

Private Tuition

Something is clearly amiss in the current educational system that depends heavily on private tuition to carry it through. Parents and guardians seem helpless to change anything. This unwarranted dependence on private tutors not only adds to the already heavy financial burden of the parents but also plays havoc with the lives of the children.

This shift in responsibility from school, to parent, to private tutors, is damaging and an injustice to children in their most formative years. Most of the blame for this situation lies at the feet of the schools but parents must also take their share of their blame because their dependence on private tuition is mainly due to their inability to guide their children themselves. Many complain they simply do not have the time to devote to their children and thus are forced to employ private tutors while others simply want to get the children "out of their hair".

But whether the fault of school or parent, what this all comes down to is the fact that our children's education is now being conducted by the private tutor. If the tutor is experienced, this may not be all bad but if not, it could do irreparable harm to our children. Sometimes even the tiniest tots are being sent to private tutors or are taught by some-one coming to the house.

The point is that sending a child to a private tutor after her having put in a full day at school can be counter-productive from the point of view of health and education. Yet this private tutor culture has now become so firmly entrenched it is encouraged by both schools and parents, the former passing on their responsibilities to the parents while the latter pass on their responsibility to the tutor. Rare indeed is the parent today who accepts responsibility for her child's education.

It may be that the schools are not selective in their choice of teachers or their methods of teaching are faulty which is why children need extra coaching. Whatever may be the cause, it is now high time schools and parents put their heads together to find a solution. Parents must unite to take a hand in the education of their children instead of following blindly the dictates of private schools, many of which are more interested in making a profit than in providing a service. Parents should now solicit the help of the government in enforcing a minimum standard of education and a minimum standard of qualifications for teachers so that a dependence on private tutors is minimised, except perhaps for specialised subjects at higher classes. If parents try to remember the most important years of a child's development are the years spent at the mothers' knee, they will see the importance of a continued parental guidance—guidance that, no matter how good, can never be delivered by a private tutor.