

Private Tutoring at the Secondary level in Assam

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Abstract: *The present study is an attempt to find out the extent and nature of private tutoring at the secondary level in Assam. The findings of the study revealed that- a high majority of students (82.56%) received private tuition. The study found that students received private tuition in different academic subjects and from different category of private tutors such as school teachers, graduate or undergraduate person etc., most of the private tutors are found to be schoolteachers. Again, it is found that the most popular subjects in private tutoring classes are General Mathematics, English and General Science. While studying the private tuition fees the study found that students paid from a sum of Rs.250 to Rs.5000 per month to private tutors. Moreover, the study also found that most of the private tuition classes are occurred in groups, students received private tuition at different places including schools also. The findings of the study may help to know the nature and extent of private tutoring at the secondary level in Assam, reasons for the growing popularity of private tuition among secondary school students and the impact of private tuition on quality education.*

Keywords: *private tuition, secondary level, secondary school students, quality education, Sivasagar, Assam.*

I. 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. The normal age group of the children in secondary classes is 14-16 whereas in higher secondary classes it is 16-18. The secondary education in India aims to enable the students to compete successfully for education and jobs globally. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen this stage by providing greater access and by improving quality in a significant way.

Concerning the performance of students in public examination at the secondary level a wide degree of variation occurred 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 & Rani, 2011)

Private tuition or private tutoring in general means the instruction that is provided to the students on various academic subjects outside the classrooms for monetary gain. Prof. Mark Bray (1999) 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 sundial 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.

Private tutoring is diversified in nature. It may be provided individually or in groups. The places of receiving private tutoring classes may be tutors' home, students' home, private tuition centers, hostels etc. Moreover, diversification is also occurred in respect to monthly fees, subjects, reasons for adopting private tutoring, teaching skills applied by private tutors, session of receiving private tutoring, time duration of private tutoring classes etc. In India, private tutoring is a major growing phenomenon in the formal education system. According to NSSO survey report, one out of every four students in India take private tutoring and in a couple of states more than three out of every four students opt for private tutoring. Though private tutoring is prevalent in all over India, it is mostly prevalent in eastern states. In comparison to the national average (37.8 percent) of pupils adopting private tuition, West Bengal is in the top where 89 percent of male secondary and higher secondary school students avail private tutoring. For a similar category of students at the primary level, Tripura (78.3 percent) is in the top list followed by West Bengal where 71.1 percent students receive private tutoring (Nanda, 2016). If we look at the international context, it is found that in the Republic of Korea nearly 90 percent

of elementary students receive some sort of private tutoring; and in Hong Kong, China, about 85 percent of senior secondary students do so (Bray & Lykins, 2012). Keeping in view the growing popularity of private tutoring among students it can be pointed out the poor quality of formal education. However, private tuition is not necessary for many students yet parents and guardians are in favor to invest on private tutoring from their wards. Because private tutors help their children in doing home works, help to score higher marks, children can properly utilize their leisure time etc.

II. Rationale of the Study

Private tuition, now-a-days become an essential feature of formal education system. Research studies have revealed the fact that it is a worldwide growing phenomenon in education in both developed and developing countries including India. A good percentage of students from elementary to higher education receive private tuition. Parents and guardians also spend a huge amount of money in private tuition. Private tuition is offered to students in single as well as mostly in-group forms. Research studies also revealed the fact that schoolteachers are engaging in providing private tuition to their own students. It becomes a common feature as well as serious matter in most of the countries of Central Asia. The growing phenomenon of private tuition is occurring due to insufficient as well as ineffective classroom teaching and similarly it adversely affects the mainstream education. Therefore, many governments took various actions as well as regulations are made in order to control and prohibit private tuition in different countries including India also.

The mushroom growth of private tuition in India is found due to several reasons such as unavailability of schoolteachers, non-completion of course, poor teaching etc. (Sujatha and Rani, 2011). Research studies also revealed the fact one of the major reason for receiving private tuition is insufficient classroom teaching (Foondun, 2002; Bray and Lykins, 2012). More interestingly, it is also evident that schoolteachers are engaging in private tuition. It is definitely a serious matter for quality education. Therefore, different regulations are in many countries such as India, Bhutan, Korea etc. in order to prohibit school teachers in providing private tuition to their own students as well as other students also. (Bray and Lykins, 2012).

The use of shadow education is growing. Social scientists argue the rise in the demand of shadow education is due to a parental response to failing school and time constrained parents. The national use of shadow education varies, but even in nations where it is least utilized, about 20 per cent of students report having accessed shadow education throughout their academic career (Southgate, 2009). Dang and Rogers (2008) studied on the prevalence of tutoring in 23 developing and developed countries. In almost all of them, 25-90 per cent of students at certain levels of education is receiving or recently received private tuition. In some countries, such as the Republic of Korea and Turkey, spending by households on private tuition now rivals public sector education expenditures. There are three driving factors of private tuition viz. micro, macro and endogenous factors. The micro factors are income of the family, parental education, location (urban/rural), stage of education, size of the family; the macro factors are advent of market economy, prospects of better jobs, effort to fill up the gap felt in the existing education system, cultural values, examination-oriented education, school characteristics and the endogenous factors are such as parental aspiration and concerns as well as students' motivation. In England, a 2008 survey of 1,500 parents found that 12 per cent of primary school pupils and 8 per cent of secondary school pupils were receiving private tuition. In France, a 1992 study found that about 25 per cent of students in one region receive private tutoring (Bray, 2009). In India, SCERT, West Bengal (2009) conducted a study on implications of private tuition in West Bengal and found that, at Class IV- 71.17 per cent, at Class VII- 86.56 per cent, at Class IX-90.91 per cent and at Class XII-93.35 per cent sampled students had private tutors. Snehi (2010) conducted a study on private tutoring at the secondary level in Delhi and found that at Class X, students received private tutoring in different subjects like Mathematics (72.5 percent), Science (55 percent), English (11 percent), Social Science and Hindi (2 percent). Sujatha (2007) and Sujatha & Rani (2011) conducted a study on the phenomenon of private tuition at secondary level in India and found that among the total students seeking private tuition, 80.61 per cent joined tutorial/coaching centers, 18.89 per cent were tutored by the same school teacher in group tuition and 0.5 per cent had home tuition or by others. The study found three major reasons for adopting private tutoring viz. academic, personal and social for availing tuition on the part of the students. Again, most of the reasons for going to tuition were directed towards students' preparation for examinations in which they wanted to score more marks. Thus, it is revealed from the above discussion that private tuition is a growing phenomenon in the world education system. Students of every nation go for private tuition and the parents also feel the necessity of private tutoring for their children. Therefore keeping in view the growing concern for private tuition it was decided to find out the extent and nature of private tuition at the secondary level in Sivasagar district.

Statement of the Problem

Private Tutoring at the Secondary level in Assam.

Objectives of the Study: The present study attempts-

- (i) To find out the extent of private tuition at the secondary level in Sivasagar district.
- (ii) To find out the nature of private tuition at the secondary level in Sivasagar district.

Research Questions: In order to achieve the objectives of the present study following research questions are formulated-

- (i) What is the extent of private tuition at the secondary level in Sivasagar district?
- (ii) What is the nature of private tuition at the secondary level in Sivasagar district?

III. Methodology

In the present study descriptive method was used to find out the extent and nature of private tuition at the secondary level in Sivasagar district.

Population and Sample

There are 200 provincialized schools, 28 recognized high schools and 75 private high schools in Sivasagar district with total enrolment of 78490 (source : I.S. Office, Sivasagar district; data up to 2013) . Quota sampling technique was used to select the sample. From the total number of schools 15% were selected as sample for the study. Thus, 45 (30 schools from rural areas and 15 schools from urban areas) schools were selected as school sample among which 30 provincialized schools, 4 recognized schools and 11 private high schools. A sample of 900 students was taken by selecting 20 students from each selected 45 sample schools.

Tools used for Data Collection:

The purpose of the present study was to find out the extent and nature of private tuition at the secondary level in Sivasagar district. In order to fulfill the purpose of the study the researcher constructed a questionnaire for secondary schools students of Sivasagar district. The data are interpreted in term of percentage.

IV. Result and Discussion

a) Students with and without Private tuition

Table - 1

Sl. no	Private tuition	No. of respondents (in %)
1	Yes	82.56
2	No	17.44

It is revealed from table that 82.56 per cent of total student sample received private tuition and 17.44 per cent students did not receive private tuition.

b) Reasons for Taking Private Tuition

Table - 2

Sl. no	Reasons	Response (in %)
1	To learn topics better taught at school	64.74
2	To prepare for the examination	29.17
3	Parents force me to take private tuition	2.72
4	Peer students take private tuition that's why I am taking	2.24
5	Teachers don't complete the syllabus	4.96

Table 2 shows that majority of the students (64.74 per cent) opted for private tuition to learn the concepts more clearly. More than one fourth (29.17per cent) of students took help of private tuition to prepare for the examination. 4.96 % of students responded that they adopted private tuition as their teachers did not complete the syllabus on time. A section (2.72%) of the students is forced by their parents to take tuition while 2.24% students took the help of the private tutors because their friends also took private tuition.

c) Subjects in which Students take the help of Private Tutor

Table - 3

Sl. No	Subjects	Response (in%)
1	General Mathematics	92.49
2	English	72.82
3	General Science	45.80
4	MIL(Assamese)	2.10
5	Social Science	2.25

Table 3 reveals that the most popular subjects in private tuition were General Mathematics, English and General Science. Majority of the students (92.49 per cent) received private tuition in General Mathematics. General English (72.82 per cent) and General Science (45.8 per cent) are found to be the second and third most

popular subjects respectively among the students. 2.25 per cent of students received tuition in Social Science while a percentage of 2.10 students received tuition in Assamese.

d) Number of Subjects in which Students receive private Tuition

Table -4

Sl. No	No. of Subject(s)	Response(in %)
1	One	17.87
2	Two	45.2
3	Three	31.68
4	Four	3.75
5	Five	.60
6	All subjects	.90

It is evident from Table 5 that most of the students received private tuition in more than one subject. Majority (45.2 per cent) of students received private tuition in two subjects whereas 31.68 per cent of students responded that they received private tuition in three subjects. A section (17.87 per cent) of students received private tuition in only one subject while 3.75 per cent and .60 per cent responded that they received private tuition in four and five subjects respectively. It is also found that .90 per cent of students received private tuition in all subjects.

e) Size of Private Tuition Classes

Table -5

Sl.No	No. of Students	Response (in %)
1	Alone	3.96
2	Two	3.06
3	Three- Five	21.98
4	Six-Ten	25.59
5	Eleven-Twenty	26.13
6	Twenty One-Thirty	15.86
7	Thirty One- Forty	2.88
8	Forty One-Fifty	1.98
9	Above Fifty	5.77

It is seen from Table 5 that most of the private tuition occurred in groups whereas 3.30 per cent of students receive tuition alone. A large number of students (26.13 per cent, 25.59 per cent and 21.98 per cent) responded that they received private tuition in groups consisting of number of students eleven to twenty, six to ten and three to five students respectively. 15.86 per cent of students responded that they received private tuition in a group of twenty one to thirty students. A section (3.06 per cent) of students received private tuition in a group of two students while 5.77 per cent of students received in a group of more than fifty students. It is also found that only 3.96 per cent of students received tuition alone. Again a section (2.88 per cent) and (1.98 per cent) of students received private tuition in a group of thirty one to forty and forty one to fifty students respectively.

f) Cost in Private Tuition

Table -6

Sl. No	Cost (in Rupees)	Response (in %)
1	200-450	42.55
2	500-950	32
3	1000-1400	14.55
4	1500-1900	7.45
5	2000-5000	3.45

It is seen from Table 6 that students paid from a limited amount to a huge amount in private tuition. A number (42.55 per cent) and (32 per cent) of students responded that they paid Rs. 200-450 and 500-950 per month respectively. 14.55per cent of students revealed that they paid a sum of Rs. 1000-1400 per month. A section (7.45 per cent) of students responded that they paid Rs.1500-1900 while 3.45 per cent students paid Rs.2000-5000 per month.

g) Who is the Private Tutor?

Table -7

Sl. No	Private tutors	Response (in %)
1	Class teacher	21.73
2	Other teacher from school	19.06
3	Teacher from another school	35.11
4	Graduate/Post Graduate person	22.99
5	Any other	1.10

Table 7 reveals that schoolteachers are mostly engage as private tutors. In the present study, a number (35.11per cent, 21.73 per cent and 19.06 per cent) of students responded that their private tutors were teacher from another schools, their class teachers and other teacher from their schools respectively. A section (22.99 per cent) of students revealed that they took private tuition from graduate and postgraduate persons while 1.1 per cent students received private tuition from different persons who were not included in the above categories.

h) Number of Private Tuition classes attended by the students per Day

Table - 8

Sl. No	No. of Private Tuition Class	Response (in %)
1	One	55.14
2	Two	38.02
3	Three	6.84

Table 10 shows that students received the help of one to three private tuition classes in a day. A highest (55.14) per cent of students responded that they attend only one private tuition class in a day while 38.02 per cent and 6.84 per cent of students attend two and three private tuition classes respectively in a day.

i) Number of Days in a Week Students take Private Tuition

Table - 9

Sl. No	No. of Days	Response (in %)
1	Two	2.17
2	Three	20.22
3	Four	4.51
4	Five	12.64
5	Six	48.19
6	Seven	12.27

Table 9 reveals that students received private tuition from two days to the whole week. A highest (48.19) percent of students responded that they received private tuition on six days of the week. 12.27 per cent of students took private tuition overall week while a section (2.17 per cent) of students received private tuition on two days of the week.

j) Number of Hour(s) in a Day Students spent in Private Tuition

Table- 10

Sl. No	No. of Hours	Response (in %)
1	One	47.49
2	One and half	2.42
3	Two	37.06
4	Two and half	1.12
5	Three-four	11.92

From Table 10 it is seen that students spent from one hour to three hours in a day in private tuition classes. 47.49 per cent of students responded that they spent only one hour while 11.92 per cent students spent three to four hours in private tuition classes. More than three tenth (37.06 per cent) students spent two hours in private tuition classes in a day. Above were only the private tutoring hours. Besides, it was also found that some students spent a lot of time in their transport to private tutoring classes.

k) Session of Receiving Private Tuition

Table -11

Sl. No	Session	Response (in %)
1	Before the starting of the academic session	20
2	After the starting of the academic session	64.32
3	Three-Six months prior to the examination	16.22
4	Two months prior to the examination	3.60
5	One month before the examination	.90

Table 11 shows that the session of attending private tuition was also found to be varied differently. Students received private tuition at different times of the year. The present study found that majority (64.32 per cent) of the students adopted private tuition after the starting of the academic session. 20 percent of students attended private tutoring before the starting of the academic session while only .90 per cent students responded that they took private tuition classes one month before the examination.

l) Teaching Skills Applied in Private Tuition Classes

Table -12

Sl. No	Teaching skills applied in the private tuition classes	Response (in %)
1	He/ she gives notes on each topic	16.03
2	He / she uses the blackboard	27.72
3	He / she explains thoroughly about each topic	60.73
4	He / she asks questions	7.21
5	Any other	.80

From Table 12 it is also seen that the private tutors in private tuition classes applied different teaching skills. Majority (60.73 per cent) of the students responded that their private tutors explained thoroughly on each topic. 27.72 per cent of students responded that while teaching private tutors used the blackboard. More than one tenth (16.03 per cent) of students responded that private tutors gave them notes on each topic. 7.21 per cent of students revealed that private tutors asked questions in private tuition classes.

m) Place of Receiving Private Tuition

Table - 13

Sl. No	Place of receiving private tuition	Response (in %)
1	Tutor's home	63.78
2	Own home	7.53
3	Friend's home	3.04
4	School	10.26
5	Private tuition centre	20.19
6	Hostel	.80

Table 13 reveals that students received private tuition at different places. Majority (63.78 per cent) of students received tuition at tutors' home. 20.19 per cent of students responded that they received private tuition in private tuition centers while 10.26 per cent students received private tuition at schools. 7.53 per cent and 3.04 per cent students received private tuition in their own home and friend's home respectively.

V. Conclusion and Suggestions

It is evident from the present study that private tuition plays a prominent part in the secondary level in Sivasagar district. The findings of the present study reveal that a high majority of students (82.56%) received private tuition having different characteristics. Students received private tuition in different subjects from different category of private tutors. Interestingly most of the private tutors are found to be schoolteachers. The most popular subjects in private tutoring classes are General Mathematics, English and General Science. Regarding the cost, students paid from a sum Rs.250 to Rs.5000 per month. It is also found from the present study most of the private tuition classes are occurred in groups at different places including schools also. The study also revealed that majority of students joined private tuition after starting of their academic session. Thus, from the findings of the present study it can be concluded that private tuition is a major issue in the secondary education level in Assam that directly or indirectly influences quality education.

Taking into consideration the growing popularity of private tuition among students as revealed from the present study, following suggestions can be given in order to control or eradicate private tuition -

- The whole phenomenon should be given much more attention by governments, the media, and professional associations as a whole.
- Government should make a clear-cut policy for regulating and prohibiting private tuition.
- Rigidity of formal school education system should be changed so that students have more choice in selecting subjects as per their aptitude and interests.
- Curriculum should be reconstructed by making it more relevant, need based and skill oriented so that it does not insists students for rote learning.
- Control of examination on formal education system should be reduced.
- Adequate classroom teaching learning facilities should be provided in each school.
- Teachers should be paid adequate salaries for regular teachers and government should determine a standard amount of remuneration to those teachers who get a very low salary.
- Mainstream teachers should be strictly prohibited from providing private tuition.
- In each school, teacher-pupil ratio should be properly maintained.
- Teachers should use innovative methods of teaching, apply strategies to know individual student understands and maintain a friendly relation with the students.
- There should be provision of remedial classes in schools in order to overcome students' learning difficulties.

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