

Private Schools And Standard Education

So far, any effort expended in the interest of raising the standard of education in the country appears to have ended in failure. The current situation whereby most of the 19.5 million students enrolled in schools and colleges are being inefficiently served has increased the demand for more schools in the private sector.

This was the subject of an editorial published quite sometime ago. It had caused us to comment that, by handing education over to the private sector, the government had found a way out of its present quagmire. As we said at the time that "any private institution which failed to give parents their money's worth will come to grief." Since then, however, we have had numerous causes for eating our words, for privatising education has not necessarily had the result of raising standards nor has it filled much of the void in the system.

However, as the privately owned schools are subjected to no law and anyone, in fact, can open a school, since no licence or other permission is required either from the municipality or the education department, they are, therefore, able to operate without supervision and, surprisingly, without an approved, standardised, syllabus. Therefore, whether or not these mothers are really obtaining their heart's desire for their children is subject to debate especially as many of these schools run with under-qualified staff.

Obviously running a "good" school which can satisfy all the requirements of parents and the state is a service which cannot be replicated easily, or is one which at the least, must be considered a service of merit; and those schools which meet this specification are performing a real service to the country. Yet it is increasingly to be seen that some schools are little more than money making machines concerned only that they do not lose students, but with small concern for maintaining standards of education. By allowing such schools to continue to function the government is doing an injustice to the country and must now step in and fulfil its duty as "guardian of the state" and make certain all schools maintain at least a minimum standard of education. It is incumbent on the government, or its education department, to take full responsibility for overseeing and monitoring all schools, whether or not these are the glamorous ones in the private sector or the ordinary ones in the public one.