A critical review of the roles and responsibilities of Rectors in nurturing Social Justice Leadership in tackling Bullying and School based violence

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ABSTRACT:
The scourge of Bullying and School based violence is no more a taboo topic it can have terrible repercussions on the development and wellbeing of children. The consequences range from psychological and mental illness to school dropouts and suicide. Victims of such scourge can also develop lifelong traumas even in their adulthood. They do not become the expected adults of tomorrow. This review demonstrates that by adopting and nurturing a different style of leadership, the Social Justice Leadership , Rectors as school leaders can have a tremendous impact in tackling, preventing and defeating this nuisance that affects students. DeMathews (2015:145) summarized the practice of social justice leadership into four categories: (a) interrogating school policies, cultures, and community expectations; (b) identifying oppressive and unjust practices; (c) employing democratic processes to engage marginalized communities; and (d) substituting unjust practices with equitable and culturally appropriate ones. All ethical standards were respected.
KEYWORDS: Social Justice Leadership. Rector, Bullying, School Based Violence

I. INTRODUCTION

Rectors as leaders have a range of roles and responsibilities. They have to lead as example and have the burden of the duty to be a source of motivation , a role model and also solve existing problem and prevent any future problem. Being proactivist and being accountable to stakeholders, within the schools system, is an important aspect of the job.This research details the nature of Social Justice leadership and its importance. Achieving good result is an important goal of the education system but preparing the adults of tomorrow that will live together in peace, justice and harmony is also an important objective of the education settings. What they learn in schools will impact their whole life. As a butterfly effect, what the students have suffered at school also will impact on what type of adult they will become tomorrow.

There is a need to undertake this research on a very sensible issue that concern the education sector since it is a real problem faced by the education sectors. Bullying and school-based violence are no more taboos of the education sector and society and the consequences of bullying and violence has terrible impact on the development process of children. Minor harassments of today can have repercussions over the adolescence and adulthood of these children. Throughout the literature it will also be discussed about the impact of bullying and violence that even in some cases, lead to suicide, depressions, psychological problems, dropout of education and the victim themselves falling into vices such as drug and early pregnancy. We as adults, educator, parents, future parents do not want our children to suffer such atrocities. Rectors as school leaders have to deal with bullying and school-based violence. This research will demonstrate the need of a different type of leadership other than the usual autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire and even the traditional transformational leadership style to solve this problem. In such situations a strong leadership is required. Social Justice leadership focus on treating everyone equally and every student has an equal chance to succeed. Under such type of leadership there is no place for any causes that lead to bullying and violence such as discrimination,racism, cultural differences and social class difference. Nurturing, cultivating and encouraging a culture of social justice is equally an aim of this research.

This research has its purpose in our local context since there is an existing, real life problem of bullying and school base violence that cannot be denied by any corners and social justice leadership is a viable practice that can change both mentality and attitude to solve this problem. Social Justice leadership put emphasis on the belief that all students can and will reach proficiency, without exceptions or excuses, and that schools have to be organized to advance the equitable learning of all students. Rather than focusing on one group of students who traditionally struggle, or who traditionally succeed, social justice leaders address the learning needs of all students. Social justice educational leadership specifically addresses how differences in race, income, language, ability, gender, and sexual orientation influence the design and effectiveness of learning environments. Social

justice leadership draws from inclusive education practices from disability education but extends the concepts further to support students from diverse groups with a wide range of needs.

This research advocates the importance of nurturing Social justice leadership. Rectors as school leaders , being on the front line, in collaboration with stakeholders have to prevent and deal with the growing problems of bullying and school based violence.

II. LITERATURE

The key areas of this Research are education, the Mauritian Educational system and local context, the duties of rectors, leadership, leadership styles and theories, social justice leadership and its dimensions and the scourge of bullying and school-based violence.Mauritius is a tropical island situated in the Indian Ocean. Mauritius has a diversified, export-oriented economy that has four pillars: sugar, textiles and clothing, tourism, and financial services subsectors. Education is free at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Free education in Mauritius means that the government pays school fees and administrative charges at the secondary level. As from January 2005, education was to set free and compulsory for all up to the age of 16, with the introduction of 11-year schooling. During the last budget 2022-2023 an amount of Rs 18.3 billion had been provided for free education in Mauritius, be it at primary, secondary or tertiary. This represents a considerable part of the annual budget of the country. Additional funds have been allocated for further infrastructures for schools. Governments and authorities put high hopes into the education sector to form the future work force of tomorrow. The purpose of education can be said to inculcate into the children all sort of skills, norms, values, the ability to have critical thinking, creativity, interpersonal skills and prepare them to the responsible law-abiding citizen of tomorrow. Idris et al (2011) researched on education and its role and stated that education is important for an individual's success in life and for quality of life.Yukl (2006:8) defined leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives". Northouse (2010) defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" . "Leadership is the moral and intellectual ability to visualize and work for what is the best for company and its employees (Mullins 2000). "Leadership is the ability to influence people to willingly follow one's guidance or adhere to one's decisions and the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically (Davis ,1996).Freedman (2003:101) and Larson C.L. &Murtadha K. (2002) made reference to Thurgood Marshall, Chief Justice United States Supreme Court when they introduce of what social justice is about. Thurgood Marshall (July 2, 1908 – January 24, 1993) was an American civil rights lawyer and jurist who served as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1967 until 1991. He was the Supreme Court's first African-American justice. The Rockefeller family of the 1900's were the founder of the Standard

Oil Company and was an American industrial, political, and banking family that owned one of the world's largest fortunes. Marchall (Freedman 2003:101, Larson & Murtadha,2002) affirmed that 'the goal of a true democracy such as ours, explained simply, is that any baby born in these United States, even if he is born to the blackest, most illiterate, most unprivileged Negro in Mississippi, is, merely by being born and drawing his first breath in this democracy, endowed with the exact same rights as a child born to a Rockefeller. Of course it's not true. Of course it never will be true. But I challenge anybody to tell me that it isn't the type of goal we should try to get to as fast as we can.'

Black scholars have been involved in a long tradition of activist leadership for social justice. Concern about inequity in education has been a pivotal for leaders whose skills, defined areas of competence, and stated life purposes are dedicated to achieving greater social justice in education. Jackson (1999) stated that women of color have led under resourced schools for years, and yet their narratives have not been a significant part of the reform literature in educational leadership.

Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002:162) defined social justice leaders as those who "create critical conditions and safe spaces". Dantley and Tillman (2010:19) believed that a social justice leader should be one who "investigates and poses solutions for issues that generate and reproduce societal inequities" .DeMatthews, Edwards, and Rincones (2016:759) claimed leadership for social justice should facilitate "a critical dialogue on the status quo within the school and community".

Dan Olweus' Swedish study of 'mobbning', Aggression in the schools: Bullies and whipping boys (1978), was the first notable bullying study. Since its publication a research tradition has emerged in many other countries, including the United Kingdom, Norway, the United States, Canada, Australia, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Japan. Other early studies attracted a lot of media attention due to the levels of bullying reported, as well as high-profile suicide cases linked to bullying in several countries. Bullying remains a topic often in the news, which highlights the ongoing public concern and continual need for anti-bullying work in schools.

The Essential components of bullying behaviour are general aggressive behaviour:
• Intention to harm: bullying is deliberate, with the intention to cause harm. For example,
friends teasing each other in a good-natured way is not bullying, but a person teasing
another to upset them is bullying.
• Harmful outcome: one or more persons are hurt physically or emotionally.
• Direct or indirect acts: bullying can involve direct aggression, such as hitting someone,
as well as indirect acts, such as spreading rumours.

Bullying also has characteristics that set it apart from other aggressive behaviours:
• Repetition: bullying involves repeated acts of aggression: an isolated aggressive act, like a fight, is not bullying.
• Unequal Power: bullying involves the abuse of power by one or several persons who are (perceived as) more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength, or psychological resilience (James,2010).

III. METHODOLOGY

Method refers to how data is collected, and methodology refers to the identification and utilization of the bestapproach for addressing a theoretical or practical problem (Kaplan, 1964).The method is about ''how to'' and methodology is about ''why to'' collect data a certain way. Both being pertinent to the research design. Stake (1995:37) argued that there are three major differences between quantitative and qualitative research: (1) the distinction between explanation and understanding as the purpose of inquiry; (2) the distinction between apersonal and impersonal role for the researcher; and (3) a distinction between knowledge discovered andknowledge constructed. For this research only available data from existing previous research work was used. There was no immediate need to go on field and meet people to collect data. Everything needed was already available. There is also scope for any future research on the same topic as mentioned in the Conclusion part.

Critical approaches recognize that peoples, social groups, institutions and societies operate on the basis of'interests' which are allied to ideologies and values. Habermas's research (1972) offers a useful tripartiteconceptualization of 'interests'. He argued thatknowledge – and hence research knowledge – serves different interests. Interests, he argues, are socially constructed, and are 'knowledge-constitutive', because they shape and determine what counts as the objects and types of knowledge. Habermas (1972) constructs the definition of worthwhile knowledge and modes of understanding around three cognitive interests:
i prediction and control;
ii understanding and interpretation;
iii emancipation and freedom.

Mertens (2007:213) argues that a transformative paradigm enters into every stage of the research process, because it concerns an interrogation of power. A transformative paradigm, she stated has several 'basic beliefs':
1. Ontology (the nature of reality or of a phenomenon): politics and interests shape multiple beliefs and values, as these beliefs and values are socially constructed, privileging some views of reality and under-representing others;
2. Epistemology (how we come to know these multiple realities): influenced by communities of practice which define what counts as acceptable ways of knowing, and affecting the relationships between the researcher and the communities who are being researched, such that partnerships are formed that are based on equality of power and esteem;
3. Methodology (how we research complex, multiple realities): influenced by communities of practice which define what counts as acceptable ways of researching, and in which mixed methods can feature, as they enable a qualitative dialogue to be established between the participants in the research;
4. Axiology (principles and meanings in conducting research, and the ethics that govern these): beneficence, respect and the promotion of social justice

Over hundreds of research articles on the topic of Social justice, leadership and Rectors duties and responsibilities were examined, reviewed and relevant information extracted to write this paper.

IV. DISCUSSION

According to Theoharis (2007) leaders for social justice—guide their schools to transform the culture, curriculum, pedagogical practices, atmosphere, and schoolwide priorities to benefit marginalized students. Social justice recognizes the inherent dignity of all people and values every life equally. It calls for both personal reflection and social change to ensure that each of us has the right and the opportunity to thrive in our communities, regardless of our identities. Those who strive for social justice believe in the triumph of our shared humanity (Kalamazoo College,2022).

V.   FINDINGS

DeMathews (2015:145) summarized the practice of social justice leadership into fourcategories:
(a) interrogating school policies, cultures, and community expectations;
(b) identifying oppressive and unjust practices;
(c) employing democratic processes to engage marginalized communities; and
(d) substituting unjust practices with equitable and culturally appropriate ones.

One of the most critical attributes of effective schools is strong school leadership (August &Hakuta, 1998; Reyes, 2006; Shaw, 2003; Walquí,2000). There has been a growing call for social justice leadership from marginalised students (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Scheurich&Skrla, 2002; Theoharis, 2007a).

According to Furman and Shields (2005:125), SJL is an attempt to eliminate the educational and economic inequalities experienced by students by providing them with a democratic school life. In schools, SJL is seen as a kind of leadership which supports marginalized groups in terms of ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, disability and sexual orientation, and this understanding is placed at the centre of school leadership (Theoharis, 2007; 2008).

VI.   CONCLUSION

Rectors as school leaders have a complex list of duties and responsibilities, including using means to theirdisposition to fight any form of discrimination and injustice. Social Justice Leadership is one of the many forms of Leadership styles that Rectors can adapt, accommodate and use in the exercise of their duties. Others forms of leadership such as Laissez-faire, authoritative and even transformative leadership do not offer the same impartiality and care for the vulnerable, and oppressed ones. It can be argued that Social Justice Leadership is a more human form of leadership style that is a viable solution against school and societal problems.

This research also provide scope for any further study on the field of Social Justice leadership and roles and responsibilities of Rectors.

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Dedication;

I, dedicate this paper to **MrsKritya Jugessur**, my loving caring mother, myfriend , my lover, my baby who passed away on the 30th Jan 2023. After the shock of 15.07.22, her health deteriorated till her death.