

Study on the Application of Psychological Knowledge by the Teachers in Elementary Level Education System in Coochbehar Municipal Area.

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Abstract

The motto of National Education Policy 2020 is to develop good and complete human beings. The ultimate purpose of this policy is to build an altruistic society with potential in the present global context. The policy aims at enhancing an individual's cognitive learning and creative disposition. This education policy also emphasizes inclusivity and equity in education with stress on physical and mental health development. A deliberate note of psychological aspects sounds through the text of this policy. This research surveyed the prevailing situation to find out the truth underlying the system. The research undertook an experimental study to focus on the extent of application of psychological knowledge by the Primary and upper Primary teachers working at the elementary level of the educational system. The question is whether the current education system embraces and applies psychological knowledge at the ground level. The area of search was delimited to the Coochbehar Municipality, West Bengal, India. A sample of fifty students from age six to fourteen years, were surveyed in the qualitative method. They were the students of "Chhotoder Theatre School" during the last five years. The school is being run by a non-profit social organisation named Coochbehar Shishu Kishore Sanstha. Boys and girls and other special children are motivated there in theatrical art and play, other performing arts, and creative compositions. They

are nurtured there with care and kindness, affection and equity, compassion and empathy, togetherness, courage and resilience. Within a very few years of their association and participation in these activities, they acquire skills in different performing arts and creativity. Their positive behavioural change is also observed. The result is that the children and adolescents grow physically and mentally healthy, responsible, learning with joy and belongingness. They lead their day to day life with self-confidence and self-respect. The students of this theatre school can secure their desired place among the vast multitude of children and adolescents. On observation of the achievement of these positive results, the current study concludes that application of psychological knowledge in the elementary level education is effective for all-round development of the children and adolescents. This implies that strong adherence to social and emotional values while educating the elementary level students have positive impacts in nation building.

Key Words: *Altruistic society, cognitive learning, psychological knowledge, creative compositions, children and adolescents.*

Introduction

Universalization of Elementary Education is a national goal of India. Because education is the effective means of social reconstruction and national development. The National Education Policy 2020 has been framed to priorities the upgradation of the educational system to the global context. The target is to develop individual's better cognitive learning such as literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, decision making, problem solving as well as creative dispositions like social, cultural, moral, ethical and emotional capabilities. The policy has outlined tasks to inculcate society oriented interest, attitude and behavioural changes among the children and adolescents for overall development of the communities and the country as a whole. Towards this prospective the students of elementary level, those who are reading in class I to class VIII, are to be taught through the application of basic psychological knowledge. Because psychology as a science encompasses different areas of study like cognitive, behavioural, educational, developmental, experimental,

biological, physiological, social, environmental and other aspects of human life.

Application of knowledge from the psychological domain would enable the educators to better understand the students' needs and their differential capabilities in a particular environment. The teachers will be more capable of imparting lessons according to the students' interest and attitude. They will also be able to apply their knowledge about how to acquire, process and store information and improve memory. Moreover, teachers' knowledge on psychological aspects will empower them to do away with individual conflicts, anxiety and tension and help them maintain their mental health. The research identified the scope and relevance of application of psychological knowledge in the elementary level educational system on the basis of the past and present analytical studies and real-life observation and experiments to fill the gap.

Review of the Literature

A study of the research article by Grutta.S La & et al (2022) on Emotional Competence in Primary School Children proposed that children's psychological, cognitive and social development are elements of learning. On intervention they found facts on the importance of developing the Psycho-Educational system for the emotional health of the school children to prevent problematic behaviours in schools. The research resulted in positive change and control over behavioural and emotional aspects in the primary level school children. The study was concerned with the primary level school children and aimed at development of emotional competence only. But the question of allround development of the children and adolescents with application of psychological knowledge remains to be answered. The current study undertook an investigation on the application of psychological knowledge by teachers in elementary level education.

Rashid U.H. et al, (2021), stated in their review paper that educational psychology facilitates the learning process in early childhood of the school children having differences and disabilities. It helps the children and adolescents acquire social, emotional and cognitive processes. These in turn help

learning for life. Not only the teachers and students but also the entire personnel under the education umbrella are effectively engaged to know the psychology of teaching-learning, social psychology, organisational psychology and the psychology of human behaviour. With the understanding of psychological knowledge elementary level teachers can devote themselves in shaping children's mental acuity towards a brighter change in the society. Moreover, the researchers conducted a study of game based performance to overcome the problem of cognitive difficulties in children. This attempt yielded fruitful results. The target group could identify the problems, analyses them and bring out the solutions with more confidence than before. Thus, they concluded that a vital point of the education system is educational psychology for proper teaching- learning, control drop-outs and help disability management in the classroom. The present research adds to this the effect of cultural activities for their all-round development.

Dr. Ravivikar S.A., (July ,2023) in the article on Application of Psychology in Education, pleaded for the application of psychological knowledge right from learning, assessment, motivation, classroom management, special education, social and emotional development of the children. The study did that with reference to the works of William James, John Dewey and Edward Thorndike who applied psychological processes in the field of training and education. The paper briefly presents the contributions of the above trio thinkers. William James' "Talks To Teachers" is a classic example of the application of principles and theories of psychology in education. John Dewey advocated that schools are social institutions for social interactions and social transformation. He stressed on students' participation in active learning, ability to adapt the environment outside school, problem solving capabilities along with overall development. On the other hand, emphasizing the students' intellectual skill development Thorndike initiated scientific research on the teaching and learning process with his valuable laws of learning. He spoke in favor of the reinforcement theory for learning expected and desirable responses and eliminating unexpected and undesirable behaviours. He identified

students' interest in learning as a vital point which is to be attended to. Thus, the author concluded that psychology is a subject that fittingly applies to the vast field of fundamental education towards social transformation.

Fatima E. (July 11, 2024) on application of educational psychology in teaching, stated that educational psychology involves students, teachers and educationist. Its application in the classroom teaching helps students develop conceptual processes, understanding, memory, orientation of emotional, social aspects and cognitive learning. The individualized and inclusive learning process inspires the children to do more than they are expected. The dynamics of the reinforcement process and providing incentives increase students' interest for performing more and more. A sense of attachment towards the institution, classmates and teachers is another field of development that ultimately leads to an ideal learning environment for the young group of learners. Moreover, their early age intervention with psychological knowledge will shape their childhood positively. This will have a long-lasting effect on their personality development, respect for moral, ethical and social values, skill aspirations and future achievements.

Alvarez D. G. et al, (2022), in their study on practicing teachers during the Covid - 19 pandemic, linked their investigation to the well-being and mental health of the teachers.

Teachers' emotional competencies are regarded as the most important pillar of quality education for sustainable development of a nation as missioned by the U.N.O. in 2015 and declared it to be attained by 2030. The research team designed the mechanism to measure teachers' character strength, optimism, self-efficacy and self-esteem with regard to their social values and diverse cultures. They found that psychological knowledge updating is necessary to improve capacity and quality of teachers and to reduce their psychological disturbances. Because the teacher's psychological disabilities affect the students' learning ability and environment of learning. They concluded that intervention based on positive psychology improved teachers' well-being and enhanced their requirements like emotional

competencies. It also reduced their psychological risks and other related physiological discomforts.

A review of B.F. Skinner's "Reinforcement Theory of Motivation" by Gordan M. et al (March, 2014) states that knowledge of psychology may be successfully applied to young learners who have any disability to pursue the existing way of learning. To encourage and motivate them to change their behaviour of learning, application of positive or negative reinforcement is very much effective. Sometimes punitive measures are also imposed to eliminate the habit of awkward behaviours. But teachers must be conscious about its implementation. They must be consistent in applying punishment, otherwise it will lose impact or the respective teacher may be questioned. They agree with the fact that bad interactions are more powerful emotionally than good interventions. So, a perfect balance is required to be maintained - such as, a good ratio is - five positive reinforcements to one punishment. But that punishment must be imposed privately and praise be done publicly to discourage and encourage respectively. The conclusion is that it is not the human but the environment of application of positive psychology that can ensure a change towards a free society.

Sailors Misty in a historical research study on Arthur Irving Gates' (1890-1972) Educational Psychology and the Study of Reading, quotes an important line from Gates. The gist of the speech is that the aim in teaching reading is to teach children to read well and to love to read. Gates who believed that formal education is a fundamental way to remake society, devoted his life to improving the quality of individual as well as social life. The study highlighted Gates contribution of reading readiness for the beginner children, reading methodology, reading materials and remedial reading instructions. It is recognized that reading is an integrated art. It is a well-balanced activity of linguistic, artistic, dramatic, constructive and exploratory skills. Reading with context and meaning smooth the way to comprehension. Misty studied in depth the biography of Gates, his philosophy of life and his vast works. The study summarized that Gates pleaded for psychological knowledge of teachers to begin the children

reading and for their reading instructions.

On importance of psychological knowledge in teachers' professional activity Gorovaya V.I. et al (2017) focused on the psychological knowledge and training gained in the university education by prospective students. They also searched for its importance and application in the educational process. Based on the method of self- evaluation, the study was conducted to find the readiness of practicing teachers to use psychological skills to encourage students in reflective thoughts and personality development. They used practical lessons for students as tools to understand teachers' readiness to apply psychological knowledge in real life situations. In this study the authors referred to pedagogical psychology. The study found that many teachers at their beginning professional activity lacked knowledge in the cognitive learning process, children's age wise individual psychological traits, cultures, proficiency in the organisational system and activity. They collected empirical data of teachers with work experience of different durations and conducted both quantitative and qualitative research. On analysis of the result of their study, the authors suggested for psychological orientation of the prospective teachers. They also stressed on improvement of the process technology and task-based practical approach using psychological knowledge to get the students to gather individual experience for future application.

Researches are being carried out to improve the quality of education, student-oriented educational environment with a view to build up professional expertise in order to face the future challenges. The methods of teaching - learning in education are mostly based on pedagogical knowledge application. Flow of knowledge from teachers to students is a common aspect of learning. To judge the validity of this system, Richmond A.S. et al (2016) made a comparative study where they tried to understand the effects of learner centered syllabus and teacher centered syllabus in the perspective of teacher-student relationship. The study revealed that the students prefer comparatively long, detailed and teacher oriented syllabus than a shorter one. They consider teachers of this syllabus more qualified and efficient to manage the

course with a better teacher-student relationship.

Education is self-revelation. Knowing the self is true education in the traditional perspective of Indian society. Education in India started under the “Gurukul” system. From then on, a vast change came in Indian educational field. But the ideas of self-respect, self-esteem and self-realization did not lose any relevance. The National Education Policy 2020 resonates with the Ideas of self-development and self-dependence ideologies for the development of the society and the nation at large. Towards that end in view importance has been laid on elementary education of the children and adolescents in the present global context. Chapter 7 of the book titled “ GururVabonayShishirShiksha” by Saha P.C. (2023), is a study on Swami Vivekananda’s philosophy of education. The author studied in depth the philosophy of education of Swami Vivekananda and explained briefly its gist in a very lucid language. According to Swamiji’s philosophy education is the manifestation of the inner qualities of man for the well-being of society. To attain this, psychological, meditational, physical activities and a close contact with nature are the fields to be attended to for man making education - as is advocated by Swami Vivekananda. That education is to be made easily available to the children and adolescents today to strengthen themselves, strengthen the society and strengthen the country in the present global context.

Objective

1. To assess the impact of application of basic psychological knowledge in the elementary level education system.
2. To evaluate the outcome of psychological interventions in elementary level students’ participation in art, cultural and community activities.
3. To validate the role of dramatic play therapy in improving the mental health of the children and adolescents.
4. To assess the results of intervention and engagement of elementary level students in fundamental creative compositions.

5. To relate the application of psychological knowledge in motivating the children and adolescents and make them understand and concentrate on the self and to implant moral and ethical values to their social awareness.

Methodology

The research was conducted on the students between the age group of six to fourteen years. They were from the elementary level schools reading in the classes from I to VIII. The schools were situated within the Coochbehar Municipality area. The students belonged to the different sections of the society. Most of them suffered economic disability. Some of them were especially abled children. They came to "Chhotoder Theatre School" on the Saturdays and Sundays of every week. They were motivated there to learn and play in theatrical arts, fine arts, performing arts and creative skills. Students were encouraged and guided to write and compose literary pieces of their own. The writers were awarded prizes as reinforcement to encourage others to follow their path and overcome individual disabilities. The good articles were published in the spokes paper of the organisation titled "Sabujmon". All these activities were being organised throughout the year with the help and cooperation of the honorary members and well-wishers of "CoochbeharShishu Kishore Sanstha", a non-profit social organisation with their objective of child and adolescent development. Out of the total number of children enrolled during the last five years, a sample survey was conducted on fifty students by observation and assessment of their skill development. It was found that the children and adolescents developed healthy habits in respect of their study and learning. Their artistic sense and capabilities were higher than the children and adolescents of elementary level in other schools of the delimited area of Coochbehar Municipality. Application of the basic principles of psychology was employed by the guides for their overall improvement in dramatic art, culture, behaviour, community sense and mental health. This intervention of the children and adolescents based on the principles and processes of psychology resulted in positive behavioural growth. Successful acquisition of the artistic skills and creative acumen made the students stand

out from the multiplicity of the students of the same area of search. It was noticed that, even the special children with some disabilities, learn and perform creditably and lead normal life with confidence and self-esteem. The observation and experience confirmed that this all-round development of the children and adolescents was because of the application of psychological knowledge by the teachers who devoted their strength and energy to this social and developmental activities.

Data Collection

The investigator used a structured questionnaire on the attitude and behaviour of the children and adolescents of the age group between six and fourteen years. In addition to that interviews, surveys, observations of their performances along with published books, journals and daily newspapers were also used to collect data.

Analysis and Interpretation Data

The research conducted on the group of elementary level school children and adolescents revealed a trend of behavioural change. The application of psychological knowledge for their skill development worked for positive change. The children became more interested in cultural, social and community matters. They understood the benefits of integration, association and group performance. Mindful exercises influenced them to be more concentrated and confident. Not only that but they also developed their cognitive skills, thought for innovative ideas for their school reading, learning and problem solving. Those who had had difficulties in speech, communication and association, overcame their problems after participation in the sessions of group interactions. This all-round development of their latent capabilities made the students of “Chhotoder Theatre School” stand out among the multiplicity of the children and adolescents of the area under research.

The findings of the current study are supported by the earlier research on primary level school children done by Grutta S.L. et al (2022). They found that the emotional competence of primary school children brought out positive results. Another

review by Rashid H.U. et al (2021) on impact of educational psychology on primary education found that application of psychological knowledge of teachers could grow children's confidence to identify the problems, analyses them and find out the solutions of their own. They identified educational psychology as a vital catalyst in elementary education.

Psychology is a science of human behaviour and its application to human development is a necessity in the present context. Dr. Raravikar (2023) on a paper on its application in education referred to the valuable contributions of the trio pioneers of the past in this discipline. By reference they emphasized that the principles of Psychology fittingly apply to the vast field of fundamental education. In her personal and professional reflection Eram Fatima (2024) on application of educational psychology in teaching pointed out that early age intervention among the children with psychological knowledge would help them develop healthy personality with respect for moral, ethical, social values and skill aspirations for future achievements.

Psychology has its many sub-disciplines. Positive psychology is one of them. During the Covid -19 period both the communities of teachers and students suffered psychological setbacks. D.G. Alvarez and others applied positive psychology for the well-being of the practicing teachers. They found that the teachers' psychological problems impacted the children's mental health. The intervention with positive psychology improved teachers' well-being and enhanced their competence. This also reduced the risk of future discomforts. A review of B.F. Skinner's Reinforcement Theory of Motivation by M. Gordan and I. A. Krishnan (2014) concluded on their findings that it is not the human but the environment of application of positive psychology in fundamental education is the change factor for a free society. In a historical research paper by Misty Sailors on Arthur Irving Gates' (1890-1972) educational psychology, the researcher found that Gates pleaded for psychological knowledge of teachers beforehand they started young children reading and giving instructions.

Teachers' profession is a noble profession. A teacher's motivation to a student is very much effective. And a

professional teachers' knowledge in psychology goes a longer way for motivational process. V.I.Gorovaya and N.F.Petrova on analysis of the result of their study on psychological knowledge of the professional teachers suggested that psychological orientation of the prospective teachers and improvement of process technology, task-based practical approach using psychological knowledge add to the students' experience for future application in real life situations. Another vital aspect of teaching-learning system in elementary level education is syllabus of study. A.S. Richmond and others made research on designing of syllabus. They conducted a comparative study on acceptability of student friendly syllabus and teacher friendly syllabus. In conclusion they submitted that the students welcome a comparatively long and detailed syllabus on consideration that teachers of the longer syllabus are more efficient, course oriented and student-friendly. A review on Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of education by the author himself (Chapter -7, 2024) stressed on the application of Swamiji's ideology in elementary level education. Swamiji's philosophy of education fits well to the principles of educational psychology today for inclusive and quality education towards building a strong nation.

The present study has limitations in respect of sample size and unit wise comparative research with government sector school students, private sector school students and Chhotoder Theatre School students who are taught and guided in elementary level.

Conclusion

The above discussion synthesizes and supports the research question on application of psychological knowledge by teachers in elementary level education. As outlined in the National Education Policy 2020 and in the constitution of India, the need of the hour is to implement the policy guidelines on the basis of fundamental principles of Psychology. The methods and processes of psychology in education help the teachers engaged in the profession understand the diversity among the students and guide them more efficiently for their better future. On the other hand, students also get encouragement and inspiration from these processes and

perform better with confidence and resilience.

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