

Development of Student Leadership Skills in Senior Secondary Schools: A Case Study in context of the schools in Ladakh

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP QUALITIES IN STUDENTS

“ There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it’s going to be a butterfly” The lines once said by American architect and theorist, Richard Buckminster Fuller.

Every child has the potential and the qualities to become a leader in some area of their life with proper support, encouragement and motivation. The formative period of a child plays a vital role and determines their life’s success and in turn the future success of our society. And if in these formative years the qualities, values, morals and skills are invested and instilled in them, we get the best of the leaders. The fundamental importance of empowering students and the contribution leadership skills make towards improved student outcomes, health and wellbeing are very important key points in bring out the leadership qualities in our budding youth.

Student Leadership:

Harnessing the leadership skills could be acquired in a student's formative years. Each person can lead in their own way. All it requires is proper guidance and space to exercise and hone their leadership skills. If students are given the opportunity and mentorship on leadership skills and technique at this stage. They can have an excellent head start in life and allow them to develop confidence and improve their overall mental wellbeing. Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the effort of others, towards the achievement of a goal.

Leadership is a multifaceted construct involving a range of interrelated skills:

- Problem Solving
- Reflection
- Team Building
- Decision Making
- Goal Setting
- Time Management
- Effective Communicative Networking
- Conflict Resolution

- Diversity Awareness
- Self Confidence

These leadership skills make the students proactive and conscious of their own roles and responsibilities. Student leaders create a culture of ownership, collaboration and community in the classroom and beyond. Student leadership development provides them with vital skills they can carry over to adulthood. It also involves influencing others and making a change in their surroundings. Self-confidence is a pivotal skill that student leaders exhibit in all their pursuits. It allows the leader to feel assured their attempts to influence are appropriate and right.

Confidence, Adaptability and Perseverance are the qualities of the present leaders with the rapidly changing world that lays consistent emphasis on new capabilities like critical and creative thinking and problem-solving. We also know climate change, new technologies, and an ever-changing geopolitical landscape, mean the future this current generation of children will inherit will be vastly different to our own. We need dynamic leaders and we can create leaders in schools.

By empowering students, we enhance student engagement and enrich their participation in the classroom, school and community. Young confident children find their own voice in a supportive school environment. They become more capable to act in the world, and show immense zeal to lead others. Leadership skills if acquired in young age are likely to gain a better understanding of themselves, a higher level of confidence, and an increased capacity to manage and organize their own lives. They show profound sense of maturity and develop processes and skills useful in their learning. They go on to become independent thinkers who understand how to work as a part of a team and have a positive effect on organization and communities.

A Case Study on Leadership Qualities Within the School Community: Saspol Higher Secondary School Leh

Based on the above-mentioned excerpt, in 2021, a study was conducted on 'Development of Leadership Skills in Higher Secondary School Children' by Kaneez Fatima Principal of the Government Higher Secondary Saspol in the same school where she is currently posted. She introduced 'Children Parliament' in school as the baseline for her observation. The program started in the first week of April which is also the beginning of a new school session in UT Leh Ladakh. The school is located in a beautiful village of Saspol. The village is 60 kms away from the main city, Leh. The village is thinly populated with approximately 1500 inhabitants. Here more than half of the population depend on their agricultural produce and the rest have employment in the government sectors. The village is very much self dependent with excellent produce from the fertile

soil of the village. Saspol village is famous for its apricots, apples and other seasonal vegetables and the climate, soil and water of the village is considered the best to grow such products.

Government Higher Secondary School in Saspol has 60 students and the school has a reputation of good to excellent scores in the X and XII class Board examination since the time of establishment. Students come from the nearby villages and all the students are from low income families and are first generation learners.

The staff of the school are highly dedicated, experienced and qualified. The school is headed by Ms Kaneez Fatima who has a sound experience in the education department.

In the month of April 2021, a project on “Children Parliament” was introduced to this school on an experimental basis to study, observe and monitor how democracy and citizenship skills are understood by students. This project was introduced to give students the official forum to voice the concerns and solutions to local and global issues.

The main purpose of this project was to make students aware of the political processes and give them hands-on experience about leadership skills. This project reflected how in the formative years of students, leadership qualities could be instilled in young children and make them accountable of their roles and responsibilities as leaders in their own respective government and also about their own rights as a loyal citizen of the country.

CHILDREN PARLIAMENT

ELECTED MINISTERS OF THE SCHOOL

1. PRIME MINISTER
2. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
3. MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS
4. MINISTER OF EDUCATION
5. MINISTER OF SPORTS
6. MINISTER OF DEFENSE
7. MINISTER OF CULTURE AND ARTS
8. MINISTER OF HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Through this project, students organize a variety of social and educational activities in school such as health and fitness events, environmental activities or multicultural events.

The ministers met on a bi-monthly basis to discuss issues affecting their school and community including the environment. Students exhibited a tremendous amount of

leadership skills. Self confidence, managerial skills, decision making skills are specifically mentioned which was widely acknowledged and applauded by the staff.



Students of Government Higher Secondary School Saspol casting their votes on the election day



Community Mobilization Program Organized by Minister of Health and Hygiene

Apricot Blossom Photography Contest Organized by Minister of Culture and Arts: The Best 3 Photos



District Inter School Science Project Competition organized and managed by the Minister of Education. The school bagged the First Prize



Yoga organized by the Minister of Sports as a part of Health and Wellbeing program

children parliament video_files