

Students hailing from different social classes and exposed to different mediums of instruction are uncomfortable with each other

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society

Society & Social Problem

Naem Butt fears that he might face an embarrassing situation during his MBA classes as he thinks it is

pretty difficult for him to compete with class fellows groomed in elite English medium schools. A brilliant student who notched up top positions in all examinations right from primary to graduation level, is now rated as a mediocre student of the class. He is a classic example of the students who fall victim to class clash at educational institutions at higher level.

Such students suffer psychologically and end up holding third-division degrees as their educational career comes to a close. Their nightmare does not stop here but continues to haunt them in practical life. Their foray into professional life proves a bitter experience as third-division degree compels them to accept a low-profile job.

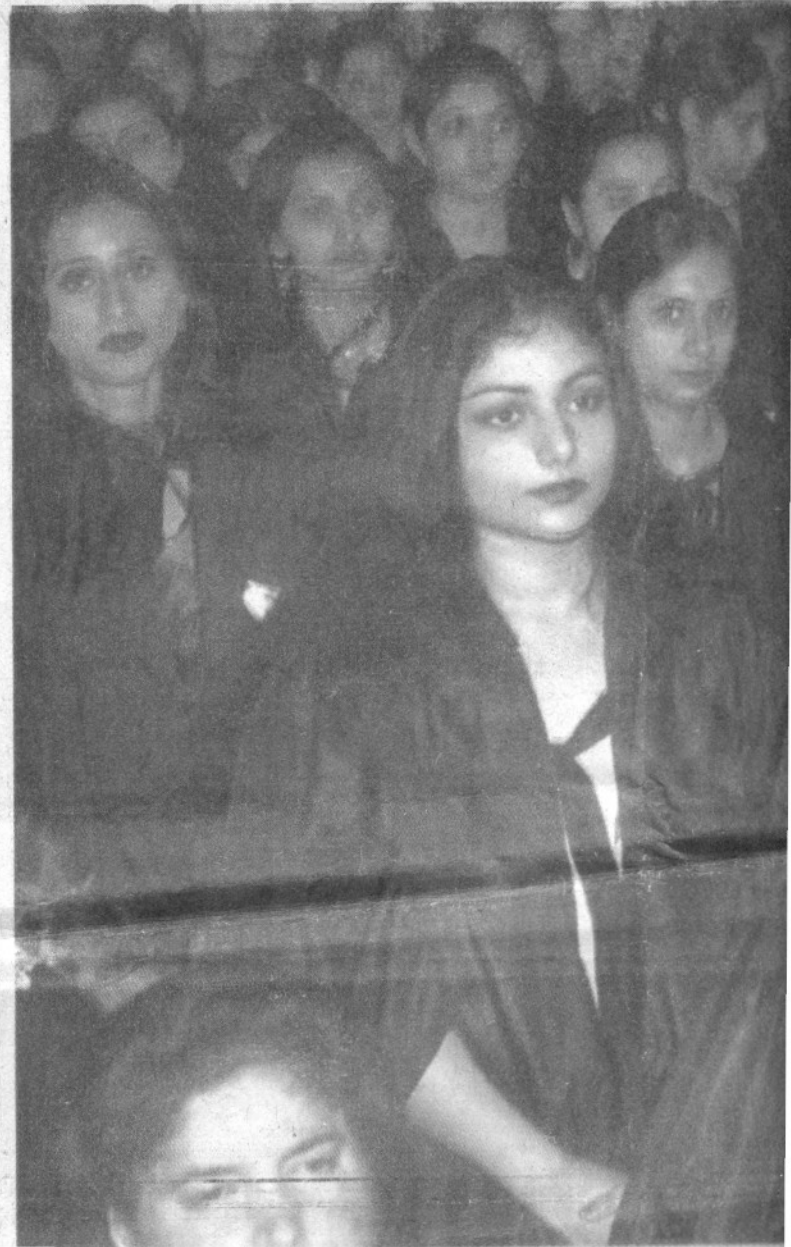
Students hailing from different social classes and exposed to different medium of instructions cultivate different propensities and acquire knowledge by employing different methods. When these two categories interact at higher or Master's level, it leads to class clash. Students hailing from English medium schools have totally contrasting outlook on

life from those coming from Urdu medium background. Further, the students who

are brought up in religious seminaries find themselves in a disadvantageous position at advance levels.

"Sometimes I really face difficulty during my lecture to explain things to Urdu-medium students as they have only learnt by heart scientific for-

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... formulae and laws without knowing and understanding the reason and logic whereas English medium schools strictly monitor effective lesson plans and easy way of teaching, enabling students to understand things and get good grades," says Tariq Mahmood, a teacher at Institute of Management and Technology.

While charm of English medium schools and their method of teaching attracts many Urdu medium students to them, they abhor the way they are treated by students studying in English medium schools since beginning. Ahmad Saleem, a student of doctorate in Mathematics at LUMS, who has Urdu medium background, says: "I face problems interact-

Barely getting along well!

ing with my class fellows. To some extent Cambridge school system is better than the indigenous ones but there is something that alienates me from my new class fellows. I think we, the Urdu medium students are victims of rote learning and that's why our knowledge remains deficient.

"We at Urdu medium schools remain confined to text books whereas a Cambridge student has to study different books to prepare for exams. This class clash does not remain only in educational field but also makes a student aggressive in his behaviour towards other students."

"We have students from dif-

ferent institutions including religious seminaries. Sometimes we witness tiff and harsh arguments on moral and religious issues among the students," says Prof Munir Ahmad, a law teacher at Pakistan Law College.

A student of LLB at Pakistan Law College Muhammad Sabir says, "Some of my class fellows look down upon me and underestimate my way of education. I feel isolated and tense while studying with them as we have different ways of thinking."

This friction and tension between the students from Urdu and English medium schools is sometimes conspicuous on college functions.

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"English medium students are more aware of Western festivals or days such as St Valentine's Day and celebrate such occasions in their own way. They take pleasure in rubbing cake on each other's faces, but know little about local festivals," says Wasif Adnan, a student of ICMA (Institute of Cost and Management Accounting).

However, some experts believe that the teaching methods adopted by certain teachers at higher level of education also promote this class consciousness.

"The government has improved curricula of different classes and the examination

system by increasing objective type questions to test the knowledge of a student, not her/his memory. We can check this clash by improving our teaching faculties in Urdu medium schools," says M Kaleem, Principal Dyal Singh College. He says at present Montessori trained teachers enjoy better salary ceiling than B.Ed and M.Ed teachers in schools.

But there are some experts who think this class clash in higher education has resulted from our social behaviour and all institutions are doing well in their respective fields.

Different ways and mediums of instruction prevail the world

over. Western institutions are churning out outstanding students. But we having both Cambridge and indigenous education system have produced a few professionals who won accolades from other societies and we can count our scientists on finger tips, says Kashif Jibrán, a teacher of mathematics at Lahore Grammar School. "Class clash takes a heavy toll on students' ability and educational process."

Rabia, a student of Masters in Psychology at Government College University, Lahore, says, "Although competition among students from different backgrounds in terms of medi-

um of instruction is a healthy practice, it should not lead to contempt for each other. There is a class divide in our university as well but this is not due to money or class, it is of an intellectual kind. I am of the opinion that this class difference cannot be bridged."

On the other hand some college students are of the view that lack of direction in our general education system is the root cause of this divide in higher classes.

The purpose of education should be to impart knowledge for the prosperity and uplift of society, and this cannot be achieved by merely handing over degrees to students.