

ties and manage to get their degrees in the normal period of time? Why were universities then never this violent? Were the APMSO, the IJT, or even the Punjabi or Pukhtun Students' federations always there in Pakistan and were there activities always this violent? And if they became violent what was the cause? Were their student members inherently violent or were they manipulated by their parent political parties or worse still by minions of the governments in power or of local politicians?

Does a ban on student unions help the situation or make it worse? It's the same as saying that there should be segregation between the sexes and then complaining endlessly when boys misbehave with girls (or 'eve-teasing' as crime reporters call it). Clearly, if there wasn't segregation, both sexes would become more familiar with each other and this familiarity would bring mutual respect and understanding or at least the frustrations of both sexes would come out in a more positive or constructive fashion.

The only solution to preventing these kinds of incidents from recurring is to lift the ban on student unions. It is ridiculous to expect people in their early 20s not to talk about politics or issues that affect them and the society they live in. In any case, lifting the ban on unions might help dilute, over a period of time, the hold that organizations like the IJT and the APMSO have over our campuses. It is time this legacy of the martial law period was erased. ■