

# DEMOCRATIC VALUE AND EDUCATION: A BRIEF REVIEW

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**Abstract:** Democracy is never a new concept for the Indians. Its tradition goes back to the time of the Vedas and Upanishads. The traditional village Panchayat system still survives these days. It is an evidence of the continuous democratic tradition in India. However, democracy in India in those days is different from the present day. Its nature and content have undergone a revolutionary change and its scope is also limited. The way we understand democracy now, is a recent concept. In this sense the basic tenet of democracy is respect for and importance of the individual of man. Democracy in modern sense is a recent phenomenon in India. People in this sub-continent have developed democratic consciousness because of the impact of science and technology. People have developed self-confidence, being influenced by the democratic ideals. It is accepted by the people not only as a form of government, but as a way of life.

**Key words:** *Education, Value, Democracy etc.*

## Introduction:

According to University Education Commission, education is the greatest instrument of social emancipation by which democracy establishes, maintains and protects the spirit of equality among its members. The Commission further opines Democracy affirms that each individual is a unique adventure of life. The function of education is guidance of this adventure for the realisation of the potentialities of each individual in the face of the actual world of men and things. From complete dependence on others and child has to grow into relative independence. Democracy can function properly if all the members of the community are educated up to a certain minimum standard. In the words of John Dewey, "Democratic ends demand democratic methods for their realisation". Education in a democracy, therefore, cannot be a monopoly of a few privileged or well to do persons: it is a social necessity, a birth right of all individuals. It is, therefore, that in our constitution, free and compulsory education for all children of the age group of 6 to 14 years has been guaranteed. This is because the ideals of justice in democracy demand every individual should enjoy freedom from ignorance also. The relationship between democracy and education is reciprocal. Whereas democracy needs the services of education for its proper functioning, education also requires the services of democracy. For example, democracy provides aims to education. In the modern world, the main aim of education in democratic countries is to produce democratic citizens, who could from their own independent judgements on all kinds of complicated social, economic and political issues and decide their own course of action. Thus, democracy and education are closely and inseparably related to each other.

With the attainment of independence on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947, India transformed into a democratic republic and accepted education as the number one nation building activity. Now, in the field of education, we have accepted the principles of freedom, equality, fraternity and justice as a way of life. Education is considered as the most potent and dynamic agency to achieve democratic values. Article 45 of our constitution has made education, free, compulsory and universal for the children within the age group of 6-14 years. We have set up a number of committees and commission to bring about desirable changes in the field of education. Regarding education in the Emerging Indian Society, the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) opines, "The aims and objectives of a true democratic education should be to develop habits, attitudes and qualities of character. This means that the educational system should make its contribution to the development of habits, attitudes and qualities of character which will enable its citizens to bear worthy responsibilities of democratic citizenship and to counteract all those fissiparous tendencies which bind emergence of a broad nation and secular outlook... There is need to stimulate cultural renaissance and cultural puritans which are suffering because of poverty". The Education Commission (1964-66) writes, "The important and urgent need in Indian education today, is to transform it to endeavour to relate it to life, needs and aspirations of the people and thereby make it a powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realisation of national goals. For this purpose, education should aim at: (a) Increase productive; (b) achieving social and national integration; (c) accelerating the process of modernisation and (d) cultivation of social, moral and spiritual values.

To run democracy successfully India, the aims or education advocated by the Education Commission is the most welcomed. Therefore, the Govt. at the centre and at the states is doing their utmost to achieve democratic values through education. Even then, the real ideal of democracy is not yet achieved. In order to success in all areas and all spheres of human life, the only way out seems to be is the spread of education on democratic lines.

## Objectives of the study:

- a) To know the meaning and concept of democracy;
- b) To know the democracy and aim of education-Ways and Means;

- c) To explain the democracy in education;
- d) To know the need and importance of democratic ideal in a country like India.

### Methodology of the study:

We know there are different types of methodology for any study. Here the historical method of research/study is used. In the present study and the approach is qualitative in nature. The work has been conducted in the following ways:

- Collection of primary and secondary sources;
- Detailed of the reliable and valid sources;
- Comparison of different sources and
- Making generalization from the sources.

### Sources of data:

Here two Types of data were collected. These were:

- I. Primary sources of Data: Interviewed with the students.
- II. Secondary Sources of Data: Different types of books of education and Democracy

### Analysis and discussion of the objectives:

#### Meaning and concept of Democracy:

Democracy is one of those terms which are talked about most by all and sundry. This concept is so comprehensive in its sweep and so elusive in its meaning that almost anything can be understood by it. But there is general agreement about its meaning. This concept is complex and has developed through ages in its various aspects. Its meaning is not confined only to its political aspect. It is accepted as way of life and covers the ethical, social and economic aspects of life. The word democracy has been derived from two Greek roots, 'Demons' and 'Cratic' which mean 'Power' and 'Public' respectively. Thus, etymologically or literal meaning of the word 'Democracy' is 'power of the people'. It is defined by Abraham Lincon as the Government of people, for the people and by the people. It may be added that it is the best kind of social organisation for man and the arguments are based on the very nature of the man himself. It is the only arrangement for group living in which man can attain upliftment all-round.

#### Definition of Democracy:

To have a clear conception of democracy, let us take the help of the following definitions:

- **Seely** defined as 'democracy is a Government in which everybody has to share'.
- According to **Mazzine** "Democracy is the progress of all, through all under the leadership of the wisest and the best".
- **Aristotle** said, "A government by the many".
- **University Education Commission (1948-49)** remarked, "Democracy is a way of life and not a mere political arrangement. It is based on the principle of equal freedom and equal rights for all regardless of race, religion, sex or economic status".

The Preamble of the Constitution of India reads, "The Sovereign Democratic Republic of India will secure to all its citizens justice: social, economic and political, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, and equality of rights and opportunity. It will further promote among them all Fraternity, assuming the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation". Thus, democracy in India is based on Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

#### Principles of Democracy:

From the above discussion, the following principles emerge as the characteristics of democracy in the modern sense.

- a) Democracy affirms the worth and dignity of the individual and declares that every human being is to be regarded as an end, and as a means only.
- b) Equality i.e. Equal right is guaranteed to all.
- c) Democracy regards political and social liberties as the only dependable safeguards of individual worth and quality.
- d) Democracy rests on individual opportunity as well as individual responsibility.
- e) In the ultimate analysis, democracy rests on the beliefs of the dignity of individuals and voluntary sharing of life by every member of society with all other members.

Democracy has enshrined three deities of *Liberty, Equality and Fraternity*, which are the ideals to be achieved. According to **Henderson**, “Democracy is based on two assumptions : the infinite value and worth of human personality and belief that men are capable of managing their own affairs in such a way as to promote the welfare of all and that therefore, they should have the freedom to do so”. It is also to be borne in mind that the democratic principles are not simply applicable to the political area. They are also applicable to the economic and social fields. **Boyal Bode**, therefore, considers democracy as “a way of life and by the way of life, he means a determining influence in every major area of life”. Moreover, democracy has been accepted as philosophy of modern life and it permeates all the activities of the human beings. Since education is a potential instrument of social change, democracy has its closest alliance with education.

### Democracy and aim of Education-Ways and Means:

The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) has laid down the following aims of education for our country:

1. **Development and Democratic Citizenship:** Citizenship in education involves many intellectual, social and moral qualities which can be developed through education. In order to develop democratic citizenship, education should aim at developing the following qualities:
  - a) Clear thinking and proper understanding.
  - b) Clear expression through speech and writing.
  - c) Art of co-operative living.
  - d) Sense of the patriotism.
  - e) Development of sense of world citizenship.
2. **Improvement of Vocational Efficiency:** This includes the following:
  - a) Creating proper attitude to work.
  - b) Teaching dignity of labour.
  - c) Promotion of technical skill and efficiency.
3. **Development of Personality:** The third main of our educational system according to the Mudaliar Commission (1952-53) is the development of personality which includes:
  - a) Releasing the sources of creative energy in the students, so that they may be able to appreciate their cultural heritage.
  - b) Cultivating rich and varied interests which they can pursue in their leisure time and contribute in their later life to the development of this heritage.
  - c) Giving a place of honour to the subjects like art, craft, music, dance and the development of hobbies.
4. **Developing Qualities of Leadership:** Leadership does not imply political leadership only, but leadership in every sphere and walk of life. Thus, education must train persons who will be able to assume the responsibility of leadership in social, political, economic or cultural field.  
To realise these aims, the curriculum as well as the method of teaching will be devised and formulated accordingly.

### Education for democracy-Ways and Means:

The ways and means for imparting education for democracy may be summarised as under:

1. **Recognition of individual's worth:** Proper recognition should be given to the individuality of every child. This can be done by providing:
  - a) Universal education
  - b) Making education child-centred.
  - c) By providing diversified curriculum.
2. **Development of clear thinking:** This can be helped through:
  - a) Adopting mother tongue as medium of instruction.
  - b) Providing self-government in schools.
  - c) Encouraging self-expression through various types of activities.
  - d) Adopting dynamic and progressive methods of teaching.
3. **Training in Human relationship:** This may be provided through:
  - a) Encouraging group activities.
  - b) Providing residential schools.
  - c) Teaching of Social Sciences.
4. **Inculcating National Integration:** This may be attained through:
  - a) Examples of great heroes.
  - b) Ideal teachers as models.
  - c) Biographies of great man.
  - d) Knowledge of our glorious heritage.

5. **Vocational Efficiency:** For providing the much needed vocational training, Indian Education Commission(1964-66) has suggested the following:
- Providing science education.
  - Provision for work experience.
  - Providing vocational education and training

This comprehensive programme will enable the children “to adopt democracy, not only as a form of Government but also as a way of life”. The Kothari Commission has suggested, “We have to cultivate a spirit of large hearted tolerance of mutual give and take and the appreciation of ways in which people differ from one another. This is a very exacting experiment in living that we have launched and no education will be worthwhile if the educated mind is unable to respond to the situation with intelligence and imagination. In short, democratic education is itself a living experiment which is not only exacting but also challenging.

### Democracy in Education:

The trend of democracy in our culture is reflected in the present system of education in the following ways:

- Equalisation of Educational opportunity:** The true democratic education demands that education should be the birth right of every individual. Therefore, equality of educational opportunity should be given to all for their fullest development.
- Universal and Compulsory Education:** Education in a democratic set-up should provide free and compulsory education to all up to a certain level and then create facilities for various types of education according to the abilities and needs of individuals. Thus it becomes universal. The constitution of India makes provision that “The state shall endeavour 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”. Besides this, certain steps have been taken by the Government of India in response to this directive principle of the state policy through Five year plans. Thus, in the Emerging Indian Society, this universal, free and compulsory education is a reflection of a democratic attitude.  
Free, compulsory and universal education is considered as strong pillar of democracy. It creates citizens, who become creative and productive members of the society. The present society is characterised by large scale production of the country, it is essential that all people should be educated.
- Provision of Adult Education:** In order to educate all democratic countries emphasize on adult education. This scheme of adult education is under operation in our country. Provision of night schools, short-term courses, one day schools and other schemes are being launched to solve this stupendous problem.
- Child Centred Education:** Education becomes child-centred in a democratic country. The child remains in the forefront in the educative process.
- Methods of Education:** In democratic countries methods of teaching have undergone a revolutionary change. The old, traditional methods have been replaced by individual attention method. Now self-teaching, learning by doing etc. are emphasized.
- Social Activities:** To provide social experiences to the child attention is now given on social, cultural and co-curricular activities.
- Students Unions:** To produce democratic citizens and to promote social welfare, student unions are organised in schools and colleges in democratic countries. In India, we have also created such facilities. It helps the students to gain knowledge about the ‘Sharing and Responsibilities’, and the students solve their own problems.
- Tolerance:** In a democratic society free play ideas should be encouraged by the help of education. In our country, growing intolerance does great harm to the well-being of the people in India today. For the survival of democracy in India education should help a lot in the cultivation of this quality of tolerance, celebration of festivals of different communities, comparative study of various cultural and religious movements are some of the devices to develop tolerance.
- Develop Love for the Country:** Education should not develop false patriotism in the children. It should be true and broad based and should develop true love towards the country.
- Physical Health of the Children:** Different co-curricular activities like games, sports, gymnasias, etc. should be organised in the centres of learning to promote the physical well-being of the students. Medical help should also be provided in schools regularly.
- Co-operation between different agencies of education:** In a democratic country, there should be co-operation between the three agencies of education-Formal, Informal and Non-formal. This co-operation can promote healthy democratic life.
- Educational Administration and Supervision:** Educational administration and supervision should work on democratic lines. Students should get an opportunity to participate in educational administration. The supervisors should develop democratic attitude while supervising educational activities.

13. **Training in Leadership:** Democratic leadership is a tradition in India. Since the time of the Vedic Age, emphasis is given to produce efficient leaders to take leadership in various walks of life. To enable the leaders, to develop an adequate capacity to discharge their duties properly, proper training should be given.
14. **Education for the Development of the 'Whole Man':** True democratic education aims at the development of the 'whole man'-body, mind and spirit. Through education an individual's physical, mental, social, emotional and moral abilities should be developed.
15. **Understanding the Values of Dignity of Labour:** Students in democratic countries should develop an attitude of true craft man. For the development of economic efficiency, emphasis should be given on hand work the dignity of labour and scorned of idleness and a leisure class.
16. **Academic Freedom:** Education for democracy can be proper in an atmosphere of academic freedom. The characteristics of academic freedom are:
  - a) **Freedom of Inquiry and Research:** This world includes the right to express orally and in point the conclusions and few points developed through such study.
  - b) **Freedom of Discussion of Controversial Issues in the Classroom:** The teacher should help the students learn how to tackle and analyse these problems themselves. He should resist the temptation of supplying ready-made solutions himself.
  - c) **Freedom in the use of Material:** This makes banning or prescribing of literature totally indefensible.

### Need and Importance of School in Democratic ideal in a country like India:

Education for democracy should evaluate all the aspects of personality. It should principally aim at the inculcation of the democratic system of values. This cannot be achieved by any amount of theoretical instructions. In other words, democracy cannot be learnt without being practised. It has to be caught rather than taught. Every aspect of the life of the school curricular or extra-curricular and every kind of relationship in school between teachers and taught should be organised in accordance with the democratic system of values. The broad and general objective of a democratic school shall therefore, be the development of democratic values of life among its pupils. The members of a democratic school have a unity of purpose. So far as this objective is concerned, because faith in democratic philosophy of life binds them together. To be successful therefore a school should create a very strong tradition in favour of the democratic way life. The crowd should be completely integrated with the school community through this tradition. Every new pupil, who enters the school, should be proud of the fact that he has joined a society which he should enrich and enable by his own contribution. The school song, the school motto, the school dress, the school organisation and the school activities should all contribute to this ideal.

But at the same time there should be sufficient variety in the activities of a democratic school. It should aim at the highest development of the potentialities of its individual members. It should specially try to cultivate self reliance, independent thinking and responsible behaviour among its members. A democratic school cannot function successfully unless the member develop these qualities and practice toleration. In democratic schools methods of teaching has undergone a revolutionary change. Rote learning and lectures in class rooms are discarded as educational methods. The pupils are to learn through their own activities problem solving and active participation by the pupils in learning activities is more encouraged. The responsibility for learning is thrown upon the pupils themselves-the teacher is only a leader.

The discipline in a democratic school is self imposed. In other words, the pupils have to discipline themselves in working out the recitation which they have voluntarily undertaken. In such situation discipline becomes free, positive and natural and has not to be enforced from above. The democratic schools develop pupils organisations to frame the 'School Pupils' and to maintain discipline in the school.

The school curriculum in democracy should be in nature and should be based upon the immediate needs and interest of the pupils. The curriculum of a democratic school usually takes the form of socialised recitation; where teachers and pupils can freely co-operate in determining the topic to be studied and in completing it successfully. This will help in illustrating the democratic ways in the selection of topics to be studied and activities to be pursued. Besides this, there should be special provision in the curriculum for developing better understanding not only between individuals and individuals but also between groups and groups and between nation and nations.

### Conclusion:

In fine, it may be pointed out that the democratic education is a responsibility only of the school, but also of the hoe and of the society. All the relationship of an individual whether in school or in family or in society should be organised in accordance with the democratic values. Democratic education fails in our schools, because we take a partial view of it. For example, if democratic principles are followed to a certain extent in organising extra-curricular activities, they are totally ignored in the case of curricular activities. Pupils who are accustomed to dictatorial atmosphere in one case cannot respond to democratic atmosphere in the other.

Education for democracy, it should be remembered, is not teaching the successful operation of the democratic machineries, but it is the development of democratic personalities.

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