

**IMPACT OF PRIVATE TUITION ON G.C.E. ADVANCED LEVEL
PHYSICS LEARNING IN MATALE EDUCATIONAL ZONE,
SRI LANKA**

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Private tuition has become increasingly common in Sri Lanka's secondary education system, even though free education is available. This study investigated the impact of private physics tuition on G.C.E. Advanced Level students in the Matale Educational Zone. A mixed-methods explanatory sequential design was used, beginning with questionnaires and followed by focus group interviews with students and structured interviews with teachers. A total of 332 Advanced Level physics students and 12 teachers from five selected schools were chosen using simple random sampling. The questionnaires included Likert scale, checkbox, and short-answer questions appropriately. Quantitative data were analysed descriptively using SPSS, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. The quantitative findings showed that 99.4% of students attend private physics classes, with about 85.0% believing that these classes are more supportive than school lessons. Similarly, 91.7% of teachers agreed that students depend on private tuition for physics learning. Students appreciated private classes for their engaging teaching methods (51.8%), individual attention (32.5%), timely syllabus coverage (42.2%), and doubt clarification (29.5%). Additionally, 44.0% of students mentioned that regular assessments conducted in tuition classes helped track progress, while 52.1% felt that missing classes negatively affected their understanding. However, practical learning in tuition settings was limited, as only 16.6% of students experienced real experiments, while 71.7% reported relying mainly on theoretical explanations. Qualitative insights revealed that private tuition has become a central part of students' academic lives, with a noticeable shift toward private classes after the COVID-19 pandemic, which appears to have reduced engagement in school activities. Both students and teachers suggested that a balanced combination of private tuition and school-based instruction is essential for a comprehensive understanding of physics. This study highlights the strong influence of private tuition on learning behavior and raises concerns about its long-term impact on student engagement, equity, and the sustainability of the national education system.

Keywords: Academic performance, Advanced level, Physics, Private tuition, Student engagement