

Education ministry needs to control school fees hike

As the school year opens, there is no good news for the parents as schools defy the authorities to hike school fees and requirements. While the ministry of Education has made its position clear by directing that schools should not increase fees or demand non cash school requirements, the schools remain adamant and parents have no choice but to comply.

Schools have come up with practices such as requiring parents to pay, "commitment fees" to secure a place or pay full tuition before one is handed a list of requirements. By the time one receives the list of requirements, it is too late to change one's mind as they are already committed.

Sometimes, parents are driven by the desire to have their children join particular schools. Thus, schools in demand take advantage of parents desperate to secure a place in order to overcharge.

The issue:

School fees

Our view:

The Education ministry needs to come out and pronounce itself emphatically on school fees hike before the opening of the next school term. Since the school heads and owners have found that they can get away with the hiked charges, this trend will only continue.

One wonders why the ministry of Education, which is the licensing and regulatory body for schools, has left the nation's parents at the mercy of the entrepreneurial school authorities.

Does the ministry still have the capacity to keep tabs on private schools and know what they are charging or if they are complying with orders from the regulator? Education has become the cost that drains the pockets of the masses and with no hope of quick returns. If the ministry is so handicapped, who will prevail on the schools which are charging such exorbitant fees?

For this term, it may be too late to take action but the ministry needs to come out and pronounce itself emphatically on school fees hike before the opening of the next school term.

Since the school heads and owners have found that they can get

away with the hiked charges, this trend is only going to go on and upwards.

However, the high cost of education is not good for the economy and is only going to leave the struggling parents impoverished, having given all their incomes, savings and assets to educate their children.

However, it is also upon the parents to say no to being fleeced. Once school owners and heads realise that parents will not accept some of these charges, then they will be forced to revise them.

In the meantime, parents' hands are tied and although the ministry has circulated a telephone contact for parents to report cases of hiked fees, one wonders how effective this will be, given the power that the almighty schools seem to wield over us all.

Our commitment to you

We pledge: