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Notes on note books

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RECENTLY cases of an underground racket in banned note books have been unearthed. The police

conducted raids at different places and seized the note books the printing and sale of which are prohibited. A few persons engaged in this illicit trade have been arrested.

Police action against any kind of racket is always appreciable and in this case one would only wish that the drive be further intensified to eliminate such corruption, lock, stock and barrel. However, the issue of note books presents certain realities which call for dispassionate analysis.

Note books for the lower classes were banned in 1982, with good reason. Students were becoming excessively dependent on note books and they were neglecting to study text books. Besides, the note books appeared to offer a false short-cut to success and were often of a low quality. But even after note books were banned the need for them were not obviated. Private tutors took advantage of the situation. Proper teaching is not done at schools and students who cannot pay for private coaching and do not receive guidance from elders in their families find that they have nowhere to turn to for want of note books. A suggestion was made that the Board should

append detailed annotations to the text books in order to make note books unnecessary. The set of measures like raising the standard of class room teaching and improving the quality of text books that should have accompanied the outlawing of note books were not taken. Consequently, while note books were banned the need for them remained unfulfilled and the ban only had the effect of pushing the note books underground. And as note books were printed and sold clandestinely their quality was bound to deteriorate further as respectable publishers dissociated themselves from the trade.

To circumvent the ban some private tutors are found to circulate cyclostyled sheets for a price and even taped cassettes are pressed into service. If anything, private help has become more expensive after the ban.

If note books there must be, they should be made to conform to certain standard. Far more important than banning note books is to make them unnecessary for the student.