

## **EDITORIAL**

### **LEARNER FRIENDLY SCHOOL**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

Every child likes to play. Family provides the initial setting for play. The members of the family who play with the child become emotionally closer to the learner. Much of the learning at home, before joining a playschool/ kindergarten / Montessori school takes place through imitation and play. Learner friendly schools are expected to provide an uninterrupted extension of these types of activities to which learners are accustomed at home, before coming to a school. Schools in ancient India were in forests, where the students grew up in the lap of the nature. In 1904, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore (Mohanty 2004) started his learner friendly school at Santiniketan in West Bengal, at the time of foundation, a remote rural area. The school later grew up as Visva Bharati. In Odisha State, similar effort was made by Pandit Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das (Mohanty 1987) at Satyavadi Vana Vidyalaya (Forest School), near Puri. It was a short-lived experiment, as its founder had to be away from the school because of his arrest by the colonial government. Such efforts are also found elsewhere in the world. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Danish educationist N.V.S. Grundtvig initiated Folk high school movement. As per the Association of Folk High Schools in Denmark (2000, p. 26 ), in 1836, Grundtvig, for the first time published his ideas on folkehøjskole (Folk school) and in 1844, the first school - Rødding folkehøjskole in the Duchy of Slesvig Holsten was established. There are many forest schools (Williams-Sieghfredsen 2011) in Denmark and in a few other countries which give stress on giving the opportunity to the learners to enjoy the life in the lap of the forest than learning to read and write. Many learner friendly schools are also located in urban areas, away from forests. Although learner friendly school is not a new concept, since three decades, a movement is being organised by the UNICEF to make nations focus on the concept. UNICEF manual for child friendly school (UNICEF 2009) mentions about varieties of

projects and programmes on this theme being practised in different parts of the world. A document of the UNICEF states that a learner friendly school (a) reflects and realises the rights of every learner; (b) sees and understands the whole learner, in a broad context; (c) is learner-centred; (d) is gender-sensitive and girl-friendly; (e) promotes quality learning outcomes; (f) provides education based on the reality of learner's lives; (g) is flexible and responds to diversity; (h) acts to ensure inclusion, respect, and equality of opportunity for all learners; (i) promotes mental and physical health; (j) provides education that is affordable and accessible; (k) enhances teacher capacity, morale, commitment, and status; (l) is family focused; and (m) is community-based. A learner friendly school is identified by a welcoming atmosphere that is friendly, warm and secure. It is noted for promoting social, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, spiritual and physical development of the learner. The school not only focuses on continuous improvement of its existing facilities, but also takes active part in continuous and sustainable development of the sister schools and the community. In short, a learner friendly school provides a stimulating, vibrant, effective and broad based learning environment suitable for an integral development of the learner - physical, aesthetic, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual.

### **A FEW IMPORTANT AREAS OF ACTION OF A LEARNER FRIENDLY SCHOOL**

A few important areas of action of a learner friendly school are: 1. Campus Atmosphere; 2. Physical Education and Sports and Health Care; 3. Learning Environment; 4. Learner Centred Strategies; 5. Inclusive Approach; 6. Co-curricular Activities; 7. Democratic Environment; 8. Material Resources; 9. Information to all stakeholders about the Current Status of the School and Its Expectations from Them; 10. Linkage with the Community. 11. Teacher Quality; and 12. Teacher Management and Continuous Professional Development of Teachers; 13. Teacher Evaluation for Teacher Development ; 14. Leadership and Collaboration. Details are elaborated below:

#### **Campus Atmosphere**

A learner friendly school has a homely and welcoming campus in a natural and spacious ambience. It has well maintained grass lawns on which learners can squat and roam about. Lawns are also used for various activities including teaching - learning. A learner friendly school is generally located in natural

surrounding with a beautiful garden, away from the noise of the vehicular traffic and from cell phone towers, which are health hazards. It has herbarium, aquarium, small pond with plants and animals, mini zoo, etc. which besides providing opportunity for direct observation as part of curricular transaction, enhance the beauty of the campus. Its classroom settings are attractive and rendered aesthetic by use of paintings, plants, bulletin boards, banners, warm colours, etc. Walls of its building are made educative and interesting with charts, posters, graphs, photos, newspaper cuttings, etc. Its building may not be costly but is kept neat and clean and is well maintained to give a sense of aesthetic perfection. The campus of a learner friendly school makes the learners feel safe and secure. It reduces the load of the school bag for a student. It makes provision in the school for keeping books and notebooks of the students in the classroom, so that students carry less load to home. In these types of schools, teacher bag is generally heavier than student bag, as the teacher bag may contain lap top/ iPod/CD/ cassettes, pen drives in addition to pictures, worksheets specially prepared for a class, etc.

### **Physical Education and Sports and Health Care**

A learner friendly school provides quality and inclusive physical education classes every day. It does not have a holiday for physical education. All persons in the school participate in these programmes. The school believes in the principle that a healthy mind requires a healthy body. During weekly holidays and long summer or other holidays, the school keeps open its facilities for physical education. In the absence of the sports teacher, another teacher remains in charge of these activities. The school ensures that all teachers have the capacity to handle such activities. It makes its teachers and students jointly take part in physical education programmes. If required, it takes appropriate help from the community in organising physical education programmes. A learner friendly school takes proper care of health of the students. It carries out appropriate health check-up not only at the time of entry but also continuously, at appropriate intervals. It gives timely feedback to parents and guardians about any health-related issue observed in the school. For instance, a teacher, after observing that a student is failing to listen, even when seated in the front bench, reports to the parents about necessity for check-up by an ENT specialist. Health check-up is also related to the student taking part in different physical exercises in the school. A learner friendly school provides hygienic and clean toilets with

adequate running water and wash basins with liquid soaps. It has separate toilet for girls and special toilets for physically handicapped boys and physically handicapped girls. It has a hygienic and well-maintained dining hall for students to take food during lunch break. In case of mid-day meal supplied by the school, the food is tasty and hygienic. Its teachers and students take the same meal. It collaborates with government health care agencies for health-related drives.

### **Learning Environment**

A learner friendly school has a joyful learning environment. The school does not use fear as an instrument for controlling the vital beings of the students, which have both bad and good impulses. There is no corporal punishment. If there is any case of indiscipline, the school explores the reason behind such an act and makes efforts to address the causal and contributory factors. It channelises the tumultuous energy of learners into harmless, cathartic activities in a climate of unconditional acceptance and love. It modifies the rough vital energies in the students in an atmosphere of love. Its teachers never show of anger or bad temper. It confers with the parents in taking various steps to control any act of indiscipline in a student. It also utilises student council activities in maintaining discipline in the campus. A learner friendly school stresses on teaching through strategies which make learning a joyful experience for the students. Game-based teaching approaches narrow the gap between the school and the home. Game-based teaching maybe carried outside the classroom, in the playground of the school or in areas outside the school. A good school educates the parents and other members of the community about the benefits of the game-based teaching approaches. It encourages parental involvement in such approaches as more than one adult person, in many occasions, become necessary for execution of such approaches. Mohanty (1980a, p. 12) in his writing about his visit to a British primary school at Linlithgo village in Scotland, United Kingdom stated that on the day of his visit, in the afternoon the school had club activity for forty five minutes. There were twenty-three clubs and a few clubs were managed by some mothers, who remain nearby. Game based approaches make the teachers take the students outside the classroom, may be to the playground of the school or to areas outside the school. In case of environmental studies at the lower classes, teaching outside the class is an essential strategy. As almost all initial teacher training programmes do not cover “ Education Outside the Classroom”, the learner friendly schools train their teachers on this instructional strategy.

A learner friendly school takes its students on study tours as part of the efforts to supplement learning of geography, science and social studies. It organises excursions to different places of cultural, geographical and historical interest. It arranges open air classes. While setting learning goals, it considers the interest, aptitude, abilities, past experiences, and the preferred learning styles of the individual students. It sets these goals in consultation with students. It develops in students a conviction that they can reach the learning goals set. It uses student evaluation as a tool for improving student learning. It makes efforts to grow as a learning community, in which every member can have the opportunity to grow at one's own pace. If it finds a student becoming regularly irregular in attending the classes, it explores the cause of irregularity and gives appropriate counselling to the guardians of the student. It provides coaching classes, free of charge to improve the level of preparation of their students for public examinations - school final examinations, scholarship examinations, etc. In case, the school has many under achievers, it provides extra class during sun days and long holidays with the help of the teachers not going out of station for personal work. It provides supervised study periods, when the students get additional opportunity to clear their doubts individually or to do their home assignments or to study with personal guidance and feedback from the teacher.

Learner friendly school employs innovative strategies to improve quality of teaching and learning. For instance, one school introduced the practice of daily assessment of a few students randomly selected on the lesson taught on the previous day as a strategy to ensure not only regular reading but also for boosting regularity in school attendance among students. The school notified that the final attainment of a student will be a composite measure consisting of 50% from daily assessments, 25% from the quarterly examinations and 25% from the final, annual examinations. Every classroom had a chart mentioning names of the students. Every teacher in the beginning of a class session asked a few questions related to the lesson taught on the previous day awarded marks for the answers. This practice made students who happen to absent themselves from the class during a day to study at home the lesson they had missed and come well prepared to face questions the next class, lest the s/he is asked to answer questions related to the lesson covered in the previous class. A learner friendly school does not limit its students' learning to the number of subjects prescribed by the examining body to which it is affiliated. Certain schools provide, free

of charge, instruction in foreign languages, dance, music, art, photography, Indian languages etc. It also provides opportunities for their students to get work experiences in the open-air involving farming, gardening, etc. This develops in the students, dignity for manual labour, respect for individuals engaged in manual labour and skills necessary for use in certain work situations. In addition to developing awareness about various techniques involved in certain work situations, it also develops deeper skills in certain crafts such as wood work, needle work, tailoring, weaving, etc. It adopts varieties of strategies to ensure punctuality among students. If a student remains absent continuously, it contacts the concerned parents. If the learner fails to come to the school due to parental reluctance, it sends its teachers to concerned parents to motivate them to send their children to schools. In order to improve the level of learning of the students, learner friendly schools located in low literacy areas, provide a greater number of instructional hours than found in other conventional schools. One school started its daily programme at morning 7, had its classes till 12 .30 after noon, had lunch break for 1 hour, followed by supervised study for 2 hours where the students completed their home tasks or did their extra study under the supervision of a teacher. After taking snacks, they had physical exercises and in at 5.30 in the afternoon left the school for their homes/ boarding.

### **Learner Centred Strategies**

A learner friendly school is learner sensitive. It makes its students take active part in formulating their own learning plan. The teachers assist them in the process. In Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education at Puducherry, such activities are provided under their scheme of 'Free Progress System'. As this institution is neither affiliated to any Board of School Education nor prepares students for any specific course, such a strategy does not have any problem. In this institution, as the progress of a student in individual subject continues unhindered by restriction of annual plan of study specified by the institution, there are situations where a student studies one subject in one class level and another subject in a higher or a lower-class level. Because of non-detention policy, in all types of schools, it is possible that a class V might have a student of class II level. In such circumstances, administration of a common test over all students may be useless. Learner friendly school uses tests which are flexible enough to measure each student's academic growth. It gives

opportunity to students to carry out independently and collaboratively various projects which may cut across conventional subject or arts/science/commerce stream boundaries. In case of learners with special needs, a good school, in consultation with each student, develops individualised learning packages. It maintains appropriate class size so that there is proper communication between the teacher and the taught. It gives appropriate awards to its students based on their performance. It arranges special teachers to facilitate growth of any special talent. However, if the school is not rich to pay such extra teachers, it collects funds necessary for the purpose from the parents concerned.

### **Inclusive Approach**

A learner friendly school is inclusive in approach. It does not differentiate learners based on caste, creed, sex, religion, physical or learning disability or income level of the parents. Because of Compulsory Education Act 2009 (MHRD 2009), each school admits a proportion of its students from disadvantaged population. Learner friendly school trains its teachers in specific pedagogy to equip them with skills to take care of learners having cognitive learning disabilities, emotional problems, physical handicaps, etc. In case of slow learners, it makes provision for them to have extra class hours. Sometimes, it also pairs such learners with their peers who are advanced learners and are willing to help. It provides specialist teachers to take extra care of blind, dumb and deaf learners and slow learners. It gives general training to all its teachers to make them aware of various types of learning aids used by dumb and deaf and blind students. It maintains a resource room for the purpose. It makes extra provision for comfortable movement of physically handicapped learners in the school campus. It takes help of resource persons available from the community to take care of learning of learners with special needs. Although E-inclusion is an under-theorised area, which has developed piecemeal over the last 30 years, certain learner friendly schools use it to enhance the learning of the learners with special needs. They also appropriately train their teachers for the purpose. With the expectation that parental help in schools can boost learning of students suffering from physical and mental handicaps, many learner friendly schools involve parents in the school programmes. Of course, they train the parents for the purpose.

### **Co-curricular Activities**

A learner friendly school conducts several co-curricular activities: debates, one act plays, drama, quizzes, elocution contests, exhibitions, fairs, annual physical education demonstrations, inter house games tournaments, athletic competitions, etc. to develop various types of abilities in the students. In order to provide better opportunity for advanced level skills in talented students in certain areas like dance, music, games, etc., it provides extra classes, which are not compulsory for all. Such classes in certain schools function before the starting and after closing of the school. For instance, a school functions from morning 7.45 to 11.30 and again from afternoon 1.45 to 4.00. Its optional extra classes for music are held from morning 6.00 to 7.00, flute class from afternoon 1 to 1.30 and dance class from evening 6 to 7 and from evening 8 to 9. A learner friendly school has various types of musical instruments. It has multiple sets of musical instruments of any type depending on its use for special training. It organises recitals of various instruments. It organises an annual drama. Throughout the year, at intervals, it organises variety programmes which give opportunity for public appraisal of the talents of students in music, dance and drama and opportunity for getting feedback for improving talent. It starts its daily activities with morning assemblies which may include silence / concentration for a few minutes with or without recorded music, vocal prayers by all teachers and students, singing of a prayer by a group and others listening in silence or repeating it, reading of texts from scriptures in case of schools managed by religious organisations, having activities such as playing musical instruments, reading important news items, enacting short plays, reciting, and listening to guest talks, etc. In case of one learner friendly school, there is no general assembly. A recorded music is played over loudspeaker and during that period, all teachers and students maintain silence and concentrate, wherever they are, whether inside the classroom or in the common room. A learner friendly school has varieties of clubs. Certain schools have club activities conducted with active participation of suitable parents and guardians (Mohanty 1980). A learner friendly school organises several competitions on painting, drawing, playing musical instruments, singing, etc. and trains students for taking part in individual as well as group events. It is guided by the principle that every learner needs to get opportunity in participation in co-curricular activities appropriate for his / her emotional development. It organises cultural activities throughout the year. The activities are planned, keeping in mind local functions



and festivals. Certain schools become the venue for community celebration of festivals. The cultural activities provide opportunity for expression of the talents of the students in various fields of activity. A learner friendly school organises picnics that provide opportunity to students to enjoy and learn how to manage themselves in a group. It also invites outside guests to perform for the benefit of the students and teachers.

A learner friendly school trains its students in maintenance of discipline. For instance, in late sixties, author was teacher in a school that utilised senior students in maintaining discipline in the classrooms in the absence of the teachers. The school lunch break is half an hour for students and one hour for teachers. During the half an hour of teacher absence, senior students take control of the school. Students in a class are allowed either to sleep or read silently. The senior student taking care of them sits on the teacher's chair and keeps an eye on the class. Certain schools divide the whole school into several 'Houses'. Each House is assigned the responsibility of taking care of school programmes and activities for a day in the week. There is a House Monitor who manages the activities, under the guidance of a teacher. On the days assigned, the House helps the school by organising morning assembly, mentioning the time of arrival in the diaries of the late comers and keeping the campus neat and clean. Each classroom has names of students on a chart indicating the House to which s/he belongs. If a teacher finds a student doing certain activity that is worthy of praise, s/he mentions appropriate marks against the student's name. In case of undesirable activities, negative marks are given. Each House motivates its members to perform better so that it can become the 'Best House'. It organises talks and other activities as part of observation of national and international days to make students aware of various issues connected to such days.

### **Democratic Environment**

A learner friendly school provides a democratic environment wherein the members of the management, teachers, students and parents have love and respect for one another and work in collaboration to achieve common goals. It has rules and regulations which are framed in the best interest of the students and are fair and transparent. It takes special care not to hurt the feelings of any student. If a student commits any error, it helps him / her to understand the psychology that gave rise to such errors. It develops appropriate skills in the

student concerned so that s/he does not repeat such errors. Its teachers and the head teachers do not act as authorities, but as collaborators, genuinely concerned in the continuous development of the learners. Its students are not afraid of presenting to the teachers or head teachers of the schools the difficulties being faced by them in the school or in their learning. Such an atmosphere at times results in making students complain to teachers against their family members or their home environments, with the feeling that the teachers love them more than their parents. In order to reduce the gap between the teacher and the taught, certain learner friendly school make their teachers addressed by students as brothers / sisters or uncle/ aunt instead of formal sir/ madam / miss. Democratic environment also makes community members share their problems with the teachers and head teachers of the schools. Certain good schools allow community members to utilise school facilities such as school playgrounds, school halls, school mike systems, etc. with or without any payment.

### **Material Resources**

A learner friendly school has appropriate and adequate material resources. It has playground of appropriate size. It has well lighted and well-ventilated classrooms, free from noise. The classrooms have seating arrangements that avoid chaos and can be modified quickly at the time of group activities. These are attractive with appropriate bulletin boards, walls, cup boards, teacher desks, etc. These have chalk boards of appropriate quality to be used with chalks of appropriate colour. There are also magnetic boards and marker boards. A portion of the classroom wall is ready to act as a screen at the time of use of PowerPoint, films, slides, film strips, opaque projectors and overhead projectors. A learner friendly school has facilities for movement of physically handicapped learners. It has halls for carrying out indoor assemblies at the time of rain. It has also stage on the ground to carry out morning assembly programmes as well as various functions. It has a well-maintained library with open access system which maintains topic index, author index and title index of books and journals and their contents. It has reading room. It also has Xeroxing facilities. Certain good schools, besides having classrooms, have computer lab, art room, music room, dancing hall, multi-purpose hall, rooms of silence, where a student can sit silently for meditation, concentration or study independently without any disturbance. Certain schools also provide rooms for collaboration, where a small number of students can have group discussion.

### Information to All Stakeholders about the Current Status of the School and Its Expectations from Them

Many private fee charging schools advertise about the achievement of their students in public examinations so that they can increase their funds by having more donations for admission. A learner friendly school does not go for such tricks. However, it informs the stake holders about its achievements and limitations based on its self-evaluation or evaluation by recognised external assessment agencies. It indicates its plan of action to overcome the limitations. Periodically, it makes explicit the rights and responsibilities of various stake holders and the roles they are expected to play in the learning community of the school. If possible, it maintains a web site and gives all the data regarding the school in it and periodically updates it. It brings out newsletters that carry also messages for parents and articles of relevant to their role in proper upbringing of their children.

### **Linkage with the Community**

The nature and quality of the linkage of a school with the community is crucial in bringing the school closer to the learners. When the parents participate in school activities, the students accept the school as an extension of home. A learner friendly school maintains close relationship with the community. It utilises this relationship in developing its material resources and in maintaining and beautifying its campus. For instance, a school gets its class rooms built in memory of father/ mother of a member of the community. In this process, a good school may get library books, library book shelves, science equipment, computer, projector etc. While utilising appropriate community physical and human resources to enrich school activities, the school ungrudgingly spares its physical and human resources for community welfare. It also undertakes community development work such as cleaning roads and ponds, carrying out volunteer work at the time of fairs / festivals being organised by the community, etc. It educates the community about the importance of taking care of the learners. It may even educate the community about the pre-natal learning taking place in a womb. It also makes the community aware of lifelong learning skills and their use in updating knowledge and skills. Every good school has a Parent Teacher Association (PTA). It works as a support to the school. However, its quality of functioning depends on the quality of the parents-

their level of education and interest in education. A learner friendly school has alumni association, which keeps the contact of the ex-students alive with the school. There are 'Community Schools' in certain countries. The duty chart of teachers of such schools include visit to homes of students for helping students in their study and for interacting with their parents and guardians. Mohanty (1981) mentioned about a school in Scotland in UK (Dean's Community High School, Livingstone) providing educational, cultural and recreational facilities to the members of the community. The school charges community members for utilisation of its facilities. The web site of the school accessed on May1, 2019 stated that "1st April 2019 will see the introduction of a £1.00 charge for Over 60's, Under 5's and Under 16's swimming. This new pricing includes all after school swims and Under 16's school holiday swim until 4pm, when full price will apply." Certain learner friendly schools give community liaison responsibility to specific teachers. In certain systems, such a teacher is called as "Homeroom Teacher". The teachers of these schools are spontaneous leaders of not only the school community, but also of the neighbourhood. They are loved by the community for their contribution to community welfare. A learner friendly school encourages its teachers to interact with the members of the community and utilise their expertise in classroom situations. It maintains a list of persons, with their qualifications, experience in teaching and expertise in various activities related to school programmes and time and day on which they can be made available to help the school. This strategy facilitates running the school in the absence of the teachers or as support to teachers. There are instances of teachers trying to help the community. Mohanty (1980b, p. 39) in his writing about his visit to a British single teacher school at Skirling village in Scotland, United Kingdom on February 21, 1979 stated that Mrs. Taylor, the teacher of this single teacher school "used to remain in the school, from 3.30 to 4.00 p. m. each Monday to provide library facilities to the local people."

### **Teacher Quality**

A learner friendly school takes appropriate steps for selecting its teachers. It looks for attributes such as integrity, eagerness to learn, concern for others, leadership, emotional stability, enthusiasm / energy, sense of humour, etc. in the candidates. Besides taking note of the professional qualifications, the school also tests teaching aptitude, content knowledge and teaching skills of the applicants. It interviews the candidates to assess their level of commitment

to the teaching profession and interest to try out innovations. It school has faith in the capability of its teachers. It treats them as pedagogical experts and gives them autonomy related to transaction of curriculum. It involves them in formulation of school policy and in planning for the year and for the future. It gives freedom to teachers in choice of textbooks and in preparing instructional materials. It shares with them the financial management policy including details of income and expenditure pattern of the school. Since two decades, the governments of two countries - United States and United Kingdom have given freedom to selected schools to select appropriate individuals for teaching job in their schools and train them on the job, without making the aspirants go for university based teacher training courses (Dept. for Education, UK 2012, p. 10; Mohanty 2015, pp.20-24; Office of Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis, US 2012, p. 1; Office of Innovations and Development, US 2004, p. 7; Quigney 2010, p.54; The Open University 2013, p. 11).

A learner friendly school has highly motivated teachers. Its teachers are punctual. Its teachers reach the school daily at least fifteen minutes before school starts. In case of schools having students coming by buses, teachers receive them. The teachers having classes in the first period come earlier to ensure that the classroom is neat and clean and is in a position to welcome the students. In case, there is a necessity for rearranging the classroom for a certain activity in the first period, the teacher's early arrival becomes indispensable. Effective teachers are self-motivated to work efficiently. They have the zeal to upgrade their knowledge and skills and to innovate. If there is no Internet facility in the school or at home or in the locality, during the weekly holidays, they go to other places to browse Internet to get ideas and information to update their own knowledge and skill. On their own initiative, they try to observe teaching of other teachers in their own school or in other schools and try to utilise new ideas/ innovations, if any, that they can incorporate in their own classrooms. They subscribe to free mailing list of organisations / institutions giving information of use to school teachers. They carry out action researches with or without any collaboration from the peers and disseminate the outcomes and seek feedback for possible improvement. They also post their writings / experiences in appropriate web sites to get feedback. They possess insight, epiphany and empathy. A learner friendly school has well skilled teachers. Its teachers make efforts to develop

skills of learning in their students. The teachers are experts in varieties of teaching techniques. The sense of enjoyment in teachers gets transferred to students during their teaching. The teachers make their classrooms interesting and educative with appropriate audio-visual aids so that the students can go through them during the lunch break or when they come to the class before the arrival of the teacher at the stipulated time.

### **Teacher Management and Continuous Professional Development of Teachers**

A learner friendly school, in addition to regular class/subject teachers, also has part/full time teachers for subjects like Art, Craft, Dance, Music, and Physical Education. It provides extrinsic incentives to its teachers for their punctuality and regularity of attendance and for better performance of their students in public examinations or in various competitions. As the initial teacher training programmes cannot take all possible steps in preparing a person to teach, a learner friendly school provides appropriate induction programmes for new teachers being recruited by it. It gives reduced teaching load to the beginning teachers and makes them free for certain hours to update themselves and observe teaching of senior teachers. It attaches new teachers to senior teachers for guidance and for giving feedback on classroom management skills, etc. It also provides varieties of teacher support materials in print and online form. It develops a repertoire of diverse classroom management practices by encouraging teachers to observe other teachers. It makes its teachers aware of the goals set by the school and accountability standards expected from them. Its teachers are consulted for setting these standards. Its teachers are rewarded not only for high performance of their students in public examinations but also for their innovations and action researches that help students overcome their social and emotional problems.

### **Teacher Evaluation for Teacher Development**

A learner friendly school periodically undertakes teacher evaluation. It gives stress on formative evaluation and utilise evaluation outcomes as support for continuous professional development of its teachers. The evaluation bases on classroom teaching observation, study of student and teacher portfolios, student engagement, student performance, students' learning process, opinions of students and parents, etc. A good school provides individualised feedback to

teachers, considering the characteristics and competencies of individual teachers and the subjects and classes being taught by them. This helps in improving skills for handling classroom disciplinary climate and improving teacher self-efficacy. Teacher evaluation is associated with several cognitive as well as non-cognitive factors. It generally takes into consideration teacher knowledge, skill in teaching and attitude and handling other activities and intelligence, but also interpersonal relationships of the teacher with parents, other teachers and the head of the institution. In order to improve the quality of assessment skills, it makes provision for appropriate training for its head teacher. The skill of the student performance as an indicator of teacher performance is also not free from criticism as many school students learn simultaneously in private coaching centres in addition to learning in school. Hence, the teacher evaluation strategy may need to include the aspect of impact of shadow education. Again, entry level ability of the student is a crucial issue in case of student performance being treated as an indicator of teacher performance. In the era of non-detention policy during compulsory schooling stage, there may be a student without having even literacy skill getting admitted in class VIII. Qualifications and training received by the teachers may not make a teacher always perform efficiently, as performance is also related to various factors such as emotional level, mental and physical health of the teacher, teacher enthusiasm, etc. which change from time to time. Past record or even previous year's record may not hold good. Evaluation based on direct observations of classroom practice supported by video recordings by trained evaluators is considered as an effective measure. A good school goes for observation of may be four or more number of video recorded lessons. In certain schools, opinions of students, peers of teachers and members of the community including parents are also taken into consideration. Teacher evaluation strategies assume importance when the outcomes are related to teacher continuation in a job. Any single mode evaluation of teacher performance is not acceptable. Hence, a learner friendly school employs varieties of strategies.

### **Leadership and Collaboration**

A learner friendly school is characterised by distributive leadership and collaboration. Its management is democratic in spirit and is based on the principle of collective leadership. It gives stress on collaboration among members of the school community. It has faith on its head teacher and gives him/her appropriate autonomy. Its head teacher performs various functions which contribute to

continuous improvement in the growth and development of the school. The school governing body / management plays a vital role in a learner friendly school. The most important task is the task of getting a competent head teacher for the school. The learner friendly school management provides facilities for the head teacher of the school to contribute to the qualitative growth of the school and in the process also to grow as an individual. It sends its head teachers for study tour of innovative schools in the country as well as outside the country. It periodically undertakes self-evaluation and organises evaluation of the school by external agencies so as to keep pace with developments at home and abroad.

### **CONCLUSION**

Every school, in order to be of high quality, must be learner friendly. Making a school learner friendly requires collaborative effort of the management and the teachers. In case of government schools and government aided schools, it necessitates appropriate policy decisions. It also requires support of the community. A learner friendly school can optimise level of learning of the students and develop them into well motivated, disciplined and right-thinking individuals. It provides an enriched curriculum that promotes integral / whole development of the learners-physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual. Transaction of school curricula is today controlled by State controlled teacher recruitment policy, teacher training policy, and courses of study for various classes and nationalised textbooks. A truly learner friendly school has a learner centred curriculum. Hence, onus of making the schools learner friendly lies with the school education policy of the government. However, in spite of restrictions from the rigid education structure, there are schools which are learner friendly. Their number is growing mostly in unorganised private sector to attract public for choosing their schools instead of State-run schools.

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