

Democracy in Education

Democracy is a system of government in which laws, policies, leadership, and major undertakings of a state or other polity are directly or indirectly decided by the “people”. It is the govt. of the people, by the people and for the people.

Democratic education is education which most appropriately meets the needs of the learner, the community and society. It does this through developing reflective individuals who are collaborative problem-solvers and creative flexible thinkers. Just what the world of constant political turmoil and emergent technologies needs. Democratic education can apply to learners of all ages in any learning environment. That said, a significant focus is placed on democratic schools and children as that is where a lot of the formal education in our societies takes place. These schools are communities where Article 12 of the UN convention on the rights of the child, which states that children have a right to have a say on matters which affect them, is fully realised. These learning communities, whatever they are, whoever they are for, are all unique from each other. They each populate their own place in the dome or spectrum of diversity within democratic education practice.

In this individuality they all share the following elements:

- **Firm foundations** in a values culture of equality and shared responsibility. Respect breeds respect. Trust breeds trust. Compassion breeds compassion. Tolerance breeds tolerance. Listening breeds listening.
- **Collective decision-making** where all members of the community, regardless of age or status, have an equal say over significant decisions such as school rules, curricula, projects, the hiring of staff and even budgetary matters.
- **Self-directed discovery**; Learners choose what they learn, when, how and with whom they learn it. Learning can happen inside or outside of the classroom, through play as well as conventional study. The key is that the learning is following the students intrinsic motivation and pursuing their interests.

Characteristics of Democracy

- Competitive Elections
- The principles of political and legal equality
- High degree with individual freedom

Types of Democracy

1. Direct Democracy
2. Representative Democracy
1. Need of Democracy in Education Equality in Education
2. Sovereignty
3. Child Centric Education
4. Adult Education
5. Free and compulsory Education
6. Build Leadership
7. Health development
8. Citizenships and international relation
9. Class room environment

Secularism and Education

Education is a human right and essential for the exercise of all other human rights. It promotes individual freedom and empowerment and yields important development benefits. Yet millions of children remain deprived of educational opportunities, many as a result of poverty. Normative instruments of the United Nations and UNESCO lay down international legal obligations for the right to education. These instruments promote and develop the right of every person to enjoy access to education of good quality, without any discrimination. These instruments bear witness to the great importance that Member States and the international community attach to normative action for realizing the right to education. After the completion of five decades of our existence as a democratic, sovereign republic, it is but appropriate that we look back at the track that we have traversed, take note of our successes and failures in different spheres of our national life, consolidate the gains and correct the mistakes, and march ahead towards a better future. Hence, his debate on systemic educational reforms.

Concept of Secularism

The word secularism did not occur in the Indian constitution as enacted on 26 November 1949. However subsequently it was incorporated in the pre amble with the 42nd constitutional amendment in 1976. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar the principal architect of our constitution explains secularism in the following words; “secular states does not mean that it shall not take in to consideration the religious sentiments of the people. That entire secular state means is that the parliament shall not be competent to impose any particular religion upon the rest of the people. This is the only limitation that the constitution recognizes.

Characteristics of secular education:

Secular education is identified with the following characteristics:

- Moral outlook
- Development of wider vision
- Pluralistic outlook
- Democratic values

- Cultural development
- Synthesis of spiritual and material
- Humanitarianism

Education for Secularism in India

Indian present educational system promotes secular attitudes and values through its broad based aims, curriculum, enlightened teachers and appropriate activities, progressivism, rationality, freedom from bigotry and equal respect for all religion. The following traits characterize education for secularism in India: • Secular aims • Democratic organization of educational institutions • Multiple curriculums • Science teaching • Enlightened teachers The present Indian educational system is trying to create a social climate in the country, in which secular values are sought to be promoted effectively and enthusiastically.

Reason for Imparting Secular Education

1. Secular education develops a moral outlook
2. Secular education helps in the development liberal attitudes and values
3. It develops wider vision
4. It develops an attitude of appreciation and understanding of others point of view
5. It develops democratic values and humanistic outlook
6. Secular education synthesis materialism and spiritualism
7. Secular education serves as an antidote to religious fanaticism and hatred.

Many positive steps have been taken to promote secularism in the country. It is laid down in the constitution that religious minorities are free to establish their educational institutions from grant. Secularism is a philosophy of moral education. Secular behavior springs in the school from the influence of school through the conduct and behavior of teachers themselves and life in the school community as a whole. All the activities and programs of school must strive for the inculcation of values of love, truth and tolerance.