



UNDERSTANDING THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEADERS PERCEPTION ABOUT DEMOCRACY THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY ANALYSIS

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Abstract: The result of this study will prove beneficial for preservice and in-service teachers to gain insight for working towards fostering democratic leadership qualities among the students through their teaching process.

Key words: Democratic Leadership, Democratic Principle, school governance, leadership qualities, administrative processes

Introduction

The democratic process in education is a type of formal education. The present qualitative grounded theory study aims to examine how Indian schools follow the democratic setup and conceptualise their role in fostering democratic leadership in the schools. It is a very pivotal role for school leaders such as the principal of the schools to take care of the education system to be democratic to foster democratic principles in the classroom and the process of school administration.

The schools are the base medium of teaching democratic principles to students from the very early stage, in this process the principal of the school plays a very vital role along with the teaching and non-teaching staff of the school to inculcate the democratic leadership qualities in setting up of the democratic principles in the administrative processes of the school governances.

To check how many schools have been set up as per the democratic principles and foster democratic leadership in their school, the researcher explores 4 sample schools, both Government and private, with English, English, and Vernacular medium schools.

That is organized democratically so that, students can manage their learning and participate in the governance of their school. Democratic education is often specifically emancipatory, with the students' voices being equal to the teachers. The history of democratic education spans from at least the 17th century. While it is associated with several individuals, there has been no central figure, establishment, or nation that advocated democratic education.

History Locke's Thoughts, 1693 Era of Enlightenment

In 1693, John Locke published *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. In describing the teaching of children, he declares, “None of the things they are to learn, should ever be made a burden to them, or imposed on them as a task. Whatever is so proposed, presently becomes irksome; the mind takes an aversion to it, though before it was a thing of delight or indifference. Let a child be ordered to whip his top at a certain time every day, whether he has or has not a mind to it; Let this be required of him as a duty, wherein he must spend so many hours, morning and in the afternoon, and see whether he will not soon be weary of any play at this rate”.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s book of advice on education, *Émile*, was first published in 1762. *Émile*, the imaginary pupil he uses for illustration, was only to learn what he could appreciate as useful. He was to enjoy his lessons and learn to rely on his judgment and experience. The tutor must not lay down precepts, he must let them be discovered. Wrote Rousseau, and urged him not to make *Émile* learn science, but to let him discover it. He also said that we should not substitute books for personal experience, because this does not teach us to reason; it teaches us to use other people’s reasoning; it teaches us to believe a great deal but never to know anything. 19th century

While Locke and Rousseau were concerned only with the education of the children of the wealthy, in the 19th century, Leo Tolstoy set up a school for peasant children. This was on his estate at Yasnaya Polyana, Russia, in the late 19th century. He tells us that the school evolved freely from principles introduced by teachers and pupils; that despite the preponderating influence of the teacher, the pupils had always had the right not to come to school, or, having come, not to listen to the teacher, and that the teacher had the right not to admit a pupil, and was able to use all the influence he could muster to win over the community, where the children were always in the majority.

20th and 21st century

Influential democratic schools

A Democratic school is a certain kind of alternative free school with a radical emphasis on students’ democracy and freedom to learn.

The oldest democratic school is Summerhill, in Suffolk, England, founded in 1921. The first democratic school in the United States was the Antioch School in Yellow Springs, Ohio. It was founded in 1921 through Antioch College. Sudbury Valley School, founded in Framingham, Massachusetts in 1968, has full democratic governance: The School Meeting manages all aspects of the school, including staff hiring and facilities. A Sudbury school is now a general class of school modelled after this original.

The term Democratic Education originates from the Democratic School of Hadera, the first school in the world is called a democratic school. It was founded in Israel in 1987 by Yaacov Hecht. It is a public school. The term has been embraced by alternative/open schools all over the world, predominantly following the foundation of IDEC – the International Democratic Education Conference, which was first convened at the democratic school in Hadera.

Free schools’ movement. In the 1960s, hundreds of free schools opened, many based on Summerhill. However, A.S. Neill, the founder of Summerhill, distanced himself from American Summerhill schools for not successfully implementing the philosophy of freedom, not license. The free school movement (including many schools based on Summerhill became a broad movement in the 1960s and 1970s, but was largely renounced by the 1980s. Progressive education and Dewey’s ideals did influence them, but only indirectly for the most part.

Networks supporting democratic education include:

The Alternative Education Resource Organization launched in 1989 to create a student- driven, learner-centres approach to education. The annual International Democratic Education Conference was first held in 1993.

The Australasian Democratic Education Community held its first conference in 2002. The European Democratic Education Community was founded in 2008, at the first European.

Democratic Education Conference.

The Réseau des écoles démocratiques au Québec, or RÉDAQ, was founded in 2012 to sponsor the creation of democratic schools in the province of Québec, Canada.

The Alliance for Self-Directed Education was launched in 2016 to make Self-Directed Education a normal and accessible option for all families.

Democracy Matters, launched in 2009, is a UK alliance of organizations promoting education for citizenship, participation, and practical politics.

IDEC 2005 named two core beliefs: self-determination and democratic governance. EUDEC has both beliefs and mutual respect is also in their belief statement. IDEN supports schools that self-identify as democratic.

Defining principles

Democratic schools are very diverse, but they can all be defined by having two key principles. In other words, it can be said that all democratic schools have these two characteristics in common:

1. Democratic governance: Meetings in which all members of the school community can participate
2. Autonomy for the students to manage their learning process

Democratic governance Democratic governance implies the active participation of the entire school community, including the children, in the various collective decision-making processes that define the school. This democratic management can be done in several ways. Most democratic schools make decisions based on a majority vote, while some schools seek to reach consensus and a small selection of democratic schools use Sociocracy for their governance.

Student autonomy

The level of student autonomy and the means of creating it varies widely from school to school. Democratic schools can have different pedagogy, as there are many ways to guarantee and develop student autonomy in the learning process. There are several approaches and pedagogical devices that can be implemented in line with the principles of democratic education.

Variety

Democratic education, like democratic government, comes in many different forms. These are some of the areas in which democratic schools differ.

Curriculum

Democratic schools are characterized by involving students in the decision-making process that affects what and how they learn. Democratic schools generally have no mandatory curriculum, considering forced learning to be undemocratic. Some democratic schools officially offer voluntary courses, and many help interested students to prepare for national examinations so they gain qualifications for further study or future employment.

Administrative structure

Democratic schools often have meetings open to all students and staff, where everyone present has a voice and sometimes an equal vote. Some include parents. These school meetings can cover anything from small matters to the appointment or dismissal of staff and the creation or annulment of rules, or to general expenditure and the structure of the school day. At some schools all students are expected to attend these meetings, at others they are voluntary.

Student autonomy

Pedagogical devices that are put into practice in various democratic schools to guarantee and develop students' autonomy in their learning process include:

- **Project-Based Learning:** Students learn through an investigation process structured around complex and authentic issues. Students choose the theme, question, or objective to direct and create their project until they reach a final output. In this way, they are the protagonists of their learning process. Projects can be carried out individually or in groups.
- **Committees:** Teams formed to help in the organization of the school space, and the completion of routine tasks for the health and maintenance of the community. These groups are usually formed during school meetings, according to the needs of the school community.
- **Study groups:** Are formed from themes proposed by students and/or educators. They may be questions or topics that they would like to explore. Each group usually has a facilitator or tutor who guides the study process.
- **Self-assessment:** The student evaluates their learning process, based on criteria defined together with the educator/tutor.
- **Mentoring:** Each student has a mentor, who can work with each student individually or in groups. The mentoring sessions deal with the goals and aspirations of the student and issues that not only focus on academic performance but also the relationship with their peers, educators, and family.
- **Study guide:** A document planned by the educator to be used by the student inside or outside the school space. It aims to assist students in autonomous study, thus favoring the understanding of concepts, resolution of situations, readings, theoretical and practical deepening, among other aspects of the teaching process and learning.
- **Unschooling/Self-directed Education:** Unschooling is an informal learning that advocates learner-chosen activities as a primary means of learning. Unschoolers learn through their natural life experiences, including play, household responsibilities, personal interests and curiosity, internships and work experience, travel, books, elective classes, family, mentors, and social interaction. Self-directed education is education that derives from the self-chosen activities and life experiences of the learner, whether or not those activities were chosen deliberately for education.
- **Finance:** Some democratic learning environments are parent-funded, some charity-funded. Schools may have a sliding scale based on family income. Publicly funded democratic schools exist in Canada.
- **Age range:** Age mixing is a deliberate policy in some democratic schools. It may include very young children, even babies. Some democratic schools only enrol older students.
- **Location:** Democratic education is not limited to any setting, for democratic learning communities include in an office building, on city streets, and in a rural area.

Theory: While types of democratic education are as numerous as types of democracy, a general definition of democratic education is education that democratizes learning itself. The goals of democratic education vary according to the participants, the location, and access to resources. There is no unified body of literature, spanning multiple disciplines, on democratic education. However, there are theories of democratic education from the following perspectives:

Cognitive theory:

- During the practice theory movement, there was renewed interest in child development. Jean Piaget's theory of universal steps in comprehension and general patterns in the acquisition of knowledge was challenged by experiences at democratic schools. No two kids ever take the same path. Few are remotely similar. Each child is so unique, so exceptional.

- Jean Lave was one of the first and most prominent social anthropologists to discuss cognition within the context of cultural settings presenting a firm argument against the functionalist psychology that many educationalists refer to implicitly. For Lave, learning is a process undergone by an actor within a specific context. The skills or knowledge learned in one process are not generalizable nor reliably transferred to other areas of human action. Her primary focus was on mathematics in context and mathematics education.
- The broader implications reached by Lave and others who specialize in situated learning are that beyond the argument that certain knowledge is necessary to be a member of society, knowledge learned in the context of a school is not reliably transferable to other contexts of practice.
- John Locke argues that children are capable of reasoning at a young age. It may perhaps be wondered that I mention reasoning with children; and yet I cannot but think of the true way of dealing with them. They understand it as early as they do language and, if I have not observed, they love to be treated as rational creatures, sooner than is imagined,” Rousseau disagreed. Use force with children and reasoning with men.
- Humans are innately curious, and democratic education supports the belief that the drive to learn is sufficiently strong to motivate children to become effective adults.

Criticism based on cognitive theory

The human brain is not fully developed until adulthood (around the age of 25). A disadvantage of teenagers being responsible for their education is that young brains have both fast-growing synapses and sections that remain unconnected. This leaves teens easily influenced by their environment and more prone to impulsive behaviour.

Ethics

Democracy can be valued on ethical grounds.

Cultural theory

Democratic education is consistent with the cultural theory that learning in school must be continuous with life outside of school and that children should become active participants in the control and organization of their community.

Research on hunter-gatherer societies indicates that free play and exploration were effective transmitters of the societies culture to children.

According to George Dennison, democratic environments are social regulators: Our desire to cultivate friendships, engender respect, and maintain what George Dennison terms natural authority encourages us to act in socially acceptable ways i.e. culturally informed practices of fairness, honesty, congeniality, etc.

Criticism based on cultural theory

Children are influenced by many curricula beyond the school curriculum: TV curricula, advertisers, curricula, curricula of religious communities, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, encyclopaedias, etc., and therefore, the most significant tasks any school can undertake is to try to develop in youngsters an awareness of these other curricula and an ability to criticize them...it is utter nonsense to think that by turning children loose in an unplanned and unstructured environment they can be freed in any significant way. Rather, they are thereby abandoned to the blind forces of the hucksters, whose primary concern is neither the children, nor the truth, nor the decent future of ... society.”

David Émile Durkheim argues that the transition from primitive to modern societies occurred in part as elders made a conscious decision to transmit what were deemed the most essential elements of their culture to the following generations. He concludes that modern societies are so complex—much more complex than primitive hunter-gatherer societies—and the roles that individuals must fill in society are so

varied, that formal mass education is necessary to instill social solidarity and what he terms secular morality.

Political theory

There are a variety of political components to democratic education. One author identifies those elements as inclusive and rights, equal participation in decision-making, and equal encouragement for success. The Institute for Democratic Education principles of democratic education identify several political principles,

The interaction between democratic philosophy and education,

Pluralistic education,

- School administration by means of democratic procedures,
- Education based on respect for human rights,
- Dialogic evaluation,
- Dialogic relationships, and
- Critical social thinking.

Effect on quality of education

The type of political socialization that takes place in democratic schools is strongly related to deliberative democracy theory. Claus Offe and Ulrich Preuss, two theorists of the political culture of deliberative democracy, argue that in its cultural production, deliberative democracy requires an open-ended and continuous learning process in which the roles of both teacher and curriculum are missing. In other words, what is to be learned is a matter that we must settle in the process of learning itself. The political culture of a deliberative democracy and its institutions, they argue, would facilitate more dialogue forms of making one voice heard which would be achieved within a framework of liberty, within which paternalism is replaced by autonomously adopted self-paternalism, and technocratic elitism by the competent and self-conscious

judgment of citizens.

As a curricular, administrative and social operation within schools, democratic education is essentially concerned with equipping people to make real choices about fundamental aspects of their lives and happens within and for democracy.

It can be a process where teachers and students work collaboratively to reconstruct the curriculum to include everyone. In at least one conception, democratic education teaches students to participate in consciously reproducing their society, and conscious social reproduction. This role necessitates democratic education happening in a variety of settings and being taught by a variety of people, including parents, teachers, public officials, and ordinary citizens. Because of this democratic education begins not only with children who are to be taught but also with citizens who are to be their teachers.

Preparation for life in a democracy

The strongest, political rationale for democratic education is that it teaches the virtues of democratic deliberation for the sake of future citizenship. This type of education is often alluded to in the deliberative democracy literature as fulfilling the necessary and fundamental social and institutional changes necessary to develop a democracy that involves intensive participation in group decision making, negotiation, and social life of consequence.

Civic education

The concept of the hidden curriculum includes the belief that anything taught in an authoritarian setting is implicitly teaching authoritarianism. Thus, civic education, if taught in a compulsory setting, undermines its own lessons in democracy. A common belief in democratic schools is that democracy must be experienced to be learned. This argument conforms to the cognition-in-context research by Lave. Another common belief, which supports the practice of compulsory classes in civic education, is that passing on democratic values requires an imposed structure.

Arguments about how to transmit democracy, and how much and how early to treat children democratically, are made in various literature concerning student voice, youth participation and other elements of youth empowerment.

Standard progressive visions of education as collaboration tend to downplay the workings of power in society. If learners are to develop a democracy, some scholars have argued, they must be provided the tools for transforming the non-democratic aspects of a society.

Democracy in this sense involves not just participation in decision making, a vision ascribed especially to Dewey, but the ability to confront power with solidarity.

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Economic theory

Core features of democratic education align with the emerging consensus on 21st-century business and management priorities. Such features include increased collaboration, decentralized organization, and radical creativity.

Curriculum theory

While democratic schools do not have an official curriculum, what each student does might be considered their curriculum.

John Dewey was an early advocate of inquiry education, in which student questions and interests shaped the curriculum, a sharp contrast to the factory model that began to predominate education during the 20th century as standardization became a guiding principle of many educational practices. Although there was a resurgence of inquiry education in the 1980 and 1990, the standards movement of the 21st century and the attendant school reform movement have squashed most attempts at authentic inquiry-oriented democratic education practices. The standards movement has reified standardized tests in literacy and writing, neglecting science inquiry, the arts, and critical literacy.

Democratic schools may not consider only reading, writing, and arithmetic to be the real basics for being a successful adult.

A.S. Neill said, "hell with arithmetic". Nonetheless, there is a common belief that people will eventually learn "the basics"; when they develop internal motivation. Furthermore, an educator implementing inquiry projects will look at the "next steps"; in a student's learning and incorporate basic subject matter as needed. This is easier to accomplish in elementary school settings than in secondary school settings, as elementary teachers typically teach all subjects and have large blocks of time that allow for in-depth projects that integrate curriculum from different knowledge domains. Allen Koshewa conducted research that highlighted the tensions between democratic education and the role of teacher control, showing that children in a fifth-grade classroom tried to usurp democratic practices by using undue influence to sway others, much as representative democracies often fail to focus on the common good or protect minority interests. He found that class meetings, service education, saturation in the arts, and an emphasis on

interpersonal caring helped overcome some of these challenges. Despite the challenges of inquiry education, classrooms that allow students to make choices about curriculum propel students to not only learn about democracy but also to experience it.

In practice

Play

A striking feature of democratic schools is the ubiquity of play. Students of all ages—but especially the younger ones—often spend most of their time either in free play or playing games (electronic or otherwise). All attempts to limit, control, or direct play must be democratically approved before being implemented. Play is seen as an activity every bit as valuable as academic pursuit, often even more valuable. Play is considered essential for learning, particularly in fostering creativity. Reading, writing, and arithmetic Interest in learning to read happens in a wide variety of ages. Progressive educators emphasize students’ choice in reading selections, as well as topics for writing. In addition, Stephen Krashen and other proponents of democratic education emphasize the role of libraries in promoting democratic education. Others, such as children’s author Judy Blume, have spoken out against censorship as antagonistic to democratic education, while the school reform movement, which gained traction under the federal initiative. No Child Left Behind; and later under ‘Race to the Top’; and the Common Core Standards movement, emphasize strict control over curriculum.

Research into democratic education

- A study of 12 schools in the United Kingdom by a former school inspector indicates that democratic schooling produces greater motivation to learn and self-esteem among students.
- A study done in Israel indicates that the decline in interest in science that occurs regularly in conventional schools, does not occur in democratic schools.
- Three studies done on students of Sudbury schools in the United States of America indicate that students & “have been highly successful in their higher education (for those who chose that route) and careers. They have gone on to all walks of life that are valued in our society and report that they feel advantaged because of the sense of personal responsibility, self-control, continued interest in learning, and democratic values they acquired at Sudbury Valley.”;
- Sands School in the United Kingdom was inspected in 2013 by Ofsted and was found to be ‘Good’; overall with several ‘Outstanding’ features. No area of the provision was found to be less than & “good’; and all of the Statutory regulations (the school “Standards”) were met in full. This is the same outcome as the previous inspection in 2010.
- Ofsted observed that taking part in the decision-making process developed “Exceptional qualities of thoughtfulness and the ability to offer balanced Arguments”. Good pupil achievements were found to be a “consequence of the democratic structures”. Personal development was deemed to be “outstanding” because of the exceptional impact of the democratic principles. The inspector was particularly impressed with the pupils “behaviour, noting that “lessons took place in an atmosphere of mutual respect “and that “visitors were greeted with interest and impeccable manners”;
- Alia College in Melbourne, Australia was in the top 5 Year 9 NAPLAN for Australian schools in Reading, Writing, Grammar, and Punctuation abilities.
- Albany Free School, in Albany, United States has treated students with ADHD far better than surrounding schools, giving them enough play time to render medication unnecessary.

Research questions:

- What do you understand by the term democratic leadership?

· Do you consider students' autonomy to express themselves sometimes hampers the democratic setup of the classroom? Yes or no.

· Have you ever faced or seen a situation in the schools where there was teacher dominance?

If yes, how did it impact the overall classroom environment and particularly the students?

· What are the factors responsible for promoting democracy in the classroom?

· What do you understand by the term equity?

· Do you think understanding equity is important for fostering democracy in the classroom?

· What kind of strategies do you employ to promote democratic leadership in your classroom?

· Do you think democratic leadership should be based on the academic merit of the students?

If yes why, if no why not?

· Do you think the requirement of the Reservation in education?

Research Design:

For the present study constructivist grounded theory design is used. It help to study how the Principals of the schools fosters democratic leadership in their education processes to implement democratic education in their school administrative process by constantly comparing data with data then data with the theory until it reaches the saturation point and emerges with the theory grounded in the data.

Sample and sampling technique-

Convenient sampling technique is involved, school principals from different schools were interviewed from Mumbai Sub-urban areas.

Table -1: Participants Demographic Information

Name of the School	Name of the Principal of the school	Type of the school
Powai English School	Ms Shirley Pillai	Private English medium School
Vivek Vidyalaya (Powai)	Mr Vivek Thora	Private Marathi & Semi-English Medium- School
Dharamveer Sambhaji School (Vikhroli West)	Ms Kishori V Rane	Government Marathi & Semi- English Medium- School
Guru Nanak School (Andheri East)	Ms Harjit Kaur	Private English medium School

Tools:

To collect the data, a semi structured interview schedule is prepared. It focuses on questions based on how participants are viewing and addressing to foster democratic leadership through democratic setup, in the school's administration and education.

Data Collection:

There were two stages of data collection. First the theories democratic education was viewed through the set of concepts were derived and later attributes were formulated for interview questions. Secondly the purposeful sample was sought and physical and video calling semi structured interviews were conducted. Data was collected only after an ethical consent of the school Principal to participate in the study with full assurance of not revealing their identities.

Data Analysis:

Analysis involved various levels. First each of the participants are interviewed and video recorded. Secondly the videos were transcript, verbatim the expression and pauses. The videos and transcript were rechecked to avoid any misinterpretation of the data. The interviews gave an overview of the Principals' administrative process to foster democratic education and leadership, also the different factors which enabled them to create the environment for fostering democracy in the school education and administration.

The interview was conducted in Hindi and in English as per the comfort level of the principal the duration of the interview was from 30 – 45 minutes. The collected data was analysed in three stages. At stage one- initial coding or open coding stage, where the data was explored and codes identified. Stage two focussed coding was done wherein categories evolved through constantly comparing data with data and data with codes as the goal to construct grounded theory.

Finding:

Findings have been theoretically sensitised and themes emerging out of the data analysis have been linked with the research questions that is elaborated in the following paragraph.

Transcription of the interviews of the principals on the topic of school administration on the line of democratic set up in the schools.

Name of the School:

Vivek Vidyalaya (Semi English & Marathi Medium private school)

Name of the Principal: Vivek Thora

Location Of the School: Park Site Powai, Andheri East, Mumbai

Transcription of the interview of the principals:

Ethical consent- Why are you calling? What information are about to seek and why? No info will be shared with anybody else.

This interview is for the research purpose, as part of the project in the course of Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Leadership. The topic of the project is about the 'Democratic set up in the Indian schools.

<p>Introduction: Myself Vivek Thora. I am the principal of Vivek Vidyalaya, in Park site, Powai. This school is run by Vivek Education Society. The founder of the school was the late Jagannath Thora He started the school in 2001. The school was in the Marathi medium but later-on some subjects like Maths and Science started to be taught in English. We have students from Nursery to 10th standard both in Marathi and Semi-English medium.</p>	<p>Understanding the concept of Democratic Leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Believer of democratic leadership ● inclusion in of thoughts and ideas in the decision making process <p>Anecdotes about democratic leadership” we welcome all teachers to share their thoughts before taking any decision. Our roles and responsibilities are shared”.</p>
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There are 600 students studying in the school, 17 teachers and 5 non-teaching staff are working in the school. The students are from poor backgrounds and cannot afford high fees so only 1000/- rupees are charged to them as fees.

The motto of running the school is towards the service of the society. The founder had started with this motto of service to the society and we are following the same.

I: What do you understand by the term democratic leadership?

Principal Vivek Thora: Yes, yes! We believe in democratic leadership. We work to enhance the democratic leadership in our school. As per the teachers, we welcome all teachers to share their thoughts before taking any decision. Our roles and responsibilities are shared. Every teacher knows his or her roles and responsibilities for every work. He is free to take whatever the decision he has to take while doing their work.

We do not interfere in their work but whatever help the teachers need we provide.

In school we follow the actual election process where all the students vote to elect the school council of standard 10 for the boys', girls' representatives. cultural and sports representatives. They are involved in the discussion of the programme planning and their thoughts are also welcomed.

This way we go ahead with the concept of the democratic leadership.

I: Do you consider students' autonomy to express themselves sometimes hampers the democratic set up of the classroom?

Yes or no.

Principal Vivek Thora: It happens sometimes, we are trying to follow proper democracy in every corner but while doing it in actual practice there come some errors. We try to make it maximum to make it properly. We tell teachers and students to do administrative work but they cannot do it because of lack of knowledge and experience but with our help they are able to do the work.

I: Have you ever faced or seen a situation in the schools where there was teacher dominance? If yes, how did it impact the

• non-interference in job roles

• Election process to elect the school council
-participation of students representatives in the decision making process.

Agreeing about students' autonomy does hamper the democratic setup of the classroom sometimes.
practical -implementation of democracy in the classroom, happens with trial and error
Anecdotes about delegation of work:

• We tell teachers and students to do administrative work but they cannot do it because of lack of knowledge and experience but with us help they are able to do the work.

Acknowledging the negative impact of the strict teachers in the democratic classroom.

• Students will not feel free to share their feelings and opinions
• Students will not feel free to share their feelings and opinions
• the other staff members will not have a good bonding.

Solutions for the strict teacher:

• provide guidance, support from the school leader (the principal), and time to change the teaching approach.

Factors promoting democracy in the classroom:

• teacher's friendly behaviour and students participatory approach are directly proportional to each other

Developing equity through

sitting arrangements

• slow learners sitting with

<p>overall classroom environment and particularly the students? Principal Vivek Thora: If the teacher is very strict, the Democracy in the classroom is difficult. Students will not feel free to share their feelings and opinions. They are capable of sharing their concerns but they would be scared about the teacher's reaction. It may happen with the teachers also if within the staff any teacher is very dominant, the other staff members will not have a good bonding. In this case as a leader, we must interfere to find out why it happens and how we can find the solution to this problem. The strict teacher may not be at fault, but the method in which to handle the problem may be different. In this situation. We would provide guidance, support, and time to change the teaching approach of the teacher by his /herself.</p> <p>I: What are the factors responsible for promoting democracy in the classroom?</p> <p>Principal Vivek Thora: Teachers' behaviour. If the teachers' behaviour is friendly, then the students also would feel more comfortable towards the teacher for sharing their views and participating in discussion.</p> <p>Choice of the topic as per the students' choice, then students' participation would be more and they can share their feelings. what does the teacher want to do with the students? If the teacher wants the students to speak up about some subject, with proper prior planning to administer the activity.</p> <p>I: What do you understand by the term equity?</p> <p>Principal Vivek Thora: In every class we have slow learners and gifted students, so our sitting arrangements such that the slow learners are sitting with the brilliant students so that he will be supporting and guiding the slow learners, since the teacher cannot be with all the weaker students of the classroom to guide personally. We run extra classes after school for the weaker students. We make the weaker students do the basic learning activities like reading, writing and mathematical numbering for their learning.</p>	<p>gifted students to get peer guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● extra classes after school for weaker students, to make sure their reading, writing and numerical skills are proper <p>Acknowledgement of the role of equity in fostering democracy in the classroom.</p> <p>Strategies to promote democratic leadership in the classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● through activities such as competitions, class assemblies, presentation through rotation. ● ensuring equal opportunities for all students <p>Democratic Leadership vs academic merit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● disagrees with the concept leadership based on academic merits <p>Opinionated on holistic development of students and their leadership qualities: "The overall behaviour of a student or each part of the students' life is developing in the school".</p> <p>"How is the student taking part in the programs and in the activities, how is he doing his projects, how is his attendance, behavioural culture. All these things are evaluated".</p> <p>"To run the proper democratic leadership, only academic performance is not important".</p> <p>Reservation in education: Opinionated on reservations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "reservation on casteism and reservation on economic status these are two points". ● reservation should be on reservation on economic status ● This is the real subject of debate. ● about following constitutional rules and
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I: Do you think understanding equity is important for fostering democracy in the classroom?

The principal Vivek Thora: yes

I: What kind of strategies do you employ to promote democratic leadership in your classroom?

The principal Vivek Thora: In the whole year we run many activities, our own competition and class assemblies are there. For the competitions or for class assemblies we select the students through a rotation process. So, every student gets an opportunity to participate on stage and can perform.

The guidance is also provided by the teachers.

I: Do you think democratic leadership should be based on the academic merit of the students? If yes why, if no why not?

The principal Vivek Thora: We cannot say that only on academic curriculum democratic leadership is based, it is only one part of the education. In co-curricular activities such as singing and drawing, the overall behaviour of a student or each part of the students' life is developing in the school. Now the CC (co-curricular activities), the continuous evaluation only 40-50 marks are for academics and the rest of the marks are for behaviours, handling the situation, how is the student taking part in the programs and in the activities, how is he doing his projects, how is his attendance, behavioural culture.

All these things are evaluated in 50 to 60 marks. And standard wise the marks are different. For standard 1 -2, 20 marks for academics and 80 marks for activities, For standard 3 -4, 30 marks for academics and 70 marks for activities for standard 5 -6, 40 marks for academics and 60 marks for activities and For standard 7 -8, 50 marks for academics and 50 marks for activities.

To run the proper democratic leadership only academic performance is not important. To run the proper democratic leadership only academic performance is not important.

government regulations on reservations

Anecdotes about the positive and negative impact of reservation on different categories of students.

“In a class, between two students, one student gets 90 percent marks and the other gets 60 percent marks. If 90 percent of students are not getting admission in a good college and 80 percent of students get admission in a good college through reservations, then this is not a democratic process”.

“For higher studies, if the annual fee is for 5 lakhs then for reserved category it is for 5-4 thousand is another such example”.

<p>I: Do you think the requirement of the Reservation in education?</p> <p>The principal Vivek Thora: We cannot say reservation on casteism and reservation on economic status are two points. I am running the Government school, so I have to follow the Government rules. So, we have to follow the guidelines of the Government based on reservation. For job opportunities also, we have to follow.</p> <p>According to the economic status reservations should be given. This is the real subject of debate. It is in our constitution and we have to follow. Earlier it (Reservation) was for 10 years, with the change of the government the reservation also is happening as per the comfort of the Government and the reservations are still going on.</p> <p>In a class, between two students, one student gets 90 percent marks and the other gets 60 percent marks. If 90 percent of students are not getting admission in a good college and 80 percent of students get admission in a good college through reservations, then this is not a democratic process.</p> <p>In the open category, for higher studies, if the annual fees are for 5 lakhs, then for reserved category it is for 5-4 thousand is another such example.</p>	
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The interview concluded with a thank you note.

Transcription of the interviews of the principals on the topic of school administration on the line of democratic set up in the schools.

Transcription of the interview of the principals:

Name of the School:

Powai English High School (Medium private school)

Name of the Principal: Ms Shirley Pillai

Location Of the School: Near IIT Powai, Andheri East, Mumbai

Ethical consent- Why are you calling? What information are about to seek and why? No info will be shared with anybody else.

This interview is for the research purpose, as part of the project, in the course of Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Leadership. The topic of the project is about the ‘Democratic set up in the Indian schools.

Introduction:	Understanding the concept ‘Democratic Leadership’.
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I am the principal of Powai English High School, located in the outskirts of IIT Powai. This school is 48 years old. We have a strength of around 1480 students. It is a co-education school. We have a staff of around 100.

I am Shirley Pillai, working for 37 years.
I: What do you understand by the term democratic leadership?

Principal: Ms Shirley Pillai

It is a very big concept, when it comes to India, the multilingual thing, there are a lot of barriers. As a leader it is very important that education should be a part of all of the students, there should not be any restrictions based on caste, creed and colour. Education should be equal for all. We should not stop anybody on the basis of religion. Education is for boys, girls and for all languages no matter whatever is the religion.

I: Do you think giving students the autonomy to express themselves sometimes hampers the democratic set up of the class-room, if yes, how and if no, why?

Principal Ms Shirley Pillai: Giving students autonomy to a certain extent is okay, if it goes beyond the limit then the problem starts. Too much listening also creates problems. Today's students are very good, they are outspoken. We were not facing difficulties, but after covid we started facing difficulties. Earlier

batches students were not like today's they used to listen to teachers, they are outgoing. There are pluses and minuses. A considerable amount of autonomy is needed for students, otherwise we would never come to know about the negative aspects of autonomy. Students need to speak up sometimes, the world is changing and their opinion also matters. India is a democratic country, where the democratic rights are important, we should not intervene. It can be said in a proper way that is fine. The students should know what to speak, what not to speak and how to speak. The values, when it comes to India, we talk about the values that are very important for our child.

-a very big concept
- education for the student/ equal for all
- for all genders, irrespective of caste, creed and colour

opinion about students' autonomy

- autonomy to certain extent is okay
- "Too much listening creates problem"
- Post covid, the students autonomy has increased
- opinion about the positive and negative side of the autonomy
- students need to speak up, the opinion of the students matters
- democratic rights must not be hampered
- In a democratic country like India, democratic rights are very important.
- The students must know the values of the Indian democratic system, when to speak, what to speak and where to speak.

Acknowledging the strictness of some teachers, especially olden days.

impact of strictness of teachers, on students.

-children not being opened up
-children were very scared of getting beaten up
-colleagues used to feel scared.
-affect the classroom environment free to share their feelings and opinions

- Students will not feel free to share their feelings and opinions
- will not express themselves
- teacher should be a little more accessible to the children
- strictness is important to the extent, as it did not stops the students to express themselves

Factors promoting democracy in the classroom

-teachers' mindset
-too much of strictness and accessibility
-manners and the character
-importance of teachers' smile

<p>I: Have you ever faced or seen a situation in the schools where there was teacher dominance? If yes, how did it impact the overall classroom environment and particularly the students?</p> <p>Principal: Ms Shirley Pillai Yes, some teachers are strict. If you take the olden days, during our schooling days. or some 10 years back, you would find the teachers being very strict. Children not being opened. Beating was a punishment so; children were very scared. So, the teachers were so strong and so tough that even the colleagues used to feel scared. This would affect the classroom environment as the students will not open up. They would run away not to see the teacher, they would hide. They will not express themselves. If they have to say something, it would depend upon the mood of the teacher. The students had to look after the mood of the teachers. This is not good, especially in the field of education. The teacher should be a little more accessible to the children, strictness is important, not to the extent that it stops students' feelings to express.</p> <p>I: What are the factors responsible for promoting Democracy in the classroom?</p> <p>Principal: Ms Shirley Pillai Teachers' mindset. It is very important. If the teachers' mindset is not okay. Too much of strictness and too much access to children also affects. The manners and the character also affect. The family matters of the teacher should not come to the school, the teachers should leave that at the gate of the school. The smile of the teacher is very important. The children's life is getting affected through the class. If they want you to come to the class every now and then, it shows that you are a successful teacher in impacting students in a positive way. It makes a lot of difference in making a conducive environment in the school.</p> <p>I: What do you understand by the term equity?</p> <p>Principal: Ms Shirley Pillai: Our school follows equality, there are no distinctions</p>	<p>-students needs for the teacher</p> <p>Understanding equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● following equality in the school ● follows gender equality contradiction of statement <p>Girls are smarter than boys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -some parents create distinction between distinction between boys and girls - teachers are non-believers of distinction between boys and girls. <p>Establishing equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -through extra classes to under-performers ● peer teaching -challenges for remedial classes - poorer family background - lack of suitable family background - lack of understanding of family members about remedial classes - problematic background of students <p>Role of equity in fostering democracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teachers has foster democracy in the classroom ● classroom should have mix of good and underperforming students ● no division of classroom on the basis of good students and under-performers <p>Strategies to promote democratic classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● more opportunities for students' participation - Narrating anecdotes about opportunities for students' participation in activities. - writing paragraphs 'Importance of the day' - expose to more competition - activities like dramatics and for sports are equally important like studies -Promoting leadership qualities like -will not express themselves -teacher should be a little more accessible to the children -strictness is important to the extent, as it did not stop the students to express themselves <p>Factors promoting democracy in the classroom</p>
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<p>between boys and girls, treating them equally is very important. Gender bias should not be there, let it be among students and teachers. Today the era is such that there is no difference whether it is a boy or a girl. Girls are smarter than boys. The parents are still having some distinction between boys and girls but the teachers are not like that. They do not have that in the classroom. For underperformers we keep extra classes and teachers on the weekends. They care for these children. We keep leaders, who are good in studies, who can help them. The students sometimes do not open-up with the teachers but they are happy with the help from their friends. Our school is not having elite class students, they are from middle class or lower middle class. When it comes to underprivileged students, they face lots of problems due to family background and the circumstances in which they live. Bringing the students to class or for the remedial class is very difficult. The only chance to make it fruitful is by making the remedial class compulsory for both teachers and students. The parents of these children are not bothered, once they put their children in good school their work gets over, they do not look beyond. They do not have the time to look after other things. Catching hold of the students for the remedial class is also difficult for us. We need it for weak students. We manage it with a peer group, but find it difficult to let them sit for remedial classes as their roots are very problematic.</p> <p>I: Do you think understanding equity is important for fostering democracy in the classroom? Principal: Ms Shirley Pillai: We cannot learn democracy like that, the teacher has to manage it. We cannot classify the students in different divisions like A, B, C.D...where D would be for the weak students. We allow all types of students to sit one class 90 percent, or 30 percent or 25 percent holders. This may have a positive or negative impact on both brilliant and weaker students.</p> <p>I: What kind of strategies do you employ to promote</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -teachers' mindset -too much of strictness and accessibility -manners and the character -importance of teachers' smile -students' needs for the teacher <p>Understanding equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● following equality in the school ● follows gender equality <p>contradiction of statement Girls are smarter than boys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -some parents create distinction between distinction between boys and girls - teachers are non-believers of distinction between boys and girls. <p>Establishing equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -through extra classes to under-performers ● peer teaching -challenges for remedial classes - poorer family background - lack of suitable family background - lack of understanding of family members about remedial classes - problematic background of students <p>Role of equity in fostering democracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teachers has foster democracy in the classroom ● classroom should have mix of good and underperforming students ● no division of classroom on the basis of good students <p>and under-performers</p> <p>Strategies to promote democratic classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● more opportunities for students' participation - Narrating anecdotes about opportunities for students' participation in activities. - writing paragraphs 'Importance of the day' - expose to more competition - activities like dramatics and for sports are equally important like studies -Promoting leadership qualities like opportunity to speak, in any
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democratic leadership in your classroom?
Principal: Ms Shirley Pillai: By giving more opportunities to come up. i.e. Writing a paragraph about the 'Importance of the day'. Teachers are instructed to go according to the roll number of the students to ask for the task to do every day. This helps a lot to the students to come out with their unique talents hidden within them. Give the students more opportunities. Put them to more competitions. Students may not be good in studies but would be good at drawing and other activities. Put them too in cultural activities and see them shining, that will take them a long way. So, the base became stronger. It is not only the studies but other activities are equally important. Give them the chance they will do better. Even for the weakest students, if we put them for dramatics and for sports they will excel. Promoting leadership qualities by providing opportunities to students to excel. Giving them the opportunity to speak, irrespective of the languages they pick up to speak. Not necessarily only in the English language. Speaking with confidence is more important than which language they are speaking. Even NEP is emphasizing more on mother- and under-performers Strategies to promote democratic Classroom.

I: Do you think democratic leadership should be based on the academic merit of the students? If yes why, if no why not?

Principal: Ms Shirley Pillai:
In our school the naughtiest student is the class monitor. Students elect the student council members. Those who are very active are the leaders. Before the election of the school council, the students ask for votes, visit every classroom and present themselves in Front of the students asking to vote for them. This way they prepare themselves as future leaders.

I: Do you think of the requirement of the Reservation in education?

Principal: Ms Shirley Pillai:
I do not think there is a need, we are making the distinction through reservation. Children are not bothered about religions. Earlier things

language
- speaking with confidence is important
- specification of importance of mother tongue in NEP
Democratic leadership vs academic merit
● Appointing the naughtiest student as the class monitor.
● electing the students in the school council by voting
● active students are the leaders
Preparation of future leaders through
● election campaign in the school
● asking votes to other students
● presenting oneself confidently for voting

Reservations in education opinionated about reservation making the distinction through reservation.
-children are not bothered about religions.
- there should not be reservation in Democracy

Narrating an anecdote about a SC teacher" she refused to mention that in her biodata or take the reservation".

were different, people were deprived, they needed reservation, now most of the people are educated and there is no such need, if we talk about democracy, then there should not be reservations.
 We have a teacher from SC category, but she refused to mention that in her biodata or take the reservation.
 In schools we have reservations only on papers, once they pass out then that applies in other areas.

The interview concluded with a thank you note.

Transcription of the interviews of the principals on the topic of school administration on the line of democratic set up in the schools.

Name of the School:

Dharamveer Sambhaji English Medium School

Name of the Principal: Kishori V Rane

Location Of the School: Vikhroli-West, Mumbai

Transcription of the interview of the principals :

Ethical consent- Why are you calling? What information are about to seek and why? No info will be shared with anybody else.

This interview is for the research purpose, as part of the project in the course of Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Leadership. The topic of the project is about the ‘Democratic set up in the Indian schools’.

<p>Introduction I am Kishori V Rane I have joined this school since 1995 as a teacher. Now I have been the Head Mistress of this school since 2003. My educational qualification is MA M.Ed. School strength is 525 and we have 19 teachers, and 7 non-teaching staff. Our school is a state government - Marathi Medium and Semi -English medium school, where subjects like English, Mathematics and Science are in English language and rest of the subjects are in Marathi language.</p> <p>I: What do you understand by democratic leadership Principal Kishori Rane: I am a leader but I take every teacher’s viewpoints while making any decision, our teachers are free to try new techniques for student’s betterment. One of our teachers had shown our students how the election process happens, by making the students understand about the election process through voting, by taking due permission from the trustee of the school.</p>	<p>Understanding the concept of Democratic Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Freedom of expression ● Freedom of thoughts and ideas of teachers and staff ● Appointment of monitors in the classroom through self will and voting <p>Anecdote about activities done by a teacher about the election process for making students to understand about the election process through voting, by taking due permission from the trustee of the school.</p> <p>Opinion about students’ autonomy: “ I do not like this concept”. Teachers are very important for the classroom. Our students are from such backgrounds they only rely on teachers not on students taking the control of the classroom measures”.</p>
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I: Do you think giving students the autonomy to express themselves sometimes hampers the democratic set up of the class-room, if yes, how and if no, why?

“ I do not like this concept”. Teachers are very important for the classroom. Our students are from such backgrounds they only rely on teachers not on students taking the control of the classroom measures”.

I-Have you ever faced or seen a situation in the schools where there was teacher dominance? If yes, how did it impact the overall classroom environment and particularly the students?

I: What do you understand by the term equity?

Principal Kishori V Rane: We take care of special needs children with utmost care. We have such a child , towards whom we are very vigilant and take care of her thoroughly.

We have special provision of after school, extra classes for the under performers. We provide them with remedial teaching after school.

I :Do you think understanding equity is important for fostering democracy in the classroom?

Principal Kishori V Rane: Yes, it's important.

I: What are the factors responsible for promoting democracy in the classroom?

Principal Kishori V Rane: the boy who is an underperformer we make them the class monitor. Then we change that child for someone else next month, on a rotation basis. This helps our students as a means of changing their personality and inculcating leadership qualities as well as disciplines.

I. Do you think democratic leadership should be based on the academic merit of the students? If yes why, if no why not?

Principal Kishori V Rane: A good academic performer is already a leader, we will motivate the students to do better. Will ask their parents to pay attention to their child. Since our students' parents are daily laborers they do not have time or resources for their children, we counsel them to look after their childrens' betterment.

I.Do you think the requirement of the Reservation in education?

Principal Kishori V Rane: Reservations should not be there. This creates a distinction among the students which is not desirable. Government says all are equal then why reservation. It creates loss for the open category, those who do not come under reservation. They do not get Government jobs, due to lack of

Understanding the concept of equity:

Explained the term equity with the example of the special needs students.

- Extra classes after school for underperformers.

Opinionated on the role of equity in fostering democracy in the classroom is important.

Inculcation of democratic leadership qualities:

- By making students class monitor , especially the underperforming students.

Democratic leadership vs academic merit of the students

A good academic performer is already a leader.

Opinion on Reservation:

Reservations should not be there.

- Creates distinction among students
- It creates loss for the open category
- Open category students feel deprived of Government jobs

reservation despite having good academic performance. They feel deprived.	
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The interview concluded with the exchange of a thank you note.
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Transcription of the interviews of the principals on the topic of school administration on the line of democratic set up in the schools.

Name of the School:

Guru Nanak English Medium School

Name of the Principal: Ms Harjit Kaur

Location Of the School: Andheri East, Mumbai

Transcription of the interview of the principals:

Ethical consent- Why are you calling? What information are about to seek and why? No info will be shared with anybody else.

This interview is for the research purpose, as part of the project in the course of Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Leadership. The topic of the project is about the 'Democratic set up in the Indian schools.

<p>Introduction: I am the principal of Guru Nanak English Medium School, located in the Andheri East, Mumbai. We have a strength of around 670 students, 37 staff both teaching and non-teaching. I am Ms Harjit Kaur, working as a principal for the last 10 years. I: What do you understand by the term democratic leadership? Principal Harjit-I believe in freedom, taking along the teachers, as well as the PTA members and students, in many matters for the progress in the school. I believe in complete democracy in my school, right from the selection of the council members, we do have voting in the school. The whole school votes for the members' campaign and then the council members are elected based on the votes that they receive. About my teachers, any decision to be taken about the school that would have a great impact, I would always discuss with my teachers. I have very experienced senior teachers and junior teachers also, who have experience when I talk to them, how to start the programme, what would be the impact on the school, on children on parents, would it be wholeheartedly accepted by them? Teachers directly interacted with the students and the parents, so their opinion matters a lot. There are certain decisions about whether to go for a picnic or not, should we have certain classes or not? These</p>	<p>Understanding Democratic leadership -Believer in Freedom - Taking consent of Teachers, PTA members' and students in "matters of progress" -School council members are elected through voting - discussions with teachers for launching any new programs Voicing opinion- respecting freedom of speech and expression Opinions on student autonomy -if the students get autonomy democratic set up is hampered. -advising students' freedom comes with limit -Expressing the need for self-discipline with an anecdote of sports event- Wherein student was given autonomy to work with teachers but they took undue advantage of it Sharp reactions on students' mischief- "I had to cut their wings" -opining about the role of a leader- freedom comes with responsibility Evidences of Teacher Dominance- Narrating an anecdote about a teacher violating the norms of secularism Instigating students in the matter of religion -being influenced by decisive politics</p>
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decisions I leave it upon the students, do you want to have help on this, does it benefit you? How will it impact you? Their ideas also I take into mind before making any decision.

I feel the freedom of speech and freedom of expression should always be given, which help us to reach a better decision

I: Do you think giving students the autonomy to express themselves sometimes hampers the democratic set up of the class-room, if yes, how and if no, why?

Principal Harjit: Definitely! It hampers the classroom setup. Because sometimes the children think they can become the boss, they can get away with anything and everything so that is what I feel and tell the students, whenever you get any freedom, it also has its limits, you cannot be limitless. You have to show self-discipline for that.

i.e. Recently we had a sports event in the school, I had told the grade 10th students, you would be the part of managing the whole event, everything cannot be done by the teachers. You have to bring ideas on how to take the children to the event and bring them back. There were few children, those who thought they had to do everything we only have to do and started making mischiefs and misbehaving with others. Which was not acceptable, so there I had to cut their wings and tell them that this is not why freedom has been given to, a leader has lots of responsibility. He cannot do anything or everything he wishes. It is not dictatorship, its democracy, here you have to work along with everyone.

I-Have you ever faced or seen a situation in the schools where there was teacher dominance? If yes, how did it impact the overall classroom environment and particularly the students?

Principal Harjit- six months back,” I am sorry to bring this incidence”, there was a teacher who had started promoting Hinduism rampantly. The teacher was just going to the class, being a history teacher not teaching Nehru, Gandhiji or many other great leaders. Few children got carried away and started making slogans in the class and the situation got out of control. Then I had to intervene and said this is not done. We are a free country and have to think about what we are doing. These children are like soft clay, the way we mould them they will be

-opinionating on the students’ nature- “I had to cut their wings”

-combating the teacher’s dominance

-counselling which failed

-issued memo

-escalated the matter to Management to seek help

- Factors Promoting Democracy in the classroom

- freedom of speech and thought in a guided manner.

- students to be stopped when stray away from constitutional rights.

- socialism and secularism should be promoted.

- no caste distinction while giving opportunities

- Narrating an anecdote about a student monitor showing autonomy and wrong behaviour

- counselling to students to understand their roles and responsibilities in expressing thoughts with appropriate behaviour

moulded. Then there were two groups formed in the class. There were pros and cons, there was a lot of fighting and parents started complaining and I had to intervene. I told the teacher here we are not here to support any politics; we have to teach the children how they should carry with them their freedom. What are their duties and responsibilities? You also as a teacher have lots of responsibility and cannot just favour one group and just speak bad about others. That teacher had brought political leaders from the vicinity. I had a tough time at that time, then looking for my children and my school was my first priority. I had to show a memo to my teacher and had to take help from the management to stop all this, this problem I had faced.

I: What are the factors responsible for promoting the democracy in the classroom

Principal Harjit: Allowing the children the freedom of thought and freedom of speech. Whenever we have debates in the class, that should be controlled because the children should be guided, what they can say and what they cannot say, what they can promote and what they cannot, that the children have to be guided. They have to be stopped whenever they stray away from constitutional rights. The constitution clearly says that we are a social and a secular country. Socialism and secularism should be promoted. We try our best that the children do behave well, they give importance to everything happening. It should not be that a child belonging to a lower caste should not be given the right to participate and speak, and somebody who is the monitor of the class should get away with anything, he has to restrain. The monitor was a very short-tempered guy. I had to explain to him, see, this short temper will not work, you are such a good person but your short temper ruins everything. So, that child was given counseling and he improved. He became an example for others. So, how we have to express our thoughts, how we have to behave to others, he became an example for others.

I: What do you understand by the term equity

Principal Harjit: The equity we have developed in our school through tiffin sharing. When I came to this school, the

Understanding equity

children were eating from outside and it was very difficult for us to manage. Many children are from very poor homes, some children used to bring tiffin and some were not bringing and when they were hungry during the recess and staring others having their tiffin. The children from different casts were not allowed to form groups. After the Pandemic, I thought since it is a new beginning,

“I got a great opportunity to break the system that was going on earlier”. After the Pandemic I stopped the outside canteen person, by giving this logic in Pandemic we can not allow outside food, I went to each and every class and told the children, from now onwards we cannot allow outside food and you have to eat in the school and you have to share among yourselves. If a child has not brought food, then you do not have to see how he is, how he studies, whose house he belongs to, which caste he belongs to, you have to do tiffin sharing. This idea worked really well.

I told them a few stories and explained, one cannot concentrate on studies in the classroom if that person is hungry, the thought of that person would be in the tiffin. So, I started going to the classes, taking a bite many times. We made strict rules to bring the homemade food, whatever the thing their mummy prepares or else you prepare and bring but no outside foods are allowed in the school. All foods like cake, chips, and pasta are allowed only on Friday and on other days, they have to bring chapati, sabji, upma, poha, the kind of things that went great with the children. Slowly and slowly, I told them, some of the parents are not with the children, some are orphans and staying with somebody else, who does not feed him properly. So, the children started to bring more of their food. Such things happened, that during the recess the children beelined outside, offering food to me to take a bite. This has promoted equity and empathy among all students. I am so proud about it. These children are from poor homes and making it difficult for the parents to make two meals a day. The other children thought we were helping, so they started bringing more food from home. Instead of one chapati, they started bringing two to share.

Equity developed in school through tiffin sharing.

Post Pandemic period as a new beginning
Narrating an anecdote of creating equity in the school environment through tiffin sharing among students

adopting new rules,

Post pandemic time for breaking the old system

enforcing the rule of tiffin sharing

Eliminating caste, status and academic differences

Motivating students through stories

Setting examples through practice

fostering the practice of healthy home cooked food.

Promoted equity and empathy among students

offering food matter of pride fostering helping nature

Fostering democracy through equity
equity must be taught
politics changes mindset

<p>I: Do you think understanding equity is important for fostering democracy in the classroom? Principal Harjit: Yes, it is a very important step because of the political condition that we are going through, for that equity is the most important thing that we should teach to our children nowadays. They are very young; their minds are very fresh. The political condition is molding them into a different kind of human-being. They are becoming very arrogant, very stringent. I think so, by promoting equity is the only way, we can make the children think that what is right and what is wrong for them, how they should behave, what is being secular, it is a need of the hour.</p>	<p>Promoting equity is the only way to promote democracy.</p>
<p>I. Do you think democratic leadership should be based on the academic merit of the students? If yes why, if no why not? Principal Harjit: No. I do not think so. A good leader can be not very good in studies, but he has leadership qualities of how to control, how to speak, how to convey, how to turn the scenario around. I do not think those who are good in studies, only exhibit the quality to promote democracy. We see our leaders, majorly are educated, they are uneducated, but leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, they were not that good in academics but they had the power to change, and the leadership qualities, the qualities, how to conduct yourself, how to mould other person's mind is more important than academics.</p>	<p>Academic excellence vs democratic leadership A good leader can be not very good in studies Leadership qualities how to speak how to convey how to turn the scenario around. leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, they were not that good in academics the leadership qualities, the qualities, how to conduct yourself, How to meld another person's mind is more important than academics.</p>
<p>I: Do you think the requirement of the Reservation in education? Principal Harjit I belong to the city, and I do not know what are the scenarios in the village but in the cities, the Government should divide it into urban or villages, the rules should be different. In the metro cities the children get equality, they are getting the same kind of treatment, but in villages or in remote areas, they are getting the same privileges. So, the children coming from village areas/ rural areas, for them the rules should be different. Casticism is rampant over there, so reservation is required. But in big cities, reservations are not required, since they are getting the same kind of treatment in school, he has access to the same kind of academics, so why the</p>	<p>Reservations in education -Different reservations in cities and villages - same treatment in cities schools -same academics -reservation brings grudges Instances of reservation repercussions Narrating an anecdote about the result of reservation. -lower performance but better opportunity through reservation - good performance but no opportunity, with no reservation</p>

<p>reservation? This brings a kind of grudge to the children who are good (in academics). i.e. one of my teacher's, she belongs to OBC, her child got admission with 55 percent, to STX, but a student who got 93 percent could not get. There I felt it was really very bad, this has brought lots of grudges, I also felt very bad, that child got 55 percent and got this child to work so hard, and only on the basis of casteism, he has reservation and got admission and the other child did not get. So, the government should make separate rules for the metro cities and for rural areas, where they are not having so much access to amenities, facilities. The rules should be different.</p>		
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The interview concluded with the exchange of a thank you note.

Conclusion:

The study presents four school principals' views and strategies to foster democratic setup in their education and administrative process while creating a conducive environment for fostering democratic leadership in the classroom. This study will help the preservice and in- service teachers to create a self-assessment of their knowledge, potentials, and skills in creating a conducive environment in their classroom fostering democratic leadership and principles in the student's personality. Further the finding will highlight the alteration and modifications of certain rules and regulations in the education system by the Government authority to let democratic education to prevail in the true sense in the schools.

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