

Strive to become society's models, not menace

NOWADAYS, there are youngsters in the country involved in cyber crime, gangsterism, vandalism, bullying, drugs and other crimes.

The nation is still in shock over the Home Ministry's statistics, which showed an increase in juvenile delinquency cases.

Many measures have been taken to overcome the problem. We should consider encouraging university students to get involved in society, particularly the youth in schools.

Developing role models among university students can result in positive feedback from the young in schools. A role model is a person whose behaviour is exemplary and can be emulated by others, especially the young.

The youth often look up to role models, whether they are encouraged to do so or not. It is natural. Role models help youngsters make sense of the world.

Role models might be their parents, teachers, famous figures or even television personalities.

Parents will always be a child's first and most instinctive role models. Children will look to them for guidance, from the time they are able to mimic sounds and actions.

As they grow older, youngsters shift their attention and look to others.

Teachers are often the next role models, as they are among the first adult authority figures children deal with dai-

ly. As the child grows older, he or she will start looking to famous personalities or celebrities.

If you could, for a second, think back to when someone had made an impact on your life. Recall how this person changed your character, moulded your personality or influenced your decisions.

Whether you had encountered such a person as a child, during high school or after university, when you had started your own family, he or she had opened up paths in your life that you may not have noticed.

Now, as you reflect upon the wonderful memories of different role models throughout your life, you probably would not consider university students. They are often overlooked or deemed to not make proper role models.

Actually, more university students should become role models to help shape the world into a more secure, friendly and inspiring place.

Sometimes, young adults in universities have it in their minds that it is their time to balance recklessness and responsibility in their own ways. They need to make the transition from being self-focused to being role models in society because the time when "someone else will take care of it" is over.

This is when Big Brothers and Big Sisters programmes come into play. The plan is for young adults from univer-

sities to mentor youngsters.

In the United States, such programmes have been conducted for a long time and have helped change children's perspectives, giving them the opportunity to achieve their potential.

It started in 1904, when a New York City court clerk, Ernest Coulter, saw an increasing number of boys coming through courtrooms. He recognised that caring adults could help the boys stay out of trouble and, thus, set out to find volunteers. That marked the beginning of the Big Brothers movement.

Around the same time, members of another group, Ladies of Charity, were befriending girls who had come through the New York Children's Court. The group later became Catholic Big Sisters. Both groups continued to work independently until 1977, when they joined forces to become Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

The non-profit organisation currently operates in all states in the US and 12 countries around the world.

We must motivate our youth and teach them responsibility and goal-setting.

Things have to change — with our schools, with the older generation being good role models, with our best university students being mentors and with the youth themselves.

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