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PRIVATE TUITION ATTENDANCE BY G.C.E. (A.L.) BIOLOGY STUDENTS:

A CASE FROM GAMPAHA DISTRICT

A PROJECT REPORT PRESENTED BY

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In Sri Lanka, G.C.E. Advanced Level Examination largely determines the future educational and occupational options of Biology students. Within this competitive framework, schools are no longer perceived to be the only effective delivery system in examination-oriented education. In the country, 35 000 students annually fulfill the minimum qualifications for 6000 university entrance places. Extra school instruction, considered as private tuition in Gampaha district has immersed as a widespread phenomenon and is being institutionalized and almost as a parallel system relevant to the formal school education. This project will examine the magnitude, consequences, opinions and attitudes towards attending private tuition by Biology students in Gampaha district.

The project surveyed 160 school Biology students (grade 12 and 13), 49 past Biology students who had passed the Advanced Level examination in 2003, 44 school teachers who teach in Biology classes in the selected sixteen schools. The school attendance of grade 13 Biology students was relatively weak when compared to grade 12 Biology students and the heavy absence reported especially during last six months prior to the Advanced Level Examination. The study found that 100 per cent of Biology students received private tuition with the majority in the grade 13 classes. When the proportions of students are considered, 1.9, 25.3 and 67.4 per cent respectively attended individual, group and large tuition classes. Even though the number of classes attended by them ranged from one to seven per week, 68.2 per cent attended only for three classes. 87.1 per cent attended for all the three subjects

while 9.6 and 3.3 per cent attended for two subjects and for one subject respectively. The total time duration spent weekly in all tuition classes ranged from 2.5 to 32 hours and the average of this value for school students' sample is 12.16 hours and for the past students' sample, it is 14.69 hours. Of the past Biology student sample, 10.2 per cent spent 20 to 25 hours per week on tuition and fared better on examination and in "Z" scores. The average tuition fee monthly paid by school student sample on Biology, Chemistry and Physics were respectively 483, 473 and 524 rupees. The total distance weekly traveled in attending tuition varies and the average of this variable is 67.8 km and the average distance between students' residences to any tuition class is 12.3 km.