

# CHAPTER IV

## CONCEPT OF ACADEMIC CULTURE

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This chapter presents the concept of Academic Culture.

### 4.0 THE CONCEPT OF ACADEMIC CULTURE

The *raison d'être* of an academic institution is pursuit of knowledge. The goal of pursuit of knowledge may be varied: occupational training, overall development, or gaining knowledge for its own sake. Each academic institution develops/adopts and follows its own philosophy, vision and mission as the guiding framework for its functioning. Stakeholders in an academic institution -learner, teacher and the principal / head- interact with each other in the pursuit of knowledge within the framework of its philosophy, the mission and the vision. In this way the nature of the pursuit of knowledge is likely to differ from institution to institution. The academic culture is created and sustained collectively by the interactions of the stakeholders in their endeavour for the pursuit of knowledge within an institutional framework.

Notwithstanding the difference in the perception and practice of pursuit of knowledge at institutional level, some constructs of the said culture that facilitate and enhance the pursuit of knowledge are freedom, respect, equality and a sense of responsibility enjoyed and demonstrated by the stakeholders. Pursuit of knowledge itself may be at stake if the culture in the academic institution is not founded on freedom for its stakeholders. Freedom enjoyed by all stakeholders is accompanied by respect for each other's ideas. This respect is based on the assumption that all are equal and therefore have a right to think independently, act autonomously and express freely. A sense of responsibility founded on the idea of discipline is crucial to enjoying freedom, respect and equality. This sense of responsibility necessitates recognition and nurture of different processes and strategies such as independence and interdependence; negotiations and discussion; deliberations, mutual reconciliation and building consensus. There may be a conscious effort to safeguard and nurture these constructs

or an unconscious one by all and/ or some of the stakeholders. Thus, as a normative concept, the culture in an academic institution which is collectively created and sustained by the stakeholders consciously and/or unconsciously in their endeavour for pursuit of knowledge and which facilitates and enhances the pursuit of knowledge as the stakeholders enjoy and demonstrate freedom, respect, equality accompanied by a sense of responsibility is academic culture.

The constructs of academic culture – freedom, respect, equality and a sense of responsibility – are rooted in the empirical reality of pursuit of knowledge in the context of a secondary school which is one of the academic institutions. Being a part of society, a school shares a reciprocal relationship with it. Its functioning for the pursuit of knowledge is both dependent on and independent of the external forces exerted by the society. On the one hand the existence of a school as an academic institution is governed by the socio-legal framework. At the same time the functioning is also largely ground zero (here school) specific. The delineation of each construct is attempted, therefore, with respect to the three major stakeholders of school who are actively involved and whose interaction/s is intense and regular in the field (here school): learner, teacher and the principal. The learner as a stakeholder is one for whose nurture and growth a school is set up. Teacher as a stakeholder plays a significant instrumental role in the nurture of learner. Teacher also engages in pursuit of knowledge for him/herself. Principal as a stakeholder plays an important instrumental role in the nurture of learner, teacher and the institution of school. An important aspect of principal's role is to function as a link and a channel between the school and the external environment viz. the management/trustees, the parents' (individual and/or as an organized body), the concerned government organization/s, the community in general. Further, the delineation is attempted on the bases of the roles, responsibilities of the learner, teacher and the principal and the essential activities of school. In the process of delineation of constituent components of Academic Culture for the stakeholder-principal, learner and teacher- the role of parents and management as other important stakeholders has been co opted albeit in implicit manner.

## **4.1 FREEDOM**

Freedom in school is visualized as the existence of freedom in school for the learners, teachers and principal. This freedom may be naturally and formally existing and/or created even within the constraints of institutional rules / obligations by informal support system/s. Freedom is also delineated in the manner in which it is enjoyed by the learner, the teacher and the principal individually.

At first, it is described as manifested in specific aspects and subsequently overall freedom for each is depicted.

### **4.1.1 FREEDOM FOR LEARNER**

The assumptions for delineating freedom for learner are: (i) each individual is unique and requires freedom to develop his/her unique potentials and (ii) knowledge is for all. Freedom for learner may be visualized in the functional areas in which the learner is going to interact with other learners, the teacher and the principal. It refers to the freedom enjoyed by and ensured for the learner:

- in sites for learning: classroom, laboratory and library;
- outside the sites for learning i.e., classroom, laboratory and library but in school
- premises like assembly, playground, corridors .
- the overall freedom for learner exclusive of the above two and the aspects not covered by the two.

Freedom for learner in sites for learning: classroom, laboratory and library

This refers to the freedom enjoyed by the learner with respect to -

choices to be made to decide what to study, how to study, at what pace to study, when to be assessed and how to be assessed. This relates to the freedom of the learner to express his /her preferences regarding the content of study, methods of teaching, determining readiness for assessment in terms of time and methods of assessment.

The learner's freedom to interact with teacher in the teaching learning process in the classroom;

This relates to the freedom to ask questions, to offer a different point of view, to discuss with classmates, to seek clarification and to share their experiences. It relates to how a teacher ensures freedom for all the learners as against a selected few.

#### *Observance of this freedom and its practice*

Learner's freedom can be observed in ensuring that all the curriculum choices granted by the examination board are made available to learners at school. In the event that institutional (school's) limitations do not permit it, the institution extends informal support by honouring the choices made by the learner.

Learner's freedom can be observed in the opportunities created for learner –

- to approach teacher/s to introduce a certain type of activities;
- to suggest to the teacher that s/he would like to learn about a certain topic first;
- to ask questions in the teaching learning process and the sincere attempt made by the teacher to answer these questions

Learner's freedom can be observed in the sense of security enjoyed by him/her-

- in requesting teacher to slow down the speed of teaching;
- to suggest to teacher not to test him/her at a particular time
- to opt for an oral test or a story telling test or a written test.

Learner's freedom can be observed in the general communication-

- in the manner (patience or impatience) in which learners in class listen to each other's views
- in the manner in which learners present their disagreements with each other and with teacher

- confidence and the courage displayed in communicating in classrooms

by almost all the students

*Freedom for learner outside the sites for learning i.e.,: classroom, laboratory and library but in school premises like assembly, playground, corridors.*

This relates to learner's freedom in the absence of teacher/s and/or in the presence of teacher in the school premises with respect to other learners, teachers and principal. It presupposes an understanding and an acceptance of freedom of self and of others in their roles as learner/s and as members of society. It refers to-

- the freedom for free sharing of ideas with other learners
- the accessibility and approachability to teacher and principal for
- interactions related and not related to teaching and learning
- the maturity with which the learners' ideas, views and differences are accepted and handled.

*Observance of this freedom and its practice*

This freedom can be observed in the opportunities and avenues created by principal and teachers for learners to enable learners to fearlessly express their views and suggestion.

The freedom for free sharing of ideas with other learners

Sharing of views, likes and dislikes, expressing displeasure on different activities / happenings of the school with other learners in the corridors or playground. The absence of coercive measures taken to control the students from fearless expression of ideas.

The accessibility and approachability to teacher and principal for interactions related and not related to teaching and learning

- a 'zero hour' or the system of 'suggestion box'.

- the absence of coercive measures taken to control the students from fearless expression of ideas
- the presence of the teacher outside school hours in the school so that learners can approach him/her. It refers to how the teacher is able to rescue him/herself from being 'busy' by keeping aside preoccupations and 'create' time for learners outside the classroom, laboratory or library. It is observed in how a teacher makes him/herself accessible by being outside staffrooms/workplace and in recess so that students can easily approach them. It also refers to the communication that a teacher encourages so that learners can interact with the teacher outside classrooms.
- The maturity with which the learners' ideas, views and differences are accepted and handled and an appreciation of views which are very different and opposite to that of teacher/s' views.

#### *Overall freedom for learner*

It is the foundational freedom enjoyed by learners which is manifested in various situations; in the way learners become confident; and have courage to take initiative.

At a basic level it includes two aspects: (i) an understanding that freedom exists and (ii) enabling learners to practice freedom, that is, helping the learners to exercise freedom responsibly and fearlessly. This begins with the freedom to think and express and creating opportunities and support for independent thinking. The said opportunities and support are not to influence, coerce or indoctrinate but as stimulants. Other aspects of freedom are to explore various opportunities and be helped to do so; the freedom to choose and be helped to choose; freedom to set personal goals and be helped to do so.

It is inclusive of the learner's freedom in learning sites and outside it. At the same time it encompasses anything and everything that is pertinent for development of a learner and that may be left out from the delineations of learner's freedom in sites of learning and outside the sites of learning in school premises.

### *Observance of this freedom and its practice*

The overall freedom can be observed in-

- the opportunity created for a wide exposure to curricular and co-curricular areas
- the opportunity and adequate time available to the learners to explore different areas of curriculum to identify his/her specific areas of interest in curricular and co-curricular areas.
- to contribute to and be a part of decision making process which affects the teaching learning process in school and the general management related to it.
- in silence of learners which indicate reconciliation and not withdrawal.
- in the display of attitude of acceptance thereby suggesting acceptance of others and so of their freedom.

#### **4.1.2 FREEDOM FOR TEACHER**

Different aspects of freedom of teacher can be observed in sites of learning : classroom, laboratory and library; in dealing with colleagues and in the decision making process of school. Subsequent to this, overall freedom for teacher is described.

*Freedom for teacher in sites for learning: classroom, laboratory and library and aspects related to it.*

This freedom of teacher refers to the choices s/he can make in terms of teaching learning process in the sites for learning. It relates to what to teach, how to teach, at what speed to teach, when to assess and how to assess the learners.

Apparently it may appear to be in conflict with the freedom of learners to make choices. In this respect, the freedom of the teacher also refers to the process by which the teacher is able to arrive at mutually acceptable decisions which are taken in the best interests of the learners.



Orientation to freedom of teachers is based on the idea that knowledge is for all including teachers and learners.

*Observance of this freedom and its practice*

This freedom can be observed with respect to the decisions to be made regarding:

- which content to be taught first and which to be taught later ;
- the speed with which s/he can teach irrespective of the generally accepted speed followed by other teachers;
- using appropriate methods of teaching to suit the learner's profile;
- determining whether the learners can be assessed at a particular stage or not irrespective of the schedule planned by school;
- choosing or devising a method of assessment for the learners.
- taking a mid course stock checking of whether the above decisions taken are appropriate and justified.
- changing the decisions regarding what to teach, how to teach and how to assess the learners in deference to the needs and request of the learner/s.

It can be observed in the sense of security enjoyed by the teacher to innovate in teaching learning process and the sense of security enjoyed that the failure of the innovation will not affect the performance appraisal.

It can be observed in discussions/consultation the teacher engages in with learners for making various decisions regarding what to teach, how to teach and how to assess the learners.

*Freedom for teacher to be a part of the decision making process in school*

This freedom relates to teacher's freedom to contribute and be a part of decision making process which affects the teaching learning process in school and general management related to it.

It relates to how policy and decisions are communicated to teachers.

*Observance of this freedom and its practice*

The freedom of teachers in this respect can be observed in different acts of decisions making such as:

- being invited to, participation, expression of ideas, views and differences in the staff meeting.
- in the manner (authoritarian or democratic) in which the staff meeting is conducted.
- the language, the address to teachers (as colleagues or subordinates) of the circulars communicating the policy and decisions taken.
- in the 'silences' in the staff meeting and what the 'silences' communicate-reconciliation or withdrawal.
- It can be observed in the access to the information that a teacher has about the policy making process of school.
- It can be observed in the opportunity created by principal for teachers to be a part of the decision making and policy making process by participating in developing school calendar, daily schedule and co curricular activities in the best interest of the learners.
- It may be observed in the teacher's participation in evolving code of conduct for teachers.

*Freedom for teacher with colleagues*

- This freedom of teachers is based on the collegial nature of teaching profession.
- It relates to sharing of academic ideas and experiences with colleagues.
- It refers to freedom to express their views, differences of opinion with principal and teachers.

*Observance of this freedom and its practice*

This freedom can be observed in the opportunities created by school to provide time for sharing of academic ideas and opportunities in terms of location of staff rooms and the seating arrangement in the staffroom.

It can be observed in practices of sharing of academic ideas such as:

- how teachers are encouraged by principal to share 'wild ideas / out of the box ideas' without ridicule.
- how teachers approach senior colleagues for clarifications and opinion on any issue concerning teaching learning process.
- how senior colleagues discuss academic ideas with new teachers and/or junior colleagues.

It refers to the system of collective recognition and collective accountability.

It is observed in the open door policy adopted by principal to create opportunity for any teacher to share views or differences with the principal

#### *Overall freedom for teacher*

Professional independence, collegial nature of teaching profession and classroom autonomy forms the core of overall freedom of a teacher in school. The overall freedom for teachers is exclusive of these and the above delineations attempted.

#### *Observance of this freedom and its practice*

It can be observed in the courage displayed in taking different initiatives related to teaching learning process

### **4.1.3 FREEDOM FOR PRINCIPAL**

Freedom for principal can be visualized as freedom enjoyed and created by him/her for developing philosophy of school. Owing to the organizational position that a principal holds in a school, it can be described as the freedom s/he enjoys and creates for others with respect to development of school and management of school.

An overall freedom for principal exclusive of the above two aspects is described subsequently.

*Freedom to evolve / chalk ou philosophy of school.*

It is about deciding the view of an overall development of learners and the role of teachers in the process. It is about how the learners will be facilitated for the pursuit of knowledge and an overall development. It is about visualizing and envisioning the growth of institution over a period of time. This relates to freedom of principal for charting out a roadmap for development of school.

It relates to the choices that the principal is offered to develop the philosophy of school. It also refers to the choices that the principal creates for the other stakeholders (learners and teachers in the present context) through processes and strategies. It relates to building consensus through process of negotiation, deliberation and collaboration to evolve the philosophy of school for its various academic endeavours.

*Observance of this freedom and its practice*

This freedom can be observed in

- the congenial working atmosphere created in which the freedom of stakeholders is recognized and respect.
- the opportunity to modify and / or evolve syllabus to decide the valid school knowledge to be transmitted to learners in accordance with the philosophy of the school.
- the opportunity to develop mechanisms/ modify teaching learning process to transact the syllabus in accordance with the philosophy of the school.

*Freedom to manage the school.*

- This relates to freedom to take decision regarding various management aspects related to teaching learning process like appointment of teachers and admission policy for learners.

- This relates to developing codes of acceptable behaviour in school for learners, teachers and parents.
- This refers to developing ways for corrective measures for instances of not following the codes of behaviour.

#### *Observance of this freedom and its practice*

It can be observed in the voice that s/he enjoys in the management process with respect to :

- appointment of teachers, admission of learners; fixing fee structure; purchase of furniture, teaching aids and equipments.
- involvement of principal in these decisions viz. is s/he informed of the decisions already taken, asked to give recommendations or asked to take the decisions.

The freedom regarding consensus on the code of behaviour/conduct can be observed in :

- the process of negotiation, deliberation and collaboration followed by principal with management and with teachers

#### *Overall freedom for principal*

The overall freedom for a principal is to create, sustain and nurture freedom of stakeholders in school. At a basic level it refers to the choices created, offered and safeguarded for him/herself, the learners and the teachers. It is exclusive of the above delineations and anything that is pertinent to support this.

#### *Observance of this freedom and its practice*

The opportunities created for principal by the management to create, sustain and nurture freedom of stakeholders in school such as:

- the support for the principal in his/her various decisions

- appreciation and recognition of the principal's acts and decisions with respect to creation, sustenance and nurture of freedom of stakeholders in school.

#### **4.2.0 RESPECT**

Respect is visualized on three bases: (i) the dignity of learners, teachers and principal as human beings (ii) as individuals functioning in their organization roles and responsibilities in school and (iii) as a necessary condition to nurture freedom and equality. Respect is essential and inevitable when freedom is enjoyed. Respect is essential if equality is to exist and be practiced in school. In a way it also becomes a corollary to freedom and equality as it recognizes a sense of responsibility.

Respect is to be observed in:

- recognizing the dignity of learners, teachers and principal as human beings
- recognizing and accepting the learners, teachers and principal as individuals
- with their own strengths and weaknesses
- recognizing the learners, teachers and principal as independent individuals with a sense of responsibility
- recognizing that the decisions and actions of learners, teachers and principal individually and/or collectively arise out of the privileges due to their organizational roles / specific positions in school

#### **4.2.1 RESPECT FOR LEARNER**

- Respect for learner is visualized as respect for him/her as a human being. This refers to respecting dignity of learners as a human being.
- It includes respect as a learner irrespective of the different potential and different success/achievement in school.

- It refers to respect for learner's right to education expressed in his/her desire to learn and the way s/he wants to learn.

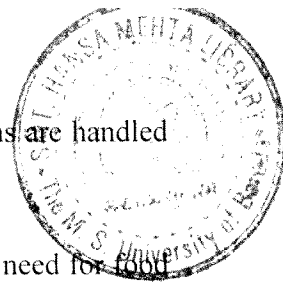
#### *Observance of this respect and its practice*

Respect for learner can be observed in the practice of differentiated instruction by teachers. This comprises differing the learning experience either in terms of complexity of content, or the learning objectives to be achieved, or the multiple modes of exposure to content to be given as per the need/s of the learner. It refers to

- accepting learners, who may be low achievers and high achievers in some areas of school curriculum, equally.
- accepting achievement of learners, who are differently abled, in some areas of school curriculum, equally and in the context of their abilities and /or limitations.
- how teachers protect low achievers from ridicule from other learners.
- how teachers mould high achievers to view their achievements in some areas of school curriculum to extend a helping hand to the other learners
- how teachers also nurture the higher potentials of some learners to do their best

It can be observed in the ease with which all types of learners irrespective of physical disabilities, colour of skin and general physical appearance are accepted.

- It can be observed in the equal treatment given to learners who are differently abled.
- It can be observed in the conversation between learners and between learners and teachers in the tone of the speech, the words used, the manner of addressing and the non-verbal behaviour accompanying in these conversations.
- In the learning sites and outside, it can be observed in how attentively teacher and the learners listen to each other.



- Respect can be observed in the way disagreements and irritations are handled as aspect of human nature.
- It is observed in the care that teachers take to attend to learners' need for food and rest when the learners work in school after school hours.
- It is exhibited in the care shown for the learner's safety in school premise from dangers of dilapidated school buildings.
- Its absence is observed when learner's fatigue is not recognized and when adequate rest is not provided to learners in the race of 'completing the course'.
- Its absence is also observed when learners are asked to do tasks not related to school or their development such as when they are made to attend functions merely to show a full audience.

#### *Overall respect for learner*

This refers to the overall respect for learners which is exclusive of the above delineations and any thing that is pertinent to support this

### **4.2.2 RESPECT FOR TEACHER**

- Respect as a human being. This refers to respecting dignity of teachers as a human being.
- Respect as a guide, as an individual with more exposure and as a person knowing the big picture in the era of knowledge explosion.
- Respect as a co-learner
- Respect as an individual acting within the school in the best interest of the learners.
- Respect as a responsible individual acting within the school in the best interest of the learners and the community in general.



### *Observance of this respect and its practice*

- It is reflected in attentive listening to teachers by learners and by the principal in formal and informal situations.
- The words, the tone and the non-verbal behaviour manifested by learners and principal in conversation with teacher reflect respect.
- It can be observed in a genuine involvement of teachers and learners in the teaching learning process in which learners recognize and accept the fact that teachers scold learners for learner's benefit.
- It is giving due attention to teacher's fatigue and right to rest.
- It is observed in accepting limitations of teacher with dignity.
- It is observed in the manner in which the principal protects the teacher from gratuitous/unnecessary/unjustified external influences like pressure of parents / management and community.
- It is observed in the effort taken and the manner in which the principal felicitates the endeavours of teacher/s in front of learners and external groups like management/parents/community.

### *Overall respect for teacher*

This refers to the overall respect for teachers which is exclusive of the above delineations and any thing that is pertinent to support this.

## **4.2.3 RESPECT FOR PRINCIPAL**

- Respect as a head of the school acting in the best interest of the learners and teachers.
- Respect as a head of the school for the decisions taken by the process of negotiations, collaborations, discussion and deliberations.

#### *Observance of this respect and its practice*

- It can be observed in the acceptance of decisions collectively taken by the principal in collaboration with teachers.
- It is reflected in the readiness with which the decisions taken are implemented by teachers and learners.
- It is reflected in the readiness with which the decisions taken are implemented by principal him/herself.
- It is reflected in displaying disagreements politely and as disagreements with the principal's position and not with principal as a person.
- It is reflected in attentive listening to, and not necessarily in agreement with, principal by learners and teachers.
- Its absence is reflected more by non-verbal behaviour such as by 'silences' indicating withdrawal of the teachers and the learners in conversation with the principal.

#### *Overall respect for principal*

This refers to the overall respect for principal which is exclusive of the above delineations and any thing that is pertinent to support this.

### **4.3.0 EQUALITY**

Equality in school is visualized as the existence and practice of equality for stakeholders in the different roles, responsibilities and activities of school. Equality is further delineated as equality of treatment and equality of opportunity enjoyed by the learner, the teacher and the principal. Equality of treatment deals with the identity and status of the learner, the teacher and the principal. Equality of opportunity refers to the equal consideration given to each for growth and development. Equality for learner,

the teacher and the principal is described individually and subsequently the overall equality is delineated.

#### **4.3.1 EQUALITY FOR LEARNER**

- Equality for learner may be described as equality of treatment and equality of opportunity that is created for and provided to the learner. These two aspects are explored and depicted in learning sites of the school and outside it.
- Equality of treatment refers to recognition and acceptance of identity of learner as a learner.
- Equality of treatment refers to recognition and acceptance of the fact that there are different types of learners by teacher and principal. By implication it also refers to making all learners recognize and accept the fact that all learners are individuals in their own right with different abilities, potentials and limitations.
- Equality of opportunity refers to the opportunity that different types of learners need to be given for their 'growth and development'. Growth and development refers to an exposure to a large range of curricular and co curricular activities, facilitating learners to explore their potentials and to make efforts for developing their potentials.

At the end, an overall equality for learner is described.

*Equality for learner in sites for learning: classroom, laboratory and library.*

Equality for learner can be depicted as equality of treatment by teachers, classmates and principal in sites for learning: classrooms, laboratory and library. This refers to:

- accepting and respecting learners as learners only in teaching situations by the teacher/s and principal and classmates .

- equality of learners irrespective of socio-cultural and economic background .
- accepting and respecting learners irrespective of their academic performance by the teacher/s and principal and classmates .
- accepting and respecting learners with different potentials by the teacher/s and principal and classmates .
- appreciating different types of learners for their achievements, whether big or small by the teacher/s and principal and classmates.

It can also be described as equality of opportunity in sites for learning: classrooms, laboratory and library. Equality of opportunity for learner can be visualized as :

- equal access to learning opportunities. This refers to ensuring equal right of entry to various learning sites, ensuring right of use of various learning material and facilities and ensuring contact with all teachers by rotation.
- creating different learning experiences and culture specific pedagogies adopting different pace of teaching for different learners.

#### *Observance of this equality and its practice*

- It is observed in the different learning tasks that teacher designs for different types of learners.
- It is seen in the extra efforts made by the teacher to support a learner outside class hour.
- It is observed in the way learners feel empowered to request teacher to teach a topic in a different way as they do not understand it the way all other learners understand it.
- It refers to the manner in which the teacher consciously addresses the learner by his/her name without making references to other details of the learner's identity and also ensures that it is practiced by other learners too.
- It is reflected in the way the teacher uses a 'neutral language' when describing the low achievers in class. Neutral language refers to description of the

learning task done by learners and the achievement in that learning task. It refers to the care taken by teacher/principal for not making any personal remarks viz. a viz. the manner in which the learning task has been accomplished.

- It is observed in the attentive listening to all types of learners by the teacher.
- It is observed in the manner in which the teacher ensures that all learners listen to what a particular learner wants to contribute in terms of ideas.
- It is captured by the tone (polite or impolite), the words (authoritative or democratic) used by the learners in communication of ideas and points of disagreements in discussions with classmates and teacher.
- It is also captured by the tone (polite or impolite), the words (authoritative or democratic) used by teachers in interacting with learners.
- It is observed in the care taken to given orientation and exposure to all learners about the different learning resources, learning sites and facilities available for them.
- It is observed in the care taken by principal to ensure that all learners get opportunity to learn with the teachers considered 'expert' and 'the best' in their school. It is captured in the way different teachers are assigned different subjects and different standards to teach each year.
- It is observed in the manner in which different divisions of a particular standard/grade are made. Equality is seen in mixed ability grouping for divisions and its absence is seen in grouping based on achievement only.
- It is observed in the manner in which different divisions of a standard are identified. Any identification which denotes ascending or descending order connotes inequality viz. 'A division' may unknowing connote the best division while names of flowers , for example, may not connote any ascending or descending order.
- It can be observed in creating opportunities of mass participation by all types of learners in school functions.

*Equality for learner outside sites for learning i.e., classroom, laboratory and library but in school premises like assembly, playground and corridors.*

It refers to the equal treatment that learners receive from teachers and other learners in non teaching learning situations

*Observance of this equality and its practice*

This refers to the time that the teacher spends consciously with different learners outside the classroom. These different learners may be high achievers, low achievers, average learners, differently abled learners) whom s/he identifies on the basis of interaction/s, observation and learner's performance.

- It is reflected in the equal enthusiasm with which teacher greets and listens to different learners.
- It is reflected in the place for different learners in different groups of learners formed to be around in school like the group in charge of conducting assembly, group in charge of taking note of late comers and so on.
- It refers to how different learners irrespective of their achievements and other identity are projected and presented for official guests and visitors to school.

*Overall equality for learner*

The overall equality is inclusive of the above delineations and anything and everything that is pertinent to support this.

*Observance of this equality and its practice*

All actions taken in this direction.

### **4.3.2 EQUALITY FOR TEACHER**

Equality for teacher can be interpreted as equality of treatment and equality of opportunity.

The dimension on equality of treatment connotes

- accepting and respecting teachers as teachers only without any discrimination in teaching and non teaching situations in the school.

- equality of status and identity of teachers irrespective of socio-cultural (caste, class, religion) and economic background
- equal treatment by principal and colleagues to all teachers irrespective of socio-cultural (caste, class, religion) and economic background
- It is reflected in equal treatment by principal and colleagues to all teachers irrespective of academic merit of subjects they teach, their academic qualification, and the sections (primary, secondary and higher secondary) they teach.
- Equal opportunity for teachers relates to the opportunity to innovate, for growth and professional development.
- Equal access to information in school refers to an open and transparent flow of information for every teacher. It is an important aspect of equality of treatment and equality of opportunity.

*Observance of this equality and its practice*

- Equality for teachers can be observed in the way teachers are addressed by principal and other teachers.
- It is seen in the manner in which information related to school is shared by principal with the teachers.
- It is reflected in appreciation of different types of achievements of teachers irrespective of whether they are publicly projected or are within the domains of classroom.
- It is observed in the rotation of duties, standards to teach, and duties with public face duties behind the curtain periodically so that all teachers get opportunity to teach important subjects and classes and are exposed to different types of school related tasks.
- It is seen in appreciation of all the teachers teaching all the subjects in different sections of the school who have contributed to the schooling process of a learner when s/he leaves the school after Class X or Class XII.

- It is seen in the encouragement that principal and colleagues provide to individual teachers to take initiative or implement an innovation and the manner in which they stand by him/her in case of failure.
- It is reflected in the support system created by principal and teachers for individual teachers.
- It is observed in care taken by principal to send different set of teachers to different workshops, training programs and other professional development avenues.
- It is reflected in giving due time to teachers to overcome their limitations.
- It is seen in opportunities created for nurturing special talents of teachers.
- It is observed in designing or organising tailor made training programs for different types of teachers.
- It is seen in the care taken by the principal in circulating the circulars well in advance to all the teachers.

#### *Overall equality for teacher*

The overall equality is exclusive of the above delineations and anything and everything that is pertinent to support this.

#### *Observance of this equality and its practice*

All actions taken in this direction.

### **4.3.3 EQUALITY FOR PRINCIPAL**

- Equality for principal refers to the sense of equality that exists in principal manifested through its practice in interactions with the learners and the teachers.
- It refers to equality that is recognized and respected for others by the principal as also enjoyed by him/her.



- It is observed in the equal treatment for principal by teachers as a colleague and viewing the principal as a teacher with the additional responsibility of managing the school.
- It is reflected in the equal opportunity to innovate and introduce change in school.

It refers to the equal opportunity for growth and professional development.

*Observance of this equality and its practice*

- It is reflected in how attentively principal listens to everybody.
- It is seen in the efforts made by the principal to reduce organizational preoccupations and be able to spend some time with teachers and learners.
- It is observed in the friendly atmosphere principal creates in school.
- The non judgemental and non threatening atmosphere created for sharing of ideas by principal with teachers and learners reflects principal's sense of equality.
- It is seen in the manner in which s/he conducts the staff meetings and the tone, words, attitudes (authoritarian or democratic) displayed by the principal in such meetings.
- It is reflected in how collectively and collaboratively s/he leads the school.
- It is seen in the attention s/he pays to 'out of box' thinking of learners and teachers.
- It is seen in the way conflicts in the school are resolved.
- A learner's attitude displayed by the principal and the opportunities that are consciously created to get wider exposure reflect equality for growth and professional development.

*Overall equality for principal*

The overall equality is exclusive of the above delineations and anything and everything that is pertinent to support this.

*Observance of this equality and its practice*

All actions taken in this direction.

#### **4.4 SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY**

A sense of responsibility refers to three aspects: understanding the purpose of one's role, commitment to fulfil the functions of the role and efforts to the best of ability to fulfil one's roles. It refers to exercise of freedom willingly with full knowledge and for the overall development of learners and teachers. It relates to the understanding and processes of accountability.

A sense of responsibility is further described for the three stakeholders-learner, teacher and principal- on the bases of their roles and responsibilities.

##### **4.4.1 SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHER**

It refers to the role of a teacher as a guide and a facilitator for the nurture of the learner and for the overall development of the learner.

*Observance of sense of responsibility and its practice*

- It is observed in the experiments that a teacher does with different methods for teaching and learning.
- It is observed when the teacher does not blame the learner for her/his(learner's) failure.
- It is observed when the teacher owns responsibility for partial or total failure of his/her experiments / actions / teaching-learning designs.
- It is observed when a teacher introspects and consults for his/her actions pertaining to learners.
- It is observed when a teacher attempts to upgrade him/ herself.

#### **4.4.2 SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNER**

It refers to the understanding of seriousness of purpose for joining school to learn. It refers to sincere and genuine attempts for an overall development of oneself. It refers to the understanding of the fact that the school is a common place for learning for all the learners and thereby all the learners have an equal right to teacher's and principal's attention.

##### *Observance of sense of responsibility and its practice*

- It is observed in the enthusiasm as opposed to compulsion displayed for the various learning tasks.
- It is observed in doing the best to complete the allotted learning tasks.
- It is observed when the learner does not unnecessarily delays the allotted tasks.
- It is observed in attending school religiously, regularly and not considering it as a 'time pass'.
- It is observed in the patience shown when the teacher attends to other learner/s.

#### **4.4.3 SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRINCIPAL**

It refers to the understanding developed and displayed by the principal to orchestrate the academic endeavours for the development of learners, teachers and the institution itself. It refers to the understanding that principal is the bridge between the school and the society; and the present and the past. It relates to the sense of accountability that s/he cultivates for all the stakeholders.

##### *Observance of sense of responsibility and its practice*

- It is observed when the principal promotes teachers and learners to do their best
- It is observed when principal keeps learners as the focus of all the efforts

- It is observed when principal ensures that all initiatives and efforts are for the development of learners
- It is observed when principal ensures that all initiatives and efforts are within the constitutional framework (of India).
- It is observed when principal brings change which is beneficial to teachers and learners. S/he also stalls the change if it is not beneficial.
- It is observed when principal develops various processes for accountability for various initiatives.
- It is observed when principal ensures that all freedom, equality and respect are followed with accountability and a concomitant sense of responsibility.

## 4.5 CONCLUSION

The delineation of the constituents/constructs is at ideational level but within the temporal reality of a school. The empirical evidences will facilitate restructuring and / or modification of these delineations to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the concept of Academic Culture.

The researcher would like to clarify that in developing the concept of Academic Culture and delineating it through four constituents of Freedom, Respect, Equality and Sense of Responsibility, the observations in the field work have been made through the lens of a composite multilateral interactions between the three spheres. Such a clarification is important because it helps to prevent a misunderstanding /misreading of Freedom, Respect, Equality and A Sense of Responsibility when examined as a stand alone criteria. In other words, on a hypothetical note, should a sample school demonstrate a strong presence and resonance of each of these four criteria individually, it should not be construed that the school embodies strong Academic Culture. This is so because there is a difference between testing the presence of these individual criteria in school on a stand alone basis and on the other hand examining them through the composite lens of multilateral interactions between the three spher