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## Business-like educational establishments

The recent Government move to bring the mushrooming Kindergartens and the English medium schools, set up in many places of the country at private initiatives, under some defined policy guidelines meets a long-standing public demand. Schools at private initiatives, owned and run by individuals, are desirable as they represent a partnership between the Government and the people in expanding educational facilities in pace with the population growth. But if they are run by owners as business establishments with more emphasis on profitability than on the quality of education imparted, as usually alleged by guardians, then the long-term interest of the society is greatly impaired by it. The Government has a moral responsibility to check it. Obviously, the present Government deserves the praise of us all for having initiated the process to ensure that private kindergartens and English medium schools would run better from now on fulfilling a cherished desire of guardians having wards in such schools.

No doubt, some private kindergartens and English medium schools have splendid record of offering standard education. But these are instances where the owners or organisers have taken the spread of education as their mission, rather than a bare business. What about such schools which prescribe standard foreign books as their text books but employ teachers with not very good academic records at small pays to explain the contents of these books to young students? Don't they spell a social disaster by spoiling the young with poor or no education? How can one compensate the guardians who have spent or spend rather generously in sending their wards to such schools only to find later that their wards have learnt very little and the money spent on their education was virtually wasted? It's good that the Government has moved ahead to ensure that guardians would get a fair deal henceforth in the form of better education of their wards in such schools.

The committee, already formed by the Ministry of Education to study the state of affairs of the aforesaid schools and recommend measures for improving their performance, should study the fee structure of students and their drop-out rate and performance in public examinations, 'O' level or 'A' level whatever, pay structure of teachers and their academic records, text books prescribed for study in these schools, the qualification and experience of the owners, who often install themselves as principals. A detailed study along this line will enable the committee to identify the degree of error of omission and commission in these business-like schools and recommend appropriate set of policy guidelines, which the Government may enforce on these schools.

Surprisingly, some private English medium schools have adopted the names of some best known academic institutions of the world, although with some suffixes or prefixes as if to evade charges of outright forgery. Such names are attractive enough to allure many guardians to send their wards to these schools. As the Government is moving ahead to oversee them, it is no longer desirable that these schools should be allowed to retain their adopted foreign names in contravention of ethical practices. Every private school may build up its own reputation with its performance and not try to coast upon the reputation of any famous foreign academic institution for doing a brisk business.