural facilities like proper sanitary systems, water facilities, better seats, up gradation of libraries etc. as recommended by the respondents of the study should be ensured. The governmental aids allotted for developmental purposes should be properly utilized. The ethical part of education plays a vital role; otherwise, knowledge loses its value. In 1948, Radhakrishnan Commission was appointed for the purpose of emphasizing on inculcation of ethical values among the students of colleges and universities of India. Further, The Kothari Commission appointed in 1965 declared that knowledge with a lack of essential values may be dangerous. The code of ethics framed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) is expected to ensure moral upliftment in higher education of India (The Times of India, 5th July 2010). The code of ethics prescribed by the UGC is required to be strictly followed by every educational institution in the state.

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