Democratic And Moral Value Orientation Among School Going Adolescents With Special Reference To Socio-Religious Organisations In West Bengal

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Abstract

The advent of modernization and technological advancements has produced revolutionary and drastic changes in the value orientations and has impacted the march of human civilizations. Values have remained central to the flourishing of human life. Schools are the agencies responsible for imparting essential values to the future generation next after families. This paper explores the importance of moral and democratic values for adolescents imparted by general government-aided schools vis-à-vis schools run by socio-religious organisations at senior secondary level in West Bengal. Using a descriptive research method, this research underlines the divergent value orientation of adolescents studying in two different sets of schools. The result reveals a striking difference and divergence among two groups of students on Democratic and moral values.

Keywords: SRO students, Non-SRO students, Moral values, Democratic values.

Background of the study

With the advent of modernisation and change in the society, the social norms have also changed manifolds. There have been some beneficial advancements, on the contrary some advancements have changed our belief system to the extent that it has somehow affected the moral and ethical orientation. Also, with advancing times some new value systems have also emerged that has gained priority over the age-old traditional values. The problem of deteriorating moral standards is multifaceted and is caused by an interplay of major trends in contemporary society which includes globalisation, consumerism, materialism, aggression for commercialization of educational institutions, Terrorism and violence. As a consequence of this, nuclear family lifestyles have replaced the joint family lifestyles, all concentrations are on personal desire fulfilment instead of community upliftment, overdependence on science and technology and its misuse. (NCERT, 2012). Education exists on a spectrum between the values of modernity and traditionalism. (Segall et al., 1990). Schools are the agencies that has the responsibility to impart essential values to the future generation next after family.

Almost every policy paper on education has underlined the significance of education in the development of values. Social, moral, and spiritual values were advocated for inclusion in school curricula by the Education Commission in 1966. The National Policy of Education (1986) emphasised the importance of values education in reducing bigotry, violence, superstition, and promoting social, cultural, and scientific ideals. Also, values such as cooperation, tolerance, respect for human rights, diversity, reverence for democracy etc. have been highly endorsed by the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005. (CBSE, 2012).

The Socio-religious Organisations

It is often agreed that the nineteenth century was marked by a wave of social and religious changes brought about by a variety of reformers. This means that social and religious reformers' groups might be called Socio-religious Organizations since all of their activity in society was linked to religion. Now-a-days these organisations mostly operate like Non profit Organisations serving for the betterment of the society. One of their major activities revolve around imparting value-based education to the larger community in the form of various activities. They also run their own schools mostly in residential format or sometimes like public schools under the auspices of their society where their respective ideologies are followed. Therefore, in this study the students belonging to the Socio-Religious schools has been termed as Socio-Religious Organisation students or (SRO students) whereas, the students of general Govt. aided schools have been termed as Non- Socio-Religious Organisation students or (Non-SRO students).

Values of Democracy

The phrase "power of the people" is what the word "democracy" means when taken in its literal sense. Democratic values majorly concern about giving freedom to the people. The prerequisite to imbibe democratic values is to become truly aware of the meaning of democracy, otherwise it may be misused resulting in anarchy and indiscipline. Education and democracy are intertwined in a way that makes one dependent on the other for its continued existence.

There have been efforts made in India to move toward a more democratic approach to the country's educational system. When planning extracurricular events and other types of programming, consideration is given to the students' opinion as well as any ideas they may have. Students' questioning, student-led discussions, and shared accountability in the teaching-learning process have all contributed to a more democratic approach to instructional practises. Learning in a way that is both pleasant and unrestricted is an essential requirement and prerequisite for a democratic education system. The Universalisation of Education at different stages and their universal access as proposed by UNESCO has become an International & National goal for seeking true empowerment and democratization.

Values of Morality

"Morality means the quality of being right, honest, or acceptable." (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.)

Morality is something that each of us can comprehend on our own and choose to utilise as a compass for our lives because we can see that it makes rational sense to do so. In a broad sense, the term "morality" refers to the absence of sins such as hatred, jealousy, greed, and uttering lies, as well as honesty of character and fairness in attitude. It helps individuals comprehend the difference between good and wrong, cooperate with each other in a way that is harmonious, and creates a healthy synergy between people. (Boruah,2017). However, moral values are in the verge of extinction. The majority of today's youth are progressively moving away from adhering to these ethical standards, which is contributing to the steady erosion of these moral principles over time.

Therefore, it can be aptly inferred that moral and democratic values should be well imbibed among youths particularly from the school days. This need has initiated the present study to explore the democratic and moral values among adolescent school students in West Bengal.

Literature Review

Gjorgjeva (2010) in a study titled ' Democratic society and moral education' observed that In Macedonia a societal transition towards democratic society brought a new ideology which posed new challenges and problems. A new form of Education based on democracy called Civic education has emerged during this period. This initiated the need for introducing moral education as a teaching subject in the changed political scenario. A study conducted on teachers revealed their perception on the necessity of representation of moral contents in all subjects. Alongside they also do not object to the existence of a separate teaching subject. Which further emphasizes that there must be moral behavior that would regulate interpersonal relations in a community. The study showed that moral education is broader than civic education and actually comprises it.

Eroğlu et.al (2013) conducted a study on 480 teachers in Konya, Turkey to examine the relationship between Human values and democracy. The correlation study revealed that there

is relationship between the values possessed by teacher candidates and their democratic tendencies. Another finding of the research indicated that the human values of the teacher candidates influenced their democratic tendencies. The values scale constructed by the researchers showed that democratic tendency could predict all four sub-dimensions of the democratic tendency scale.

Sirianne & Carl. (2017), in an article titled "Do Democracies Provide Better Education? Revisiting the Democracy–Human Capital Link." Investigated whether democracy enhances the skills and knowledge of citizens through improving education quality. It was a cross-national study on democracy and education quality. A dataset comparing international student tests for 128 countries, from 1965 onwards was employed. It was found that there was no systematic evidence that democracies offer better education though democracy was found to provide more education than autocracies. Democracies providing education access to more (and different types of) children than autocracies, and it appears both in rich and

poor and in low- and high-capacity states. It was also revealed that autocracies display more variation in education quality outcomes than democracies.

Boruah (2017), in his paper titled 'Degradation of moral values among young generation in India: an emerging issue' tried to know the factors and consequences of moral degradation among Indian youth and accordingly suggested some remedies to reduce moral degradation. The paper identified lack of moral values in curriculum as one of the major causes of moral degradation among youths. Among the several remedies suggested, the researcher pointed out making value education as a compulsory subject in all stages of formal education, making the youths follow rituals and traditions of Indian culture and religions and seeking the help of NGOs and voluntary social associations to bring stability among youths.

Objectives of the study

1. To explore the Democratic values reflected by adolescent school students.

2. To explore the Moral values reflected by adolescent school students.

3. To critically analyse the differences in accumulation of Democratic and Moral values among the two groups of adolescent (SRO & Non-SRO) students.

Hypothesis of the Study

Ho1: *There is no significant difference between SRO and Non-SRO students with respect to Democratic value*

Ho2: *There is no significant difference between SRO and Non-SRO students with respect to Moral value*

Methodology

The study involves descriptive survey method.

Population & sample

Population: All pupils of Socio-Religious Organizations (SROs) and Non-SROs, i.e. general government-aided schools in West Bengal, are included in this study's population. Sample & Sampling: The overall number of participants in the research is 400. Students from SROs and Non-SROs from three districts in West Bengal were divided into two groups of 200 each. Students from the Higher Secondary (H.S) section between the ages of 16 and 18 comprised the data sample. Students from five SRO and five non-SRO schools were selected to participate in the study.

Data collection

Tool used: A self-constructed questionnaire was used to assess the presence of the 2 (two) essential values in two distinct group of students which was standardised with the help of experts. The questionnaire was based on a 5-point Likert type scale.

Analysis & Interpretation

A non-parametric approach was used to analyse the data because of the non-normal distribution of the data. Mann-Whitney U Test was performed to find out any significant difference in means whether exists between SRO students and Non-SRO students regarding the two value dimensions – Moral values and Democratic values. The test works by comparing the sum of the ranks in the two student groups.

There are 2 dimensions indicating two different value sets viz. Democratic & Moral aspects of value systems. Each Value set has been sub divided into five factors I the form of five statements which have been analysed individually to test the perception of the students on those value factors and thereby getting an idea of their value orientation.

Ho1: *There is no significant difference between SRO and Non-SRO students with respect to Democratic value*

Hypothesis-1 reveals the result of students' value orientation pertaining to democracy. Students from both groups were asked a series of questions on democratic beliefs and practices in an attempt to gauge their level of commitment to a democratic way of life. The results of the Mann Whitney U test are reflected in the following table-1.1.

Table 1.1: MW-U Test for Democratic Value

Hypothesis	Descriptive Statistics		Ranks			Test Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Student Category	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Ho1	3.643	0.4817	SRO	131.44	26288	6188	26288	-12.032	0.000
			Non-SRO	269.56	53912				

Source: Primary Data based calculation

Student's attributes (SRO & Non-SRO) are used as an independent variable to measure 'Democratic value'. The mean rank obtained for SRO students (131.44) is lower than that of Non-SRO (269.56). The mean rank is significant at the Mann-Whitney U result 6188 and p (0.000) < 0.05. **Therefore, we have the strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative and there is a significant difference between students from SRO and Non-SRO with respect to Democratic value.**

Table 11: Statements

D6: Democracy	Selection of a class monitor based on a consensus of opinion	The desire to achieve democratic rights via open discussion and agreement.	Press and media freedom in democracies	Class monitor/house captain nomination as a mini-democracy	Opinion on student government committees.

Source: Researcher's compilation

The above table contains 5 positive statements.

Figure 1.1: Analysis of the Statements

Democratic Value
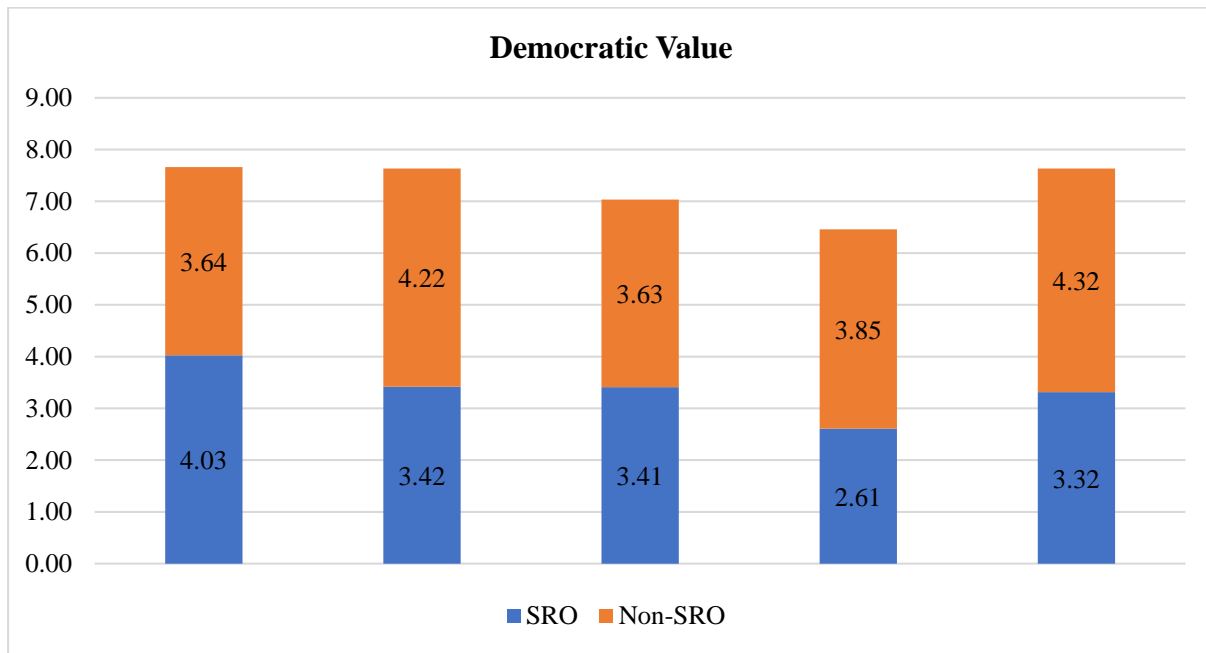
Source: Primary data-based calculation

SRO's mean score (4.03) clearly outpaces Non-SRO's mean score in the first statement (3.64). This shows that SRO students place more importance on the consensus of their peers when selecting a class monitor than non-SRO students do. The difference between students in the SRO (3.42) and Non-SRO (4.22) groups while analysing the second statement, " The desire to achieve democratic rights via open discussion and agreement," was found to be greater. According to another statement, non-SRO students (3.63) are more likely to believe that 'freedom of the press and media should be safeguarded in democracy' than SRO students (3.61). Again, Non-SRO (3.85) has a higher mean score than SRO in the fourth statement, which describes the procedure of nominating a class monitor/house captain (2.61). The majority of Non-SRO (4.32) students supported student government committees, but the majority of SRO students disagree (3.32).

Ho2: *There is no significant difference between SRO and Non-SRO students with respect to Moral value*

Hypothesis 2 exposes students' value orientation on morality-related statements. Table 2.1 displays MW U test data, while Table 2.2 describes five moral value statements.

Table 2.1: MW-U Test for Moral value

Hypothesis	Descriptive Statistics		Ranks			Test Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Student Category	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Ho2	3.625	0.6451	**SRO**	288.35	57669	2431	22531	-15.258	0.000
			Non-SRO	112.66	22531				

Source: Primary data-based calculation

Student's attributes (SRO & Non-SRO) are used as an independent variable to measure 'Moral value'. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare SRO and non-SRO pupils' mean rank and significance. The SRO mean rank (288.35) is greater than the Non-SRO mean rank (112.66). Mann Whitney U= 2431 and p< (0.000) 0.05 indicate statistical significance. **Hence, we have the strong evidence to declare that, there exists a strong difference between SRO and Non-SRO students with respect to Moral value.** In the below diagram, the selected statements have been discussed.

### Table 2.2: Hypothesis and it's Statements of Moral Value

D8: Moral value	*Modern living doesn't need moral values.*	*Attitude towards using unfair approaches in exam*	We shouldn't cheat for personal gain.	*Honesty is considered useless now-a-days.*	*To achieve progress in life, dragging someone down is sometimes essential.*

Source: Researcher's compilation
Note: negative sentences are Italicized.

The first four assertions in the table are negative, whereas the third is positive. Positive comments are assessed from agree to disagree, whereas negative statements are measured from disagree to agree.

Figure 2.1: Analysis of the Statements
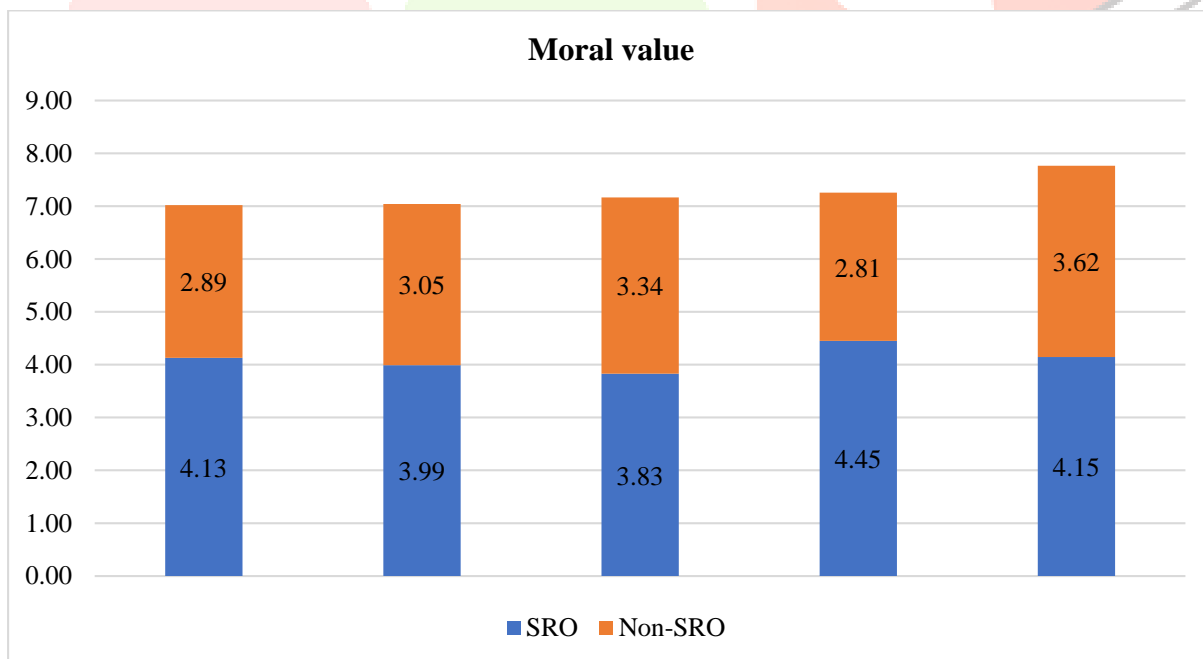
Source: Primary data-based calculation

Regarding the 1st assertion, SRO (4.13) has a substantially higher mean score than Non-SRO (2.89). This shows that SRO pupils respect morals more than non-SRO students. SRO students (3.99) highly criticised the 2nd statement on unfair exam methods compared to non-SRO pupils (3.05). SRO students (3.83) endorse the third statement about not cheating for personal gain more than non-SRO pupils (3.34). SRO students scored higher than non-SRO students on the fourth statement, which says honesty is an obsolete

virtue (2.81). Students at SRO schools place a far greater priority on virtues like honesty than their peers. SRO pupils (4.15), compared to non-SRO students, strongly disagreed with the 5th statement about dragging someone down is sometimes essential for personal advancement (3.62). Analysis of the five moral values statements shows that SRO students have greater moral values than Non-SRO pupils.

Objective-wise Interpretation

Objective 1: To explore the Democratic values reflected by adolescent school students.

The MW-U test findings concerning values of democracy suggest that among the two groups of adolescent students Non-SRO students are more likely to strongly affirm to democratic values and also the difference in mean ranks are significant. A comparison of the mean scores of responses w.r.t the statements of SRO and Non-SRO students pertaining to Democratic value dimension also resonates the same.is an important value in life and democratic process and participation in school spheres is an important indication of democracy in miniature.

Objective 2: To explore the Moral Values reflected by adolescent school students.

Comparison of the Mean Ranks of SRO and Non-SRO students on moral values through MW-U test illustrate that SRO students are more likely to affirm to the importance of moral values in life compared to Non-SRO students. The findings related to SRO students' value orientation on the importance of moral values are statistically significant. Again, a comparison of the mean scores of the SRO and Non-SRO students in response to the individual statements pertaining to Moral Value dimension also indicates that SRO students have outperformed their counterparts.

Objective 3: To critically analyse the differences in accumulation of Moral and Democratic values among the two groups of students.

The Hypothesis testing through MW-U test and the mean score of individual statements concerning the Democratic and Moral value dimension reveal an antagonistic trend between the two groups viz. students belonging to SRO & Non-SRO. Whereas, Non-SRO students have reflected higher democratic values than the SRO students, on the contrary moral values have been highly reflected in SRO students compared to their counterparts. This striking difference may be due to the difference in School Environment, curriculum followed and teaching-learning practices adopted by the two types of schools. It has also been observed from the analysis that where democratic values are high, moral values are on the lower side and vice-versa. A study conducted by **Sirianne & Carl. (2017)** also reveals that Democracies providing education access to more (and different types of) children than autocracies but there was no systematic evidence that democracies offer better education.

Conclusion and Suggestion for further studies

SRO and Non-SRO school children have different values and perceptions, according to the results of the study. For this study, the comparative method provided a fresh insight into two different types of schools, one run by socio-religious groups and the other a government-aided institution. The contrasting nature of the two types of values exhibited by two distinct group of students from two different school backgrounds indicate a further in-depth investigation to explore the exact reasons behind the difference and contrasting nature of two sets of values. It also provides ample scope to delve into the fact that whether democratic values have a bearing on moral values or vice-versa.

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