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Making a drug-free society

We need to make Bangladesh a drug-free society. We need to strengthen our law and order situation, remove the weaknesses of our enforcement mechanism and ensure the efficiency of personnel involved in operations of border security, customs, road check-posts and coastal guard, general and police administration, narcotics control etc., writes **M Azizur Rahman**

ILLICIT drugs contain chemical substances that alter the psychological functions. If the drug can influence the human psychology, it is certain to affect the family, and impact the social behaviour, the most of which are not acceptable to the society at large.

A growing number of people in the country have now got used to taking drugs as stimulants. The drug-abuse problem is acute among the teenagers, high school-goers and college students, elite class and the people living in the slum areas. This problem is more so for the English-medium school-students. Drug-addicted people cannot behave normally. They cannot work productively. They behave almost like an animal. Sometime, they cannot make a difference between what is good or what is bad.

Once a drug addicted youth is married to some girl, their family life gets broken, shortly after the marriage. Addicts cannot think rationally. They cannot study. We do not expect any productive work from them. The contribution of drug addicts to themselves, their family and society and their economy is zero, if not negative. For exam-

ple, if most people become drug addicted, then the society of human beings may turn itself out to be a society of animals.

Addiction to drug has been a problem world-wide. This has become so recently in Bangladesh. A growing number of people in this country are getting addicted to drugs. This must be stopped. We have to find out the way through which the people get the access to drugs. What are the problems for which the people tend to become addicted to drugs? The problems can be unemployment, poverty, financial insolvency, family disturbances, failure-in-love, over-affluence or elitist approach and any other related one. The drug-addiction problem is mostly found among the wards or members of the solvent or elite families, and also of those families living in the slum areas.

One major area of utmost concern today in Bangladesh is how to tackle the drug addiction problem. Illicit drugs are not manufactured at home in Bangladesh. They are illegally imported or smuggled into Bangladesh. Some profit-hungry businessmen, individu-

als, smugglers etc., are involved in drug business. Our departments of narcotics, general and police administration, border security personnel, customs' officials etc., have to be made stronger and be more sincere to stop the smuggling of drugs.

One possible action here can be of giving harsh punishment to those involved in this trade. An example can be taken from a member of South East Asian countries including those of Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. Our government officials do need to visit Singapore to learn how to make endeavours for a drug-free society.

It is the prime responsibility of parents and teachers to discourage the drug-addicted children and others and isolate them from others. The normal children will see how the addicted ones are hated or ignored by the society, families, schools and institutions, and at work-places. Once we see the drug addicts face de facto social isolation, others will not be tempted to become addicted to drugs.

Drug addiction has been causing an irreparable loss to the society. It would, however, be inhuman if capital punish-

ment under a restructured legal measure is proposed for the drug-addicted young people, including the children. It is our responsibility as human beings to provide facilities for proper treatment of the drug-addicts at some good rehabilitation centres. Such arrangements, if properly ensured for the addicted people, can help bring them back, in most cases, to their normal life.

We need to make Bangladesh a drug-free society. Following the example of drug-free Singapore, we need to strengthen our law and order situation, remove the weaknesses of our enforcement mechanism and ensure the efficiency of personnel involved in border security customs, road check-posts and coastal guard, general and police administration, narcotics control etc. In addition, our whole value system, centering around the family and social life as well as in our religious pursuits, have to be properly nourished and nurtured.

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