## Meritocracy in the United States

The second scandal involved the Texas Senator, Ted Cruz. Even though mandated by law, Cruz failed to indicate the source of his campaign money, which came from low-interest loans, amounting to almost one million dollars. The source of the funds was Goldman Sachs and Citibank. The point of mentioning this incident is that Goldman Sachs was Cruz's wife employer for a long time. This incident is just one of the many incidences in America every day. In some situations, people are given opportunities and chances based on merit and talent. Still, this incidence is drowned by the many times influence, and money has placed unqualified people on top compared to talented people.

The surprising twist is that Michael Young, the British sociologist who coined the term meritocracy, based it on a society where merit was calculated by combining a person's IQ with their effort and using the results to put the people into classes. He assumed that the resulting society would be a paranoid and smug group of an elite class ruling a disenfranchised and powerless people (Ref-DJ79KL). The term was picked up by politicians who redefined it to paint a picture of a better and fairer society where success came from hard work and not family influence. The twist is that instead of a fair society, America has sunk into the dystopian culture that Young defined. In the modern American culture, the line drawn on how an individual makes it to the top is arbitrary. It is terrible and unethical to get a job through nepotism, but it is okay when the same individual receives the same post through college connections.

The education system continues to test the culture of meritocracy in America. Over the past decades, parents have hired pricey tutors to help their children with tests for college admission. They continue to pour thousands of dollars, as high as $1500 for three hours per day, to get their children to elite universities and colleges. Those with vast connections in the political and social arena call in favours to get their children into internships that embellish college applications. This culture has been part of the American education culture for a long time until it has been normalized by society. Another culture is legacy admissions. This culture in elite schools has ensured students whose parents are donors or alumni of these institutions free-pass admissions. Reputable schools have learnt to look the other way when it comes to students whose parents are mega-donors in the institutions, even when the children do not have the academic credentials required to earn admission. A notable example is Charles Kushner, who made a $2.5 million donation to Havard in 1998 (Ref-J7Y3X2). His son Jared Kushner applied to the same institution and was immediately accepted even though his SAT scores said otherwise.

Over the years, revelations have shown that parents with deep pockets have gone to the extent of corrupting the college admissions process using any means to ensure their students get into the college they consider fit for their social status. At one time, a parent whose name was withheld used 6.5 million dollars to get their child admitted into the college of their choice. Other parents use hefty amounts of money to falsify academic certificates and test scores to get the college or university (Ref-J7X2B9). Financial titans and famous actors bribe sports coaches to make them lie to admission officers on how their children are champions in various sports like; tennis, water polo, or crew. This disadvantages those children whose parents lack connections or money to manipulate the education system. One or two may get in on merit and talent and sometimes get a scholarship in these elite schools. Still, hundreds of positions talented children from middle class or poor backgrounds deserve are taken by children whose parents can buy their way through the education system.

There have been rising inequalities in the US since the 1970s. Most Americans don't have enough resources to pay their way through education and employment, which has caused outrage against the minority wealthy class that can do (Ref-A1B2C3). The parents who cannot buy admission spots for their children do understand that there are not enough chances for all the children, and many others know that the fulfilment and happiness of their children do not solely lie in elite schools, but what has caused the outrage is the chicanery and unfairness exhibited in these institutions. The same influential people bending the rules and corrupting the system are the same individuals advocating for meritocracy. The devastating part is that the same affluent students will gladly flaunt the degrees, arguing that quality wins over hard work, regardless of having a tremendous head start and their path evened out. The sad reality is that 1% of wealthy families are the ones who draft policies and guidelines that are supposed to help students from low-income families get admissions into these elite institutions (Ref-D4E5F6). Therefore, it is right to suffice that the odds are against meritocracy from the start and talent and hard work does not stand a chance in the American culture.

Even though meritocracy in the U.S. was embraced to be the handmaiden of equality since it opened up the elite in its early years, the concept currently is nearly stifling instead of fostering social mobility. For instance, middleclass families may not afford the extensive schooling that rich families buy and ordinary school continues to lag farther behind elite ones. According to Menand, even those benefiting from meritocracy in the United States are not particularly happy since the meritocratic elites have to work for long hours in consulting, medicine, business and law in order to maintain their status alongside passing it to their kids (Ref-DJ49KL). Therefore, with meritocracy in American society, elites will be enticed an inauthentic and anxious heartless, lifelong contest in securing status and income through own excessive industry.

In conclusion, meritocracy used to exist to an extent that economically treasured positions got distributed on the ground of educational performance and attainment, intellectual capability alongside general dispositions such as conscientiousness. However, the continuing increase in wage stagnation, income inequality, and decreased social mobility economically hurt ordinary citizens. The current disparity benefits the minority and benefits the majority. The American system may have set out to be meritocratic in the 1960s, but that dream is not reflected in the current society. A tiny percentage of Americans achieve the famed American Dream through hard work, talent and merit. The school system is negatively affected by corrupt admissions and manipulation. The public school system for the less wealthy does not have enough resources because the children of the rich attend private schools and elite universities and colleges. And that is why one can confidently say that meritocracy is dead in American, and this is the new American culture.