

Thorough re-think needed on tuition classes

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The government of the day must take cognisance and ownership of the actual state of education in schools. The BN coalition party machinery, in particular the Education Ministry, must in earnest re-examine why parents are finding it absolutely necessary to put their school-going children through private tuition classes.

These past thirty over years private tuition centres have been mushrooming all over the country. It certainly is another unnecessary multi-billion ringgit industry that is thriving out of a nearly failed education system in the country.

Parents in their commitment to give their off spring a sound future are not backing off. Every parent ensures that their children - even those in primary schools, go for private tuition. Without tuition classes, their children are certain to fall way behind in class and eventually complete the years of compulsory schooling without a certificate.

Hence, parents will swear that this or that tuition centre is the best in town and attest with testimonies of how their sons and daughters got through right into university because of the tuition classes.

The question is why do we need those two to three hours of tuition two or three times a week in order to pass exams when the children have been spending a good six hours every day five days a week, every week in school?

Obviously in school they are not learning anything; they are not able to comprehend; they are not getting assistance from teachers; they are not motivated to grasp the subjects. Hence the need to go for tuition to better prepare for passing exams. Right?

Parents need to wake up. They need to ask themselves why they are allowing themselves to be victims of a failing education system. They need to re-examine the increasing dependency on tuition when their children are spending almost half their waking hours in school.

The Education Ministry must be honest and courageous enough to re-evaluate the system without fear or vested interest. If you are truly into creating a nation that is resilient for the future and swear you subscribe to transformation and caring for our young minds, then the education that our kids get in school should suffice to make the students aspire for excellence. You do not need private tuition classes to do that that miracle-saving act.

In actual fact, if tuition classes can produce such good results despite the short learning hours, then why waste time, money and resources having full-time schools? Maybe all schools should be just converted to tuition centres.

Unfortunately, parents keep this unhealthy and unnecessary practice alive by patronising tuition centres and not demanding that the government of the day bring back the glory of schools and teachers and teaching methodologies that were the pride of the nation before the 1970s.

Unfortunately, too, teachers who are given good salaries in school have taken tuition classes more seriously and passionately. That extra and unlimited income from giving tuition makes a substantial difference for their wealth creation dreams.

In the early years of nationhood, weaker students would be given extra coaching classes by teachers for free. Many schools, too, had student clubs where the more capable learners would stay back after school to help the weaker students, with teachers moderating or supervising these sessions. And mind you, the

government did not give any allowance or incentives for all these caring concern that teachers demonstrated.

Today, despite the government spending multi-millions of ringgit for education, including introducing all kinds of smart schools and smart buildings, we find that schools are not the place where students learn to master the subjects. The tuition centres are today the places of learning and understanding. And it comes at great cost and burden to parents.

Perhaps parents should pull up their socks and roll up their sleeves to fight this tuition menace that does not make sense of the whole purpose of having schools.

The prevailing argument that schools cannot and do not have the means to address the needs of weaker students is a whole lot of crap. Such arguments simply mean that we have allowed our schools to fail and keep failing by our supporting of the tuition industry.

The question is why is it that students who attend international schools do not have to attend tuition and yet excel?

We have to be courageous enough to be honest to the core. Our school systems have broken down. We do not have the right people for the right job. There is too much politicking that has crept deep into the veins of education. The bureaucracy that permeates and webs around schools has made teachers to be de-motivated.

Policies and constantly changing directives that have a political motive and agenda spun around, have made teachers end up doing the bare minimum.

Greed to make money at the expense of the failing system further drives more and more teachers to moonlight as private tuition providers.

Blinded and unthinking parents meanwhile allow themselves to be permanent victims of a failed education system, and end up fervently subscribing to the tuition system.

When you have extinguished passion from within the corridors of teaching and learning, you have already hung the education of our young.

Parents, what is your take on this?

Teachers, what is your take on this reality? Oh no, you cannot speak up because you fear being penalised. Right?

Ministers and policy-makers, how about you? Oh no, we cannot risk admitting our failures - not now when the 13th general election is whispering in the air.

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