SHADOW EDUCATION: PREVELANCE AND IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

Education and learning are quite related terms. There are formal educational arrangements made for providing education to all up to a certain level of schooling. The term Shadow Education refers to a kind of education which provides supplementary support to the learners by shadowing the mainstream education; this tries to deliver the services lacking in mainstream education as well as provides support in preparation for examinations. The COVID-19 pandemic brought every learner across the globe to a state of anxiety in their learning as the formal schooling got obstructed. This article focuses on the conceptualization of the Shadow Education system: from the genesis of the concept to the possible future trends alongside mainstream education. The evolution of Shadow Education system across the nations in terms of the features is discussed in the present paper. It outlines the underlying drives of Shadow Education system and its impact on Formal Education. Shadow Education system in India is one of the attentions of this paper. This concludes with a discussion on the emerging trends in Shadow Education system and its implications.

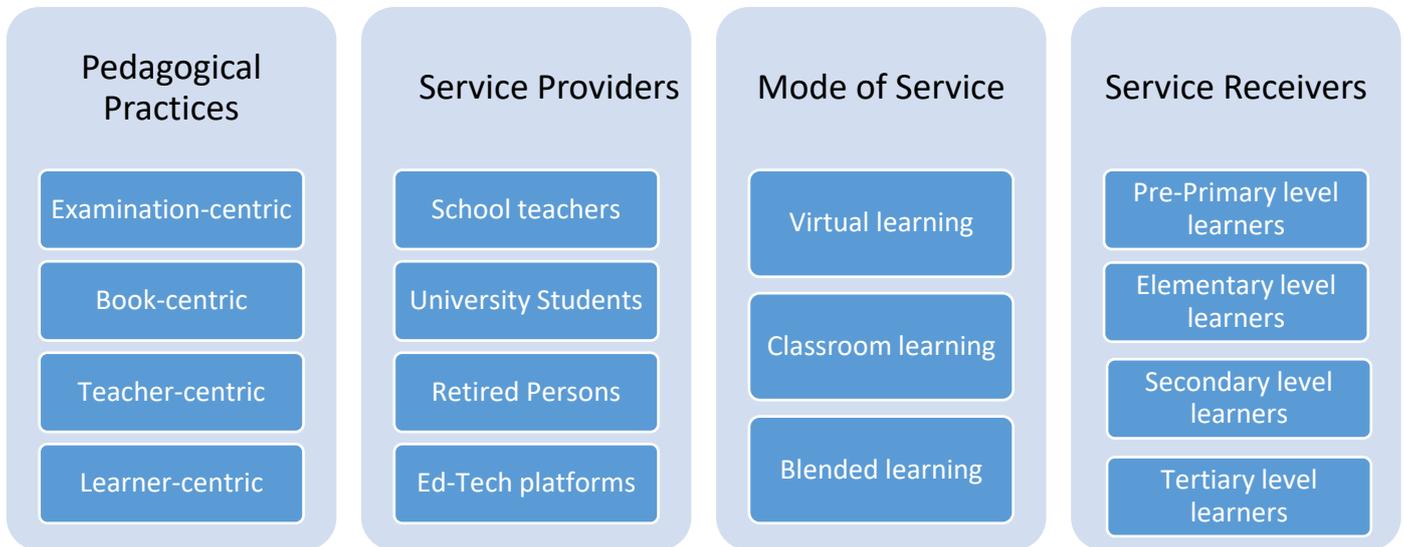*Keywords: Shadow education, learning experience, formal education*

Introduction

Shadow Education as a metaphor evolved more than two decades ago but it has its roots in the past around five decades ago or may be nearly a century ago at some places across the globe. The emergence of this term, its use, beneficiaries, participants involved, impact on the regular education have always been a debatable topic which received less importance than other factors influencing the educational aspects in a country. The area of research on Shadow Education system has not received as much attention from the educational researchers than other areas of research in education. This might be due to not being valued by the educationalists, policy makers, educational psychologists, educational sociologists or the stakeholders of education. The essence of compressive analysis of documents to find the proper definition of Shadow Education was quite difficult and relevant (Malik, 2017). The out-of-school education of learners has been largely covered by Shadow Education system and has a significant impact on their learning. As it provides alternative choices to the stakeholders, there might be an issue of equality of education for the learners of the same level. This aspect was recognized by Government of India since the current Education Policy had laid emphasis on reforming the assessment strategies at secondary level to eradicate the 'coaching culture' as cited;

"The current nature of secondary school exams, including Board exams and entrance exams - and the resulting coaching culture of today - are doing much harm, especially at the secondary school level, replacing valuable time for true learning with excessive exam coaching and preparation." (MHRD, 2020, p. 18)

Growth of Shadow Education System

By becoming a part of daily life for learners of different levels, Shadow Education has stretched to reach almost all parts of the globe in a diversified manner (Zhang & Bray, 2020). The marketization of Education promotes, shapes, modifies the structure, features, and strategies of Shadow Education with the demands of the consumers (Gupta, 2021; Yung & Yuan, 2018; Yung & Bray, 2017; Azam, 2015; & Kwo & Bray, 2014). There is no evidence of having a specific curriculum followed by the institutions providing Shadow Education. Providers may be very successful in creating, shaping, and emphasizing what families want through aggressive advertising and technological tools, and the tutoring curriculum is shaped by what family consumers want. (Zhang & Bray, 2020). The features of Shadow Education

system can be categorized in accordance with the service provider, service receiver, mode and practices of the services observed from analysis of the textual data mentioned in Figure 1.

Pedagogical Practices	Service Providers	Mode of Service	Service Receivers
Examination-centric	School teachers	Virtual learning	Pre-Primary level learners
Book-centric	University Students	Classroom learning	Elementary level learners
Teacher-centric	Retired Persons	Blended learning	Secondary level learners
Learner-centric	Ed-Tech platforms		Tertiary level learners

Figure 1

Features of Shadow Education

The features of Shadow Education system evolved from the support of learning needs to the enrichment of learning towards the preparation of high-stake examinations. The features of Shadow Education system across nations could be observed in Figure 1.

Government and other education officials generally overlooked the existence and evolution of Shadow Education (Zhang & Bray, 2018; Bhorkar & Bray, 2018; Zhang & Bray, 2017; & Majumdar, 2014). The evolution of technology in education is shaping the future of Shadow Education system providing individualized instruction, assessment, and support for learning. Artificial Intelligence, Ed-Tech applications, Game-based learning, Immersive Technology, Digital Learning platforms with interactive sessions from all over the world have been shaping and redesigning Shadow Education system as well.

Shadow Education System: Reasons for Prevalence

The major causes for choosing a non-formal learning platform for the supplementation to the formal education is quite observable at different levels of learning. The drives opting for Shadow Education system could be understood from different perspectives e.g., from the perspectives of the parents, learners who seeks the service and the participants who provides the service according to the demand. Basing upon the features of, reasons for having Shadow Education system along with the formal education system is stated as below:

- To fill out the gaps of learning in formal education.
- The learners having difficulty in their learning at school are seeking further help to overcome these difficulties so as their parents.
- Formal education with a dense population of diversified learners many of them do not get required attention from the teacher.
- The scope of interaction with teachers is less in the formal educational settings.
- The increase in competition in the academic directs the learners to search for tricks which help in order to memorizations of concepts for the purpose of securing more numbers in examinations.

The more the anxiety of parents towards academic performance, the more the dependency on Shadow Education system (Exely, 2021). The system of early tracking, selective schooling, entrance exam preparation, and centralized competitive exam preparation in different level of education facilitates the demand of Shadow Education among the learners as well as their parents (Šťastný, 2021; Exley, 2020; Yahiaoui, 2020; & Borodchuk, 2011). The Shadow Education system might be not only for educationally weak learners but also focusing on the enrichment of the high achievers. Parental education, socio-economic status and involvement has a key role in the use of Shadow Education system (Jansen, et al., 2021; & Gao & Xue, 2021).
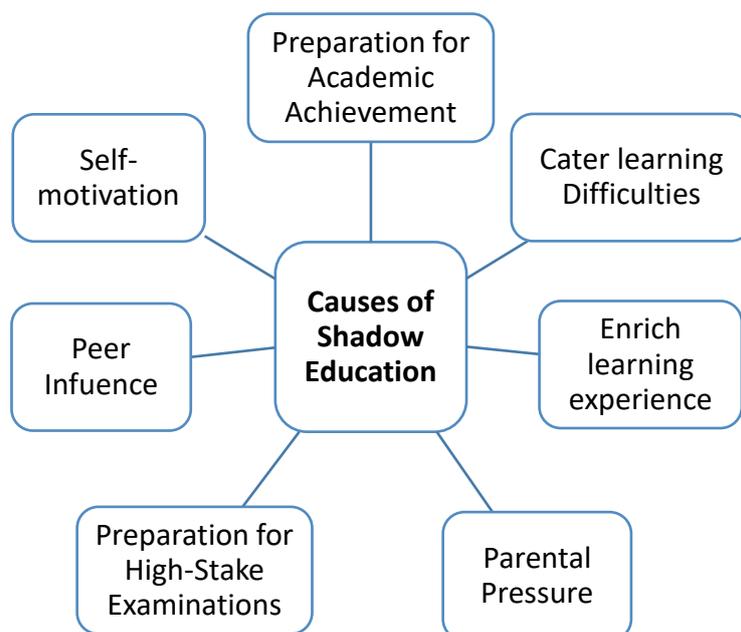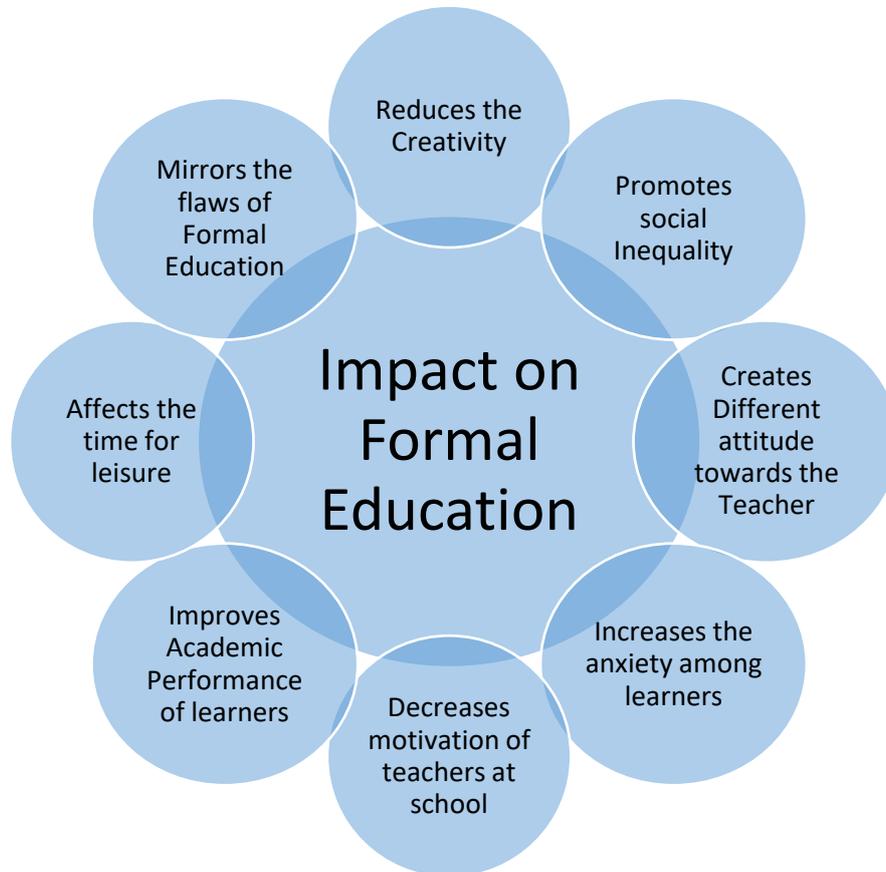
Figure 2

Causes of Opting Shadow Education System

Some of the underlying causes of having a supplementary tutoring service are shown in Figure 2. The increase in the academic competition as well as the national level standardized entrance tests is fueling the growth of Shadow Education system. The pressure of preparation for board examinations is one of the major causes for opting coaching classes, particularly observed in India. This was reflected in the new National Education Policy-2020 while it focused on the elimination of taking coaching classes by reforming the Board and Entrance examinations at Grades of 10 and 12 (MHRD, 2020, p. 18).

Impact on Formal Education

Insofar as families believe that schooling is insufficient to meet their needs, and teachers believe that their salaries are too low, Shadow Education system is a result of the crisis (Bray, 2016). The major impact of Shadow Education system on the formal education system under different aspects could be understood by the following observations from different studies across the nations.

- The concept of providing equal opportunities to the learners by the formal education system has been largely affected by the inclusion of Shadow Education system.
- There is a rise in complicated socio-psychological behavior of learners having/not having Shadow Education towards the teachers.
- Sometime Shadow Education system shows the flaws of the formal education system and sometimes it hampers the educational strategies adapted at formal education settings.
- When large proportions of students receive Shadow Education, teachers may assume that their students are receiving additional support, and then put less in effort than they would otherwise (Bray, 2016).
- Learners lose their creativity while preparing for high-stakes entrance examinations. (Punjabi, 2020).

Figure 3

Impact of Shadow Education on Formal Learning

The system of Shadow Education adapts itself in accordance with the reflection of Formal Education, it designs according to cater the flaws in the Formal Education which promotes the academically weaker learners as well as the high achieves to have Shadow Education (Gupta,2021; Guan & Wei, 2021; & Ghosh & Bray, 2020). Negative impact on formal learning at school is increased by the increase of the use of Shadow Education (Ghosh & Bray, 2020, 2018; & Zhang & Bray, 2018). The school-bred tutoring can have a negative backwash on school systems. As such, private supplementary tutoring is not just a neutral shadow, but it affects the body that it imitates (Ghosh & Bray, 2020).

Shadow Education : Indian Context

In India, the Shadow Education system refers to private tuition for the learners on a small-scale basis. However, for the larger population of learners, the term coaching center is used, operationalized by commercial companies (Zhang & Bray, 2020). It has been observed that in the areas where literacy is high, the rate of having Shadow Education is also high (Sujatha,

2014). In the preparation of high-stake entrance examinations, e.g., preparation for IIT-JEE, NEET, etc., the learners lose their creativity (Punjabi, 2020). The parents who have anxiety about their children's career try to find multiple sources of educational support to cater all their academic needs. Private tutoring serves as a critique of formal schooling in the empirical context (Gupta, 2021). It has been observed that it is growing from home tuition to online learning. The rapid growth in this context led to different educational applications being developed since last decade. Even the Government had also planned various programmes to provide support for learning.

The features of Shadow Education system were although researched in many literatures, but in Indian context, it was not observed in a rigorous manner. The supplementation for third language or for pre-vocational education has not been researched so far. The research on the exploration of Shadow Education in the field of teacher education, vocational education, education at pre-primary or early primary education has not been conducted so far. Private tutoring is a necessary good in the household consumption basket (Azam, 2015). Substantial proportions of Shadow Education system emanate from and are fostered by school systems in India (Ghosh & Bray, 2020).

The National Education Policy-2020 has plans to cater the negative impact of the Shadow Education system in the context of coaching cultures by reforming some examination criteria which has been reflected in the policy document as;

"To further eliminate the 'high stakes' aspect of Board Exams, all students will be allowed to take Board Exams on up to two occasions during any given school year, one main examination and one for improvement, if desired.

In addition to introducing greater flexibility, student choice, and best-of-two attempts, assessments that primarily test core capacities must be the immediate key reforms to all Board exams. Boards may over time also develop further viable models of Board Exams that reduce pressure and the coaching culture." (MHRD, 2020, p. 18)

Shadow Education System in the Emerging Trends

The emerged COVID-19 pandemic has changed the scenario of the traditional means of Shadow Education system. The inclusion of technology as well as the development of individualized learning opportunities by the use of advanced technology in the field of education has changed the picture of non-formal education. The educational technology

companies, widely known as Ed-Tech firms have evolved as a kind of supplementary education providers for the learners. This could be the emerging dimension of Shadow Education system which has come into light when schools were closed, and the digital learning platforms became an important part for providing the learning experience during the health crisis of COVID-19 pandemic.

A Way Forward

The concept of Shadow Education has been a debatable term since the emergence of this term in the field of educational literature. Over two decades passed, still there is a blurring vision in defining the concept of Shadow Education. The research on Shadow Education system conceptualized it in the specific context of research in the particular demographic range. Shadow Education system mainly follows a subject-centric philosophy of education where the importance has been given to the mastery of learning. Shadow Education system can mean different things to different people (Bray, 2014). It usually focuses on the learning needs, preparation for examinations and it acts as a positive supplementary support to the learners for the improvement of the learners in the mainstream education (Subedi, 2018; Mwania & Moronge, 2016; & Entrich, 2014).

The first decade of the 21st century focused on mapping Shadow Education system globally and then the second decade saw an expansion of research with respect to the social and educational impact of Shadow Education on the learners. The related terms used for Shadow Education worldwide are such as: private tutoring, out-of-school education, after school studies, extended education, informal learning, additional studies, educational activities outside-school, supplementary tutoring, Juku (Japan), Hagwon (South Korea), Buxiban (Taiwan), Parapedia (Greece), Repetitorstvo (Russia), Private Tuition (India, Pakistan, & Singapore), etc (Kobakidze & Suter, 2020).

The dynamics of private tutoring should be considered when conceptualising the educational processes and devising policies for schooling, especially in relation to social inequalities and the efficiency of school systems (Bhorkar & Bray,2018). Literally the meaning of Shadow Education might be the mimicry of mainstream schooling, but this could not be developed as a theory so that it could be applied to specific research problems. Difficulties were felt in order to understand this theme due to the biases and limitations of using the vocabulary term used for Shadow Education in different places across the globe.

Shadow Education system from a diversified dimension may be conceptualized as:

- The out-of-school education that supplements the mainstream education with additional time and expense
- A non-formal educational setting which grows from the gaps of formal education in order to fill the gaps by providing paid services
- A supplementary paid tutoring service to enrich and enhance the academic performance which is not addressed by the school or other formal educational institution
- The emergence of Ed-Tech platforms as a form of digital Shadow Education system
- Unpaid academic support from any other person from the community
- Coaching centers, which may or may not be having specific pedagogical strategies or a strict curriculum, taking charges for providing service
- Dedicated private coaching centers which provide specific training for standardized entrance tests by taking significantly high charges.

Conclusion

The previous studies directed the new researchers in this field to go for further research with the changing dimensions of Shadow Education system. The policies and implications regarding this aspect of the education system must be examined. The perspective of stakeholders as well as the educationalists regarding Shadow Education system about its existence and future with the mainstream education has a great role to bring a new kind of reformation towards the holistic development of the education system in the country. The dynamic nature of education has been impacting on the changing nature of Shadow Education as well.

Since Shadow Education system has always remained a controversial area of education system, it is not considered much as a factor impacting the learning process of formal education system. Parents, learners, teachers from either formal education system or Shadow Education system are not keen to share precise information, which could help in doing imperative study on this area. Although, two decades have passed in the field of research on Shadow Education, there are some undefined, undergrounded aspects still uncovered. The essence is to set some clear boundaries in the context of Shadow Education system by the policy makers, educationalists and educational philosophers.

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