

## SECTION F

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### SOME SOCIAL UNDERPINNINGS OF TUITION CLASSES

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Students attending tuition classes have been increasing in recent years. Among the reasons adduced for this phenomenon had been the acute competition to gain admission to the Universities. While this is important, attention to the growing tuition system had tended to ignore or underscore the fact that only children who can afford the tuition costs can attend tuition classes, thus eroding the aims of the free education system introduced in the mid 1940s, with the egalitarian ideology that all children should have equitable access to education.

In this study an attempt is made to assess students' socio-economic background and explore whether any correlation exists between this background and tuition attendance and non-attendance. The methodology was quantitative. Data was collected through a questionnaire administered to 576 students in grade 10 and grade 12 in two purposive sample of schools in the Colombo City and Kegalle District. Colombo City sample included 8 schools categorised into 4 groups ranked on the schools' prestige or status. In Kegalle district 3 schools were selected on an urban rural dimension.

The data reveals that a greater number of students in more prestigious schools, and from better socio-economic background attend tuition classes and also that they attend more expensive tuition classes with presumably better quality of teaching, etc. It is supportive of a strong nexus between tuition classes and income groups and ultimately to the social underpinnings that this study uncovers viz. the linkage between tuition class and social class. The data shows a significant curve up in the percentage attending tuition classes as one moves up the income groups and the reverse or a declining curve of students not attending tuition on the income group dimension.