

The New Nation

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## Private coaching and education

Paid advertisement are published every now and then in newspapers offering the opportunity of private coaching to intending learners. Tutorial homes are also mushrooming in different names at every nook and corner of the metropolitan Dhaka, and even at mufassil towns. Some of them commit sure success at the admission tests in reputed schools and colleges, medical colleges, or BUET, or cadet colleges, or universities or any other educational institutions where admission is relatively competitive. Some guarantee high marks sometimes above seventy or eight per cent in public examinations. Some, again, promise overseas jobs or admission in overseas educational institutions to those who would agree to undergo some courses there at exorbitant fees. Some venture making experts in foreign languages including English in a month or so or even less than that. And these so-called education centres, whatever education they are dispensing, are very well catching students and making money. Opening coaching homes seems to have become as lucrative a business as opening private clinics or attending patients at private cham-

bers. What a happy situation! Both education and health, the two most important sectors, are in close competition if not professionally, at least from commercial point of view.

Most of the teachers, attached whether to schools or colleges, private or government, understandably need to earn more than what they get from institutions they serve. They are no less hard hit than any other fixed income group. Drawing a hard line, therefore, like prescribing a total ban on private tuition will be as ineffective as forbidding a doctor to attend to patients at private chambers or clinics. There are schools and kindergartens where the salary of a teacher is nominal—even Taka one hundred or so. Teachers are not only available at this nominal salary—there is a queue when some vacancies are advertised. The crisis is so acute. That does not mean, however, that teachers should do private coaching business at random, neglecting or forgetting their duties in the class rooms of their parent institutions. The teacher who concentrates on money cannot concentrate on education, as a doctor whose concentration is on money cannot attend to patients.

Obviously the commercial aspect of the enterprise has been much too attractive for investors. Even non-teachers serving, for example, radio or television or any other government organisation having no teaching experience nor the teaching mind, are now-a-days finding it lucrative to be attached to tutorial homes.

Teaching or learning is nobody's monopoly. But then developing a teaching mind is not everybody's task.

Recently some restrictions have been put to private coaching. Accordingly, a teacher involved in private coaching cannot become an examiner in public examinations. This is of course welcome as a rule. Parents too must have been happy expecting a healthy change in favour of their wards. But how successfully the rule is being applied by Boards remains to be seen. Teachers having good private tuition business would not mind foregoing their claim to become examiners—some of them may even feel relieved being free from their obligation with Boards. But what about those who want to have it both ways? Do the Boards have any mechanism to ensure if they are always getting the true picture in this regard? These are of course harsh questions raised about a very respectable profession. But we are anxious about those boys and girls whose parents are unable to meet the fees of private tutors or tutorial homes.