



Politics of the Policy, Teachers' Assumptions and the Existences of Children from Economically Weaker Section in a Private School, Delhi

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ABSTRACT:- As societies industrialize and modernize, social class increasingly plays a significant role in determining educational outcomes. Well-designed interventions aimed at improving the quality of instruction can make a difference. Intangible factors such as school culture (the values propounded by school personnel and student peer groups) also are significant. If the intervention in the form of policy (EWS Free Quota Policy) is successful, the reality of equitable classroom with children from different strata of society is not impossible. This study explored the authenticity of the Policy and the assumptions carried by the teachers in implementing it. The data collected through questionnaire and unstructured interview from the teachers (20 in number) dealing with three children as cases. The results showed that majority of them were aware of the policy and its need to give the EWS children an opportunity to study in their school. Though they are sympathetic towards them, they highlighted problems associated with engaging them appropriately in the school context.

KEYWORDS:- EWS Quota Policy, Politics of policy, Teachers' assumptions, EWS children

I. INTRODUCTION

While primary education has expanded to near universal coverage of the relevant age group, access to the levels of education that are most important for social mobility and entry into the most modern and competitive sectors of the increasingly globalized economies remain elusive for all but elites. Consequently, the relationship between parents' socio-economic class and their children's socio-economic class has shown little evidence of changing over time. Moreover, comparative longitudinal studies of factors influencing what is learned in school and level of educational attainment suggest that as societies industrialize and modernize, social class increasingly plays a significant role in determining educational outcomes. This finding does not discount the importance of school-based factors in determining how well students, especially those living in conditions of poverty, fare in school. Well-designed interventions aimed at improving the quality of instruction can make a difference. This paper tried to explore the authenticity of the educational policy as means of intervention and the assumptions carried by the teachers in its execution.

II. BACKGROUND NOTE ON ECONOMICALLY WEAKER SECTION (EWS) QUOTA POLICY

There are 1160 public schools in Delhi, out of which around 397 schools have allotted land at subsidized rates from the Government on the condition of providing free education to underprivileged children. The agreement between the Government and schools availing of concessionary land rates was that the underprivileged children would be given fair and equal education without any prejudice and discrimination. A social Jurist filed a petition ([W.P. \(C\) 3156/2002](#)) in the Delhi High Court and a judgment was passed on 20th January 2004 which ordered schools who had been allotted land from Government, to give admission to children of unprivileged sections of society. The Court further ordered that in case its order was not followed, these schools would be derecognized, and lease deed provided to the schools would be cancelled. The High Court had also instructed the Education Department of Delhi to immediately issue rules and regulation pertaining to the admission procedure of unprivileged children.

In July 2005 Delhi Govt. has published an order related to admission of the children belonging to

economically weaker section in many newspapers, in which they have mentioned the guidelines for such admission. Therefore it was a good opportunity for the poor by which they can also give free and good education to their children in public schools.

Several complaints were sent to the Deputy Directors of Education of the Districts, and Director of Education for the non compliance of the Court Order. All these complaints came in to the notice of the Chief Information Commissioner during the hearing of those cases therefore commission has also recommended departmental inquiry against some deputy directors of education. Eventually, in 2006-07 around 180 children and in 2007-08 around 400 children were able to get admission in (public !) private schools, who would have never dreamt of going to such schools.

The Honourable High Court's order signifies a resolve to intervene in a process which places children in different streams of socialization by means of schooling and deepens the differentiation entrenched in the distribution of educational opportunities. The occasion for the order, and for the subsequent decision taken by the government (No PS/DE/2004/10496-11595 dated 27th April 2004), was rather specific, in the sense that both acquired their rationale from the expectation that private schools to whom the state gave land at concessional rates should respond by sharing the state's social responsibility. However, this is not the same rationale which underlies the educational policy of promoting 'common' or neighbourhood schools. The latest policy document, the NCF, explains the educational logic of including children from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The logic is that a heterogeneous school population provides an enriched learning environment, apart from promoting social cohesion. The currently used term 'inclusive' education implies, as did earlier terms like 'common' and 'neighbourhood' schools, that children from different backgrounds and with varying interests and ability will achieve their highest potential if they study in a shared classroom environment. The idea of inclusive schooling is also consistent with Constitutional values and ideals, especially with the ideals of fraternity and social justice and the importance of equality of opportunity and social justice. It is in this context that the committee felt that the order given by the Honourable Delhi High Court carried a valuable remedy for a distorted situation.

III. POLITICS OF THE POLICY

Before looking at the implementation of the policy, an attempt needs to be made to look at its stated objectives. The major objectives can be summed up in terms of the following questions:

Is it social obligation to the poor?

One of the objectives behind the granting of private lands on throwaway prices to more than 1500 un-aided recognised private schools in Delhi was that schools discharge their "social obligation" to provide free education to a certain percentage of the children of the poor through their schools. Social obligation of the private schools catering to the educational needs of the economically privileged classes towards children of the poor, was therefore one of the objectives of the order.

Is it a 'punishment'?

The public authorities had not taken any action against the erring schools for violating the conditions of land allotment as no school was providing free education to the children of the poor. Then the question is whether this notification is, therefore, simply aimed at 'punishing' the schools which had violated rules in this regard and make them pay up. This aspect becomes especially important in view of the fact that a large number of private schools in Delhi, which had struck a deal with the state government at the time of acquiring land, are now playing the 'victim'. These schools had also lodged an appeal challenging the government 'diktat' that was subsequently dismissed by the Supreme Court.

Is it aimed at ensuring equity and equality in education?

"This was done in order to promote integration of rich and poor sections of society and to drive home the fact that an educational institution has a social obligation to fulfil," says a lawyer who was part of the group that filed a PIL on this matter in the Delhi High Court in 2002. The PIL also added that the growth of private schools has widened the gap between the classes and masses, which is opposed to the letter and spirit of the Constitution of India. The provision of free education to the children of the poor as stipulated in the allotment of land letters, it stated, if implemented, will go a long way towards achieving the goals set out in the Constitution.

Is it extension of the Right to free and compulsory education?

The petitioner submitted that Law Commission of India in its 165th report on free and compulsory education for children deals with the question of free education to the children of the poor in private schools. It proposed "Free and Compulsory Education for Children Bill, 1998" in Section 12 of the said Bill. It was further

submitted that every child of this country has a fundamental right to receive free and compulsory education up to 14 years and this right is an independent right of the child and does not depend on the economic and other status of his/her parents. And that all un-aided recognized private schools in Delhi irrespective of the fact whether public land has been allotted to them or not, should provide free education to the children of the poor to the extent of 25 per cent as a part of their social and moral duty towards the children of the poor, especially when such schools have been given public land at throwaway prices.

Is 'integration' really happening?

The parents of children belonging to the economically marginalized sections of the society are being unduly harassed by school authorities and are facing a lot of problems in getting their children admitted to these schools, despite the state Government's directives. Constraints faced by these private Schools suggested 'alternatives'. The representatives of private schools seemed to have expressed a range of reactions – **opposition, doubt, worry, reluctant acceptance**. Questions have been raised : Who will pay the cost of free education? Do we ask parents of those students who pay fees to undertake this burden? And more importantly, where do we go looking for these children? Or "while the inclusion policy is good, governments may have to subsidize private schools in order to achieve the target of free education for 20-25 per cent students".

The host of objections to the scheme includes the views of principals stating that, it is "**not fair**" to these children as they are "**unable to follow what is being taught as the standard of their school is very high**". That "**assimilation**" will never happen, given the differences in "**family backgrounds**"; that inability to do well in school is an "**inherited trait**" that children receive from their parents.

Prevalence of stereotypes/prejudices against children of the poor:

While students of the economically poorer sections have been admitted to these schools, one factor of concern that cannot be overlooked is the stereotypical mindsets and prejudices of the school management and, to some extent, the teaching community. As mentioned earlier notions abound that children from the slums are "criminals" who use "Abusive language" and "violent behaviour"; who do not have the proper attitude and aptitude towards studies given their lack of parental support at home and more seriously, that these are "inherited traits" that they've "acquired" from their parents. In other words, their home and environment (of filth, squatter, illiteracy and decadence) are responsible for the "weakness in studies" and it would be "unfair" to them to admit them to private schools as the quality of education of these schools is "high" and "Beyond" their level of understanding. (ISST report, 2005)

There is also an inability to empathize with the living and working conditions of the parents of these children. A middle-class frame of reference to assess parental attitudes towards their children exists. The inability of parents, most of whom are non-literate, to supervise their children's homework, to send them neatly dressed to school, to attend parent-teacher meetings are instances cited by teachers as indicating parents' neglect of children and their inability to be "supportive".

There seems to be a complete lack of sensitivity towards understanding the culture and conditions which prevents parents from being supportive towards their children. The differential learning requirements of first-generation school-goers and the understanding of the student's capacities and talents by teachers also suffers from several pre-conceived erroneous notions. There is no realization of the need to provide positive academic support which children are unable to receive at home. There seems to be a complete lack of engagement and commitment towards teaching children from these backgrounds.

While there is widespread acceptance that the students' failure to understand is due to the transition from a Hindi medium of instruction to English and also the poor quality of education in government schools, there is still no attempt to provide additional support to help them catch up. Their obvious requirement for supportive classes to help them improve their pace is totally ignored and the fact that the student is unable to cope is treated as a "natural" or "inherited" weakness, not as the failure of the schooling system and teaching community.

Segregation of children is another issue that requires attention. What seems to be dangerous is that along with an indifferent attitude towards the predicament of the children, an attempt is also being made by at least one of the schools in the study, to change the organization and make-up of the classroom and to segregate the children within the classroom.

Perceived Difficulties

When children from different socio-economic backgrounds are admitted to the same school and taught together, the teacher's role becomes extremely important. A teacher working in a mixed classroom must have substantial understanding of child psychology, especially of the effect of home and social environment on the growing child. The teacher of an integrative classroom must also be free of bias or stereotypes. Above all, such a teacher must know that language is only a means of communication, not a signifier of knowledge or the

quality of a child's mind. This last point implies that the teacher must respect the child's home language and not aim at linguistic homogeneity or standardization from the beginning. The teacher's appreciation of the aims of education, her ability to mediate and persuade, and her capacity to listen to children with a desire to build on what the child already knows, are of utmost significance.

Finally, the question of fulfilling social responsibility in return for land received at concessional rates elicits a variety of arguments, including the one which leaves a school free to fulfil its social obligation in a manner it thinks fit. For instance, there are schools running an afternoon shift of the poor, or those running a separate school or a non-formal centre for vulnerable children. Among fee-paying parents too, there is a feeling that they are being asked to carry an additional burden. Among certain principals and teachers of private schools, there is also an apprehension that children from sharply varying socio-economically classes will find it hard to mix, that the free ship quota children might end up becoming a sub-group alienated from the larger group of better-off children. These fears cannot be dismissed and need to be taken into account as we draw up a sustainable strategy of implementation of the judicial order.

TEACHERS' BELIEFS

Teachers' beliefs and values radically affect the emerging organizational paradigm called **mainstreaming or integrative schooling**. A social constructivist perspective on teachers' beliefs acknowledges that teachers have their ideals and this knowledge influences their actions in the implementation of integrative schooling. This happens within a social and cultural context of the school and the community, Carrington(1999). Our knowledge and understanding of academic success and failure are considered as cultural constructions (Carrier 1990). This is because the dominant group in a society defines the features of the culture that differentiate **'those who can'** and **'those who can't'** and cultural understanding of differences are reflected not only in the beliefs and attitudes of people, but also in the reactions and behaviour of individuals (Gliedman *et al.* 1980). The beliefs and attitudes of people in a community are also reflected in the economic and political arrangements and organizations and these are contexts for differential treatment of members. One example of an organization in the community is our current educational system. Societies react to many kinds of difference, for example socio-economic status, racial characteristics, gender and identifiable lifestyles. These have been described as **deviations from a defined social norm** (Turner and Louis 1996). These differences may be confusing and threatening and could force individuals to confront and question commonly held assumptions and beliefs (Tierny 1993). This holds good for the teachers.

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TO MAINSTREAMING

The need to ensure that social justice and equity goals are met for all students is a challenge for regular schools and in particular for classroom teachers (Forlin *et al.* 1996b). Educators' attitudes to mainstreaming are closely linked with the acceptance of children from a different background (Ward *et al.* 1994, Forlin *et al.* 1996a, Scruggs and Mastropieri 1996). Research has shown that some educators believed that the child with a low socio-economic status had a right to equal educational opportunities (Semmel *et al.* 1991) but that educators' attitudes towards integrative placements were in general negative (Center and Ward 1987, Giangreco *et al.* 1993, Forlin *et al.* 1996a) and affected the outcome of mainstreaming. (Forlin and Cole 1993, Bender *et al.* 1995).

Some advocates for integrative schooling argue that requiring all students to be included in the regular classroom would force educators to change their beliefs and assumptions about education (Stainback *et al.* 1989). It is assumed that educators will generally take ownership and ensure that all children have an appropriate education so that a special structure for children with a different set of values is unnecessary (Christensen and Dorn 1997). These authors argue that nothing in inclusion will change schools' description of poor background as failures of the student. This is a more complex phenomenon that involves the values of the school culture, the nature of the learning environment and beliefs about teaching and learning. A teaching culture includes beliefs, values, habits and assumed ways of doing things among the school community. It has been argued that cultures of teaching help give meaning, support and identity to teachers and their work (Hargreaves 1994). There are school culture factors that may influence the implementation of integrative practices. Institutional and personal factors have been identified by Thomas (1985). Some of these factors were school policy, how students are allocated to classes (mixed-ability or streaming), the principal's attitude to mainstreaming and the teachers' level of confidence in selecting appropriate teaching methods.

Other contributing factors may be 'outside' the school. Common values that exist in the local community may also influence the acceptance of difference and the implementation of integrative practices. Teachers' theories and beliefs for aspects of teaching, such as the purpose of schooling, perceptions of students,

what knowledge is of most worth and the value of certain teaching techniques and pedagogical principles, can be described as an educational platform (Sergiovanni and Starratt 1988).

In the world of the classroom, the components of educational platforms may not be well known. Teachers tend to be unaware of their assumptions, theories or educational beliefs. Sometimes they adopt components of a platform that seem 'right', that have the ring of fashionable rhetoric or that coincide with the expectation of certain others, such as teachers who they admire or of groups with which they wish to affiliate.

Ainscow (1996) argued that in addressing the notion of improved school development, the culture of the school affected the differences in the way schools operated and in the way problems were solved. In reflecting on practices in schools, it was noted that there were different patterns of relations between staff and students that affected the amount and type of cooperation and collaboration that occurred and differences in motivation and confidence of students.

Both 'teacher context' and 'educational context' can contribute to and be influenced by school cultures (Woods 1983). A teacher working in a mixed classroom must have substantial understanding of child psychology, especially of the effect of home and social environment on the growing child. The teacher of an integrative classroom must also be free of bias or stereotypes. Above all, such a teacher must know that language is only a means of communication, not a signifier of knowledge or the quality of a child's mind. This last point implies that the teacher must respect the child's home language and not aim at linguistic homogeneity or standardization from the beginning. The teacher's appreciation of the aims of education, her ability to mediate and persuade, and her capacity to listen to children with a desire to build on what the child already knows, are of utmost significance. Thereby the children need not experience social dissonance inside the school. With this framework, the study pondered over the following questions.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What kind of knowledge about the Policy do the teachers have to appreciate the nature of inclusion?

What were the teachers' belief and attitude towards these children?

Is there any evidence of prevalence of the 'social dissonance' in the classroom for EWS children studying in elite schools?

Research design

With the understanding of the theoretical and policy background and reviewing various research studies, the researcher attempted to explore answers for the questions. An questionnaire was framed and administered on 20 subject teachers teaching the children (taken for case study) namely **Pankaj** (IX std.), **Vishal** (VIIstd.), and **Navya** (VIstd.). It contained questions on various domains related to the policy behind the quota allotment, their perceptions and knowledge about the policy along with their personal views regarding these children, and their answers were quantitatively and qualitatively analysed. Their interviews were also taken in an informal setting to highlight some of their assumptions.

The secondary data contained actual status of admissions in the school under study (a private school in Delhi: name withheld) using the real data generated by the school administration. Also the circulars issued by Directorate of Education, Delhi Government were looked into for clarity about the recommendations and orders passed by the government and to compare them with the actual implementation scenario in the school.

V. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Assumptions about the Policy

Teachers' Knowledge about the Policy:

All the teachers (100%) had some basic knowledge about the policy. The High Court of Delhi in its interim order had directed that the private schools of the capital, which have been allotted land by the government agencies, shall earmark at least 10 per cent of seats for admission of students belonging to the economically weaker sections and 5 per cent for wards of the staff of the schools. As per Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, all recognized unaided private schools imparting elementary education shall admit in class-I, to the extent of at least twenty-five per cent of the strength of that class, children belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged group in the neighbourhood and provide free and compulsory elementary education till its completion. But, only few had a detailed idea about it. Rest had an outline idea only about the policy.

Assumptions about allotment of seats

In response to which asked the teachers about whether the step taken by the Government to allot seats for EWS (Economically weaker section) children in private schools was a good one or not, 75% of teachers felt that it is indeed a good step. They all felt that the reason behind it would be that these children could get a chance to study in schools which they would never have dreamt of and thus they felt that it would help these students in upwards social mobility. But, in response to question about whether the allotment of seats is “**justly done**” by private schools, 14 out of 20 (70%)of teachers felt that it was **not** rightly done. They felt that private schools indulged in “profit making” and that such admissions are just an “eye wash”. One teacher also told the researcher (on condition of anonymity) that “teachers’ wards” were being admitted to the school under EWS category which is actually curtailing the chances of deserving EWS children to get admitted to the school whereas, “on paper “ they claim to be rightfully allotting these seats.

Assumptions about the justification of the policy

When being asked about the possible reasons due to which the Government would have thought of implementing this policy around 65% of the teachers stated that it was to spread literacy among ‘below poverty line’ people. This view is supported by the rising public awareness about literacy due to the various literacy missions being conducted by the Government in which schools, teachers and children take active part. Teachers also said that this also would give these children a chance to have “quality education” which they felt is not available in Government schools. Teachers also thought that it was a step towards “**mainstreaming**” these children and was a step towards “**inclusive education**”. Mainstreaming as a concept comes from sociology and it aims towards “acculturation” of children to fit well in the society. Around 35% thought that the reason behind it was “profit making” as they felt that the Government was giving an “eye wash” and in the cover of this policy, it has given land to private schools at “throw away rates”. They also stated that almost all the unaided recognised private schools in Delhi are violating the conditions of land allotment as no school is providing free education to the children of the poor and that the public authorities have not taken any action against the erring schools for failure on their part to comply with the terms and conditions of land allotment.

Assumptions about relevance of the policy related to the Family

In response to the question about the relevance of this policy for EWS children’s parents, only 35% of teachers felt that it was actually useful. They cited reasons such as getting quality education for their children, a chance for brighter future, getting mainstreamed etc. Around 40% of them felt that they weren’t sure whether this policy was helping EWS children’s parents or not, as they think that it may be as problematic as it is beneficial.

Around 25% felt that it was not useful as they believe that parents find it hard to bear the extra additional expenses which are regular feature of these schools. This included the expense incurred on co-curricular activities, class excursion trips etc. Here the views of Gauri, Vishal’s mother (Case Study 2) and Rashmi, Navya’s mother (Case study 3) could be taken into account. Both of them said in the interview that the additional “*Bojha*” (Burden) of expenses made it difficult for them to let their children continue in this school. Similarly Pankaj (Case study 1) of class 9 felt “bad” when his parents couldn’t send him on a school trip and he was ridiculed by his classmates on being the only one who couldn’t make it.

Teachers’ Understanding of the Child in the context

When the teachers were asked about whether they felt that the EWS child’s growth was being hampered in any way while studying in the private school, 12 out of 20 i.e. 60% felt that it didn’t help the child as the child felt uncomfortable during play, recess and regular classes as he / she probably hasn’t been accepted as a part of the peer group (specially in Navya’s case). The teachers also felt that the child felt alienated and depressed with low self esteem(In case of Pankaj). This view leads to the fact that such children experience dissonance due to a conflict that arises between their value system and that of their school as they try to adjust in the school environment. The rest that is 40% said it did help the children as they felt that it was showing good results and the children were coping well, and slowly getting adjusted to the school environment.

Similarly in response to the question which asked teachers about whether they had seen the child uncomfortable,90% felt so. This may be explained through dissonance which results from the differing demands placed on students as they negotiated with the norms, values, and behaviour expectations of ‘school’ and ‘home’ contexts (Kumar, 2006; Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, 1998).Only 10% felt that they never felt so.

Teachers’ attitude towards these children

In response to the questions which introspected teachers’ attitude towards EWS children, around 17 out of 20 i.e; 85% of teachers said that they never felt that uncomfortable on being around such children; here the teachers claimed that they found them to be similar to other students..Around 10% felt a little uncomfortable

initially but it was fine after few **Teachers' attitude towards these children** days. The reasons given were the appearance of the child and that the child looked different from the rest initially.

On being asked about the feelings that arose in the teachers upon seeing such children in their class, about 13 out of 20 i.e. 65% felt that it is sympathy. They felt that they didn't have strong supportive family. About 35% felt nothing special about such children.

Almost all the teachers teaching EWS category children had at least the basic information about the judgement passed by Honourable Delhi High Court for reservation of seats in private schools for EWS category children but, very few knew about the fact that they had been given land on lease in lieu of it. Teachers felt that the government has taken the right step for mainstreaming these children by passing the judgement. Most teachers responded by supporting this order on the grounds that the children will 'benefit' from the physical infrastructure of these schools (school building, labs, playground etc.) "*Suvidhayen milengi*" or "they'll get facilities" that are not available to them in government schools.

Attempts to talk to another teacher in the school was met with scared responses like, "I have been teaching here since the past seventeen years and we are told not to talk about the school...we can talk only after the principal permits us to do so". Teachers were reluctant to speak to the researcher openly about the 'unjust' distribution of seats being done but, they did furnish some startling facts about the real scenario on conditions of anonymity. Few teachers mentioned that "teachers' wards" were being admitted to the school under EWS category. This showed the resentment of teachers for the misuse of the policy but, they didn't want to come out openly against the institution.

Teachers also felt that the parents of these children were indeed feeling the pressure due to extra expenditures they have to bear because of their wards studying in the school (through parents teachers meeting). But, they did feel that these children were getting a chance at 'quality education' and could get a chance to improve their social status.

Teachers did feel that the EWS children were noticed getting/feeling uncomfortable amongst the peer group. They felt that they were not at ease with the peer group and that probably led to abnormal behaviours like being withdrawn and passive (Pankaj's case) and aggressive behaviour (Navya's case).

Teachers mostly showed sympathy towards the children as they felt that they belong to 'disadvantaged' section of the society. Many of them expressed both indirectly as well as directly their assessment and evaluation of students from poor families as failing to do well in studies because of their "home environment". They said that most such families have a "hand-to-mouth existence" with the parents being largely illiterate and not finding the time to devote towards their children's education (not coming to see teachers to enquire about their child's progress etc), it is this lack of a supportive home environment, according to them, that is responsible for the low level of school performance of such children.

While it was accepted by the teachers that a child's school performance is also dependent upon a supportive school environment, they stated that there was "no spirit of competition" amongst these children as also motivation to "do well, dress better, stay clean and tidy" etc., since all of them came from similar backgrounds and were the "same".

One of the school teachers, however, did admit to the existence of 'levels of variation' in terms of academic performance in school amongst these children (with some performing better than the rest). Another teacher, teaching students of standard VI, said that she had faced "no problems teaching these children". She stated that "all children are the same, if these children sometimes face problems in catching up with what is taught in class, so do children belonging to better-off classes". She believed that even though these children might lack parental support, they can pick up, especially when they start off young."

CONCLUSION

Children from economically weaker section experience social dissonance when their integrity and adequacy are threatened by real or perceived differences between home/self and what is valued within the school context. They constantly face a 'conflict' situation when their value systems, beliefs, morals differ from what exists in the 'middle class' and 'upper class'. They are urged to 'change/alter' themselves to 'fit' into the existing group and be accepted and valued as a member of the society. Not all differences necessarily lead to feelings of conflict and dissonance. It is the threat to self posed by perceived cultural differences and discrepancies, not the differences *per se* that arouses dissonance. This leads to low self esteem, aggression, engagement in more self-deprecation or in extreme cases- depression. These children were found 'negotiating' themselves in the existing classroom scenario.

While students of the economically poorer sections have been admitted to elite schools, one factor of concern that cannot be overlooked is the stereotypical mindsets and prejudices of the school management and, to

some extent, the teaching community. By studying acculturation patterns of EWS children in the society of elite school, the importance of intercultural relations within the school context to understand children's experiences of social dissonance is very important. Group membership is the lens through which individuals in a culturally pluralistic society view one another. Thus when students categorize themselves as minority or others within the school context, the probability of stereotyping, ethnocentrism, intergroup clashes, and competition increases. Mainstream members are more likely to adopt a segregationist orientation toward immigrants whose culture differs considerably from the mainstream.

Schools and teachers who want to promote the well-being of students at risk for experiencing dissonance need to face the challenge of minimizing the saliency of differences among students and work to foster learning within an inclusive and empowering environment. This can be accomplished at the individual level by requiring teachers and school personnel to examine their own beliefs and behaviours toward culturally diverse students and at the systems level by restructuring school practices in ways that help ameliorate social dissonance. The understanding of school and classroom culture in a way that can help ameliorate home-school dissonance and foster a sense of belonging to school, can be advanced by achievement goal theory, a social cognitive theory of motivation that conceptualizes the relationships between school learning environments and students' motivational, emotional, and academic well-being.

A teacher working in a mixed classroom must have substantial understanding of child psychology, especially of the effect of home and social environment on the growing child. The teacher of an inclusive classroom must also be free of bias or stereotypes. Above all, such a teacher must know that language is only a means of communication, not a signifier of knowledge or the quality of a child's mind. This last point implies that the teacher must respect the child's home language and not aim at linguistic homogeneity or standardization from the beginning. The teacher's appreciation of the aims of education, her ability to mediate and persuade, and her capacity to listen to children with a desire to build on what the child already knows, are of utmost significance. There is also the need to encourage teachers to critically examine, and overcome their personal prejudices and biases so that they may be fair and equitable in their dealings with students.

In view of the conceptual soundness of inclusive schooling, the policy should provide a free ship quota be applied uniformly to all private schools, and not merely those which received concessional land. The new policy must not be seen in terms of a mechanical insertion of a certain proportion of the poor into private school classrooms. The planning to make the policy as a successful reform must take into account its human dimensions not its political agenda. No educational policy can be seen purely as quick-fix social engineering. The provision of a free ship quota in private schools is a major and radical step forward towards fulfilling a policy objective which has been ignored for decades. Such a long backlog of implementation cannot be meaningfully overcome in a day, nor should such a move be attempted in a hasty manner.

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