

WHERE IS THE SPACE?**Sandeep Kumar*****ABSTRACT**

*This is a small study done by the author in a school to understand the space provided to the learner by the teachers in teaching learning processes. Though I also strongly believe that when I am saying above line space provided to learner by teacher itself carry a super impose authority of teacher on learners, where we have accepted the unquestioned authority of teachers. This article will try to elaborate how much and what kind of space is available for learners in class room teaching learning processes like, is the teacher plays an authoritative role in class or not? Is there any contradiction the way learner and teacher perceive the classroom processes? How much a child comfortable in the class to say his or her views? Etc. So the basic objective of the work is to **explore** the space and say of a learner in his or her own learning processes and how this processes is being influence by the teachers' authority. To achieve this objective data has been collected by observation of twenty classes of social science in a school. Paper starts with a theoretical framework, which talks about the importance of authority of learners in teaching learning processes, which also include the rationale along with the objective of the work done. Then after collected data has been analyzed on the themes emerged from the collected data itself. After analysis some suggestions has been given to teachers to appreciate the learners' authority in the class.*

Key words: Teaching- Learning- Process, Authority of Learners, Teachers Authority, Socio-Cultural Context.

Introduction

When we talk about democracy we talk about such a system and mechanism in which all components work individually, but with sprit of collectivism. Two things work here very effectively individualism and collectivism. Each component has its own defined work different from others, but they all collectively work for a system. If you see democracy form structuralist functionalist perspective, we come to know that democracy work like a body, in which all parts work individually but with relation to another one, to make a body function properly. According to Michel Apple (2007) democracy is not only a term used in political science, moreover it is a skill for life living. It is not only related to administration and system but also with all aspects of life. Democracy is a way of looking at things which is related to all parts of life, whether it is state, society, family, school or any other system or even an individual. When we talk about democratic school various thinkers come in mind like Ganghi, Tegore, Krishanmurti, Geejubhai Badheka, Dewy, Montessori etc. According to Apple and Been democratic school are the actual school based on democratic way of living. And if we want to make this spirit alive, we have to provide opportunities to our learner to make them understand the importance of this democratic sprit.

With students, community participation is also essential in education system to make a democratic school. Gandhi said school has a great role to play outside the school premises. He said students ultimately will have to deal with the community, than why not they get chance to learn about it from school itself, so that they can understand it in a more comprehensive manner. When a child enters in school, he/she is not a blank slate nor a clay to whom you can make anything. Dewy (1938) said a child has a legacy of his/her past experiences those can be good or bad. Child has strong innate abilities to learn from the birth. Without

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any teacher they learn many things from their surroundings. With little guidance they learn how to speak, they also learn their culture and customs. This learning process is self-directed and self-oriented. Above discussion point out that children do learn from his or her own past experiences. Michal Apple (2009) said that we have to consider these experiences to help learners to learn naturally. Rabindra Nath Tagore said nature is the actual teacher. He also said there should not be any restriction on curriculum, it needs to be free. This way learners can do his or her over all development. He has full faith in learners' abilities and capabilities, that is why, he said child construct his knowledge in natural settings. He perceived very strong, positive and constructive role of education in which desired role is to play by learner which is forced.

Geeju Bhai Badheka has written many books on his own school experiences. Dewaswapan is one of them, he said in this book that it is important to make a pedagogy contextual. He also mentioned that examination decides everything in school education and the objective of education get defeated. He accepted the space of learner in learning processes and to understand this he does some experiments based on humanistic perspective. He said learning is not mere collection of knowledge, it is a process of dialogue. So it is essential to make learning dialogue based, not teacher authority based. Dialogue means, where dignify respect can be given to learner and his or her experiences and viewpoints. Krishan Murti accept the space of learner in learning process. He said learning is a lifelong process and there is no time when we learn nothing. So in this way actual experiences of life teach us many things. Dewy said a person is an active organism and part of his community. His nature is to express himself and this expression is built and constructed in social settings and social experiences. So if we ignore this expression of learner in class, we are doing injustice to them and in such a situation learning cannot take place. Frère also criticized education system for not giving appropriate space to learner in learning process. He argue that education system believe---teacher teaches and learners are taught---teacher knows and leaners are tabula rasa---complete authority is with teachers and learners are who obey, etc. Frère said actually banking system of knowledge consist Burdon of knowledge which suppress the development of the personality of a child. He said the function of education is to break the culture of silence and also to create the space for dialogue.

With reference to above discussion this is also need to be consider that all individuals are unique, there are difference between two individual and we should respect that difference.---- all student should be given full respect and acceptance, it is inhumane to show some one down---- to develop faith in each other, it is mandatory that we should be honest towards each other---- there is a need to listen each other patiently--- teaching should be meaningful---- it is to be acknowledge that everyone have their unique way of learning etc. But is this the reality in schools? It is a question subject to inquiry. Do students have any role in their own learning process? Are classes always teacher dominated? Does this domination of teacher influence learning of a learner? Is there any conflict in authority between learner and teacher in classroom? What is the role of a learner in a democratic school? Does examination determine everything in school? How much space a learner has in his/her own learning. These and many other questions will be answered in this next part of the paper after methodology.

Methodology

The nature of entire work is qualitative and analytical. Observations and interviews were being used as tools for data collection. To collect the data 20 classes of social sciences were being observed and 20 students and 5 teachers were being interviewed. Some theme emerged from the data and on the basis of those themes analysis was done. Themes are also supported by theoretical framework of the work.

Findings

This analysis is done on the bases of data collected by observations and interviews of students and teachers to understand the space of learners in teaching learning processes

Disdain of Students Say in Class

It was being observed in the classes that students' authority is disdain. Authority means, the equal opportunities and participation in class. Students curiosity was not addressed satisfactory. Question asked by students were not being answer properly. Nothing was being asked by the students, that how they want to do the work, everything was decided by teacher. In a class student said " aj hum political science padengy." Teacher refused immediately and said " *aj history ka turn hai so no political science*" It was a clear disdain of student space in learning process. In some of the observed classes teacher even reject the idea of participating the entire class. They always ask question to the bright student to show and prove their teaching quality. In whole some, it came out from the analysis of observed classes that student has no say in class.

Decline of Child's Identity in from of Student

Observation show that there are huge crises regarding the identity of a child in school or in a class. We need to consider that all students are children first and then students. Generally children feel proud to be part of any class, but observation and interviews done with students it clearly came out that they are in school forcefully without any objective. They shared that they come to school and go back, parents send them to school and school does not accept them as a child of a particular age. So the childhood had lost somewhere between school and home. Resultant they are not doing well at school nor at home. They are losing the childhood and identity as a child.

Ignorance of Learner Natural Tendencies

Students are curious by nature and this curiosity is different learner to learner, but this natural and innate tendencies are being suppressed in class. Students want to ask question (but stopped by saying that your question is wrong), they want to enjoy (they stopped by saying it is not a cinema hall), some time they do not want to study (they are being forced by saying that it is a class not a picnic spot). In all most all classes naturality of a learner is being rejected and disdain. They are not allowed to do anything which does not have acceptance of teacher.

Inadequate Development of Self of Student

It was being observed in the classes the student has not developed their self adequately, reason being they are not being accepted the way they are. Teachers do not have faith in their abilities. All the time words being used by teacher "nonsense", "you cannot study", "cannot even you do this much" etc. such behavior of teacher is not appropriate, it creates hinders in the process of self-development of learners. It became more problematic when teachers is this teacher even do not think about such issue. While interviewing a teacher it came out that they (students) have become already what they want to be, we cannot change them. With this understanding they do not do any effort to help learners in their personality development.

Lack of Co-relation between Democratic Class and Learners' Space:

Observations show that classes are not democratic and there is no space for learners to participate in classroom processes. Democratic class rooms provide space for learn to engage him/herself in learning with due respect. But observations showed that student even do not have space to ask questions without any

hesitation. They answer only what teacher asked to them. In democratic class teacher should provide opportunities to raise questions but nothing like this was being observed. Only straight forward statement is the pedagogy of the classes, no space for dialogue between teacher and students. Everything is prescribed to learner no scope for negotiation.

Negligence Role of Learners to Decide What and When to Study

Analysis showed that right to decision is with teacher only. Student has no such right in classes. In observed classes it has never been asked students that what would you like to study or discuss today. This prerogative is with teacher only. Students only obey. So we should forget about the authority of learners in the class room process. Interaction with teacher revealed that they have to do this way only because, they have deadlines for entire course and so there is no time for all such work.

Forced Disciplined and Forced Value Education

Responsibility and accountability is inherent within the discipline but only when, if discipline is not forced. Discipline need to be volunteer not forced. But observation showed that classroom discipline is forced by teachers and because of this students are failed to develop feeling of accountability. Interviews with students showed that they feel if everything is done by teacher than why they should bother, even keeping chalk in classroom. They bring chalk when teacher ask them to do. So what so ever discipline exists in school and class does not carry the feeling of responsibility.

Sitting Arrangement in Classroom

Sitting arrangement in classroom is also not appropriate. Some students seats are fixed in class, like the bosses (influential students) of the class have their fixed seats and some learners those who are less influential has also fixed seats at back. So such division is very problematic and it is more surprising to know that teacher knows this and does not intervene in this. Teachers' view is that let them decide, how much we can intervene. So it was observed that there are two classes within one class. Active students and passive students. Interviews with student revealed that they have understanding that intelligent students should sit in front and others at back. It is more surprising to know that teachers also indorse this process. So the sitting arrangement also need to be reconsider on egalitarian basis.

Contextless Teaching and Ignorance of Individual Experiences

Analysis showed that teaching in classes are some way or other was context less. Researches proves that subject like social sciences can be best deal in context, but unfortunately observed classes were not using learners context. Discussion with teachers also revealed that they are not bothering about this. They just complete the syllabus on time. Even some of them were very confused that how to incorporate learners context (like their social background) in teaching. Most of them just read books in class or ask some students to read the book and then question answers. Observed classes also revealed that teachers are not sensitive about the students previous experiences they have constructed from their cultural legacy and if used is problematic, like Diwali is a festival when cleaning is done but cannot it be said that cleaning is done on all festivals. So situating learning in context was completely absent.

No Space for Critical, Analytical and Reflective Thinking

Everything is given to the learner such as content, questions etc. Hardly there is space of thinking. And in absence of thinking there is no criticality and analysis in absent of these there is no space of reflection . Content is given to learners just to memories and to write in exams. The activities given in text books are also not being used. Teachers skip those activity by saying that put more focus on content

because that will be asked in exams. In such a situation, it can be assumed that nothing is happening for the development of critical, analytical and reflective thinking.

No Collaborative Work

Collaboration is a very good strategy to deal with the classes like social science. Student get more chance to understand others perspective and then also learn how to work in group individually with collective responsibility. But nothing like this has been observed in classes. No collaboration exists in classroom teaching. Only teacher fronted classes are existing in schools, where teacher is in the front and students are just listener. While talking with teachers it came out that they believe, that ultimately our teaching helps students to write in exams. In group work they just enjoy and do not study. So collaborative work was not seen in the present study.

No Understanding of the Nature of the Subject (Social Science)

It is very sad but true that teachers did not show good understanding of the nature of the subject social science, neither in observation nor through interviews. Most of teacher said social science is the combination of four subjects which is a very wrong phenomenon about the social science; they said history, geography, political science and economics make this subject. But when I asked them, why you teach them separately they could not reply much on this question. They do not understand that social science has its own nature and scope except history, geography etc.

Conflict between Learner and Teacher Interests

Analysis of observations shows that there is conflict between learner interest and teachers interest. If it is supposed to be said learner want to learn and teacher want to teach. But teacher want to teach without bothering how learners want to learn. And learner want to learn but not being given due respect to their ways. So, they fail to achieve what they want. So this conflict is very crucial to deal to resolve it in a proper way. So that teaching process actually become teaching- learning- process.

Others

Except above issues there are more issues were being observed in the classes. Like Lack of child centered pedagogy, information oriented knowledge, teaching dominated teaching-learning- process, unavailability of co-curricular activities in class, ignorance of individual difference, Homework pattern, School as government tuition center and teachers are agent.

Conclusion

As a conclusion it can be said that till date students do not have any space in their own teaching-learning- processes. They do not have space for debate, dialogue, criticize etc. they have no space for asking questions, reflection, analysis, collaboration. The entire process is teacher oriented and classes are teacher fronted. School is working like a government tuition centers and learner as their agent or customer. School is losing its identity as a school and so the welfare agenda of state. So the question still exists "where is the space."

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