

## UNIT – VII

### CHILD RIGHTS EDUCATION

Child Rights and School Management - Child Rights and Democratic Education - Concept and Ladder of Child participation - Models of Child Participation

#### Child Rights and School Management

##### **Introduction**

School is one of the most important institutions developed by the society with specific objectives of providing education to children. In fact, school has to play a crucial role in moulding the society, which builds it. The function of developing future citizens is entrusted to the schools. As a future citizen the child enjoys certain rights. The society and school are under obligation to fulfill those rights.

##### **Child Rights Education – Importance**

Education is the fundamental right of the child. *Article 28* of United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child recommends steps for their right to be achieved “progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity”.

*Article 29* emphasises that education should help the child in developing his or her “personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest of potential”.

- ❖ Another purpose is to develop respect for human rights and fundamental freedom.
- ❖ Another important purpose is to protect children against all forms of physical and mental violence, injury and abuse.
- ❖ Yet another purpose is right of the child to rest, leisure and play.
- ❖ Yet another purpose is against child labour, and protection against drugs and sexual abuse.
- ❖ *Article 6* – right to life, goes further than granting children the right not to be killed. It includes the right to survival and to development.
- ❖ *Article 12* lays emphasis on the right of the child to be heard and have his/her ideas taken seriously.

It is important to note that childhood is no longer seen as only a preparatory period for adulthood but having a value in itself. It is important that a holistic view of the child is developed in which it is stressed that he or she should have space to develop that his/her opinion should count and that therefore, the child is a subject in the learning process, not an object to be stuffed with facts.

It is important that the education policies that are developed be in the best interests of the child, which enable the child to develop democratic values, and human rights.

#### Child Rights and School Management

Democratic school management should give the pupils power over his/her own learning process. It should allow pupils to participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of their education. It should give pupil an influence on larger views of education policy such as administrative aspects which are directly relevant to them and decision making process of the administration of the individual students. The school management has an important role in implementing child rights, some of which are directly related to education as given below:

In *Article 28.3* of the convention it is clearly mentioned that “States shall promote and encourage co-operation in matters relating to education, particularly with a view to contribute to



the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods".

There is also a trend in some countries that this responsibility is moved to schools from State. This is probably sound in many ways and will hopefully enhance the responsibility of the school management.

The Government of India is a signatory to the International Convention of Child Rights and hence it is obligatory on the part of the Government of India to respect the provisions of convention in the country. Towards this goal the Indian parliament in the year 1974 adopted a National Policy for Children. The objectives of the National Policy adopted by Government of India are relevant to school education and therefore relevant to school management of different schools be it be State, local bodies, private, aided, unaided and public schools. The details are:

- Nutritive programme should be organised with the object of correcting the deficiencies in the interest of the children.
- The schools shall provide free and compulsory education to all children within the age group of 14. Special steps to be taken to reduce wastage and stagnation in schools, particularly in the case of girls and children of disadvantaged groups, minorities and physically challenged.
- Children who can't afford full time formal system of education should be provided with other forms of education keeping in view their needs and requirements by the management.
- Physical and Health Education, Cultural activities, Art Education and other types of recreational activities shall be promoted in schools for enhanced participation of children.
- Children should be protected against neglect, abuse, cruelty and exploitation.
- Education facilities have to be created for all children as every child has a fundamental right to education and that every child has got different characteristics, interests, abilities and needs. The combination of the principle of non-discrimination and the recognition of the uniqueness of each child become the pillar of the Salamanca statement and its framework for action. To meet the special needs of children with disability of learning problem requires planned efforts by the school management. In other words children with special educational needs should have access to regular schools and that child-centered pedagogy should be developed to accommodate them:

"The convention further states that the disabled child should be able to enjoy a full decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in society". The school management should organize education so that he or she can achieve "the fullest possible social integration and individual development" (Article 23).

The above stated objective, have to be implemented by all the school managements. It is obligatory on the part of the managements to follow in letter and spirit these regulations. For this they have to encourage teachers, provide facilities for students participation and educate parents.

### **Suggested Activities for School Management**

The following are some of the suggested activities to promote child rights.

- \* To prevent cruelty towards children, corporal punishment, and exploitation in the school.
- \* To tack action against teachers who show bias basing on the caste, creed, sex, religion and community.



- \* To implement student welfare programmes viz: mid-day meals scholarships, distribution of free textbooks. Impartial in recommending names for Talent Search Examinations, admissions into public schools for SCs & STs, attendance scholarships for girls etc.
- \* To arrange for parents meetings and to create awareness for Small Family Norm, Education as the fundamental right, and Prevention of cruelty towards children.

## **Child Rights and Democratic Education**

### **Indian Constitution and Child Rights**

**Article 45** of Directive Principles of State Policy lays down that "The State shall endeavor to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years". This is one of the directive principles of State policy fundamental in the governance of the country and it shall be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws.

### **Education of Weaker Sections of the People**

The Constitution makes it an obligatory responsibility of the Government of India to promote the educational interest of the weaker sections of the people.

**Article 46** lays down, "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation". It is one of the directive principles of State Policy.

**Article 15** states, "Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of article 29 shall prevent the state from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward class of citizens or for the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes".

### **Education of Minorities**

The Constitution provides certain safeguards for the cultural and education interests of minorities.

- i) **Article 29**-Protection of Interests of Minorities: Article 29 relates to the protection of minorities. It lays down:
  - a) "Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of Indian or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same".
  - b) "No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them".

### **Some of the Most Important Rights of the Child**

- Every child has the right to a satisfactory, and up-to-date, education.
- Every child has the right to an educational programme that bridges the gap between home and school, and between school and future life.
- Every child has the right to schooling under healthy conditions.
- Every child has the right to get for his educational needs the required funds from the resources of community, state and nation.
- Every child has the right to educational service and guidance during the entire year throughout the periods of his education.



- Every child has the right to approach teachers, supervisors and administrators who understand him and who are educated to deal effectively with his needs and problems.
- Every child has the right for training through the school to participate in community life and culture.
- Every child has the right through his school to health services, educational and vocational guidance, library facilities, and recreational activities. In special circumstances, the school may have to provide for special services like mid-day meals transportation facilities, etc.

### **Principles of Democratic Education for Child Rights are:**

#### **i) Principle of Sharing Responsibility**

According to John Dewey, democracy is sharing of responsibility. In a school run on democratic lines, the head-master introduces various democratic measures to inculcate values of democracy. For example in School Assembly, Republic Day and Independence Day celebrations all students should be allowed to participate and shoulder the responsibility. Celebrating functions and festivals thus provide the pupils exposures to civic life and democratic society. Pupils know how to exercise their vote and appreciate the relation of man with the society, understanding their democratic rights and duties".

#### **ii) Principle of Equality**

In a democracy, all are treated alike and get equal opportunity to work. Therefore all the children studying in a school should get equal opportunity of participation in the activities irrespective of caste, creed, region and social status. Student councils and governing bodies will provide practical approach to understand democratic values. All children learn and share team spirit and acquire habits of team work.

#### **iii) Principle of Freedom to Learn**

In a democracy people enjoy freedom of speech, initiative etc. Balanced development of pupils should be planned in an atmosphere of freedom. Unnecessary restrictions on pupils kill their initiative and creativity. To meet the special needs of children or learning problems require planned efforts by the school community. Child-centered pedagogy should be adopted to develop freedom to learn at his own pace of learning.

#### **iv) Principle of Co-operation**

Co-operation is an important principle of democracy. Full understanding and goodwill should prevail among all the students and staff between parents and school. Students should wholeheartedly co-operate with the school authorities in organizing various programmes by identifying themselves with the school.

#### **v) Principle of Unbiased Curriculum**

In a democracy all individuals are treated on equal footing. There is no favouritism or partiality. All possible steps should be taken to provide equal justice to all through unbiased curriculum. Equality and justice steps are the strong principles of democracy. Therefore, the curriculum should be planned to inculcate the idea that all children are equal and provide similar learning conditions which promote justice and equality.

#### **vi) Principle of Leadership**

In a democracy leadership is not restricted to a group or a single individual. Anybody who helps the group in the achievement of aims provides leadership to the group. The head-master should recognize the leadership qualities among students and encourage them to lead the group. The qualities of leadership are to be developed by providing opportunities in the form of



games, sports, celebrating functions, running self-governments and working with self-confidence.

#### **vii) Principle of Recognition**

In a democracy individual/group works for recognition of his/her good work or qualities. Nothing works more than encouraging a man or a woman, a boy or a girl to a greater effort than an encouraging recognition of good work done or sincere effort made, or good qualities shown – says W.R. Ryburn. Therefore individual good qualities are to be recognized by the school and work should be allotted according to worth.

#### **Teaching and Mother Tongue**

Every child has got the right to be taught in mother tongue. Language learning plays a very important role in child rights and democratic education.

#### **Poor Quality of Education for Poor People**

The quality of education does very poor children from disadvantaged communities tends to get a worse deal. Gaps between rural and urban areas as well as housing segregation in the cities tend to create such disparities. The experience so far of privatization of schools has also shown that it risks increasing significant differences between the haves and the have-nots.

Extra efforts are necessary to protect the right of girls to come to the school or to give disabled children a genuine chance of regular schooling; it is not sufficient just to state that they have the same rights as others. Information campaigns and home visits may be needed to justice system or in other forms of closed institutions, who are often neglected in this context, also have the right to a decent education. Non-formal education might be the most effective means of reaching children working in the streets or in other places.

#### **The School should be Relevant to the Child Now and for the Future.**

The Rights of the Child stresses that the school should help to develop “the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential”. This can only happen if the curricula relate to the daily life of pupils and what is relevant for them: their immediate social relationships, food, hygiene and the environment. The key point is that the school must be relevant to the child, now and for the future.

#### **Cultural Roots and Global Values**

While the Convention on the Rights of the Child seems to argue for a democratic school in which the child is an active participant, rather than a listener, it does not propose a value-less school. On the contrary, it should prepare the child for a responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, tolerance, equality of the sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin. Respect for human rights and the natural environment are also mentioned specifically.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has suggested that governments specifically include human rights in the national curricula to ensure that such education is given appropriate importance. Respect for human rights should also be developed through a democratic spirit in the school itself and expressed in, for instance, teaching methods and behaviour codes.

Another important aspect is the combination of learning to respect one’s own nation and culture while at the same time respecting those of others. The school has a role in preventing xenophobia. One intention of this part of Article 29 is to create better understanding for minorities, indigenous peoples, refugees and immigrants; the word ‘respect’ is significant in this context.

Therefore, it is recommended the democratic education imparted in schools should encourage “a culture of tolerance through all possible channels, the media and the law. The



schools should teach children to be tolerant and to live in harmony with persons from different backgrounds".

### **New Methods of Learning**

Few educators today deny that children should have a chance to be active. 'Learning by doing' is often much more interesting and effective than passive listening. Memorization and raw facts are less valuable than application and processes, which enhance understanding. Schools which have tried interactive methods have tended to continue on that road-small group discussions, role playing, games, drama and simulation. It is established beyond doubt that one can combine learning with both critical thinking and having fun.

This is, of course, not only a question of effectiveness. The school should be child-friendly. The child has the right to be curious, to ask questions and receive answers, to argue and disagree, to test and make mistakes, to know and not know, to create and be spontaneous, to be recognized and respected. There should be recognition in school of the reality that pupils are individuals and learn in different ways and at a different pace.

A child-centered school gives the teacher a new role: less of a lecturer or a classroom police officer, more of a facilitator or group leader. A modern teacher will organize activities, provide materials, stimulate, guide and give advice. The pupils should have opportunities to 'learn how to learn' as a basis for continued, lifelong learning.

A good library as the center of the school could encourage children to find out through their own initiative. The library itself should be a place of life, not a dead book museum. Reading is important.

### **Mutual Respect**

The inner life of the school must reflect its democratic educational message, including the values of human rights, such as the importance of tolerance and respect for those who are different. Democratic learning requires respectful relations in the school. The Convention on the Right of the Child states that the human dignity of the child should be respected: "State shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present. Convention" (Article 18, 2).

Corporal punishment in school is explicitly permitted in a number of countries and, sadly, is seen as routine. The Government in post-apartheid Namibia, however, tackled this problem and recommended a non-violent approach.

### **Pupil Participation**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child argues for a democratic school. Article 12 not only says that the child should have the opportunity to express herself or himself, but also that these views should be given "due weight". The school is of course an important arena for providing this right, it is not by chance that the committee on the Rights of the Child in discussion after discussion has asked government delegations to explain how Article 12 is implemented in their school system.

It goes without saying that physical abuse violates the spirit of democracy. It is also important that there is the possibility of appeal against repressive decisions. A pupil who has been expelled from school should be able to have his or her case reviewed. A good school should always endeavour to be a model of fairness.

One conclusion that we draw, however, is that the knowledge and attitudes of the educators themselves appear to decide the pace. Progress in any country is unlikely to be faster than the teacher can manage to accept. They are, of course, also influenced by the community in



which they live. Here is an obstacle but also an opportunity. Teachers, after all, are progressive in many societies.

### Concept and Ladder of Child Participation

#### Concept of Child Participation

After 1989 child rights convention the concept of child participation gained momentum. CRC recognized it as the fundamental right of the child. Participation means different things to different people. While the Education Commission for Latin America (1973) considers contribution by pupils in the school programmes and their involvement in the decision making process as participation. Cohen and Uphoff (1977) maintain that participation includes pupils involvement in the entire decision making process. FAO (1982) emphasises participation in all decision making processes but by the pupils own organization and through self-organised action. Paul (1987) defines the concept of enhancement of well-being in terms of values cherished by the school as being the ultimate objective of participation.

The basic objective of child participation is to develop the total personality of the child. At the same time it should aim at developing their attitudes, abilities, capacities, capabilities according to their growth and development in a constructive way. This development should take place within the orbit of child rights. To sum up participation is a means of achieving the child rights and a process of empowering the pupils.

#### Types of Participation

There are different schools of thought on participation viz. 1) passive participation and 2) self mobilization. Passive participation suggests, where the pupils are told what to do. On the other hand is self mobilization where the pupils themselves are in total command of the process. As one moves from passive participation to active self-mobilized participation the control of the school and the management over the process varies.

Yet another classification of participation is manipulative participation where participation is simply a pretence and pupils have no role as in the case of nominated members to school assembly who have little say in the decision making process. If we look at the typology of participation the impact of different kinds of participation with differ. While participation by manipulation and passive participation can disempower pupils, both interactive participation and participation by self-mobilization can be highly empowering.

Participation is therefore, being increasingly viewed as the process of empowering the pupils. The focus is on involvement of pupils in the governance of the school.

### Ladder of the child participation

#### Topology of Hart

Hart in his topology of child participation defined child process of empowering in a ladder form. The ladder includes eight step. They are

- Manipulation
- Decoration
- Tokenism
- Assigned but informed
- Consulted and informed
- Adult initiated shared decision with children
- Child initiated and directed and
- Child initiated shared decisions with adults.



- **Manipulation:** In this the child does not have any knowledge the programme and result. He/she can't understand what they are doing. For example child's participation in general election with a play card in his hands asking people to 'cast' vote to the particular candidate.
- **Decoration:** It is another passive method when a child exhibited as a decorative piece with no scope for the child express his/her own ideas.
- **Tokenism:** In this third step child gets an opportunity participate to speak but is prevented from ventilating his/her own ideas.
- **Assigned and informed:** In this fourth step child will be given role and informed about the details but no chance is given to express his/her views openly.
- **Consulted and informed:** In this the adults will do the project planning and monitoring, children will be informed about project.
- **Adult initiated and shared decision:** In this model projects to be planned, executed and monitored by the adults consultation with children.
- **Child initiated and Directed:** In this model children run the project and share the projects with their classmates.
- **Child initiated and shared decision with adults:** This is the highest order of a child's participation. In this, project will be initiated by the children and share their decision with adults.

### Models of Child

A review of the the child rights in conceptual. The manner also varies. Box given participation.

Models

Child Initiated & Shared Decisions with Adults
Child Initiated & Directed
Adult Initiated & Directed
Consulted & Informed
Children Assigned But Informed
Tokenism
Decoration
Manipulation

### Participation

literature on participation as well as education reveals that participation is in which participation can be enlisted below details different models of

1. **Passive Participation Model:** Pupils participation by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. (Manipulation, decoration steps of Hart model)
2. **Assigned and but Informed Model:** In this model pupils participate but do not have the opportunity to influence proceeding as the findings of project are neither shared nor checked for accuracy by the pupils.
3. **Consulted and Informed Model:** In this model pupils participate by being consulted and youth listen to views. But the youth (teachers)



define both the problems and solutions and may modify these in the list of pupil's response. Such a consulting process does not concede any share in the decision-making and teachers are under no obligation to take pupils views.

4. **Functional Participation Model:** In this model pupils participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement order does not tend to occur at the planning stage of the project, but rather after project objectives have been defined and planning strategy has been finalized.
5. **Interactive Participation Model:** Here participation is seen as a right but not just the means to achieve the goals. For example participation in science fairs and exhibitions.
6. **Child Initiated and Directed Model and Child initiated Shared Decisions with Adults:** This is the real functional model of participation wherein pupil's participation is predetermined to the objective related to the project. Participation is seen as a right and not the means to achieve the goals.

### Barriers to Child's Participation

The following are the barriers normally seen in child's anticipation.

#### **i) Schools Discrimination**

Discrimination between children by the school management affects the child's right in participation. Poverty, caste, region, (page.no 173), children of SCs and STs and other disadvantaged groups-are some of the discriminating features which obstruct their rights. The children of disadvantaged communities and poor economic status also have a right to education.

#### **ii) Lack of Standard Structures**

In all schools councils, special student committees are not formed. Even if they exist they remain non-functional. A school which aims to be relevant would plan for standard structures for effective participation of children.

#### **iii) Lack of Resources**

Another greatest barrier is lack of proper resources both physical and financial. Every school should plan for proper utilization of available resources to develop fullest potentialities of the children.

#### **iv) Officialdom**

In many schools the headmaster instead of acting as a friend philosopher and guide, acts like an autocrat where his will is exactly law and expects everyone to obey him. He gives no opportunity to students to make suggestions, formulate policies and seek solutions to problems. He behaves like a despot and expects strict obedience and execution of his orders.

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