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PRIVATE TUITION AND ITS EXPANDING INFLUENCE: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL IN SIVASAGAR DISTRICT OF ASSAM

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Abstract

Private tuition has emerged as a rapidly expanding phenomenon within the education systems of both developing and developed nations. Over the past two decades, its prevalence has increased significantly, permeating diverse socio-economic backgrounds. In many countries, private supplementary tutoring has evolved into a major educational industry with considerable economic, social, and pedagogical implications. This paper examines the growing dependence on private tuition among secondary school students in Sivasagar district of Assam. The study explores the reasons for seeking private tuition, the subjects taught, the nature of tutors, the teaching–learning processes involved, and the different forms of private tutoring practiced in the region.

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Introduction :

Secondary education is one of the most crucial stages of formal education ladder. It has great importance as it prepares the students for higher education and also for the world of work. It can be further divided into two stages i.e., secondary stage which constitutes Classes IX and X and higher secondary which constitutes Classes XI and XII. Internal efficiency in terms of performance of students in public examination at secondary level showed a wide degree of variation among the schools as well as a large number of failures. This obviously demonstrates the inadequacies of formal education system. In India, like most of the developing countries, there exists a system of 'private tuition' parallel to formal system of education to supplement the academic support in the household and to overcome school inadequacies. Though private tutoring is prevalent at all levels of education it is preponderant in secondary education for various reasons i.e., improving performance in public examinations, preparing for entering into higher, technical and professional education etc. (Sujatha & Geetha Rani. 2011).

The period since the turn of the century has seen considerable expansion of what is widely called the shadow education system of private supplementary tutoring. This phenomenon, which has spread globally has historically been most visible in East Asia. Japan has long been known for its *juku*, which operate alongside and supplement the school system for young people of all ages; and the Republic of Korea has similarly long been known for its counterpart *hagwons*. Now the shadow sector is strongly visible throughout Asia as well as in other world regions.

Shadow education systems are expanding at an alarming rate in Asia. Households in certain countries spend staggering portions of their incomes on shadow education. There are various reasons for this;

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poor quality of education in schools is not the only one. In several countries in the region, including some with high-quality school systems, shadow education appears to have become a permanent feature. (Mark Bray and Chad Lykins,2012).

1.1 Meaning of the term Private Tuition

The terminology used to identify private tuition varies in different countries. In some English- speaking societies, people refer to private tuition more often than private tutoring. In Japan, tutoring centers which supplement the school system are known as 'juku'. A parallel phenomenon exists in the United Kingdom, where such institutions are called 'crammers'.

Private tuition or private tutoring means the instruction which is provided to the students outside the classrooms. It has been defined in various ways. Tutoring primarily refers to 'extra lessons after school'. Others describe it as 'learning activities for the clientele of the formal school which take place outside the regular school instruction programme for a fee or as a community service'.

Prof. Mark Bray (1999) in his book "The Shadow Education System: Private Tutoring and Implications for Planners" has used the term 'shadow' education system to describe private supplementary tutoring. The metaphor of a shadow is appropriate in several ways. First, private supplementary tutoring only exists because the mainstream education exists; second, as the size and shape of the mainstream system change, so do the size and shape of supplementary tutoring; third in almost all societies much more public attention focuses on the mainstream than on its shadow; and fourth, the features of the shadow system are much less distinct than those of the mainstream system. Just as the shadow cast by a sun-dial can tell the observer about the passage of time, so the shadow of an education system can tell the observer about the change in societies.

So, with the given rationale, the undertaken study is an attempt-

a) To find out the reasons for taking private tuition.

b) To find out the subjects learned by the students at private tuition

c) To gather information regarding the teaching-learning process of private tuition

d) To elicit information regarding the private tutors and

e) To gather information regarding the forms of private tuition.

Different forms of Private Tuition:

Tutoring can be delivered through many modes, which are evolving with the development of new technologies. Most tutoring is detailed in person, but some is delivered by phone, television, and the Internet. Formerly, a lot of tutoring took the form of postal correspondence courses, but this now has been mostly replaced by websites and email (Mark Bray, 2009).

Many types of tuition may be identified. At one end of the scale is individualised tuition, often conducted in the homes of the pupils or the teachers. At the other end of the scale are mass lecture theatres with overflow rooms served by closed-circuit television screens focusing on what in Hong Kong are called 'idol tutors', who in some respects resemble film stars and popular musicians (Bray & Kwok 2003). Between these extremes may be small groups, medium-sized classes and large classes.

Much advocacy in mainstream education systems insists that classes must have fewer than 35 pupils in order to be effective; but in shadow education system, in some societies, pupils commonly pay to attend tuition classes that are much larger than this.

Diversity may also be found in the ages and qualifications of tutors. In may settings, secondary school students earn pocket money by tuitioning primary school children, and similarly university students may tutor secondary students. In contrast, many tutors are retirees who still wish to contribute to society

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and also earn some extra money. Between these two extremes of age, are others who provide tuition on a full-time or part-time basis, and who may or may not have formal training.

For face-to-face tuition, however, location becomes of considerable importance. In most countries, face-to-face tuition is much more readily available in cities than in rural areas. This is partly because the population density of cities provides sufficient supply of pupils to allow the tutors to set up classes which are large enough to permit affordable prices, but also because cities commonly have more competitive environments and higher per capita incomes.

Private Tuition in Sivasagar District:

Like the world education system private tuition is also a growing phenomenon in formal education system of India as well as Assam. In India on the basis of management and administration secondary schools can be divided into various types such as government, provincialized, recognized, non-recognized and private schools. Research studies have revealed the fact that students studying at all types of schools receive private tuition.

In Sivasagar district there are one (1) government, two hundred three (203) provincialised, twenty five (25) recognized and seventy (70) private secondary schools (Source: Office of the Inspector of Schools, Sivasagar District, 2014). The study was conducted on 200 students of classes IX and X studying in five (5) secondary schools of Sivasagar district covering both provincialised, recognized and private schools. The data were collected from the students through questionnaire. The study mainly focused on extent of private tuition, reasons for taking private tuition, subjects learnt at private tuition, private tutors as well as the forms of private tuition.

The findings of the study are:

Table – 1 Reasons for taking Private Tuition

	Reasons	**No of res-pondents**
a)	To learn topics better taught at school	129
b)	To prepare for the exam	62
c)	Parents force me to take private tuition	12
d)	Peer students take private tuition, that's why I am taking	10
e)	Teachers don't complete the syllabus and classroom teaching isn't sufficient to secure good marks in the examination	16

Table 1 shows the various reasons for receiving private tuition on the part of students. It reveals that the main reason for receiving private tuition is to learn topics better taught at school and out of 200 students 129 i.e., 64.5% gave response in favour of this reason. The other reasons for receiving private tuition are to prepare for the exam, teachers don't complete the syllabus and classroom teaching isn't sufficient to secure good marks in the examination, parents force them to take private tuition etc.

Table – 2 Subjects taken at Private Tuition

Subs-	**English**	**Gen.Maths**	**Gen.Science**	**Adv.Maths**	**Social Science**
No of respondents	127	159	63	17	07

It was found that students take private tuition in different subjects. Table 2 reveals that majority of students take private tuition in General Mathematics and English. Moreover they also receive private tuition in the subjects like General Science, Advanced Mathematics and Social Science.

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Table -3 Teachers at Private Tuition

	Private Tutors	No of respondents
a)	Class teacher	66
b)	Other teacher from school	21
c)	Teacher from another school	60
d)	Graduate/ Post graduate person	51

Regarding the private tutors Table 3 shows that majority of students receive private tuition from their class teacher as well as teacher from another school i.e., school teachers are highly engaged in the task of providing private tuition to their own students. Moreover they also receive private tuition from graduate and post graduate person and other teacher from their own school.

Table-4. Teaching- Learning process at Private Tuition

	Period	No. of respondents
a)	Before the starting of the school session	49
b)	After starting of the school session	101
c)	3-6 months before the examination	42
d)	2 months before the examination	09
e)	1 month before the examination	05

Table 4 shows that majority of students receive private tuition after starting of the school session and a few students receive private tuition one (1) month before the examination. Some students also receive private tuition before the starting of the school session as well as 3-6 months before the examination.

Table-5. Number of Students

No. of students	One	Two-Five	Five-Ten	Ten-Twenty	Twenty-Thirty	More than Thirty
No. of res-pondents	09	46	77	48	08	03

Table 5 shows the various forms of private tuition. It reveals that both one-to-one as well as group tutoring exists and majority of students receive private tuition in a group of 5-10 students. There also exists other groups such as 2-5,10-20,20-30 and more than 30 but the latter groups are very less in number.

Regulations regarding Private Tuition in India

Regarding private tuition regulations are set at the state and local levels. In Uttar Pradesh, coaching centers should register under Coaching Regulation Ordinance 2002, though not all do so. In Maharashtra, coaching centers are registered under the Shop Act of the State Revenue Department, while bureaus that provide tutors for home tutoring are registered under the Charity Commission Act. Registered coaching centers pay 1% tax to the Revenue Department, while tuition bureaus pay 8% service charge to the Charity Commission. The West Bengal government prohibits teachers from providing tutoring, though it has had difficulty implementing the prohibition (*Times of India* 2010). A similar situation is evident in Tripura (*The Telegraph* 2011). During 2011, the authorities in northern India attracted media attention with a blanket ban on private tutoring by college teachers (Malla 2011). The authorities added that government teachers were allowed to provide private tutoring only after school hours. In effect, this amounted to approval of government teachers providing tutoring on their own time (Bray and Lykins,2012) . In Assam also school teachers are prohibited from providing private tuition but it is not fully implemented.

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Conclusion:

It has been found that a higher percentage of students are receiving private tuition in the secondary schools of Sivasagar district. Similarly, teachers also engaged in private tuition could hardly focus on regular teaching. Although different regulations are set regarding private tuition and school teachers as private tutors it is still difficult to implement. This has proved to be a major problem before the educational system particularly the function of schools as institutions of learning and socialization.

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