

Shadow Education: Private Supplementary Tutoring Among the Higher Secondary Education in Private Institutions in Agartala

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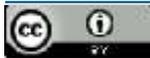
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ABSTRACT

This study delves in the private tutorial system, commonly known as “shadow education,” since it resembles the mainstream system and is growing at an alarming rate in Tripura. Shadow education appears to have become a permanent presence in certain regions with high-quality systems. Two other variables are the increased competitiveness among pupils to outperform one another and high parental expectations. The rise of shadow education is so rapid that every student has more than one supplemental tutoring or coaching service, which aims to aid kids outside of school, primarily to prepare for exams. This study aims to determine the elements that influence the education system in higher Secondary Schools

INTRODUCTION

The private tutorial system, also termed “shadow education” as it mimics the mainstream system, is increasing at an alarming rate in Tripura. First, the term ‘shadow’ education system used by Prof. Mark Bray (1999, p. 17) was about private supplementary tutoring exists only because mainstream education exists. Shadow education is widely practiced in Tripura, which describes the provision of supplementary education by tutoring students in the form of a home tutor, group, or the requirement given by the school to help the students in the form of coaching or remedial class. It is typically to assist in succeeding in their board examination results. Private tuition mainly concerns tutoring in academic subjects outside standard school hours. Stevenson and Baker (1992, p. 1639) define shadow education as “a set of educational activities that occur outside formal schooling and are designed to enhance the student’s formal school career.” Bray and Kwok (2003, p. 612) define private tutoring as “tutoring in academic subjects which is provided by the tutors for financial gain and which is additional to the provision by mainstream schooling.”

On January 31, 2010, the Tripura government urged the school teacher to stop private tuition and restore faith in the institutional education system. Former Education Minister of Tripura Mr. Tapan Chakraborty stated, “The state government is against private tuition and has taken a number of steps over the past few years to stop the practice. We need to know why students are still so keen on taking personalized help. Are they really benefited by private tuition?”

The state government has yet to implement it because it believes instructors will see the negative impacts of private tuition. Meanwhile, the teaching community criticized the government, claiming that the government’s recruitment policies had forced instructors to seek private instruction.

Tripura government’s previous attempts to ban private tuition had failed in the face of protests by guardians and students because this is totally against the interests of students and their guardians. Moreover, private tuition, which certainly exists at the basic primary level, also affects the higher level of study and even to the extent of college and university level eventually, contributing to the adverse loss of confidence and self-initiation of a student. However, private tuition is also beneficial for slow learners aiming to study science, especially Mathematics subjects. So, we cannot consider it fully a lousy policy.

However, the main aim of this article is to impart and realize some empirical shreds of evidence on how shadow education is affecting the mainstream educational system. How could one visualize the trends of shadow education in Tripura currently? It is becoming a severe threat to the students, parents, teachers, authorities, and society. Shadow Education or tuition affects the ability of a student to excel in life and affects the educational system as a whole widely. This is because most students who attend tuition have lost interest in attending schools, colleges, or universities. After all, they receive ready-made notes and importance in the tuitions. This causes a decline in student participation and attendance at the school, which eventually helps undermine institutional policy and discipline.

Objectives of the study

One of the most significant aspects of private tutoring is the pedagogical process. To understand, we need to look into the following objectives.

- To study the reason why students are dependent on private tuition.
- To find out the remedies or solutions to do away from shadow education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 gave rise to an eventuality that teachers of all schools could be prohibited from giving private tutorials. In section 28, 'Prohibition of private tuition by teachers,' the Act prohibits teachers in schools from teaching students through private tutorials, as private tuition is seen as a thriving business across the country. Furthermore, section 3(2) says 'no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing the elementary education.'

METHODOLOGY

I utilized a qualitative interpretive exploration method (Creswell, 2012, p. 238) to identify secondary level teachers' and students' perceptions about shadow education. Purposive sampling was used to determine their perceptions of the effects of shadow education on mainstream schooling. Participants in the study are private teachers and secondary school students from Agartala, Tripura. Some were new to private tutoring, while others had been doing it for a long time (i.e., 10-15 years). Here, private tuition is the highest point towards success in education, and the maximum number of students depends on private tuition.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reasons for Attending Private Tuition

In Tripura, students from different parts of the district come to Agartala, also called the state's heart, to avail themselves of the best education, especially in private institutions spending lots of money to get the best education. The students who come to study are from different family backgrounds, some are from low-income families, and some are from wealthy families. However, the tuition policy has forced even the poor students to effort it as this system became a 'Cultural Dimension' (Subedi, 2018, p. 32). The students with low-income family backgrounds have cost them more. Every student in the school feels threatened because, without private tuition, they think they might not score better than their friends in the board exam. In short, we can say that the education policy hinders and badly affects a student's ability to be independent and reliable and makes them feel inferior to the knowledge they got about their subjects.

On the other hand, some students are referred to as the "weaker section" or "slow learners," requiring extra time to study and be instructed. Such students need special attention and care to make them understand their subjects better. So, this student needs private tuition. Moreover, some students who develop a culture at a primary level have lost interest in sitting and studying at home with their parents, which eventually forces the parents to take the help of private

tuition to make their children excel in their studies. And this habit of taking an education or taking help from the school teacher, especially from the class teacher, became a habit even at their higher level of studies. Thus, it becomes a wonder whether "Private tutoring is not a good or bad thing in itself. A great deal depends on how it is provided and under which circumstances" (Hallak & Poisson, 2007). Therefore, various policy recommendations have been developed to encourage positive dimensions and discourage negative ones from ensuring that "private tutoring indeed complements mainstream schooling and does not become its substitute" (Hallak & Poisson, 2005).

Private tutoring, referred to by Prof. Mark Bray (1999, p. 18) as a "mechanism through which pupils extend their learning and gain additional human capital, which benefits not only themselves but also the wider societies of which they are part. Tutoring may also minimize the workload of regular teachers by assisting students in understanding the materials that have been or will be delivered during the regular school day." For example, if children study in private tuition before the regular school courses begin, they may perform better in the classroom, causing the school teacher to perform better.

Shadows can, of course, be beneficial. The child is bound to perform better than an ordinary task by advancement in studies. Therefore, it is clearly stated that just as the shadow cast by a sun-dial can tell the observer about the passage of time, the shadow of an education system can mean the observer about change in societies (Bray, 2009).

The guardian or parents encourage their children to attend tuition because they fear they will not bring marks in their exams. Many families employ private tutors to help children with schoolwork, thus participating in a 'shadow education system that supplements regular schooling. (Stevenson & Baker, 1992). Though private tuition and coaching is a deliberate choice and action of parents to deal with the needs of students having low achievement to motivate and improve their learning and achievement in their subjects. It is unclear from the numbers themselves, but the figures for private tuition are certainly high among some groups. We also need to look at the gains in pupil attainments across groups and ask to what extent these are due to changes in teaching or school reforms or the provision of tuition at home?

A few other factors have also been considered in relation to private tuition. For example, students' indulging in social evil and not paying attention to education became a worry to the parents and forced them to get help from private tuition (Newson & Newson, 1977).

According to this brief assessment, there are numerous reasons why parents offer individual instruction to their children. For this reason, parents who hire tutors assume that it would improve their children's academic performance and that the money invested will be well spent.

This empirical study on shadow education found that students who have been tutored are believed to perform better than their peers in their final board examination. But the actual reason is that all students can do well and attain good marks even without tuition if they really work hard and if the teacher is teaching well without any partiality. For this reason, the school teacher needs to make a

callous choice not to show any distinction between those who avail and don't avail so that division doesn't create among themselves. Sometimes, some students need their teacher's love (special care) and attention, so they request their subject teacher or teachers to start private tuition. And some teachers believed in-class teaching and made them do lots of assignment tasks to help them improve in their academics.

The private school teachers in Agartala, who practiced private tuition, made the students believe that they could only score better marks in their board exams through private tuition. On the other hand, scoring during their unit/term exam in the school believes in achieving which non have achieved earlier in their previous school. Especially in Tripura, it has become a culture where students have a private tutor as a symbol status (Max Weber). According to the students I have interviewed, the primary reasons for students seeking private instruction are as follows:

1. It is said that students can easily express their difficulties in the subject matter to the private tutors and solve their problems, unlike in the classroom.
2. With the help of private tuition, it is easier to score high marks in the examination.
3. In the private tuition, the tutor became friendlier with the students, and students were encouraged to express their problems which they could not do in the classroom.
4. The private tutor works hard to bring the best in their students who go for tuition. As it would be about their bad reputation if the students don't do well in the exam thus, the students are also compelled to do well in the exam.
5. On the other hand, if a parent is unable to teach or does not have the time to devote to their children, a private tutor for each subject or a subject is being arranged.
6. Sometimes, the students are compelled to go for shadow education due to peer pressure.

So, the cause and foremost reason for taking private tuition is the fear of failing the exam or scoring lesser than their friends in the board exam. Due to the great expectation from their parents in fear of not getting into a reputed college, the students are pressurized to have multiple private tutors either at home or in the private tutor's home or coaching center. This kind of expectation leads to tremendous pressure on the student's mind.

Remedies to Win Away from Shadow Education

However, many students who are not engaged in shadow education are against it and believe that they could do better in their studies even if they don't take shadow education. What all matters are hard work, self-reliance and self-belief, and regular attending subjective classes. Thus the students could do better and succeed on their board examination even without taking shadow education and also can afford good grades.

Teachers and students were found to have focused on the board exam rather than learning. So, the system of shadow education is destroying mainstream schooling by rote learning. It includes tutoring students one-to-one or in small groups and more prominent groups. Parents have to bear the extra financial burden as the class instructor and armature instructor and the provision of mainstream schooling (Bray, 2013; Bray, 2011). I, too, believe that if this matter could be taken care of by the concerned institution, this could be far better.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

So finally, it is found that private tuition is considered the center point of education, especially in Agartala. Even though it is found to harm the student's career, it hinders the talent and ability to excel in the student's capability in studies. It is challenging to eradicate it. It is considered the only way for the students to learn and grow. And as of today, private tuition in Tripura appears to be on the rise and is projected to do so in the foreseeable future. If this continues, are we destroying the younger generation's creativity in understanding the subject by spoon-feeding them? Guardians themselves have stated that they cannot help their children in all the stages of their issues. It is only through private tuition that their children complete home tasks. And some parents are uneducated and unable to teach or help their children in their academic subjects; for such types of parents and their children, there is no other option other than tuition.

In the beginning, it is also analyzed that some children need exceptional help or tuition as they are the weaker section or slow learners or some brilliant students aiming for a specific subject as honour/major in the future. So, from the above statement, it is found that private tuition or shadow education has both negative impacts and positive points in education. It can never be entirely eradicated as it is considered the main channel to a successful education. But, on the other hand, it caused a significant impact on a student's life as it hindered the versatilities of a student to excel.

However, this paper represents some reasons to be sceptical about different perspectives. Education brings or acts as a bridge between the people who want to be educated from unknown to known. Are we encouraging them to do tuition or help those who are needed? Let us not forget as a teacher, and let's work together to build a proper structure for our future generation.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so it is necessary to carry out further research related to Shadow Education: Private Supplementary Tutoring Among the Higher Secondary Education in Private Institutions in Agartalademi to perfect this research and add insight for readers.

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