



Management of Education for Deepening Democracy in India

Alex P. Joseph

Assistant Professor, Rajagiri Centre for Business Studies, Kochi, (Kerala), INDIA

(Corresponding author: Alex P. Joseph)

(Received 22 June, 2017, Accepted 25 August, 2017)

(Published by Research Trend, Website: www.researchtrend.net)

ABSTRACT: The concept education for democratic citizenship considers democracy as the aim and method of instruction. If democracy has to become vibrant people should participate in it fully. An educational concept rooted in democracy and which practices democratic method of instruction helps students hone the necessary democratic skills and values. India being the largest democracy has the responsibility to mould individuals who will appreciate democratic principles and participate in democracy in the right manner. The policy makers of education should design an educational framework which is truly democratic in nature. Such a framework will insist on democratic methods of teaching-learning strategies. Examples of such strategies are case study method and media education. These strategies promote critical faculty and encourage students to participate in classroom discussions with enthusiasm. There will also be a shift in the leadership role of a teacher, from autocratic to democratic.

Keywords: Education for Democratic Citizenship, Democratic Educational Framework, Case Study Method, Media Education

I. INTRODUCTION

We are living in an era where the achievements of educational curriculum are determined by measuring against the needs of the market. Such a consideration beats the original purpose of education. A careful study of the history of education reveals that initially education was deemed as a process which helped individuals in the formation of their character, in strengthening their mind and in expanding their intellect only to become responsible contributors to society.

The problems of contemporary Indian society can be thwarted to a large extent by designing an educational system that underscores democratic citizenship. The core of education for democratic citizenship concept in India should be every citizen is of immeasurable value and he/she is capable of making effective contributions to society for its development.

As per this educational ideal, democracy is a goal and a method of instruction. Deliberative and participatory practices which are the provisions of well-functioning democracy are promoted through this educational process. The teaching – learning process of democratic education emphasizes on the fundamental values of democratic societies.

Based on the educational philosophies of John Dewey, Joseph Agassi, Mathew Arnold, John Holt and Amy Gutmann among others, it advocates learning that equips every human being to participate fully in a healthy democracy. All of them call for an educational system based on respect for human rights and one that values freedom and responsibility, participation and collaboration, and equity and justice.

A project on “Education to promote democratic citizenship” was introduced in the year 1977 by the European education committee to find out the skills and values for individuals in order to become participating citizens. The motive was to identify their capability in learning these skills and passing the same to others. Subba (2014) supported this and agreed that this was part of the action plan so that an awareness of rights and responsibilities can be raised among the citizens in a democratic country. This was to facilitate and encourage them in participating in the civil society (Black, 2011) [4].

The European ministries of Education formed an effective framework to manage education in terms of developing democratic citizenship in schools and looked forward to:

- Intensify activities on the education related to democracy, tolerance and human rights and at the same time, to give proper attention towards the teaching methods and contents of the education based on democratic citizenship in schools (Crick, 2017) [7].
- Train the teachers accordingly so that they can focus on developing democratic education in schools
- Foster a setting of networks between teachers and schools so that they get engaged actively in the education for human rights, tolerance, and democracy

II. EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Biesta (2011) specified that most of the young people or students grow up by learning the lessons of solidarity, care, justice and responsibility through a daily engagement with friends, communities, and families [1]. But, Biesta (2015) claimed that a framework of an effective education management to promote democratic citizenship is essential [2]. The purpose of setting this educational framework for democratic citizenship is to make an investment in producing societies characterized by inclusion, participation, and non-discrimination (McCowan, 2011) [9].

This is the initial and vital step towards a successful future for a citizen living in a democratic society. Various controversies pertaining to tolerance that occur in the Indian subcontinent give us a good reason to make a deliberate attempt to design an educational framework that promotes participatory democracy. It will be a march against social exclusion, racism, and violence that threaten democracies as noted by Johnson & Morris (2010) [8].

The National Policy of Education (1986) in India also emphasized on an education for values removing intolerance, violence, superstition and upholding social, cultural and scientific principles to make India a secular, democratic and progressive nation taking pride in its cultural heritage (Subba 2014) [10]. When far-reaching advanced development of technology and globalization remain as boon and bane, each individual has the right and responsibility to play an active role in ensuring peace and democratic stability in the society.

A major factor that remains as a challenge to create an educational framework focussing on democratic citizenship is the over emphasis on the bread and butter aim of education. As a result the skill sets necessary for working in mighty corporate organisations are developed in students ignoring the skills required to function effectively in a democratic society.

The central aim of this paper and its significance lies in the support of developing educational policies in temples of learning so that they promote the participation of young people in democratic life. Learners have to experience a formal curriculum standard and policy related to democratic citizenship.

III. TEACHING -LEARNING STRATEGIES

Educational institutions can play a vital role in order to prepare students to function actively in a democracy. And for this Black (2011) claimed that the role of a teacher needs to be converted from the authoritarian one to the personal and facilitating role. Bîrzéa (2000) mentioned that for democratic teaching in schools, there must be a smooth communication between teachers and students. Teachers have to keep a focus on what needs to be taught and how so that students can understand their human rights and democracy [3].

What separates democracy from other political philosophies is the principle and practice of solving differences first and foremost through dialogue. Decisions are not made unilaterally but consensus is attained after considering the views of the parties concerned. Freedom of speech and expression is a hallmark of democracy.

The National Curriculum Framework 2005 framed by the Indian government emphasizes not on merely learning democracy as a political system but adopting democracy as a way of life. Teacher has to play an important role in ensuring that the students understand not merely the form but spirit of democracy. Teaching democracy in the classroom means incorporating the values of democracy, using a democratic approach to teaching that enables students to practice democracy, and providing a safe environment where students can take risks and where they can actively participate in the learning process (Subba 2014) [10]. In this context teachers have to adopt teaching – learning strategies that are democratic in nature. Also these strategies have to promote discussions in a classroom context.

IV. CASE STUDY METHOD

A teaching-learning strategy that requires a special mention here is the case study method. It is democratic in nature and more importantly it promotes classroom discussions. Students get to understand different perspectives and it

helps them to widen their mental horizons. When discussions are encouraged it leads to critical thinking and critical thinking is fundamental to a rational and democratic society. It also helps in making reflective judgments.

Although they have been used most extensively in the teaching of medicine, law and business, case studies can be an effective teaching tool at all educational levels and in any number of disciplines. As an instructional strategy, case studies have a number of virtues. They bridge the gulf between theory and practice and between academic situations and real life situations.

They also give students practice identifying the parameters of a problem, recognizing and articulating positions, evaluating courses of action, and arguing different points of view.

When the class is divided into groups and when groups are encouraged to make presentations based on the given case it heightens the sense of community. Students will establish a shared identity. They will receive social support and encouragement to take risks and that way the teaching-learning strategy becomes inclusive in nature.

Thus students get a chance to tread the path of liberty, equality and fraternity which are considered as basic values of democratic systems. And as a facilitator of classroom discussions, there will also be a shift in the leadership style of a teacher, from autocratic to democratic.

V. MEDIA EDUCATION

Crick (2017) noted that use of media also plays an important role in developing democratic citizenship in students. Newspapers or televisions are not harmful every time, but, these can be used to transmit important political information and others that the students can understand and enhance their knowledge regarding the same [7].

Hence, Johnson & Morris (2010) inferred that media education can be considered as an important source of education for democratic citizenship and at the same time, it enhances the power of communication of students to influence and mobilize their identities. Democracy becomes efficient when the citizens are engaged actively. Use of news reports as topics for classroom discussions enables in engaging students in learning and in providing a richer experience [8].

Following an international meeting of experts held in Grunwald in Germany, UNESCO published a declaration making the argument for media education. In its definition of media education, the Grunwald Declaration reflects several key emphases that continue to be shared by the majority of media educators today.

- *Media education is concerned with the full range of media, including moving image media (film, television, and video), radio and recorded music, print media (particularly newspapers and magazines) and the new digital communication technologies. It aims to develop a broad based literacy not just in relation to print but also in the symbolic systems of images and sounds*
- *Media education is concerned with teaching and learning about the media. This should not be confused with teaching through the media – for example, the use of television or computers as a means of teaching science or history. Media education is not about the instrumental use of media as teaching aids: it should not be confused with educational technology or educational media.*
- *Media education aims to develop both critical understanding and active participation. It enables young people to interpret and make informed judgements as consumers of media; but it also enables them to become producers of media in their own right and thereby to become more powerful participants in society. Media education is about developing young people's critical and creative abilities. (Buckingham David 2001)[5].*

Media education helps students become conscious of the impact of media on them as consumers of media. It also helps them to become producers of media content. With the advent of social media today's citizens are not mere receivers of information but they have become producers of information too. Earlier information generation and dissemination was the monopoly of a few and receivers of information remained passive. Today democracy can be experienced in this sphere.

Media plays an important role in shaping people's thoughts, passions and aversions towards significant political and socio cultural entities as important as nation or nationalism (Chauhan and Shukla 2016) [6]. In such contexts media education helps students to critically analyse and understand diverse perceptions and to respond intelligently to media creations.

VI. CONCLUSION

A system of education is always inspired by the social, political and economic conditions prevailing in a country. The educational aims in a country like India must be in conformity with cherished democratic values.

Formal educational environments having vibrant democratic practices contribute towards the sustenance of vibrant democracy. They are nurturing grounds for individuals to develop democratic citizenship skills.

Studies show that educational environments engaging young people as active participants in their own learning are linked with higher student attendance and student achievement, greater creativity and conceptual learning, and increased intrinsic motivation and determination in learning.

Having an educational framework focussing on democratic citizenship and including teaching learning strategies that are not only democratic but also engaging, educational institutions render service to the nation by deepening democratic values in the minds of their students.

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