



Teacher authority, weber and the ‘self’: An ethnographic study from a secondary school in New Delhi

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Abstract

The study explores the varied facets around teacher authority to understand everyday life at school. Taking the Weberian framework of ideal types, the individual authority of the teacher is explored in this paper, by understanding the teacher’s ‘self’ and how it’s manifested and negotiated within the student- teacher relationship. Drawing on ethnographic work for nine months, interviewing 36 students and 21 teachers of class IX and X, apart from observations of classroom, and different sites at a secondary school in New Delhi. This paper focuses on understanding the Weber’s ideal types to understand the nature and dynamics of charismatic authority to ascertain the teacher’s ‘self’.

Keywords: teacher authority, understanding ‘self’, weber, ethnography, secondary school

Introduction

In order to understand teacher authority, the present paper draws from Weber (1925/1947) ^[32, 37, 38] work around the ideal - types of authority, which helps in understanding the sources of teacher’s authority and how it is manifested in different aspects of school process and practices in order to understand the teacher’s ‘self’. Weber’s traditional authority looks at the role of people in positions of power, according to traditional norms or customs, that is, teacher’s are seen as having a superior position, and students have to accept their position and authority. Whereas charismatic authority rests with those who evoke immense passion, dedication and are not bound by official rules, the legal-rational authority rests with those who follow the official lines of command, and is based on rules and norms. In an organisation particularly the school, people are appointed on a post like Principal, Vice- Principal on the basis of their competence, managerial or administrative skills, apart from the qualifications to the post, which brings forth the professional authority apart from the Webern notions of authority. It could be further added that authority is also gained within the institution, by gaining membership of different national, international bodies, associations and networks, or getting awards or recognition for their work which the teacher may be associated with like CBSE, NCERT, and British Council etc.

In the Indian context, however, there has been a severe dearth of studies of this nature, barring the one by Meenakshi Thapan (1991) ^[35] which had comprehensively used the approach of Peter Woods to study everyday life of an elite school, called Rishi Valley School, founded on the philosophy of J. Krishnamurthi, a philosopher and a spiritual leader notes the case of teacher’s authority by describing various aspects of discipline and authority (p. 65). Whilst Prema Clarke (2001) explains that it is very important for the teacher to maintain control and clearly demonstrate her authority to the students. Foucault argues that the school’s method of surveillance and control also has an ‘individuating’ influence on the students. Sarangpani (2003) ^[34] study at a primary school in New Delhi (government school)

explain the role and mechanism of social control that a teacher might be playing in the school by using verbal chastisement (p. 118). Another study by Avijit Pathak (2002) ^[26], though not very elaborate, throws light on the life at the Mirambika School, run on the lines of the philosophy and spiritual vision of Sri Aurobindo. This study, as one could see, captures the distinctness of the school in terms of its ideology. Yet a study of this magnitude fails to provide much deeper sociological insights.

The above studies demonstrate how various labels, the discipline methods, the rituals, corporal punishment etc. is used to establish and endure the authority of the teacher. Therefore, most of the studies look at the varied aspects around the teacher’s authority, Durkheim gives importance to the moral authority of the teacher and the context and the reason for accepting orders, but what most studies did not look at was the teachers ‘self’, that is, what factors affect oneself and in turn impact teacher’s authority or how it gets manifested within the school. The present study discusses varied aspect of teacher’s authority, with the following objectives-

1. To explore the different sources of authority in the school and how teacher authority shapes interactions between teacher’s and students.
2. To understand how teacher’s construct, shape, and reproduce everyday routines of the school.
3. To know how students confirm, resist and negotiate everyday routines of the school and its impact on teacher’s authority.

Methodology

Ethnography has been used in social science research in a variety of fields and contexts. Some researchers view it as a method rather than a methodology. In the present study, it is, however, *used as a methodology. As for me, Ethnography is mostly multi-method, as it involves observation, interviews, looking at various documents, etc. and thus it tends to be described as a methodology, rather than a method.* It could be mentioned here that in the present study participant observation was used as the

basic method, apart from using a variety of tools and methods. Ethnography is best suited for the present study as the actions of participants are studied in the context they naturally occur, here referring to the 'secondary school'. The research problem defines the method to be employed, and the objectives which have been listed above, as the study explores the everyday practice in the school, and their interaction in the school context.

The researcher approached the school for permission to conduct the research, which was granted and the researcher was directed to meet the gatekeeper who arranged for the classes and other procedures for the study. The researcher conducted the fieldwork for nine months from April 2014 till March 2015. The main study was conducted at the secondary level from classes VI-X, however the paper is based on fieldwork from classes IX and X, age group 14-17 years, which includes all the four sections A, B, C, D in both classes having student strength of 40-45 in each section. Going beyond the classroom observation, the researcher looked into the curriculum, textbooks, teachers' workload, timetable, etc. to understand the power structure of the school. The different activities as part of the daily school life like school assembly, co-curricular activities were observed. Apart from other events, like Republic Day, Gandhi Jayanti, Children's Day, Christmas Celebration, Inter class quiz for class IX, X, Alumni Day, etc. were observed. The interview of students and teachers of classes IX and X were scheduled and undertaken as per the convenience of both. The various sites in the school were closely observed like corridors, library, canteen, staffroom, etc. Interviews were conducted after purposive sampling for teachers and students, 36 students were selected based on classroom observation- 2 boys and 2 girls from each section of class IX, X and there were 4 students which were differently abled they were part of the study, 21 teachers were selected, considering teachers may be teaching any subject in class IX, X or both. The recording of complete and detailed field notes is the significant aspect to the research setting, the date and time, period, subject, class, and total number of students in the class, whether present and absent were recorded as field notes. Further, map of the class was drawn to understand the spatial location like the green board, windows, desks, display board, cupboards, door etc. and how the classroom is arranged, classwork what the teacher wrote on the green board or whether the teacher used the smart board and students interaction were maintained which helped in the analysis.

The School Context

The study is based at Sunshine Public School# (# In the study pseudonyms were assigned to provide anonymity to the school and the participants and to protect their privacy, confidentiality and identity), New Delhi India. It is a public school, meaning that it is a fee paying school, it does not receive any government funds. The school is part of a chain of schools and is run by the Sunshine Society and located at South West Zone of Delhi. The school was setup in 1982 and is affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). There is a feeder primary school (run by the same society) around 3 kilometres away, from where around 40-45 students join class VI every year. It is a Co-Educational school. The school is located near a residential area and had students coming from diverse communities. The school has classes from Nursery to XII and a strength of around 2500 students.

Sources of Teacher's Authority

In this section, the diverse sources of teacher authority are described. The case studies from the ethnographic research conducted in the school are presented below to highlight the varied facets of one's self as a teacher, describing the Individual teacher authority. The classroom observation, interviews discussed the nature and process of teacher's authority and how the student-teacher relations are continuously shaped and re-shaped as they are based on the everyday interaction among them.

Case Studies

Individual Authority for a teacher in the school, can be seen from two broad points: the first question raised is: does a teacher possess authority? If yes, then how or if not, then why? The second question raised, how do students view teacher's authority?

In the school 'Individual Authority' is derived primarily from the 'knowledge of the content' one teaches that is the subject like, for example Geography or Physics, etc. Each subject has a prescribed eligibility criteria set for the post held in the school, which is dependent on the qualifications one possesses like the Graduate or Post Graduate degree depending on which subject one teaches senior or secondary classes, apart from the professional qualifications like the teacher training course. Like in Delhi, a Bachelor or Master Degree and a teacher training degree B.Ed./B.El.Ed or a D.El.Ed degree is mandatory, apart from passing CTET examination depending on the institution. Yet, these are an access or eligibility requirement for teacher recruitment in the school as part of the institutional norms of the school and the rules and regulations enforced by the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) and now mandated by the Right to Education Act (RTE) or prescribed by the state or central government in India. But it is the subject competency of the teacher which is most crucial in a classroom, nevertheless this alone may not translate into teacher getting authority in the school. The student comes to the school for 'learning' and gains competency in the relevant subject content and they expect the teacher to have expertise and make them proficient in the subject. To substantiate this, a case of Maths class X-A is explained here to point out the varied dimension of individual authority:

Case 1

The Maths teacher is teaching probability in class X-A, the expected learning outcome is that students would have gained expertise in the concept. It is also to point here that in a class of 40 students, all are at different functional levels with respect to their concepts related to probability (class room observations X-A), as some were taking more time to complete the question, some were struggling with division or multiplication facts. But each one was trying to solve the question, sometimes alone or with help from their peers. Further looking at the micro processes, from the students' point of view, it was dependent on their clarity around basic mathematical concepts, and whether they will be able to understand and decode the question, which required language skills of comprehending and analysing as well. But looking at the teacher's micro processes it may be related to her own competency in the subject or the institutional policies of the school.

In the light of the above, the paper draws attention to the importance of the varied *factors* which affect the classroom

environment, ranging from teacher's own personality characteristics such as age, height, weight, gender, voice etc. to the more societal notion of caste, class, etc. The post one holds as well as the position in the hierarchical structure of the school like whether she is a PGT (Post Graduate Teacher) or TGT (Trained Graduate Teacher) and further, who may occupy leadership roles in the future seem to play a key role in understanding authority. However, these attributes and features may not directly translate into teacher attaining authority. As authority has to be legitimized, students may not accept teacher's authority quite easily, and neither can any teacher assume to have authority nor the teacher can have 'authority' in all the classes one teaches. Primarily the authority of the teacher is a *relational* concept and is derived from the relationship between the student and the teacher.

What the study found is that, students try to test the teacher in different forms and ways before they accept his or her authority in the class. Testing may range from testing the knowledge, subject competence, to playing pranks, using humour, taking on different roles, to control, etc. As exercise of authority is always in relation to someone in the school that is *relational*, the epistemic and pedagogical authority becomes crucial. It is a combination of various factors, cited above, which provides the teacher the required authority as it has to be legitimized. Whether it is a teacher who has been teaching for a decade or the younger staff who has recently joined the school, to gain authority, a combination of various factors play a crucial role in determining 'who' gains authority. It is a *dynamic* process, and may evolve or change depending on various factors like the school leadership or teachers retiring or joining the school or change in school management as well as it also depends upon teacher's position in the hierarchical structure, the *seniority*, experience as well as the everyday nature of school life and its demands, apart from institutional and government policies. To further, shed light on this analysis some accounts from the classroom observations as well as interviews conducted with the students and teachers are described below to understand the varied dimensions of teacher authority and its sources.

Case 2

In Biology class of X- B (around 40 students), the teacher Varsha was teaching the topic on 'Environmental Sustainability and its effects'. The teacher Varsha's voice could not be heard after the second row. In such a scenario, students were busy chatting, playing and doing their own things in the class. The teacher was trying to gain the attention of the students, and she did move around the rows, but students didn't pay much attention.

Students response in the interview, while referring to the above mentioned class, was that they could not hear her. It is thus trying to go beyond a simplistic understanding of authority, the background and the process of appointment, but also related to one's own 'self' which go further than having the eligibility for the job which she had attained a decade ago. The teacher Varsha had joined the school few months back, and was working in a school for the first time. During the interview, she explained that she had recently shifted from her job in the Call Centre to teaching in order to be able to give more time to her kids, she was on a consolidated salary for a few months as the permanent teacher was on maternity leave. This is to bring forth the point that teaching, apart from the expertise on subject content, also

requires skills, which comprise a mix of classroom management, discipline strategies, ability to play with humour, interpersonal skills, and personality traits especially height and tone, to be visible and audible to the students. Another dimension which is highlighted, is the term of a teacher. Whether the teacher is on a permanent basis, temporary, short term, against leave vacancy, etc. explains the reasons behind the response of the students. They may not take the teacher, appointed on a temporary basis, seriously and approach the class teacher or supervisor which the students did not indulge for the permanent teachers as stated by the students. This points to the nature of job which is a crucial indicator for a teacher being able to attain authority.

Case 3

The classroom observation of General Knowledge (GK) Class of IX-A: The teacher Nidhi, instructed the class monitor to write the different symbols, flags of the world on the Green board as she moved around the class ensuring that everyone is writing. If anyone is not writing but is talking or looking here and there, she would scold and threaten them, "I am noting your name in my Diary and would deduct your marks". Further she said "I am going to give your name to your class teacher". She even asked "the girl monitor to go and check whether the Supervisor is there in her room, so that she can give the name of the students who are not writing (yelling). Although she did not send her out, but these statements like these were periodically repeated in the class. These utterances do help the class to maintain order, although only momentarily. However, it is interesting to note as Gaurav, a student of the same class explained during the interview:

"there are no marks for General Knowledge in class IX, so we don't listen to her. We keep doing other work, she thinks we are doing her work. In reality, she never complains, even to the monitor she only threatens us by saying that she will complain to the supervisor, but we have asked the monitor on several occasions. She tells her, just go out to scare them, but also instructs her not to complain to the supervisor and come back from the corridor itself".

This brings to focus the nexus between the class monitor and the peers. It could be understood that the peers seem to realize the technique and style, used by the teacher's, to gain control and exercise authority, as the teacher prefers to maintain her image and self-respect in front of student which is crucial for his or her 'self' in maintaining authority. Foucault (1977: 177)^[12] discusses how gaze and surveillance are used which operates at all levels from top to bottom, in a hierarchical manner and is multi-directional.

With respect to the above mentioned cases, the different scenarios from the classroom observations, student and teacher interviews, it is evident that there are diverse sources of teacher's authority in a school. The authority of a teacher is derived from the subject competency at its core, but also from different aspects such as the personality characteristics like voice, gender, subject taught and its place in the curriculum, the position one holds and the experience in an institution, classroom management skills, disciplinary strategies, relationship with students, teachers and school leadership etc.

Theme 1-The relationship between students and teachers

Within the Weberian lens, authority is manifested in diverse way. Let us look at the relationship between student and teacher which

determines authority relations in the classroom, and the school. Weber sees authority as voluntary submission, while power may be compelled by force, but authority can't, it depends on one's own choice and the legitimacy one receives, or is acknowledged. This brings forth the nature of relationship which the teacher shares with the students whether it is *coercive, or democratic?* From being lenient, disciplinarian, authoritarian, to being firm, are the common notions about teacher's identity which may depend on various contextual factors such as whether teacher is approachable, accessible, friendly, strict or the kind of rapport that the teacher shares with the students. It may be that they are all dependent variables and not independent and may be influenced by various contextual and institutional factors as discussed above, nevertheless it is a vibrant relation which changes over time, setting and with time and experience, the type and management of institution, the Principal and his core team. Another interesting observation from the field is that a teacher may have authority in four out of the five classes one takes, and may not have any authority in one of the classes, as it may not be legitimised. It is also important to mention that within the class the students are not passive recipients of teacher's instructions or the content one engages in. The students also act within their own sub-cultures which give power and authority to them and their peers to question, engage and critically discuss with the teachers, which may change across different classes, subjects and teachers. As one of the teacher Neerja (in her late 20s and been teaching in the school since the past 3-4 years) after coming from class X-C in the staffroom mentions that verbal instructions to submit work do not work despite repeated reminders. This appears to be a classical case that highlighted the role of staffroom culture and 'gossip' about students, which helps to construct an image about the students and the class. The class had quite a few students, who were repeating class X, and the disturbance and the noise from the class were a common concern among teachers, apart from the teaching-learning environment in the class.

These analysis stated above point to the relationship between students and teachers which is crucial in gaining authority in the school, as the students feel comfortable with teachers who are accessible and approachable as they can freely discuss their problems and issues around adolescent life, peers, curricular demands, formative & summative assessments, cycle tests, assignments, parental pressure etc. It is this relationship which is crucial in maintaining a fruitful and interactive relationship with students. Sometimes, the teachers faced resistance from the students ranging from disobedience, answering back, conflicts or mass protests or in some cases, turned out to be violent as well. Most students however, see their teachers as 'parents' and 'mentors' and seek their advice and guidance which is in line with the Indian tradition of looking at teacher as 'Guru'.

Further it is worth mentioning that the 'control' is one of the most common distinguishing factors to see whether teacher is in a position to exercise authority or not. The noise level in the class is an obvious indicator of the position of the teacher and, as Denscombe (1977, 1980) ^[9, 10] in his work on London schools, argues that ".....absence of noise in their classroom is the basis on which their teaching competence is adjudicated, rightly or wrongly, by their colleagues". The discussion in the staffroom was an indicator of this. The newly appointed teacher Varsha, was allocated class X-B, and found it extremely difficult to manage and teach, and as the class was next to the staffroom, the

teachers sitting there would perhaps guess by the 'noise', who was actually teaching in the class. She found it tough to teach in the class, as the students would pose questions, move around the class, and chat among themselves as her voice that is the tone and volume was not audible to the students. So she in turn, would call the class teacher to scold and manage the class. But soon there were whispers around her personality and 'gossip' in the staffroom, and when it became a routine with the teacher, the class teacher started to avoid her and began making excuses so as to avoid going to the class. Further, during an informal conversation in the staffroom with the researcher, there were loud noises coming from the class (Varsha X- B), next to the staffroom. Some students came to call the Class teacher Ms. Ruchika, who refused to attend as she felt that the frequent interference with other teachers' classes would undermine their authority as they should try to deal with the students by themselves. This conversation has a deep and analytical role to play in understanding the issue around teacher authority. 'Classroom Control' is one of the primary aspects of the teacher attaining authority in the class as it is expected that after completing the teacher training course, the teacher knows how to manage and control the classroom behaviour, however, this process takes time and develops slowly as there are various contextual factors.

Further, there are some personality characteristics which define 'Who you are as a teacher?' which is perceived by each one in a different way: the first being the subject competency that is- Expertise in your subject, that is those who 'know their subject'. Expertise in the subject helps in exercising authority over students within the classroom, while in a bureaucratic set up it may be akin to legal authority as envisaged by Weber (1947: 304) ^[38, 32]. For others, one may gain authority by use of corporal punishment, or threats, scaring the students, but in the Weberian sense, authority needs to be legitimised, which, depends on the authority one wishes to gain, but how much the institution is also willing to allow and assert authority 'self'. As mentioned above, this kind of authority, may be legitimised by one's own personality characteristics: the voice, gender, post one holds, inter-personal relationship among the staff, seniority, networks with national and international bodies. Thus, the next section, brings forth the distinction between teacher attaining authority and charismatic authority within the Weberian framework.

Theme 2-Teacher's Self, Identity, and Charismatic Authority

The question here is to put forth as to how teachers see their own 'self' as well as teaching and learning for the students? It is also determined by how the teacher sees her own "self" and their own identity as a teacher, the reasons one joins the profession are crucial, as does one join to have a safe and secure job and able to take care of family and household needs, or to grow and develop with and for students, to see learning as a social need nurture aspirations of students, civic virtue and see teaching as a satisfying and fulfilling career. It is also to understand the nature of teaching profession, it has struggled to be recognised as a 'profession'.

This has been highlighted in the interview the researcher conducted in the school, with Mr. Mehta who teaches Physical Education, he highlighted that schools nowadays are run as a business model, which is a drastic shift from the earlier model, which was based on Indian theme, the Guru-Shishya (Teacher-

Pupil) parampara (tradition), keeping with the times, the teachers too had to respond to such changes. This discussion highlighted the role of teacher in the Indian context and how it has moved beyond the Guru-Shishya tradition, as schools were considered as a philanthropist enterprise or “legacy” of the colonial era. Teachers were considered as noble and wise and parents relied on them for holistic development of children from moral to intellectual to social to citizenship education and inculcate them with Indian values of respect towards the teacher. In the context of the Indian culture, the ‘Guru’ is usually seen next to God and is given a pedestal in the ancient texts and scriptures. There are various customs and traditions which continue to be followed like celebrations around Teacher’s Day or having a puja called ‘Saraswati Puja’ or ‘Guru Purnima’ etc. at most of the schools in India. The teaching profession has undergone drastic change and shift in the schools towards business model is evident. Schools in the era of neo liberalism and open market policy are driven by profit and it is in this transitory phase where teachers have to define and choose their own role and identity as ‘self’. It is this identity, the internalization, of the *role* a teacher that *one sets for oneself*. The answer to this important question, defines the individual authority, does one stick to one’s own’s ideals, thoughts, attitude as a teacher ie, ‘self’ or change, develop, grow or decline over time, to develop the agency of the teacher. More importantly, how is it usually seen in relation with students? The answer to the question cited above will also determine whether a teacher will attain authority as a teacher. The symbolic interactionist as well as Goffman in his work in his works (1959, 1967, 1971) elaborates as to how one manages the “impressions” we have of each other. Teacher may use various symbols like language, gestures and objects to have control of the class, noise level in the class, whether teacher has to rely on corporal punishment at times, or can use communication channel to get the work done or one has to “create an atmosphere of fear” among the children ‘as without which the students will not learn’ as was stated by the teachers in the Sunshine Public School. All the above factors determine the power and authority a teacher will be able to exercise in the school. Some teachers view teaching as a soft job which pays well, while others stated that they took it up for the love of the subject, or loved being around children, and some wanted to bring about change in the school system and help students.

Amongst the teachers who wield individual authority, it is a dynamic concept and mostly dependent on the role and relationship which the teacher shares with the students. The mutual love and respect, sharing and seeking guidance or preparing students not as subject experts but as learners for life is the goal which one envisions as a friend or mentor. Woods (1998) [9] study emphasis teacher’s role as ‘embodied self’ as what Weber would describe as ‘*charismatic authority*’. In the Sunshine Public School, the teacher Mrs. Pooja as seen in the class is a master of the subject, an expert. She evoked a deep sense of relationship with the student. Her personal style, symbols, gestures, tone, voice modulation seem to reflect a deep engagement at the epistemic level. This happens when teachers inspire the students and there is an emotional bonding or connectedness. The English Academic Speaking and Listening Skills (ASL) activities are planned with a fine balance of audio and video recordings done by her. The voice modulation, expressions and emotions she displayed in teaching poems,

reading lessons and novel was such that all the students are actively involved and engaged in her class, like a performance. There was hardly any disruption, and the classes were smooth, exemplary and enjoyed by all students. On the contrary, the other teachers, who primarily rely on giving written work or dictating notes, were struggling to control the class. The case of Pooja, is classically different as she would involve all the students in the class, which essentially flows from her expertise and exceptional charismatic personality. It was also found that some of the students commented that her classes have a long lasting impact on them. The classes were such that they had a mesmerizing impact and the students would feel lost in her class. The enthusiasm, excitement, energy and the vibrant atmosphere which she had been able to generate in the class is considered outstanding by the students.

The observation of the English Novel ‘The Diary of Anne Frank’- class X-C being taught by Pooja:

She introduced the lesson with a pre-lesson strategies for the students so as to involve the whole class. Her unique style with which she taught, paying immense attention to voice modulation, the content, the characters, and the plot as its execution in the class, the whole process from the planning to the activities, to the seating arrangement, to the involvement of students involve subject competency as well as a pedagogical skill of a master class.

During the observation, she asked one of the students “Mr. Malik can you tell me from the novel of Anne Frank, why she says that the Diary never sleeps or gets tired?” Mr. Malik replied and gave the answer. She then went up to him and congratulated him in a most amusing and innovative manner as she commented:

“let me come and shake my hand with you for such a fabulous answer, tomorrow you will read and come and discuss the next chapter”.

The rapport Pooja shared with the students, her overall sense about learning and the attitude towards teaching was part of her performance, and of her embodied ‘self’ (Delamont, Sara, 2002, 2016) [7]. Pooja gets deep under the skin to be able to contribute to her performance, a complicated process which is not linear but multi-layered and evolves over time. Classroom is seen as a “stage” where one moves, tries to explore different themes on the stage. The varied and diverse observations of classes are like a ‘*Performance*’ which is possible, as she had command over the epistemic knowledge, which translated into her pedagogical authority. This command over subject competence and pedagogy, assisted her unique style, which led her to have a close and cordial relationship with students and through which she derived her charismatic authority. The teacher needs to “touch the soul and heart of the student” and the passion she evoked led the students’ to give her the most influential authority as a teacher, the charismatic authority as described by Weber.

Discussion

This paper has explored the ‘individual authority’ of the teacher using the Weberian lens from the varied case studies which shows that how individual authority is dependent on the ‘self’ and how one exerts it in the school determines whether one’s authority is legitimised. The data from the study suggest that the teachers in the country are the idealised one, and the expectations are enormous, as the rhetoric of Guru-Shishya tradition is so powerful and voiced often which was reflected in the different

narrations. The issue of classroom control is significant as it is seen as an indicator for the school leadership around teacher's authority being legitimised by the students or not, and whether one is successful in gaining it?

With respect to Weberian framework, the legal-rational authority is most visible, as the school management with the help of the Principal assign different tasks to the teachers which is based on traditional or legal rational authority like setting question papers for the examinations or attending staff meetings, attending PTM, or organising cultural events etc. The traditional and legal-rational authority in the school context meant rules, regulations, policies, acts, so as to abide by them accordingly. However, charismatic authority evokes a sense of passion, gratitude, kindness and the relationship shared with student-teacher is central to argue that Ms. Pooja, taught her subject content with the appropriate pedagogical methods which were engaging and inspiring to the students, as she was deeply involved, dedicated, and committed in her mission.

Thus, to analyse it is imperative to look deeper into teacher's own 'self' as that determines whether teacher authority will be legitimised. *Authority cannot be assumed to be possessed as it is bound within the student-teacher relationship and may change depending on the institutional and societal context.* The teacher's 'self' is vital, and juxtaposing it with the Weber's ideal types, the findings put forth the nature of charismatic authority, manifested within the pedagogical authority. The various case studies exploring the individual authority of the teacher suggest that knowledge of the content apart from the post one holds in the school assume significance in the hierarchical school structure, but how each teacher sees one's own self and interacts with the students, aids in getting 'legitimacy'. The most critical indicator is the *pedagogical authority* as how teachers' transact, engage with the curriculum. Apart from it there are significant factors like the subject taught and its popularity in the job market or greater avenues for undergraduate studies etc. The evaluation pattern and the assessment pattern mandated by the Right to Education Act, the Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation (CCE) system which bequeathed too much power in the hands of the teacher, which was often a source of discontentment among the students. Nevertheless, the charismatic teacher was able to cross this borderline and engage the learners in a collegial environment as they were immersed in the art of teaching. It's reflected in their planning, everyday interaction with the students, the relationship one shares with students is vital in gaining or losing authority.

Further, looking at the broader context, the traditional role of a teacher has been radically transformed and instances of student challenging their authority are not unheard of. But the rhetoric of Guru- Shishya tradition and Gurudakshina continues to shape the student-teacher relationship in today's classroom too and moral authority prevails. Bowing down, not questioning, not answering back, being polite and obedient are some of the qualities which are seen as a mark of respect to teacher's authority. The contemporary world of education has witnessed a typical paradox. The students are scoring Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 10 or 100% in their class X or XII board examination and are considered brilliant students in terms of their academic performance. While the policy of 'No-Detention' till class VIII, as enumerated in the Right to Education Act (RTE), said to have ensued in a malady which the country may face in

the next decade where there are students, in different classes in the schooling system, who may not be able to read and write but are promoted to the next class. Thus, at the same time, the social skills and the Indian values of love, respect and care of community living are being taken over by individualism and the quantification game. The perceptions about the student-teacher relationships, where the teacher used to be an inspiration and to be a mentor to the student, have been diminishing due to the societal demands or the education policies as well as the social and economic changes seen as part of neo-liberal economy.

The role of the teacher has been greatly reduced from being a mentor in the Gurukul education to a 'commodity' and the student seen as a consumer in the market. The private public schools want the students to seek admission and they eventually run their institution with the help of student fees as they don't receive any government funds, while the parallel coaching industry thrives on competitive exams in our country which gives hope and aspirations to millions to achieve their dreams. In this scenario, teacher authority is dependent on contextual factors within the school, apart from various curriculum constraints, evaluation parameters and the government acts and policies.

Consequently, there is a need to demystify the role of the teacher and its perception and understand that teaching is not merely a job. The entry to the profession of teaching might seem easy and sometimes even lucrative, but it requires utmost commitment and dedication on the part of the teachers to impart knowledge to the students. And it is this relationship with students that makes the teacher's authority significant. Some teachers might use moral or coercive measures to attain authority, while others might try to get it by teaching and using varied pedagogical methods in the class or their dedication or commitment. But there is no denying the fact that the recipe for teachers' authority resides in the ability of teachers to translate the content through the different pedagogical methods. At the same time, the ability to exercise authority also depends on the ability of the teachers to maintain the personal touch, the relationship one shares with the students. It is in this relationship of negotiation, teachers gain or lose authority. Sometimes in this complex mechanism of gaining legitimacy, it is turned into a power game with the students, which may lead to conflicts, and disrupt the student- teacher relationship which is largely based on love, warmth and affection and gets refined by the shared values of the society.

Conclusion

Thus, in this paper the emphasis is to explore the individual authority of the teacher within and beyond the Weberian framework. The teacher's 'self' has been the focus, the findings suggest the core of authority relation rests on student - teacher relationship and it determines whether it will be legitimised. The historical and traditional authority continues to be, voiced even today and the the Guru- Shishya tradition is dynamic and alive. Yet, the charismatic authority is the most sought after, but challenging to achieve in the school context, as foremost it is set within the intellectual prowess and one's personality traits. But beyond it the relationship with the students, colleagues, etc. helps one to achieve legitimacy. As the informal relationship is also significant, the gestures, symbols used by the teacher like smile, pat, shaking hands, eye contact etc. aid in building relationships which are deeper, meaningful, long lasting and help in building emotional bond with the students which keeps them inspired.

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