

Teachers aren't responsible for failures in schools

PROF GEORGE W. KANYEIHAMBA > LEARNED VIEW

The foundation of a child's education begins at home. If the parents or guardians of a child are illiterate and incapable of inculcating the ethics and desire to have good education and only live under the adage of "I do not care" or "I am not bothered", the child or children under their care will find it very difficult to rise to the occasion of required standard at which they should perform in their education.

The principle of parents or guardians not caring about the education of their children will prohibit them from developing a philosophy of adventure and achievement. This gravely affects their future prospects of commitment and desire to fulfil the main object desired by this nation. Children who go to school by luck are already handicapped and will fare badly in their work and performance.

The situation becomes worse when schools are poorly facilitated and forced to rely on poorly paid teachers. In many instances, those schools are forced to hire poorly qualified or

unqualified teachers to do the teaching. The teachers are, therefore, incapable of producing passable students in examinations.

Over the years, we have noticed that the children of the parents who care about their children's education perform better. On the other hand, children who come from poor background or homes that are themselves ignorant of the values of education have always performed extremely badly and failed examinations. However, this should not be blamed on their teacher. It is, therefore, unjustified to demote or sack teachers simply because their students performed poorly in the examinations.

Teachers who teach in poorly facilitated schools are incapacitated in producing the best pupils or students. Therefore, many times any criticism levelled against such teachers is unfounded. Faced with such criticisms, some teachers are tempted and sometimes are forced to show better results or else have their services terminated.

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Dilemma. Faced with such criticisms, some teachers are forced to show better results or else have their services terminated. They do this by lowering their own standards in schools, cheating, exaggerating and falsifying results.

They do this by lowering their own standards in schools, cheating, exaggerating or falsifying results and performance of their results. The media has published such tendencies and revealed the tricks such schools use to pretend that they are performing well.

It was reported in one school that teachers themselves answered then distributed and instructed pupils to paraphrase and adopt answers as their own in order for school to



produce excellent results. A recent research reveals what happened to those pupils when they were admitted to higher institutions of learning. It found that they invariably perform poorly and become dropouts in those schools.

In our opinion, however, it is wrong to accuse lecturers and teachers of incompetence. An example from a university in the United Kingdom will suffice. Students were obliged to do one subject outside their preferred course in order to be awarded a de-

gree. About 60 per cent of the students did not like the subject offered as additional study. They refused to attend classes or do tests in subject chosen.

When examination time came, they nevertheless turned up to do the examinations to qualify for the degree. They could not pass the final examinations without a pass in that subject. All of them, except one failed. The university authorities were unhappy with the number of failures in that subject which showed that only one candidate had passed in the course.

When they complained, the university authorities confronted the lecturer to explain why there was such a high rate of failure in his subject. He defended himself that they did not attend his classes and, therefore, his marking reflected.

The university authorities sought an opinion of an external examiner wishing to have the lecturer disciplined. The external examiner vigorously defended the accuracy of the lecturer's professional marking and remarked that he was only surprised about the student who passed.

This country should be concerned with facilitating schools and teachers for better, meaningful education and achievement.

Prof Kanyeihamba is a retired Supreme Court judge.
gwkany@yahoo.com