

The Parallel market for education in India: In context of Private Tutoring

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ABSTRACT

The size of private tuition is increasing with the rise in enrollment under mainstream education. These private tuition providers are calcimining their role as supplementary to the quality of mainstream education. Their presence at all level and location is arising the concern about the failure of education reforms. The prevalence of these tutoring has serious implication for the society and for child development. The following article analyses and discusses the scope and nature of tuition and coaching market and also illustrates its effects and need for its regulation.

Key Words : Private Tuition, Mainstream education, Shadow education, Service providers, Consumer, Social divide

INTRODUCTION

Usually the market of education constitutes the institutes (service provider) and students (consumer) who hold degrees and diplomas ordained by the same institutes and colleges as the part of the ultimate stage of finishing the curriculum. Apart from this market there are some private players who don't award degrees or certifications but they do supply education and training after charging for them. It is these entities which constitute the shadow market. Private tuitions and coaching are common examples of shadow market. These are not involved with degrees and certificates but work in a parallel direction with students to augment the competence of the students. Hence, we can assume them as a parallel education hub.

Reasons for the need and spread of shadow education:

It has been established as an indirect result of the deficiencies and pitfalls of the mainstream academic pattern and as a direct result it came into existence as a complementary system that seeks to address and overcome the drawbacks of mainstream academics. The proliferation of the tuition market is due to lack of quality in the mainstream established academics. Various reasons responsible for the undermining the mainstream education which include lack of teachers in the institutions, their propensity to indulge in absenteeism, lack of experience and wherewithal and a

general lack of interest paired with the absence of basic infrastructure in schools. Together they lead to a drop in the quality of the education that is imparted. To compensate for this gap in the quality, students and guardians have no other option but to turn towards tuitions for help.

The need or clamor for tuition stems from the lack of quality in the mainstream educational setup. Some other factors such as family status, observing and following others, alluring marketing strategies by coaching magnates pushes them towards entrusting these institutes and teachers with the careers of their children. Usually these families enjoy high income and that makes them care for their status. To conform to the latest fashion of sending kids to coaching such, families rarely contemplate the overall prudence of making a beeline for sending their kids to these institutes. Private coaching enterprises create a need for their product by means of aggressive and appealing advertising and publicity. These ads create an air of indispensability by highlighting the achievements of their students and exaggerating their role in helping these students gain admission into prestigious colleges. The parents are taken for a ride by convincing them about the prevalence of cut throat competition.

The decline of quality in mainstream education aided by liberalization and globalization has ultimately coaxed the parent into accepting that private coaching is essential for acquiring a high level of education. The rising purchasing power of parents has led to their ambitions soaring sky high. This is followed by an eagerness to invest even more resources into the education of their children. A sound school background and exposure is precursor to reasonable success at the next level. This, in turn, brightens the prospects of gaining admission in prestigious colleges which is mandatory for gaining a lucrative employment. These aspirations form the basis upon which there is urgency from the elementary education level for quality improvement. There has been apparent rise in the nationwide competition for securing the admission in prestigious established institutions. The eminent institutions like IITs and IIMs and NITs apart from Central Universities all fill their seats by entrance exams. This means that the aspirant to seat ratio is to the tune of one seat for several thousands of students. This leads to a manic competition for these seats. Gaining employment is relatively very easy after passing out from such institutions. Every capable parent aspires that the child must have access to these institutes by all means possible. To ensure the same they make all possible efforts from the elementary level itself, to avail coaching and tuitions.

Middle school in the country has witnessed a steep rise in admissions which has fueled the rise of number of aspirants going on for higher education as well. The level of quality in education has not been able to rise correspondingly. There is a great paucity of institutes with quality education and academics. This has resulted in huge demand for private coaching to excel in entrance exams. Muralidharan (2012) observes that the ambiguities in the syllabus for school education lead to a specific rise in the demand for individual and private coaching. Chaudhary (2006) and Banerjee (2013) have pointed out the disparity between state run schools and private schools. The gap is so immense that only private tuitions can rescue the aspirant and help groom him/her for competitive exams in future. Majumdar (2014) says that students resort to tuition to survive the exams. The study in 2003 indicates that the private tuitions market became indispensable as it progressed. While some nations (Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia) have shown that the mainstream educational set up and academics can be complemented by the parallel education system but the studies in UK show that the former can be substituted by the latter. India is seeing both systems flourish; some coaching companies have substituted the existing mainstream body of academics with their own system streamlined for immediate success in entrance tests. Under this system, students first enroll in a dummy school, where they go only for giving exams but they pursue their studies in the

coaching set up.

Some parents are well to do but the level of their education is not satisfactory; hence, they want to ensure their kids do not languish in the absence of quality education. They can go to any lengths to achieve the same. They provide them education in big budget schools. These parents cannot afford to spend time in the education of their wards and their professional commitments keep them from doing so. They rely heavily on external tuitions for this. This is also factor leading to high demand of tuitions. Some pupils are not bright enough to cope with the demands and rigors of mainstream academics, such students rely on tuitions to be abreast with the level of competition.

Private tuition system has widened the gap between the rich and the poor. This divide is reflected in the educational level also. The weaker section of the society bears the brunt of this disparity. Students from these sections have to undergo palpable discrimination in academics. As a result, their reliance on tuition increases even further but the costs mean that this is out of their reach too. The structure of private tuition shows that expensive coaching has a distinct advantage over affordable coaching. Weaker sections of the society send their wards to state run schools where there is a general lack of competent and industrious teachers. Thus they need tuitions and that again is expensive enough to be out of their grasp. Private schools are also similarly arranged; expensive schools have a distinct edge over affordable private schools. Similarly, the schools in rural areas are predominantly less expensive than the ones in urban areas but their competence decreases; hence the section of students which is in acute need of tuitions can often not afford the cost that it involves. The flipside is that the section which can easily afford tuitions is always able to meet its cost. This is how the system creates and aggravates the already worrying divide between the rich and poor.

The nature and scope of tuitions market:

There are many forms of private tuitions in the prevalent tuition and coaching market. It ranges from private tutor to a big coaching brand. From elementary level to secondary and higher secondary level, its tentacles are everywhere. Under the system of private tuitions, a tutor often goes to the house of the pupil to teach him/her individually. This usually happens when the family is prosperous enough to afford the fees and expenses. In some cases, a tutor teaches a group of students at one common place which economizes the cost for the students to some extent. In a different manner, students go to the house of the teacher and study in groups. The tutor is supposed to teach the students in different groups at different times of the day. Apart from these some service providers have taken this to a whole new different level. Towns and cities are seeing steady growth of such institutes often spiraling into huge numbers. Many qualified and competent tutors work under a single roof and teach various subjects. Technology by means of various advanced techniques e.g. video conferencing, video lecturing has made it possible to reach thousands at the same time. The cost of private tuition differs according to the geographical region. Low earning regions have a lower cost just like rural areas with limited means of livelihood. Hence, as per the purchasing power of the populace, there are various tiers of coaching available in the education market today. Hierarchy is prevalent in market as is evident from two diverse instances where a well to do or affluent parent can send for a tutor to come at his residence and teach his ward while in another instance a middle class salaried parent sends his ward to the less able tutor to be able to afford coaching for his child.

The exam fever further accentuates the need for the coaching pill, very evident in the months of exams. Some parents are able to afford tuitions for only a month or two, to augment the

performance of their wards towards the commencement of exams. Subjects like Science, mathematics and English have huge demands for tuitions as they are conventionally formidable subjects. The mainstream academics rarely focus on these. Standards like the eighth grade, the tenth and the twelfth which are also accompanied by Board exams, have a higher demand as the above said exams have high reflectivity, transparency, accountability and neutrality. They are free from local influence and discrimination. This adds a distinct sheen and prestige to them. Hence, there is a perceptible need to excel in these exams by virtue of tuitions. Science students of twelfth standard have tuitions as an indispensable tool.

The wages or rate of the private tuitions is directly dependent upon the tutor's mettle, competence distance and place. Generally, teachers proficient in English as medium of instruction are few. The parents of such students are usually well to do. Hence, the charges in regional language are significantly less than those in English. Small towns and cities are seeing mushrooming of inferior English medium schools. The coveted status of English medium drives the parents further into availing these resources which are inadequate from beginning. Private coaching also benefits in a similar manner. The economically weaker section sees parents spending a hefty sum on this expense.

Though an accurate estimation over private tuition market and its extent is not available, yet few surveys and researches conducted at different points in time and at different places delve deep into their structure, density and responsible factors. In a broad sense private coaching flourishes with rising income of parents. As a result, private coaching proliferates in posh areas. A survey over coaching companies was conducted in 2009 by Wosh and Deewan. The survey highlights the yearly rate of growth as 15 per cent and \$6.4 million USD. The 71st round of NSSO gave its education report that 26 per cent or over one fourth of the existing students in the nation was dependent on private coaching. Their number stood at 7.1 crores comprising 4.1 boys and 3 crore girls. The families spent close to 12 per cent of their finances. This study found 89 per cent of the population agreeing with the fact that tuitions are necessary for improving educational quality. The Sujata and Rani study of 2004 showed that 58.8 per cent per cent of tenth standard students were taking tuitions across the states of Andhra, U.P., Kerala and Maharashtra. Bengal saw 57 per cent of students availing tuitions as per Amartya Sen (2009).

The above studies indicate the growth of private tuitions has been upward always. Generally, state run schools have a comparatively lower level of imparted education than private run schools. In this condition it can be expected that the demand for private tuitions is supposed to be higher for state run schools. A clear goal is good results in the exam. Similarly schools in rural area are usually less qualitative.

Objectively, the demand for private tuitions doesn't really stem from the lack of quality in mainstream educational system but from the higher income of parents. Areas with a higher income attract a higher price on coaching. It has been observed that parents with high income possess a propensity to enroll their kid in a private school as these are outside the reach of a lesser earning parent. Since private coaching thrives for high income sections hence the tendency to avail private coaching is found more in students in private schools. In the same manner, urban regions have a high income and correspondingly they have a higher demand for private coaching than rural regions. Compared on a state basis, the same trend follows. Higher earning states have a higher demand for coaching in comparison to low earning states.

A survey conducted in 2008 by leading coaching providers revealed that this industry was worth \$6.4 billion USD. It witnessed steady rise of 15 per cent per annum. This is the estimate despite not including the small players. The urban areas in India spent 328 rupees for primary

tuition per student per year for boys and it was 268 for girl students. The cost for higher primary was 730 and 547, respectively for boys and girls. It went up to 1930 and 1631 and it must be understood that if the student studies in a state run school then the expenditure on school fees is very less than the expenditure on tuitions. This is because education is subsidized in state run schools while a private school levies the expenditure upon the family. The expenditure in West Bengal's state run primary education had 21 per cent of it going towards private tuitions. The Rana (2005) survey provides ample data for the above conclusion. Similarly, the ACER (1) 2013 study showed an average expenditure of 170 rupees per week and the annual spend was over 2000.

Social effects of the tuitions market :

Generally, micro approach is considered to be beneficial towards a student as it directly develops the competence of a student and improves the performance of the student in exams. This imparts great importance and credibility to coaching as it improves the quality of education. The same ideas led to the rapid spread of tuition market and its continuous growth. Different studies have proven the fact that coaching improves the academic achievements and level of education of a student. Hamid (2009) survey on 10th standard students established that students availing tuition in rural areas had twice the probability to score more than the students who did not avail tuitions.

The macro approach says that private tuition has a range of negative social and personal effects. Fundamentally it is perceived that tuition addresses the problems that traditional system leaves behind. A removal of the deficiencies in the mainstream system will also lessen the need for tuitions. The idea floated by the coaching providers is that they help weak students to overcome their weakness and help the studious gain extra edge by virtue of their coaching classes. They improve the understandability of a subject by making it simple in front of the students. Hence, they improve the overall level of education in a child.

An ideal system should have the traditional mainframe system leading the way irrespective of their public or private nature. Such a system includes the remedial and special program for a weaker student. Subjects like mathematics and science, which are considered traditionally tough, should be carefully and diligently taught. More attention during exam time and lesser care in other days must not be encouraged. Above mentioned are just a few of many solutions that can remove these deficiencies.

The total expenditure on education by a country includes the private schools, tuition and coaching, state run schools and miscellaneous dues that parents bear. Individually a parent only considers the money spent on tuitions and bases his decisions on that. But when seen from the perspective of the entire nation, all the expenses are borne by the nation itself whether it is private run or state run system of education. Public expenditure cares for social equality while private expenditure only follows individual interests. The difference in the objectives leads to a difference in the social outcomes of the two. State run educational establishments are never operated with the motive of profit. The motto is to be accessible to all sections of the society without exclusion. The institutions under private ownership have a clear profit motive for individual owner.

Parents are falling prey to the habit of the coaching facility as they are sure about its positive effects on the academic abilities of the students. Society always prioritizes the educational quality and there is always an ever increasing pressure on the students to score high marks. The insane level of competition has prompted parents to add this to their social status. This results in unidirectional growth of the student which clearly contradicts the goal of all round development. Physical growth, community traits and participation and a sportsman spirit are all required for a student to blossom

into a full-fledged mature and energetic citizen of the country. Apart from this the mere successful passing of exams, scoring of marks, memorization of answers and gain of lucrative employment cannot be the sole motive of education. To reach the correct goal of education we must make our academics all round in nature and scope.

Private tuition is antagonistic to the overall social parity and order. It differentiates the rich from the poor very effectively. The expectation from affluent students to be a good citizen becomes unrealistic. They cannot be expected to be sensitive towards the weaker section of the society. Success of private coaching depends upon a lot of factors. School quality, family atmosphere and financial soundness and the level of education of parents apart from the inclination of the student, guidance and nourishment are all crucial in this regard. Coaching cannot overcome these factors. The results of coaching depend upon the kind of coaching, level of teaching and the processing ability of the student being taught. It is considered that coaching is a crucial factor in clearing IITs and many coaching institutes have a success rate of 10 per cent. But they also take entrance tests of students before taking them under their wings. Only 3 per cent students from the non-coached section successfully compete in these exams. The reason for higher success rate cannot be attributed to coaching alone. Instead, a range of elements like the grasping capacity, learning pace and family income to name a few, are responsible. Private coaching woos the parent through aggressive and catchy advertising and slyly promoting the successful students while concealing the data about unsuccessful students.

Private tuition also sees the rampant corruption and immorality by teachers. Teachers take tuitions for extra income apart from what they get from schools. These teachers do not do justice to their role in the school and are often laidback in schools. They are at their best when they take private tuitions. This propels the students indirectly towards tuitions. Even in schools, teachers blatantly prefer their tuition students over school students and give them unfair advantage.

Parents have been observed to stress more on exams results rather than emphasizing overall all round development. Recent board exams in the state of Bihar showed the ugly event of parents trying to help their wards cheat in the exam. The fees in state run schools are paltry while it is huge for coaching. Hence more importance is attached to coaching than school. It has been observed many times that parents arrange tuitions for their kid even if there is no real need. This pushes them to depend on tuitions in all situations and their self-study is adversely impaired. This cripples them of self-dependence life-long.

Though there are many advantages listed in favor of coaching which is a result of individual perspective. The plea by coaching institutes is that they remove difficulties from a subject and help students score greater marks as they may not have understood the subject at school as well as others. They address the individual concerns and adjust their pedagogy accordingly. Parents also consider this as a boon for students who find things difficult at school level.

Applying a macro approach to the same it reveals contradictions in the above mentioned claim. The idea of a nation as a unit does not agree with this concept. The overall expenditure on education is the sum total of all the expenses that parents and schools incur. Parents believe it to be their individual expense and hence expect the government to respect their discretion. Whoever spends, the GDP remains unchanged. Education being a merit good should be promoted by the govt. so the government approaches the issue like a patriarch and takes prudent decisions on education. Steps are taken to remove the fallacies in the educational setup and to remove disparity in society.

Private tuition and coaching is indispensable from social perspective. Consequently, it promotes

disparity and divides in the society. It only focuses on the academic achievements and ignores all round growth. The demand grows from the deficient and lacking school system. This then becomes the government's prerogative to remove these faults and redundancies in the school system so that the demand for coaching and tuition is organically kept in check. For achieving this, government must bring better administration and regulation in mainstream educational structure. All students must have access to best resources and quality education without discrimination. The schools must develop an intrinsic mechanism to deal with the problems faced by weaker students. Teachers must be provided training and insights into better methods of teaching on a regular basis. The curriculum should be made simple and comprehensive for subjects like mathematics and science. The use of technology should be encouraged to promote audio-video, learning app and software.

Presently this market is not under complete regulation as it doesn't award certificates or degrees. However, looking at its nature and future growth as well as social implications, regulation must be brought. Teachers from state schools have been prohibited to indulge in private coaching. But they have found loopholes and find themselves free to do what they want. Private schools and coaching providers know no such bounds and are autonomous in this aspect. Large scale institutes are free to register as a commercial firm and pay taxes as applicable. That is the only regulation they experience and after this, there is no accountability regarding fee structure, quality of service and working environment.

Conclusion :

Investment in health and education is an investment at the fundamentals of human resource development. Educational expenditure is even more crucial as it is instrumental in creating awareness about health and hygiene. School is an important part of education because of its many varied externalities that play an important role in imparting quality and all round education. The faults in the mainstream education have led to the establishment of a shadow market which is creating divides in the society. The government must seek to bring about relevant changes to curb its menace. To reduce the need of private coaching, the regulation of this market and the clause of transparency must be relentlessly pursued.

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